

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
March 1, 2023
Electronic Meeting, 3:00-4:15 p.m.

Number of attendees: 121 ([List of names](#))

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair Melissa Broeckelman-Post (MBP) called the meeting to order at 3:03pm.

- II. **Approval of the Minutes of January 25, 2023 and February 8, 2023:** Approved with correction: Capitalize “New College” on p. 1 of the February 8 minutes.

- III. **Opening Remarks**
 - Please welcome Truman Deree, new Senate Clerk. He is a graduate student in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program.
 - Join the Senate Executive Committee tomorrow (March 2) at noon for lunch at the Mason Club. This event is open to the whole community to socialize and talk about issues in the Senate or university. Please join even if you don’t have a club membership.

IV. Committee Reports

Senate Standing Committees

- Executive Committee – no report (have been discussing issues already on today’s agenda).
- Academic Policies
 - Alignment of undergraduate and graduate policymaking procedures
 - AP Committee has been in contact with Provost’s Office and Graduate Division to discuss procedures to adopt/modify graduate-level procedures. Currently all policies AP1-5 are dealt with by the AP Committee and voted on in Senate, but AP6 is handled by the Graduate Council and voted on by them without coming to the Senate. This does not align with language in the Faculty Handbook, Section 1.3.2.
 - The AP Committee is reviewing ways forward and will bring ideas to the Senate for discussion at a later meeting.
- Budget and Resources
 - Planning to post updated salary data by the March 22 meeting, which will reflect multiple raises given out over the last few months.
 - The Committee is meeting with Deb Dickenson, EVP of Finance, on March 23.
- Faculty Matters

- Currently dealing with recommendations for annual reviews from the Faculty Evaluation Workgroup and how they align with the Faculty Handbook
- Faculty Evaluation of Administrators (FEA) Survey
 - Previously announced that we will partner with Gallup for the first time to administer this survey
 - The survey will be shared on April 3
 - This will be the standard FEA with ratings for President, Provost, and Deans—same questions as in the past, but with the benefit of being able to look across all Deans.
 - We are also in conversation with Gallup about pairing the FEA with the Faculty and Staff Experience survey, which also captures the staff experience and allows us to compare across schools and industries.
 - Another benefit of partnering with Gallup is “getting the players out of the referee box”—Gallup is collecting the FEA data, not the faculty.
 - We are also in conversation with the Provost about possibly extending the FEA to chairs. For many years people have asked about evaluating chairs, associate deans, etc. We are not there yet but plan to revisit next year.
- A number of Faculty Handbook changes will be brought to the Senate for a first meeting later in March.
- Nominations
 - Working on Grading Task Force nominations
 - Call for nominations for next year’s Board of Visitors (BOV) and university standing committees will be coming out soon—faculty are encouraged to nominate themselves and colleagues for these opportunities.
- Organization & Operations
 - The committee met regarding the bylaws revisions and have taken further revisions to the Executive Committee. These have been sent back to committee and we plan to bring the final read to the Senate on March 22.
 - We will soon be providing tabulations on senate representation numbers—they didn’t change this year. We will share with the Executive Committee and Senate soon and work with the new clerk to send letters to Deans.
 - If you want to change the charge of your committee, e.g. activities are changing or you have been following new avenues within the current boundaries of the committee, bring to our committee and we will review with you and bring to the Senate for discussion and approval.

Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

- [Mason Core Committee- proposed revisions \(Debra Stroiney & Laura Poms\)](#)
 - This is the first read of proposed revisions to the Mason Core curriculum.
 - Background

- Following up on suggestions and recommendations made last year. We have worked on this during the fall with the Capstone/Synthesis Task Force. Thanks to the members of the task force, which included student representation.
- Refresher on Mason Core enhancements
 - Last Spring the Senate approved Just Societies and Global Contexts-flagged courses and requirements. These will go into effect next year or the following year [side note: workshops will be held soon for faculty who want to develop Just Societies courses].
 - We are also reviewing the culminating experience of the degree, the synthesis or capstone course. This is an important and evidence-based part of the liberal arts experience.
- Rationale for changes to capstone/synthesis
 - Synthesis requirements have been in Mason Core since 2000; capstone added in 2014.
 - Having two categories (capstone or synthesis) for the same graduation requirement confuses students and advisors.
 - Synthesis has learning outcomes but no guidelines, while capstone has guidelines but no outcomes. Faculty struggle to design courses because of this lack of consistency. A lot of the courses that come to Mason Core Committee lack important details because of the lack of clarity.
 - Proposing name change of the culminating experience to Apex. Mason Core director and student representatives brainstormed with student groups and Mason Core committee voted on it.
- Proposed new requirements and learning outcomes
 - 3 credits can be over multiple courses—some departments already to this. Just needs to add up to 3 credits at the 400 level to count.
 - Will not be retroactive—starts with students entering the university in 2024-25.
 - Existing capstone/synthesis courses at the 400 level will automatically transition and be redesignated; do not need to be resubmitted.
 - Existing 300-level courses will be flagged directly with departments to discuss renumbering. These courses may still count, just need to consider course numbering given new requirement that culminating experience must be at the 400 level.
 - Departments won't need to create new courses or add to existing programs. If you don't already have a course that meets the requirements, there are other courses that students can take.
 - Mason Core Committee, OIEP, and Stearns Center will work with departments prior to the Mason Core assessment to ensure learning outcomes are met.
 - Most concentrations already require a 400-level capstone/synthesis so this is a small transition for most.

- Timeline for changes
 - Mason Apex will roll out in the 2024-25 catalog year, which is also when the Just Societies category flag will be added.
- Questions
 - Within the AP Committee we talked about research on capstone experiences. There are thousands of articles on capstones in the literature and the term is widely used and recognized. Were the student groups you engaged aware of this and might you consider keeping the name “capstone” given that this is the term used in the literature and at other universities?
 - Disciplines that require a synthesis felt that “capstone” didn’t summarize what is done in their programs. The term doesn’t resonate well with all areas (e.g. the arts).
 - We asked students to brainstorm to get buy-in and also have something less charged based on previous discussions.
 - We tried to come up with a term that covers all perspectives.
 - Related question—I was also part of the AP Committee discussion. Almost every higher education institution uses the terminology “capstone.” Only Mason and a couple of other places use “synthesis.” No other universities use “apex,” although some high schools do. Typically we’d like to go with the mainstream rather than trying to invent something new.
 - Response from Bethany Usher, Associate Provost for Graduate Education: There were concerns that if we used “capstone” it would be seen as a requirement for the major and we wanted to avoid that.
 - There’s also a high school AP capstone requirement now, so that may add to confusion for students. The workgroup was trying to anticipate the many different meanings of the word.
 - Laura Poms: We were really pushing for an administrative change to help students and faculty better understand the requirements and get students excited to take the course. Students typically don’t get a lot of say and we thought it was important to bring them in. I think there will be significant challenges if we try to impose “capstone” across different fields and areas.
 - Comment: If we do it our way perhaps we will become the leaders in this area and people will follow us. It’s more important to do what’s best for Mason and our students vs. what everyone else is doing. Having experienced the confusion over the years I think this is the cleanest way.
 - I appreciate these comments but if this is something nobody else is using will grad schools be confused by what they see on student

transcripts when all other students from other schools have a capstone course? We want our students to be on the same page as other students when being evaluated elsewhere.

