

2025-2026 Mason Core Committee Report

2025-2026 Committee Activities

The Mason Core Committee met 11 times during the 2025-2026 academic year with one working session in October 2025 to discuss the assessment results for Quantitative Reasoning and Information Technology & Computing categories and one working session in May 2026 to discuss potential changes to the QR and IT&C categories and integration of career outcomes in the Apex category. 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 August prior to our regularly scheduled meetings. The retreat welcomes 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 discussed an overall vision for Mason Core and how Mason Core assessment results can help us refine categories and learning outcomes, thinking ahead to the Quantitative Reasoning (QR) and Information Technology & Computing (IT&C) categories in particular.

Committee Work

Quantitative Reasoning and Information Technology & Computing Assessment Results and Learning Outcome Revisions

Chris Lee, OIEP, presented assessment results to the committee for the QR and IT&C categories; Courtney Wooten, faculty co-chair, presented these results to Faculty Senate in February 2026. The committee used the results to review the existing learning outcomes for these categories and decided to solicit more feedback from key campus stakeholders regarding the learning outcomes. The Mason Core leadership team (Courtney Wooten, Keith Renshaw, Laura Poms, Tricia Wilson), with input from the committee, drafted a survey about the learning outcomes. It was sent out in January 2026 to faculty who taught courses in those categories as well as chairs, program directors and university libraries staff. The data will be shared at the upcoming May 2026 Mason Core Committee working session. The results of the survey will help the committee determine possible revisions to these categories' learning outcomes.

Career Outcomes Integration in Mason Core

In alignment with increased attention to helping students identify the career outcomes they are gaining from general education courses, Mason Core has been working with Career Services to identify possible ways that career readiness outcomes could be embedded in Mason Core. This year, several Mason Core partners collaborated with Career Services to embed career outcomes in their courses, including English (ENGL 302) and Modern Languages (FRLN 385) in the Mason Apex category. The committee discussed the pilot programs and possibilities of

integrating career outcomes into Integration level courses specifically. In May 2026, we will continue those discussions in relation to the Apex category to develop next steps.

Proposal Reviews

The committee again reviewed a significant number of proposals, continuing the trend from the previous two years. The committee reviewed 59 unique proposals, which does not include a substantial number of proposal resubmissions that required a second, or in some cases, third review. We commend the committee for their continued diligence and dedication to providing comprehensive, actionable reviews, vastly improving the quality of Mason Core courses.

AGLS Conference Presentations

Representing George Mason and the Mason Core team, Tricia Wilson, Mason Core Curriculum Specialist, and Laura Poms, Mason Core Director, facilitated a pre-conference workshop at the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) conference in October 2025, entitled Refining the Proposal Process: Streamlining General Education Course Development. The workshop provided attendees with strategies for implementing a course proposal process that is both efficient and supportive of faculty, committee members, and the overall general education program. Attendance was a record high for pre-conference sessions.

Courtney Wooten (faculty co-chair) and Tom Polk (ex-officio member) presented on ways that general education programs can enhance a vertical writing curriculum. This included understanding institutional mission and context, surveying what is already happening, understanding students' learning, collaborating with stakeholders, and building more integration as needed.

The following courses were approved this academic year for Mason Core with several courses pending review as of April 9, 2026:

Arts

INTS 346: Art as Social Action

ITAL 320: Italian Cinema

Global Contexts

ANTH 308: Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East

DANC 118: Global Dance Perspectives I

HIST 315: STEM and Society: A History

JAPA 310: Japanese Culture in a Global World

Literature

HIST 334: American Scriptures

RELI 334: American Scriptures

Mason Apex

COS 411: Introduction to Science Policy

EVPP 425: RS: Ecological Sustainability

FRLN 485: Multilingualism, Identity, and Power

HIST 491: Honors Directed Research
KORE 470: Research in Korean Studies

Oral Communication

COMM 101: Fundamentals of Communication

Social and Behavioral Science

GOVT 203: Immigration Politics
INTS 310: Violence, Gender, and Sexuality
KINE 110: Physical Activity and Wellness
WMST 200: Introduction to Women and Gender Studies
WMST 320: Violence, Gender, and Sexuality

Writing Intensive

COMM 308: Writing for Public Relations and Strategic Communication
COMM 369: Multimedia Storytelling
COMM 380: Media Criticism
RUSS 400: Contemporary Post-Soviet Life
SEED 477: Studying Teacher Impact on Student Learning

Committee Members:

Keith Renshaw	Co-chair, Associate Provost, Undergraduate Education
Laura Poms	Mason Core Director, Undergraduate Education
Courtney Adams Wooten (Senate Appointee)	Co-Chair, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Abena Aidoo Hewton (Senate Appointee)	College of Education and Human Development
Lauren Cattaneo (Provost Appointee)	College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Megan Erb (Provost Appointee)	College of Science
Michael Hunzeker (Senate Appointee)	Schar School of Policy and Government
Minjoo Kim (Senate Appointee)	College of Visual and Performing Arts
Don Starr (Senate Appointee)	College of Visual and Performing Arts
Ana Stoehr (Senate Appointee)	College of Public Health
Debra Stroiney (Senate Appointee)	College of Education and Human Development
Liz White (Provost Appointee)	College of Engineering and Computing
Shun Ye (Provost Appointee)	Costello College of Business
Andrea Zach (Senate Appointee)	College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Alessandra Shallal (Student Representative)	Student Government Association (Fall 2025)
Efrata Tewodros (Student Representative)	Student Government Association (Spring 2026)
Chris Lee (OIEP)	Ex Officio

Tom Polk (WAC)	Ex Officio
Shelley Reid (Stearns)	Ex Officio
Margaret Calkins (University Libraries)	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?

Provost Antony met with the committee in August 2026 to discuss ongoing initiatives and the JS course designation.

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?

N/A

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.

In conversations about learning that all students should receive, including those about AI, we believe the Mason Core committee should be consulted because it represents a set of courses across campus that all Mason students take or must transfer in and its members include faculty from across campus. It would also be useful to be included in conversations about first year learning experiences or academic student success efforts.

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

N/A