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Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning Digital Learning | Teaching Excellence

From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

It's fabulous to have you all back on campus, on Zoom, in Blackboard, and roaming the halls and cyberspaces in between—we can practically feel the energy rolling out of your classrooms and screens!

Now that you've finished all of those start-of-school tasks, it's time to look ahead to our biggest event of the year: our 14th annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference (and Thursday pre-conference workshop).

• Our keynote presentation on engaging students in learning in all of our "new normal"

• Over 25 in-person sessions, along with streaming sessions accessible remotely throughout the day

• Lunch and an end-of-day reception, with raffle prizes and opportunities to connect

Have you <u>registered</u> for this free conference? invited a friend or one of your new colleagues to register? <u>signed</u> <u>up for the workshop</u>? It'll just take a couple minutes, and you don't want to forget...!

If you can't wait until the end of the month to have a lively conversation about teaching, don't be sad: we've got lots going on to help you connect with other faculty, learn new tools and strategies, and raise your game for excellence in teaching. For instance, you can

• Sign up to join a <u>Teaching Square</u>, or jump into our new connection option, <u>Teaching Reflection Circles</u>, to explore ways you can build your own reflective practices around teaching.

• Sign up, if you're new or nearly-new faculty, for our <u>First-Year Five</u> program and identify how you can improve your inclusive and equitable teaching in five hours

• Join a Faculty Learning Community about indigenous research strategies or global perspectives that can enhance your teaching.

Receive coaching about your online course each month through our special newsletter.

• And don't forget to nominate a colleague for a Teaching Award!

You can see our <u>full Fall Calendar</u> on our events page: keep checking back!

Along with our partners (including the Office of the Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development, Writing Across the Curriculum, Mason Impact/Undergraduate Education/CECiL, Graduate Education, GradLife, University Libraries, and Information Technology Services) we we hope to see you at ITL or at other events as the weather cools and teaching and learning heat up!

Shelley

E Shelley Reid, Ph.D. Director for Teaching Excellence Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning Associate Professor, English Department <u>ereid1@gmu.edu</u>

Events & Deadlines

IN/OVATIONS in Teaching & Learning

Save the Date! Innovations in Teaching & Learning conference

Friday, September 30, 2022

The Stearns Center invites you to the **Innovations in Teaching & Learning (ITL) conference Sept. 30, 2022.** Join us for a day of workshops, panels, teaching-focused presentations, and networking with colleagues -- not to mention a free lunch and our end-of-day reception! This conference will include a variety of in-person activities, a diverse menu of live-streaming options, and on-demand content. Visit the ITL website for more <u>information and registration</u> details.

Keynote speaker Dr. Claire Howell Major, author of <u>Student Engagement</u> <u>Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty</u> (available online for free, courtesy of University Libraries), will share her principles of teaching students to advance learning and develop classroom engagement in higher education. Also, see below for details about her pre-conference workshop: Thursday, September 29, 3:00-4:30pm.

TEA Nominations

Full-time TEA Nomination Deadline: Friday, October 7, 2022

Adjunct TEA and Online TEA Nomination Deadline: Friday, December 2, 2022 The 2023 George Mason University Teaching Excellence Awards are open to faculty with significant teaching experience at George Mason.

Our TEAs for full-time faculty (term and tenure-line) offer recognition for excellent teaching overall, and special recognitions for excellence in teaching General Education (Mason Core) or High Impact Learning. Faculty who have already completed three or more years teaching at Mason are eligible.

The Adjunct Teaching Excellence Awards recognize excellence in the teaching of parttime faculty who have already completed teaching courses in at least six semesters at Mason.

The Online Teaching Excellence Awards recognize teaching excellence for all instructional faculty members (adjuncts, term, tenured and tenure-track) who have taught at least one fully online course during the past academic year, and who also have at least four semesters completed of teaching fully online courses at Mason. Faculty do not need to teach exclusively online, nor do their online courses need to occur in consecutive semesters. We are expanding our OTEAs this year, and will be able to recognize faculty who demonstrate excellence in asynchronous and/or synchronous online teaching, as well as recognizing excellence in the design and implementation of online assessment strategies.