- We will take these comments back to the Mason Core committee to consider in time for the next reading of the proposals.
- FYI: see [presentation slides](#) for dates and registration links for Just Societies and Global Contexts proposal workshops (March 9 and 31; May 9).
- [Athletic Council \(report attached\)](#)
- [Graduate Council \(Victoria Grady\)](#)
 - Policies on general leave of absence, continuous registration, and medical leave of absence were passed by the Graduate Council on February 15
 - Background and purpose
 - Graduate students had access to parental leave opportunities but not leave because of other challenges or financial concerns.
 - The process of reviewing existing policies and passing new policies started in January 2022
 - Highlights of changes, which apply to doctoral and masters students (see attached report for full details):
 - Leave policies apply when students do not enroll in at least one credit for one or more consecutive semesters
 - A re-enrollment form is required
 - Distinction between general and medical leave of absences
 - Academic load policy revisions were also proposed but not voted on yet. We welcome feedback.
 - These revisions apply to AP 1.2 as it relates to graduate students and programs.
 - Revisions were drafted due to discrepancies between curriculum development and catalog policies.
 - AP Committee would be involved in this and changes would be brought to the Senate for review and approval.
- [Mason Core Committee Report – see attached report](#)
- [Technology Policy Committee](#) (Delton Daigle)
 - Learning Management System (LMS) upgrade
 - The workgroup is hard at work and conducting lots of outreach with stakeholders
 - Procurement process has started and we will like the RFP on the Senate website once it has been finalized by the state later this week

- Oral presentations by bidders will be conducted in mid-April
- The evaluation committee consists of 5 faculty, 4 staff, and 1 student. The committee will make a recommendation to the Provost and senior leadership will ultimately make the decision.
- As we decide where we want to go, we encourage everyone to engage with the process, watch for opportunities to try out sandbox courses, engage with vendors to see demonstrations, etc. We may be using this system for the next 10 years or more.
- Vonage phone update
 - The updates are in progress; soon updates will be made to Aquia, Innovation, and Fenwick and then a building or two per week. Telecom coordinators have been notified. This will impact all phone systems except in Mason Korea.
 - The updates will provide E911 and soft phones for many people
 - We have concerns about the rollout plan:
 - Existing telecom network still has emergency management gaps, e.g. no hard phones in new buildings, poor WiFi coverage and dead spots, switching networks between Mason Secure and Eduroam, no blue light emergency phone system, geolocation issues with E911 system, no access for campus visitors.
 - 72% of our buildings have poor/very poor service
 - Responses
 - WiFi calling should help alleviate some cellular dead spots
 - Phones in classrooms will be part of the system
 - Plans to address cabling needs
 - Long-term plan to evaluate spaces and needs going forward
 - Plans to incorporate better emergency management systems in new buildings
- Questions
 - Concerned about new LMS—attended some outreach efforts and it became clear that Blackboard will not be considered as a continuation. Not in the running to even ask Blackboard if they can make the updates we need. I'm not saying we should keep Blackboard, but there are a lot of issues in switching systems when faculty have been invested for 20 years. The schedule/timeline looks very fast and I didn't feel like people were responsive to my concerns.
 - In 2021 the Instructional Continuity group advised piloting Blackboard Ultra, but we put the brakes on this because there was no faculty involvement. This process is the result.
 - Blackboard Learn is a dead system so the company will continue to support it, but not indefinitely.
 - Blackboard Ultra is a completely different LMS with no backward compatibility.

- A lot of our peer institutions have moved to other systems.
 - Response: I still think this is a very rushed process. I'm very invested in Blackboard and it does what I need it to do. I'm worried about a huge amount of content being destroyed in the rush to update to a new system.
 - I hear you and we have made it clear that this needs to be implemented with support for faculty and with effective communication. But change is going to happen because we currently have a dead software system.
 - Chair Melissa Broeckelman-Post: There is still a lot to learn but can you speak more about the timeline? This isn't happening completely overnight.
 - The best case scenario is that this will be adopted in Fall 2024. Pilot testing may start in Fall 2023 once we know who the vendor is and then early adoption in Spring 2024, but we'll need to work with the vendor to do course conversions etc. We are at least 18 months away from a new LMS, if not longer.
 - Follow-up question on support for conversion of existing content: after moving to this new system does this mean we could walk in and see some or all of our content under a new system? It just may not be fully operational in the way it is now?
 - No faculty member should be hands-off in the conversion process. There are going to be significant resources to help you do this. The provider will have a team to help with the transition, and there are third-party vendors who help aid in the process to ensure videos, PowerPoints etc are transferred. But you can't assume you'll walk in the following semester and your course will be ready to go. You need to be a bit hands on.
- Recreational Advisory Committee (Gene Shuman)
 - Faculty may be interested to hear that 8 new pickleball courts will be build off Campus Drive
 - Mason Recreation wants to know if faculty have suggestions for additional instructional courses they could offer (potentially for a fee)—things like yoga, meditation, weightlifting, etc. Let me know if there is anything you would like to see and I will pass it along.
 - Questions
 - Is there a way for Mason Recreation to offer connections between faculty and staff, e.g. if people were interested in pickleball but don't know of others who are, is there a way to help them get connected? It would be a good way to build community around health and wellbeing.
 - There may be a plan to start a league for Pickleball specifically.

