

2024-2025 Mason Core Committee Report

2024-2025 Committee Activities

The Mason Core Committee met 10 times during the 2024-2025 academic year with one meeting in Fall 2024 to discuss strategic committee work with no review of proposals. As detailed below, the workload associated with the committee continues to be substantial, far beyond the typical workload of a university-level committee, and we commend the committee members for their engagement, dedication, and thoughtfulness in crafting a general education program that serves the needs of all of our students.

Mason Core Retreat

A retreat was held in September prior to our regularly scheduled meetings. The retreat welcomes the new and continuing members. During the retreat we reviewed the expectations of the committee and set goals for the committee's tasks and work for the year. This year, we also began discussion of revisions to Oral Communication outcomes and committee bylaws at the retreat.

Committee Work

Oral Communication Outcomes

The committee worked this year to revise the oral communication category outcomes. Melissa Broeckelman-Post presented information about oral communication at the September retreat as a subject matter specialist. The committee then worked to draft and revise the category learning outcomes, soliciting feedback from the Mason Core Assessment Council before voting to finalize the revised learning outcomes in Spring 2025.

Committee Bylaws and Procedures

The Mason Core committee has been operating without committee bylaws, and we wanted to create these to ensure consistency in the ways voting, absent members, quorum, etc. are handled. The committee began discussions of bylaws at its September retreat, and it worked on revisions throughout the year. Eventually, this led to the creation of a procedures document separate from the bylaws as we wanted to ensure the procedures were spelled out but did not think that level of detail was appropriate for the bylaws themselves. We are still working on these, and we hope to finalize these either this May or next year.

Task Forces

One task force about Literature & Humanities, which began work last year, completed its work this fall. The committee explored the possibility of expanding the literature category to a humanities category and reviewed the current literature category outcomes; it recommended that the category remain literature with updated learning outcomes. The Mason Core committee still needs to discuss these recommendations.

Just Societies Flag

The Just Societies flag continues to be approved for courses, although Provost Antony agreed to continue pausing the implementation of JS courses as a requirement for Mason students. He met with the committee in December to discuss the ongoing pause for this requirement and to hear concerns from committee members about this process.

Proposal Reviews

This year, we had ongoing high numbers of proposals for the new Global Contexts category alongside other proposals. The committee reviewed 66 unique proposals, which does not include a significant number of proposal resubmissions that required a second, or in some cases, third review.

AGLS Conference Presentation

Representing George Mason and the Mason Core team, Tricia Wilson, Mason Core Curriculum Specialist, and Laura Poms, Mason Core Director, led a presentation at the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) conference in October 2024, entitled Building Bridges: Connecting Faculty to Your General Education Program. Their presentation focused on how to create avenues for communication with faculty to improve not only faculty perception of general education but also to improve course proposals received for committee consideration. This presentation was well-received by attendees and will be expanded into a pre-conference workshop for the Fall 2025 AGLS conference at the request of conference leaders.

The following courses were approved this academic year for Mason Core:

Global Contexts

ANTH 313: Myth, Magic, and Mind
ANTH 317: East Asian Cultures
ANTH 320: Global Africa
ANTH 331: Refugees
CONF 340: Global Conflict Analysis and Resolution
FAVS 300: Global Horror Film
FOLK 100: Global Folklore
GERM 315: German for the Global World
GOVT 132: Introduction to International Politics
HIST 317: Nazi Germany
HIST 318: Holocaust: History and Meaning
HIST 346: Sport History and Film
HIST 364: Revolution in Latin America
HIST 378: History of Aviation
INTS 406: Global Leadership
INYO 105: U.S. American Cultures
MUSI 103: Musics of the World
PSYC 379: Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology
RELI 383: Holocaust: History and Meaning
SOCI 120: Globalization and Society

SPMT 346: Sport History and Film

Information Technology & Computing

COMM 320: Business & Professional Communication

Just Societies (optional flag)

HIST 318: Holocaust: History and Meaning

HIST 378: History of Aviation

INTS 406: Global Leadership

RELI 383: Holocaust: History and Meaning

RMGT 210: Recreation and Leisure in Life

SOCW 200: Introduction to Social Work

Literature

HIST 403: Revolutionary Era in American History, 1763-1812

RELI 338: Qur'an and Hadith

Mason Apex

CS 405: Synthesis of Ethics and Law for the Computing Professional (previously CS 306)

ECED 493: Internship in Early Childhood Special Education

ELED 480: Practicum in Elementary Education

GGG 485: Capstone in Geography and Geoinformation Science

LING 497: Linguistics Apex Research

Natural Science with Lab

CLIM 103: Global Warming: Weather, Climate, and Society Laboratory

Social and Behavioral Science

GGG 304: Population Geography

HIST 321: Modern France

RMGT 210: Recreation and Leisure in Life

Writing Intensive

BIOL 400: News & Views: Selected Topics

ELED 305: Foundations of Elementary Methods and Management

KINE 605: Research Methods in Kinesiology

RELI 300: Theories and Methods in Religious Studies

Committee Members:

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| Keith Renshaw | Co-chair, Associate Provost, Undergraduate Education |
| Laura Poms | Mason Core Director, Undergraduate Education |
| Courtney Adams Wooten (Senate) | Co-Chair, College of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| Abena Aidoo Hewton (Senate) | College of Education and Human Development |

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| Lauren Cattaneo (Provost Appointee) | College of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| Jamie Clark (Senate) | College of Humanities and Social Science |
| Matthew Dievendorf (Senate) - Spring 2025 | College of Visual and Performing Arts |
| Megan Erb (Provost Appointee) | College of Science |
| Michael Hunzeker (Senate) | Schar School of Policy and Government |
| William Lake Jr. (Senate) | College of Visual and Performing Arts |
| Samaine Lockwood (Senate) - Fall 2024 | College of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| Ana Stoehr (Senate) | College of Public Health |
| Debra Stroiney (Senate) | College of Education and Human Development |
| Liz White (Provost Appointee) | College of Engineering and Computing |
| Shun Ye (Provost Appointee) | Costello College of Business |
| Griffin Crouch (Student Representative) | Ex Officio |
| Chris Lee | Ex Officio |
| Tom Polk | Ex Officio |
| Shelley Reid | Ex Officio |

Respectfully submitted by:
Courtney Adams Wooten, Faculty Co-Chair

Additional Questions

1. During the past calendar year has the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President (or their respective offices) announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?

There was ongoing communication about the implementation of the JS courses, which Provost Antony ultimately continued to pause. Part of this occurred during the summer, so it was difficult for the committee to have direct conversations then (although we did later, see below).

One initiative it would have been helpful for the committee to hear about further was the AI Task Force and sub-committees. This potentially could overlap with Mason Core, and while members of those committees talked with Mason Core Director Laura Poms and the Provost for Undergraduate Education Keith Renshaw, more direct communication with the committee may have increased understanding on both sides about AI and its potential role in Mason Core in the future.

2. Did your Committee seek information or input from the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?

Our committee sought information from Provost Antony about his decision to continue pausing the implementation of JS courses. He attended a committee meeting in December 2024 to discuss this decision and listen to feedback from the committee.

3. Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost, Senior Vice President and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.

N/A

4. Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President, Provost, Senior Vice President, or their staff.