Students, faculty members, or administrators may nominate any faculty member for an award (we don't accept self-nominations). See more information on our <u>website</u>. To nominate: Please use our <u>Qualtrics survey</u> to provide the information about your nominee and a few paragraphs about your recommendation for them.

Faculty Development Workshops

Featured Workshop: ITL Keynote Speaker

September 29 | 3:00- 4:30 PM | RSCH 163 Terms of Engagement: Understanding and Promoting Student Engagement

Student engagement is important for learning across levels and disciplines. All faculty can learn some planning and course design strategies for increasing engagement -- and all students, especially those who may still be struggling to engage consistently in college learning environments, can benefit from structures that invite and support their participation.

Recent research on motivation makes it clear that for students to be successful, they have to value the task, expect to succeed, and be active participants in their own learning. In this hands-on, collaborative workshop, we will explore the practical implications of this research. In addition to examining a model of student engagement, we will discuss and share specific teaching techniques that can motivate students to participate in the learning process.

Register here

Facilitator: Dr. Claire Howell Major

Webinars

September 22 | Online | 2:30 - 3:30 pm Automating Assessments for Large Section Courses

Grading can take a considerable amount of time, especially in sections with large enrollments. In this webinar, we will focus on how to leverage assessment features that can speed-up grading and feedback, return work electronically, and use assignment analytics to gain more insight into student learning. Gradescope can be found in Blackboard and is available to all Mason faculty.

Facilitator: Gradescope Register for this webinar

September 29 | Online | 2:30 - 3:30 pm Leveraging Gradescope in STEM-based Courses

Online assessments, especially in STEM-based courses that require students to complete proofs, diagrams, graphs, or other hand-written work. In this webinar, we will focus on how to leverage online assessment features with Gradescope that support freeform submissions. Gradescope can be found in Blackboard and is available to all Mason faculty.

Facilitator: Gradescope Register for this webinar

Continuing Professional Development Workshops for Fall 2022

Do you want to improve your assignments, your grading, or your online discussions this fall, but don't have time for a lengthy redesign? Are you completing an evaluation portfolio and want to document your commitment to improving your teaching? Our one-hour, interactive CPD workshops might be just the thing!

The Stearns Center is offering a series of <u>Continuing Professional Development</u> workshops throughout Fall 2022. These workshops cover topics including efficient grading, engaging students, and providing feedback for written assignments. Please register via links on our <u>Events</u> page; workshops will be virtual or have a virtual option throughout Fall 2022.

Faculty who complete three CPD workshops and upload a revised course document during one calendar year will receive the Stearns Center Level One Faculty Development Credential.

September 21 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | CPD Level 1: Assess Workshop: Student-Centered Assessment Strategies | Facilitator: Breana Bayraktar

In this workshop, we will explore three strategies to elicit from students the kind of learning that we want to measure: designing low-stakes assignments, offering multiple ways for students to demonstrate mastery of course objectives, and asking students to reflect on their learning.

October 5 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | CPD Level 1: Assess

Workshop: Making a Mid-Course Correction to Enhance Engagement| Facilitator: Crystal Anderson

Would you like to increase student attendance and assignment completion? Do you want to leverage technology so that students value in-class activities? Would you like students to think your course is engaging? In this workshop, you will learn strategies that you can apply during the semester to enhance student engagement.

October 18 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00pm | WAC + CPD Level 1: Assess Workshop: Providing Feedback to Support Student Revision | Facilitator: Tim Lilley

Want to develop a more sustainable plan for providing feedback? This workshop will help faculty increase student engagement with and the impact of their feedback.

Teaching Squares Return in September

Application Deadline: Friday, September 9, 2022

What do other faculty actually do in their courses? How are they adapting to new opportunities, engaging their students, providing feedback, managing their time, and supporting long-term learning? If you joined a Teaching Square, you could find out!

Stearns Center Teaching Squares are a kind of professional "pot-luck dinner": a quick way to build your teaching network and learn strategies that will support your teaching. For Fall 2022, we will match interested faculty with a Square of colleagues from across the university (usually four people, but sometimes a little larger or smaller) and guide you through a quick four-part approach:

- Each Square meets once near the middle/end of September for introductions and planning
- Each member of the Square shares some element of a course they're currently teaching
- Each member provides reflective feedback to the others by late September or early October.
- The whole Square meets in early or mid October for a conversation about what they've learned and how they can support one another further

See additional information <u>on our website</u>. To indicate your interest for Fall 2022, <u>please complete our two-minute form</u> by Friday, September 9, 2022.