- Can offer up the idea more generally at the next meeting

V. New Business

- [Conflict of Commitment Policy](#) (Elizabeth Woodley and Christopher DiTeresi, with Solon Simmons for the Faculty Handbook committee)
 - Mason is preparing to roll out draft policy 4021 and propose revisions to the Faculty Handbook, section 2.10.7, regarding outside activities and conflict of commitment (COC). Goal today is to preview new requirements and proposed changes.
 - Background to policy
 - New federal regulations are expanding disclosure and reporting requirements around outside activities for faculty. We need to update our policies and practices to comply with these.
 - At Mason we don't have a conflict of commitment policy and lack infrastructure for reporting and monitoring.
 - We want to build something from the ground up that suits Mason and meets our requirements.
 - We do have a conflict of interest (COI) policy (#4001), which concerns financial interests and allows for centralized review due to the level of risk these conflicts can pose. But COC is not currently addressed—this concerns outside activities that may be in conflict with university activities, and calls for distributed review by Deans.
 - To bring Mason into compliance we need to:
 - Create a policy
 - Establish requirements and process for reporting and reviewing disclosure
 - Develop process for requesting prior approval for activities with high potential for COC
 - Replace internal COI disclosure management system with a system that will cover COC and COI in one place (via RAMP)
 - COC policy efforts began in March 2022 and COI system implementation within RAMP began October 2022—we are progressing these efforts simultaneously.
 - COC policy committee consists of delegates from deans of all colleges, administrators ex officio (Office of Research, Institutional Compliance), faculty (Faculty Matters, Faculty Affairs, at large).
 - Timeline
 - March-December 2022: Policy drafting and Faculty Handbook revisions, new policy 4021 drafted, updates to 4001 to align policies
 - January-May 2023: Implementation phase—monitoring approvals of policies, creating/updating procedures, and communicating changes across campus; training for chairs and deans.

- RAMP system will go live for research purposes in early May and faculty will be onboarded over summer in waves by college
 - Effective date for policy is September 1, 2023—tentative, but will be in fall.
- Policy overview
 - Takes into account compliance needs, integrity of shared governance, and need for low administrative burden for faculty and approvers
 - Strategy to ensure we have university-level processes so everyone can use the same system, but also college-level decision-making
 - Policy builds on Faculty Handbook section 2.10.7 with new specific requirements (e.g. Dean’s approval for sponsored research outside Mason; foreign commitments, etc.)
 - Decision-making will be in the hands of Deans and unit heads, with appeal process to Provost’s Office
- We are committed to making the transition as painless as possible. We know it’s a big list but we hope the new system and scaffolded review process will make this less difficult for faculty.
- Clarifying note: The Senate is not deliberating on the policy itself, but on the proposed Faculty Handbook changes.
- Questions
 - Thank you for the clear presentation that gave a lot more context around the need for these changes. I understand the need for the policy and generally being good stewards of taxpayers’ money. But I am concerned about the removal of Faculty Handbook language that encourages faculty to do outside work and connects it to opportunities to increase visibility in the field for faculty and Mason. Small outside consulting gigs were incredibly helpful for me as a junior faculty member to raise my profile and reputation in the field. I’m concerned that the removal of this Handbook language makes it sound like Mason is discouraging this work.
 - Solon Simmons: Our goal has been to remove justification language and move to operational language in the Faculty Handbook more generally. The intent was not to discourage this work, but just to set the rules. There are areas in the Handbook that do bring in values and justifications, but we’re trying not to do that because it also introduces a level of contention.
 - Chris DiTeresi: The same story goes for when University Counsel saw the policy. They also wanted just operational language and to cut out unnecessary justifications. I do want to share a slide that shows the kinds of things that we expect will be given as guidance at the college level—it does retain the spirit of that language. This was a huge issue for the

committee and we want to make sure that outside activities are supported and encouraged. There will be a lot of communications and web-based guidance, which is not available yet but we absolutely have this in mind.

- Related question: I do wonder if some of those supports could be codified in the Handbook, because it does come across as very discouraging, and it raises a lot of questions about what might be a reportable event, like giving a talk at another university, elected positions in the field's professional association, etc. Do you need prior approval to run for a position, even if you don't know whether you'll get it? I understand that a lot of decisions will be pushed to colleges, but it would be helpful to put some of it in the Handbook. Some of these commitments are quite large and might also be considered service, but we aren't necessarily getting buyouts for them anymore.
 - Solon Simmons: The Provost's Office is interested in having departments and colleges clarify their bylaws and standing rules. CHSS is in pretty good shape here but others less so. That might be an opportunity to clarify some of these conversations within disciplines and areas so that Deans are not turning down important opportunities for faculty.

At this point in the meeting a motion to extend the meeting time until 4:30pm was made and approved.

- [Ramadan 2023- Austin Deray, Graduate Student Life](#)
 - This year is the first time since 2013 that all of Ramadan will take place during the academic year, including the Eid holiday that will take place while classes are still in session.
 - We wanted to bring this to the faculty's attention and ask for your support and consideration to support Muslim students during this period.
 - We created an infographic to share with departments and colleges (see attachment)
 - Highlights some terms and potential impacts on classes, possible accommodations that students may need during a time that is mentally, physically, and emotionally taxing (those observing Ramadan fast—including not drinking water—from sunrise to sunset and it is challenging to experience this while doing school work and exams).
 - How you can support students
 - Ensure they know it is OK to leave class or be late to class to allow time for prayer. There is only one prayer room on each campus and it can take a while to get to class from those locations. Students may need time to eat before an evening class.

- Allowing time for extensions on work on April 20 and 21 so students can participate in Eid, which is one of the most celebrated religious holidays in the world. Students may take these days off to travel to see family etc.
- Bethany Usher, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs: My office is fully supportive of this for students and I encourage all faculty to support students.

VI. Announcements

Provost Ginsberg

- Thank you for a good general faculty meeting on February 22 – the meeting was well put together and featured conversations at a high level, especially the panel on ChatGPT
- Quick update from State—there is a stalemate between the House and Senate and we don't yet have good information on the budget. We are hoping the Senate budget will prevail as it has more expansive funding.
 - In last week's Board of Visitors meeting it was announced that if the State does come forward with a package close to the Senate's proposal, with additional funding for us, we will hold steady on in-state undergraduate tuition next year. There will be a modest increase of \$300 for other tuition/student types. Room and board will increase 3% (board accounts for most of this due to inflation of food prices). The increase is below inflation but we will subsidize some of this and not pass the cost onto students.
- Fall 2023 classes will begin on August 21. Thank you for your engagement around changing the academic calendar this year. We are now aligned with other institutions in the state. The Spring semester was moved back a week too; classes will start the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- The performance evaluation season for A/P faculty and classified staff opens soon, and departments that did not do faculty evaluations last fall should do them in spring ahead of budget/merit raises this summer.

EVP Dickenson – not available.

VII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty: None.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Gill, PhD
Faculty Senate Secretary

**APPENDIX A
MASON CORE PROPOSED REVISIONS**

Mason Core Committee Proposal to Consolidate Capstone and Synthesis Requirements

Current requirements (directly from 2022-2023 catalog):

**Synthesis or Capstone Experience Requirement
(minimum 3 credits)**

The purpose of the synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the Mason Core curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines. While it is not feasible to design courses that cover "all" areas of general education, synthesis courses should function as a careful alignment of disciplinary goals with a range of Mason Core learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes for Synthesis:

The Mason Core synthesis course must address outcomes 1 and 2, and at least one outcome under 3. Upon completing a synthesis course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)
2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns
3. Apply critical thinking skills to:
 - a. Evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources, OR,
 - b. Judge the quality or value of an idea, work, or principle based on appropriate analytics and standards

Required: One approved course.

The purpose of the capstone course or sequence of courses is to provide a high impact, culminating element of an undergraduate education, helping students develop a more comprehensive and integrative understanding of their area of study and to utilize critical thinking skills. Capstone courses provide students opportunities to apply and demonstrate their knowledge and generally involve integrative /applied/ experiential projects. Student learning in a Capstone course is assessed using a set of identified learning outcomes, and for critical thinking, as defined by the American Association of Colleges & Universities.

While each academic degree program defines its learning outcomes, a Capstone course or sequence should follow these guidelines:

- Minimum of 3 credits
- Later in the curriculum, after a student has taken at least 85 credits, and at the 400 course level
- No more than 35 students in the course or equivalent instructional/ mentored support
- Emphasis on experiential/applied/integrative learning
- Allow students to apply critical thinking skills
- Learning outcomes defined by the degree program

Required: One approved upper-division course. Please speak with an advisor to determine the appropriate course to fulfill your major's requirement.

Proposed Revision: Mason Apex

Rationale: The disparate categories of Capstone and Synthesis are quite confusing for faculty submitting courses and for students completing their degree requirements. The synthesis requirement has learning outcomes but no additional guidance for scaffolding a student's program of study while the capstone requirement has "rules" for courses, but no identified learning outcomes.

The revised category's requirements support both disciplinary (like Capstone) and interdisciplinary experiences (like Synthesis). Combining the two categories into an overarching category captures the intent of both Core categories, is much less confusing, is inclusive of all disciplines, and will consider a wider range of high impact experiences.

The category's name was suggested by Mason students, a number of whom participated in brainstorming sessions with Student Involvement staff and the Mason Core Director. The Mason Core Committee made the final decision.

Summary: Replace the separate categories of Capstone and Synthesis with a single inclusive category: Mason Apex.

Implementation Timeline:

Update effective for 2024-2025 catalog. Existing 400 level Capstone and Synthesis courses will transition to the new category. Existing 300 level courses will be discussed with the directly affected departments to determine if renumbering is appropriate. Departments will not be required to create new courses or add a course to existing major requirements.

Catalog Description

Mason Apex courses provide Mason students with a high-impact culminating experience, requiring students to utilize critical thinking skills and preparing them for life-long learning. Students are challenged to draw connections across their Mason undergraduate academic experience. Mason Apex courses provide students opportunities to apply and communicate their knowledge, and involve integrative, applied or experiential projects.

Required: One approved at least 3-credit course at the 400-level. Students enroll after completing at least 85 credits. These courses maintain faculty/instructor/mentor-to-student ratio of no more than 1:35.

Learning Outcomes (both must be demonstrated)

Upon completing a Mason Apex course, students will be able to:

1. Integrate skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained across a Mason student's undergraduate education to explore complex issues in original ways.
2. Communicate effectively the results of the student's work with awareness of audience, purpose, and context using an appropriate modality (for example: written, oral, visual, material, embodied, multimodal).



Mason Apex First Reading Faculty Senate

Deb Stroiney, Faculty Co-Chair
Mason Core Committee
Laura Poms, Mason Core Director



Capstone/Synthesis Task Force

- Jason Kinser (chair)
- Abena Aidoo-Hewton
- Tom Polk
- Anne Verhoeven
- Jesse Guessford
- Liz White
- Shun Ye
- Laura Poms

With thanks to

- Nishok Chitvel, Mason Core Committee Student Rep
- Lauren Long and the Office of Student Involvement
- The students who participated in the category name brainstorming sessions.



Mason Core Enhancement Refresher

Capstone/Synthesis		Integration	
Writing-Intensive			
Written Communication			
Just Societies (2)	3	Arts	Exploration
		Literature	
	1	Global Contexts	
		Social & Behavioral Science	
		Natural Science	
	2	Global History	Foundation
	Information Technology and Computing		
	Quantitative Reasoning		
	Oral Communication		
	Written Communication		

Mason Core Enhancements Approved April 2022

- Revision 1: Global Contexts clarifies goals of Global requirement (in effect 2024-2025)
- Revision 2: Global History updated to reflect global and US experience (in effect 2023-2024)
- Revision 3: Students will be required to take two Just Society flagged courses across the Exploration category. Just Societies integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes into courses across the curriculum. (in effect 2024-2025)

Capstone/Synthesis Revision

Mason Apex		Integration	
Writing-Intensive			
Written Communication			
Just Societies (2)		Arts	Exploration
		Literature	
		Global Contexts	
		Social & Behavioral Science	
		Natural Science	
	Global History	Foundation	
	Information Technology and Computing		
	Quantitative Reasoning		
	Oral Communication		
	Written Communication		



Mason Apex aligns the culminating experience already represented by the separate Capstone or Synthesis requirement (in effect 2024-2025)

“Culminating experiences provide graduating seniors a course, program, or activity designed to cap off the integration of educational experiences, and foster transition to work or further education beyond the bachelor’s degree experience.”
“Opportunities to integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge are essential to ensuring deep, meaningful learning experiences.”

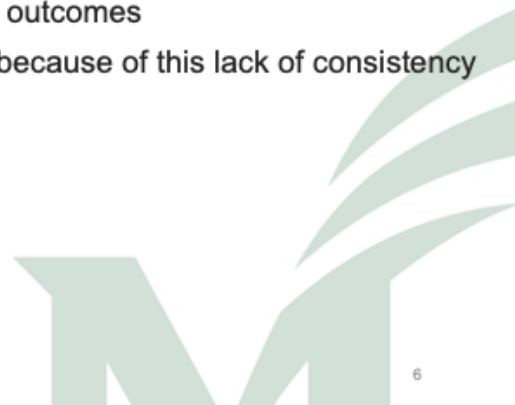


Kinzie, J (2013) Taking Stock of Capstones and Integrative Learning. Peer Review, Fall (27-30).