New! Teaching Reflection Circles Debut in September

Application Deadline: Friday, September 9, 2022

You probably know that taking time to reflect—as a person and as a teaching professional—is beneficial to your practice and also your overall wellbeing. But finding time to build a regular reflective practice, and sticking with it long enough to see the

benefits, can be challenging.

Joining a Stearns Center Reflection Circle can provide you the time, accountability, and community to support your own reflective practice *and* gain insights from others at Mason. For Fall 2022, we will match interested faculty with a Circle of colleagues from across the university (usually 4-6), and help you arrange four monthly meetings (75 minutes, virtual or in-person). Using our reflection guides, each Circle meeting will include

- 15 minutes of introduction and conversation with your Circle
- 30 minutes of individual reflective writing about your teaching and related
- experiences, using our three-part structure
 30 minutes of follow-up discussion based on insights and experiences that surfaced during the reflective writing

Across a semester of this practice, participants in similar programs across the nation last spring noted that the repetition of the individual reflective practice, the shared reflective insights, and the connections to faculty colleagues across diverse backgrounds strengthened their growth and meaning-making as educators and helped anchor daily events in more meaningful values and relationships. You don't need to light candles, chant, or compose poetic sentences to benefit from professional reflection!

See additional information on <u>our website</u>. To indicate your interest for Fall 2022, please complete our <u>two-minute form</u> by Friday, September 9, 2022.

ITS Blackboard Webinars/Workshops

Are you looking to learn Blackboard basics, beyond basics, grade center, Kaltura media, Collaborate Ultra, using rubrics in Bb, or anything relevant to Bb? Consider attending any or all of these Blackboard training sessions/webinars facilitated by Mason's Bb team. The date, time, and registration links are here: <u>Blackboard Support.</u>

Other Stearns Center Resources

September 16 | Application Deadline

First-Year Five: Self-Study in Inclusive Teaching

New Faculty at Mason are invited to join the First Year Five program run by the Stearns Center where they will commit to five hours of work or learning over the academic year, regarding curricular and pedagogical issues surrounding inclusivity in the classroom. Demonstrate your commitment to Mason's core value of inclusive excellence and <u>register</u> for the program by the deadline of September 16. For more information, please email <u>Stearns@gmu.edu.</u>

Subscribe to Fall 2022 Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter: How to Ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction in Your Online Course Design and Teaching?



In the Fall 2022 Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter series, we will focus on tips for quality online course design and teaching practices that support Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) between online instructors and students. RSI complies with Department of Education regulations and provides a hallmark of effective online teaching! Throughout the semester, our newsletter will highlight practices for how you may implement Regular and Substantive Interaction in your online courses. Starting in mid-September, you will receive an Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter issue about every two weeks during the Fall 2022 semester. The Newsletter will be available to you as a downloadable PDF, so that you may save and refer to these teaching strategies just when you need them.

<u>Subscribe today</u>! Past issues of the Online Teaching Newsletter may be downloaded from the <u>Stearns Center website</u> (see the Online Teaching Newsletters posted on the right of the screen).

Questions? Contact <u>Darlene Smucny</u>, Assistant Director for Quality in Online Instruction, Stearns Center.



Check out Stearns Center <u>Quality Assurance resources</u> for online courses!

Faculty Self-Checklist: Use the Faculty Self-Checklist to review your online course and online teaching.

Online Course Quality: Essential Elements: Review our infographic on Online Course Quality: Essential Elements to get the most out of your course.

Want to learn even more? Our Quality Assurance Checklist and Guidelines contains both a faculty self-checklist and essential quality indicators for each domain with examples of how they can be demonstrated in an online course. This is an extensive document, and we encourage you to schedule an appointment with our QA team if you have any questions regarding it. Email <u>QATeam@gmu.edu</u> to request a copy of the full guidelines. You can indicate whether you would like a brief consultation with our QA team in your email.

Contact QA Team: For any questions regarding Online Quality Assurance, please contact: **<u>gateam@gmu.edu</u>**

Faculty Learning Communities

Our Faculty Learning Communities are starting or re-starting this fall, and you're invited to participate! FLCs meet 3-5 times each semester, and are open to all faculty at Mason (full-time, part-time, and graduate instructors included): which one might you join?