Rationale

- Two categories for one graduation requirement confuses students
 - Synthesis has learning outcomes but no guidelines
 - Capstone has guidelines but no outcomes
- Faculty struggle to design courses because of this lack of consistency between categories



Capstone and Synthesis: Current Requirements

Synthesis or Capstone Experience Requirement (minimum 3 credits)

The purpose of the synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the Mason Core curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines. While it is not feasible to design courses that cover "all" areas of general education, synthesis courses should function as a careful alignment of disciplinary goals with a range of Mason Core learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes for Synthesis:

The Mason Core synthesis course must address outcomes 1 and 2, and at least one outcome under 3. Upon completing a synthesis course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)
2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns
3. Apply critical thinking skills to:
 - a. Evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources, OR,
 - b. Judge the quality or value of an idea, work, or principle based on appropriate analytics and standards

Required: One approved course.

The purpose of the capstone course or sequence of courses is to provide a high impact, culminating element of an undergraduate education, helping students develop a more comprehensive and integrative understanding of their area of study and to utilize critical thinking skills. Capstone courses provide students opportunities to apply and demonstrate their knowledge and generally involve integrative /applied/ experiential projects. Student learning in a Capstone course is assessed using a set of identified learning outcomes, and for critical thinking, as defined by the American Association of Colleges & Universities.

While each academic degree program defines its learning outcomes, a Capstone course or sequence should follow these guidelines:

- Minimum of 3 credits
- Later in the curriculum, after a student has taken at least 85 credits, and at the 400 course level
- No more than 35 students in the course or equivalent instructional/ mentored support
- Emphasis on experiential/applied/integrative learning
- Allow students to apply critical thinking skills
- Learning outcomes defined by the degree program

Required: One approved upper-division course. Please speak with an advisor to determine the appropriate course to fulfill your major's requirement.

Mason Core Committee

First Reading Revision to Capstone/Synthesis Requirement Mason Apex Category

Proposed Revision for Synthesis and Capstone Categories (effective AY 2024-2025)

Mason Apex courses **or sequence of courses** provide Mason students with a high-impact culminating experience, requiring students to utilize critical thinking skills and preparing them for life-long learning. Students are challenged to draw connections across their Mason undergraduate academic experience. Mason Apex courses provide students opportunities to apply and communicate their knowledge, and involve integrative, applied or experiential projects.

Required: **Minimum of 3 credits at the 400-level.** Students enroll after completing at least 85 credits. These courses maintain faculty/instructor/mentor-to-student ratio of no more than 1:35.

Student Learning Outcomes (both must be demonstrated)

Upon completing a Mason Apex course, students will be able to:

- Integrate skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained across a Mason student's undergraduate education to explore complex issues in original ways.
- Communicate effectively the results of the student's work with awareness of audience, purpose, and context using an appropriate modality (for example: written, oral, visual, material, embodied, multimodal).

These courses are designed to be Mason-specific experiences and as such, courses transferred from other institutions do not meet this requirement.

Naming Process

Student generated, MC Committee approved!

MC director, Office of Student Involvement, MC student rep worked with student groups to brainstorm names

Mason Core Committee voted on student suggestions

Mason Apex selected because it represents the culminating point of a student's undergraduate experience

Moving Forward

- The new category pertains only to students entering the University during the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond. It is not retroactive
- Existing Capstone and Synthesis courses will transition to the new category and will be re-designated with the new category name. These courses do not need to be resubmitted at the current time
- Existing 300-level courses will transition initially but will need to go through a renumbering process that will be facilitated by the Mason Core Committee
- Departments are not required to add a course to existing degree programs
- Departments are not required to create a new course to meet the requirements
- The Mason Core Committee, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP), and the Stearns Center will work with departments prior to the Mason Core assessment period for this category to ensure courses are meeting the revised learning outcomes (no sooner than AY 2025-2026)

		Catalog 2022-2023	Catalog 2023-2024	Catalog 2024-2025
Anticipated Timeline	Integration	Capstone/Synthesis	Capstone/Synthesis	Mason Apex
		Writing-Intensive	Writing-Intensive	Writing-Intensive
		Written Communication	Written Communication	Written Communication
	Exploration	Arts	Arts	Arts
		Literature	Literature	Literature
		Global Understanding	Global Understanding	Global Contexts
		Social & Behavioral Science	Social & Behavioral Science	Social & Behavioral Science
		Natural Science	Natural Science	Natural Science
		Natural Science with Lab	Natural Science with Lab	Natural Science with Lab
		Western Civilization/World History	Global History	Global History
	Foundation	Information Technology and Computing	Information Technology and Computing	Information Technology and Computing
		Quantitative Reasoning	Quantitative Reasoning	Quantitative Reasoning
		Oral Communication	Oral Communication	Oral Communication
Written Communication		Written Communication	Written Communication	

Mason Core Just Societies/Global Contexts Proposal Workshops

Date	Time
Thursday, March 9	1:30 PM to 3:30 PM
Friday, March 31	11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Tuesday, May 9	12:00 noon to 2:00 PM



Questions?

masoncor@GMU.EDU



George Mason University

4400 University Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

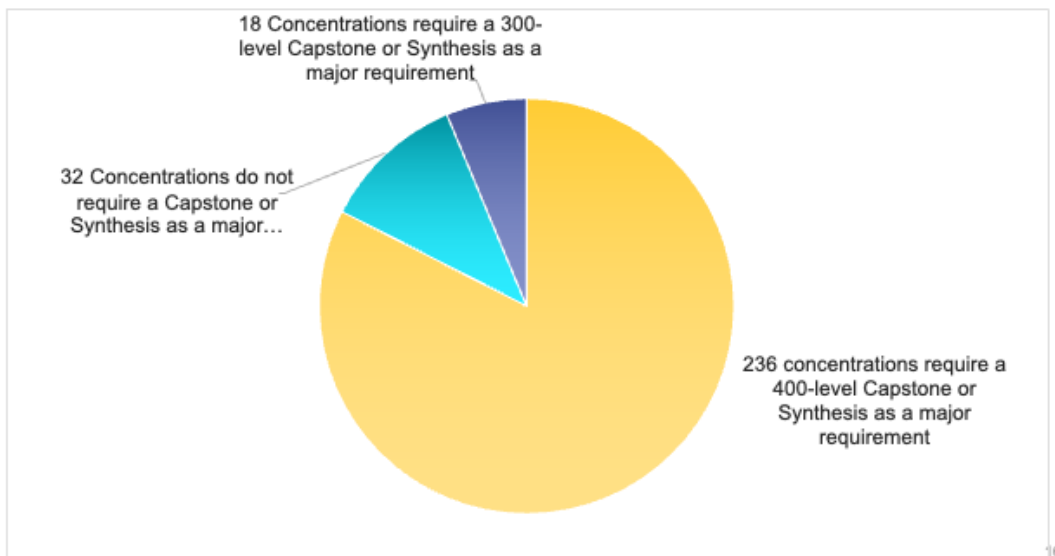
Tel: (703) 993-1000

Motion to approve Mason Core Revision Capstone/Synthesis Requirement to Mason Apex