• NEW! Teaching Indigenous Research Methods, led by Jessica Hurley (jhurle@gmu.edu) and Sylvia Schreiner (sschrei2@gmu.edu), English, will support faculty seeking to increase their understanding of Indigenous research methods (IRMs) and ways of knowing, and how to integrate IRMs into their teaching of research methods.

• NEW! Integrating Global Awareness into Any Class, led by Hyunjin "Deborah" Kwak and Amy Lewis, Mason Korea (<u>alewis33@gmu.edu</u>), invites you to join in conversation with faculty across disciplines and campuses about course assessments, resources, teaching and learning tools that shape academic success in an interconnected and diverse world.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing-intensive Course Learning Outcomes Implementation

Beginning in fall 2023, the WAC Committee will begin reviewing WI courses to provide feedback to faculty and units on the integration of the new WI learning outcomes and WI course criteria. Visit <u>WAC's Outcomes Implementation Process webpage</u> to learn more about this process and the resources we are developing to support faculty and units.

Faculty Writing Community

Our Friday Writing Sprints are in full swing this semester, and all faculty with any kind of writing project are invited to participate. After a few minutes of check-ins and goal-setting, we will spend our time quietly working together. Add them to your calendar, tell your friends, and prepare to marvel at just how much you can accomplish in two-hours bursts alongside your fellow Mason writers. Visit <u>WAC's Faculty Writing Community</u>

webpage to learn more and to register.

Stearns Center News

Stearns Center Consultations

Stearns Center staff will be glad to assist you with any questions related to teaching, managing, and developing your face-to-face, hybrid or online courses; we can respond via email or Zoom. Please submit your questions by <u>clicking here</u>. We work to answer your questions as quickly as possible; however, response times may vary.

From Our Partners

Faculty Affairs

Opportunity to Join an Affinity Group

As part of Mason's commitment to inclusive excellence, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development supports faculty and doctoral students' affinity groups. These groups provide our diverse faculty and doctoral students with a sense of community, inclusion and belonging. The groups also serve as safe spaces for discussion of issues that impact the success and well-being of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Multiracial, Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islanders and First-Generation faculty members and historically underserved doctoral students. Learn more about Affinity Groups here.

AAPI—Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander Faculty In person, Thursday, Sept 15, from noon-1:00pm, Johnson Center, room B

BLIM—Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Multiracial Faculty Online Only, Wed, Oct 5, from noon-1:00pm | Register here!

HUDS—Historically Underserved Doctoral Students

Finding Your Home at Mason: Join us for this first gathering of HUDS (Historically Underserved Doctoral Students) to kick off the new academic year with a community of support! **Dr. Julie Choe Kim**—Director of Graduate Student Life—will lead a conversation about connecting and checking in with one another in graduate school and how to find your home at Mason.

Online Only, Monday, Sept 19, 2:45pm – 4pm | Register here!

Workshop | October 6 | 1:00-2:30pm | Online How to Ethically Mentor, Author, and Collaborate

The second Faculty Matters Workshop Series, co-sponsored by the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development and Research Development for Fall 2022, is on October 6th from 1:00-2:30pm on Zoom. The workshop series is designed to address key issues central to faculty development and success. The October workshop, How to Ethically Mentor, Author, and Collaborate, focuses on engaging with colleagues about best practices when considering the ethical dimensions of your scholarly work and collegial relationships. Participants will have the chance to win a free book, <u>Coaching and Mentoring for Academic Development, by Kay Guccione & Steve Hutchinson.</u> <u>Registration is required</u>.

OSCAR

Research Assistant Positions

OSCAR is expanding opportunities for students to learn research, creative, or scholarly methods in their field and giving faculty free support on their projects at the same time. Learn how you can hire a research assistant.

Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on a research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. **Find more information on our website**.

Undergraduate Student Travel Fund

The Undergraduate Student Travel Fund (USTF) supports research and scholarly related travel for undergraduates who are presenting their projects via poster, talk, screening, round table, performance, etc. USTF can support costs associated with presentations at virtual conferences. Students must apply 30 days before the start of the event. Learn more here.

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