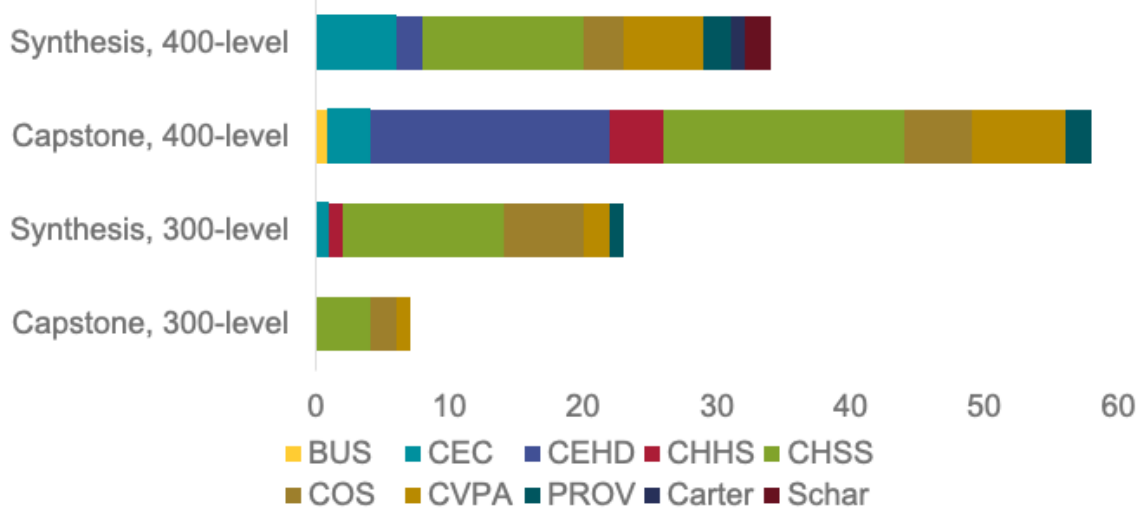


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Current Synthesis and Capstone Requirements by Concentration



Current Capstone and Synthesis Approved Courses (N=122)



APPENDIX B OTHER COMMITTEES

Athletic Council

Submitted by Dr. Dominique Banville, Faculty Athletics Representative, and Chair of the Athletic Council.
February 15, 2023

The Athletic Council had its second meeting of the academic year on January 31, 2023. In attendance were Nena Rogers, Bethany Usher, Malcolm Grace, Zack Bolno, Stacy Wilson, Lisa Rabin, Jacqueline Clabeaux, Joshua Walker, Ken Walsh, George Perry, Margaret Jones, and Dominique Banville

Nena Rodgers, Interim AD, provided an update on ICA. Academically, Student-athletes (SAs) had a combined GPA of 3.24 which is higher than Mason's student body (3.07) and four teams had a team GPA of 3.5 or higher. A ceremony will be held on February 21 to honor the 51 Peter N Stearns Provost Scholars, the highest academic honor for a Mason SA. Related to facilities, she announced that the field house locker room will finally be renovated. Through University Facilities, an architect and plumbing engineer have been hired to design the much-needed renovations. Also, ICA is participating in two ongoing feasibility studies for future large-scale development on West Campus: A mixed-use commercial development and a multi-purpose ballpark for professional cricket and Mason Baseball. The studies will hopefully be completed by June.

SA representatives then shared some of the activities they have been involved in including advocating for better funding for Mason by sending letters to their representative, identifying specific games in different sports for cancer awareness, and organizing activities to support "Morgan's Message" (mental health), and National Girl and Women in Sports Day.

Dominique provided an overview of some of the things she has been involved with since the last meeting such as attending the FARA Conference in Indianapolis in November. The A-10 held their FAR meetings in conjunction with the conference so it was a great opportunity to share and discuss current issues and best practices. She helped with the certification of all the freshman wrestlers at the end of the Fall term to allow them to compete unaffiliated over the winter break, and administered the NCAA Student-Athlete Health and Wellness Survey to the softball team and the Men's Track and Field team. She also took part in a few webinars with the A10 and the NCAA to learn more about the Transformation Committee Report and legislation changes, and she traveled to RI with the Men's basketball team. In the next few weeks, she will travel with Women's basketball to Chicago, with Lacrosse to Richmond, and with Baseball to Longwood. She will also coordinate the A10 Postgraduate Scholarship selection process and participate in the search committee efforts to identify the next AD.

Dominique then provided a background on the money distribution process that is now available to NCAA Institutions and the metrics that are used to determine if a school qualifies for that money. Mason was the only institution in the A10 not to qualify for this money (about \$120K this year). An ad-hoc committee has been created to address this important issue and Dominique is the chair. On the committee are representatives of all the parties that have a role to play in this effort: the ICA administrators, coaches, athletic trainers, and academic support staff.

Finally, Malcolm Grace gave an update on the latest legislative updates. The Transformation Committee has published its report and some of the recommendations that are more likely to impact us are related

to providing more benefits to SAs related to their experience, well-being, and mental health, extending the health coverage of SAs two years beyond the end of their eligibility, increasing the travel benefits, increasing SAs' voice on NCAA Committees, at the Conference level and Institutional level, eliminating the title of "volunteer coach" and increasing the number of coaching staff for every sport, and eliminating the SAT/ACT requirement

Graduate Council

Submitted by Victoria Grady, February 22, 2023

Graduate Council Report

All referenced policy documents can be accessed through the February Graduate Council [agenda](#).

ITEM 1:

At the February 15, 2023 Graduate Council meeting, the **General Leave of Absence, Continuous Registration, and Medical Leave of Absence policies** were passed by the Graduate Council as AP.6 policy recommendations to the Provost. This outcome is the result of a careful review and development process that started in January 2022 (See process document attached).

Currently, Mason graduate students have time to degree conferral limits for degree programs. Although graduate students in these programs have access to a Parental Leave of Absence policy that provides an extension of these deadlines, there is currently no leave of absence provided to graduate students for other significant reasons such as health or finances. While Mason has a continuous registration policy for doctoral candidates and master's students writing theses, other students can be absent for up to two semesters before being required to re-enroll. Although students can step away for any reason in this manner, there is no extension of their time to degree clock and graduate programs do not consistently have an infrastructure to maintain a connection to these students.

Thus, these policies have been proposed to enable graduate students to maintain their connection to Mason, strengthen the current capabilities of graduate academic units to plan for future enrollment, and increase transparency for students so they can make informed decisions prior to pausing enrollment. Collectively, these policies will help with decreasing time to degree.

A few highlights for the Continuous Registration policy:

- Continuous registration will only apply to master or doctoral degree students.
- A student who does not register for at least one credit for one or more consecutive semesters will be required to complete a reenrollment form, which carries no fee, to register again, unless a program requires a new application.
- Any student who is not registered within two business weeks of the semester starting will receive a reminder notification.

A few highlights for the Leave Policies:

- A *General Leave of Absence*, which can be taken for any reason through a digitized notification process, will enable students to pause enrollment and extend their time to degree deadline by up to one year over the course of their program.
- A *Medical Leave of Absence*, which will require some documentation submitted to a neutral entity, will enable students to pause enrollment and extend their deadline by up to two years over the course of their program.

The policy votes were presented and supported by the Policy Management Group and the Provost and are now pending implementation details and final approval by the Provost. An initial Leave of Absence procedural document was presented to provide information on how the policies could be implemented. Regarding next steps, all three policies were passed by the Graduate Council with the understanding that entry into the Catalog may be held until there was further clarification on the procedures and resources that would be available for successfully implementing these policies.

ITEM 2:

Also, at the Feb. 15, 2023 meeting, the Council began discussion on proposed recommendations regarding revision of **AP.1.2 Academic Load** as they relate to graduate students and programs. Initial revisions were drafted due to identified discrepancies between curriculum development practices and Catalog policy regarding maximum credit registration. Also introduced was a document proposing procedures to use when evaluating graduate programs or pathways that state a need for a modification to the maximum credit registration limit. Again, this is only a first draft to obtain initial feedback. If any recommendations for revising AP.1.2 were approved by Graduate Council the next steps would include submitting the proposal to the Policy Management Group for review and then the Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee Chair that sits on that Group would bring any approved items to the Faculty Senate for the appropriate committee and full Senate approval processes.

Review and Development Process and Timeline for the Continuous Registration and Graduate Student Leaves of Absence Policies



January 2022

The first meeting of the Graduate Council Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence Working Group held. Seven members plus a group facilitator were selected based on nominations by academic units and subsequent appointment by the Chair of the Graduate Council. Group composition included both instructional faculty and administrative-professional faculty. The group met every 2-3 weeks between January 2022 and January 2023.

February 2022

A review of leaves of absence policies for graduate students at 37 institutions outside of Mason, including SCHEV benchmark schools, was completed. The review informed the conversations to create of an initial draft of policies and procedures.

October 2022

A review of a random sample of enrollment records for master's and doctoral students enrolling from Fall 2011 to Fall 2021 (n=19,003) was completed to identify patterns in enrollment breaks. A review of continuous registration policies at the 37 benchmark institutions was completed. The documentation requirements for medical leaves at the benchmark institutions and 21 additional universities in Virginia was also conducted and completed.

November 2022

Presentations of the proposed policies were conducted at the Provost Executive Leadership Team meeting and a meeting of the Graduate Admissions and Graduate Academic Administrators (GAGAA) group. The draft policies were introduced to the Graduate Council.

December 2022

Members of the Graduate Council Working Group collected feedback about the proposed policies in individual and group settings. Additional feedback about the policies was collected during discussion at the Graduate Council meeting from input graduate council voting members received from their respective faculty and staff members.

January 2023

Graduate Council requested to postpone the vote on the proposed policies until additional information pertaining to procedures and implementation of the policies could be gathered.

February 2023

Graduate Council voted on the policies in two motions with the understanding that procedural elements would be in place before the policies were implemented. The policy votes have been presented and supported by the Provost but are pending final approval. In parallel, the policies are being presented to the Policy Management Group (PMG) and Faculty Senate.

In Process

Presentation to the Policy Management Group (PMG) and Faculty Senate. Final approval by Mason Senior Leadership. Finalization of procedures to assess the needed resources for successful implementation within a feasible timeline.

Mason Core Committee

Submitted by Debra Stroiney, February 21, 2023

Committee members:

Bethany Usher, Abena Aidoo, Anne Verhoeven, Courtney Wooten, Samaine Lockwood, Deb Stroiney, Lauren Catteneo, Jaime Clark, Jason Kinser, , Liz White, Nishok Chitvel, Shelley Reid, Shun Ye, Andrea Zach, Matt Cronin,

Ad Hoc members: Shelley Reid, Gina Polychronopoulos,

Mason Core Director: Laura Poms,

Undergrad Curriculum Specialist: Krista Shires

MC Curriculum Coordinator (as of January 30, 2023): Tricia Wilson

January 26, 2023 Mason Core Meeting

The committee approved the following courses for the Mason Core:

ARTS ARTH 303: National Traditions

Capstone BAS 493: BAS Capstone

The committee voted to approve the new catalog language, learning outcomes and administrative details for the revised capstone/synthesis category. The vote also included whether to bring it forward to the faculty senate. The committee approved the items above and will forward it on to the faculty senate for review. The Mason Core director will work with the Office of Student Involvement to solicit names for the new category from a cross section of student groups.

Transfer guidelines for HIST 125 Global History were discussed.

February 16th, 2023 Mason Core Meeting

No proposals submitted for review.

A discussion and vote on proposed changes to the Capstone/Synthesis Mason Core requirement name was held. Six potential names were provided by Mason students. The Committee approved Mason Apex as the name of the revised category.

The Mason Core Leadership Team shared the timeline for Faculty Senate approval for the Capstone and Synthesis category. Members of the Mason Core Committee will be visiting each college to discuss these changes and answer any questions.

Committee members were invited to participate in Just Society and Global Context Stearns Center workshops. The Stearns Center website has the scheduled times for these.

Revisions to the Mason Core charge for the Faculty Senate are under way to reflect the new position of Mason Core Director, and the potential addition of the writing intensive courses to fall under the Mason Core approval process. This will be available at the next meeting for the committee to review.

Faculty Senate Technology Policy Committee

Submitted by Delton Daigle

Met: 02/14/2023, Submitted: 02/23/2023

PRE-MEETING BACKGROUND:

The GMU Faculty Senate Technology Policy Committee has been meeting monthly since we first met on September 6th, 2022. This meeting follows both the 1st Faculty Senate meeting (08/31/2022 where the current FSTPC membership was voted upon), and a beginning of semester pre meeting (08/30/2022) of last year's co-chairs (Delton Daigle and Kevin Dunayer) with ITS leadership (Kevin Borek and Charlie Spann).

FACULTY SENATE TPC COMPOSITION

(2021-2022 co-chair) Delton Daigle (SCHAR)¹ ddaigle@gmu.edu

Socrates Dimitriadis (CEC) - socrates@gmu.edu

(2021-2022 co-chair) Kevin Dunayer (CVPA & CEHD) - kdunayer@gmu.edu

Jessica Matthews (CHSS – 2023) - jmatthe2@gmu.edu

Laurie Miller (INTO Mason)² lmiller@gmu.edu

Lee Solomon (COS) - lsolomo@gmu.edu

[Pam Baker \(CEHD\) – pbaker5@gmu.edu](mailto:pbaker5@gmu.edu)

ATTENDANCE AT LAST FS-TPC MEETING

All of our committee members were present in addition to Charlie Spann (Interim CIO), Joy Taylor (Executive Director – Learning Support Services), Cherie Galantis (Manager – Enterprise Collaboration and Telecom), and Maribeth Luftglas (IT Project Manager – Vonage upgrade).

SALESFORCE

Current install includes UG recruiting and graduate recruiting. The goals for the Salesforce project currently include the creation of a third iteration that will be dedicated to coaching and advising. There is an RFP out looking for vendors to assist integration into our suite.

LMS SEARCH UPDATE

The LMS Committee's have been hard at work and we are pleased to update the Faculty Senate on where we are and where we are going with the LMS Project. For the last several months the Steering Committee has been involved in reaching out to the GMU University Community. Through a series of Faculty Meetings, Town Halls, Focus Groups and Faculty/Staff Surveys the LMS Committees were able to receive feedback from over 12,000 participants. Please see below for a breakdown of stakeholder engagement:

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Faculty Survey** - 932 Responses; 36% Tenured & Tenure-tracked; 28% Term; 27% Adjunct
- **Faculty Focus Groups** - Hosted 9 focus groups; 89 participants

¹ GMU Faculty Senator

² GMU Faculty Senator

- **Student Survey** - 1185 Responses; 41% - Face to Face; 27% - Hybrid; 32% - Online (ways taking courses this semester)
- **5 Weekly Student Polls** - 9,956

The next steps for the LMS Review Project revolve around selection of an LMS vendor. Please see below for the proposed time line:

Proposed Time Line for Spring 2023

- **January:** Advisory Committee finalizes RFP language based on feedback from stakeholders. Selection of the RFP Evaluation Committee.
- **February:** RFP will be finalized and sent to the Business Office for perspective LMS vendors
- **March:** Review of Proposals & Invitation of LMS vendors for Oral Presentations.
- **April:** Oral Presentations/Sandboxes and Feedback Gathering from perspective LMS Vendors
- **May:** Evaluation Committee Deliberations & Final Proposed Selection by the Evaluation Committee

For the latest information on the LMS Review Project please the link to the website below:

<https://lms.gmu.edu/>

VONAGE / PHONE SYSTEMS

- 12 – 18 months to complete and will replace the legacy, end of life cycle telephones and MS Teams based calling. (Internet fax to email is coming thereafter).
- Well over 84% of GMU phones have been inventoried by the various telecom coordinators.
- Telecom coordinators met with project team 02/22/2023 and were advised as to rollout of Vonage phones which will first focus on buildings with large ITS presence (Innovation, Aquia, Fenwick) and then rollout will begin at a rate of about 1 building per week.
- The Vonage install impacts all campuses EXCEPT Mason Korea.
- E911 will be used to track locations of faculty and staff using softphones – NOTE – it was our understanding that the precision of E911 location tracking is limited to the floor of a building that the individual is on.
- There are a number of non-ITS supported locations that are beyond the scope of work of this project.
- A recent survey by ITS found that 72% of classrooms had poor to very poor cellular service.
- There are locations on campus that may not have either wired service or cellular service (CVPA has dressing rooms that have neither).

FS-TPC has significant concerns about the lack of integration of this phone rollout with our larger on campus emergency management concerns.

Our observations include that we are switching to a VOIP system at a time when our existing telecom network has substantial EMGT gaps that remain unaddressed including:

- No phones in Horizon or Peterson Classrooms.
- Substantial cellular dead spots on campus and many more locations with weak signals.

- WiFi coverage that does not blanket the entire campus (including all parking areas, event spaces, etc.) and does not provide uninterrupted network access to all users in all locations (ie: Faculty and Staff attending events at dorm locations).
- No blue-light emergency phone system.

Moreover, the new Vonage system without support from wired lines across campus seems to create new problems:

- Lack of accuracy in locating 911 callers.
- Little opportunity for Campus visitors to access emergency services.
- No opportunity for those without smartphones to contact emergency services.

These issues have been brought to the attention of Ken Walsh (Chief of Staff to the University President), Charlie Spann (Interim CIO), Julie Zobel (AVP – Safety, Emergency, and Enterprise Risk Management), as well as student government and the staff senate. Charlie Spann has advised that ITS will draft a response to our concerns for submission to the next Faculty Senate ITS report.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY ITS BUSINESS

- Windows 10 is nearing EOL which will impact about 1500 systems on campus.
- Our optical network is nearing EOL and there will have to be a new network run in the near future.

**APPENDIX C
CONFLICT OF COMMITMENT POLICY**

PRELIMINARY DRAFT



Policy 4021: Outside Professional Activities and Conflict of Commitment

Categorized:

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Policy Procedure: *Link RAMP?*

Related Law & Policy

[University Policy 4001: Conflict of Interest](#)

[University Policy 2227: Outside Employment](#)

[University Policy 4018: Postdoctoral Research Fellows](#)

[State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act](#)

[CHIPS Act](#)

I. Scope

This policy applies to all faculty governed by the Faculty Handbook, and implements [Faculty Handbook section 2.10.7, Outside Professional Activities and Conflicts of Commitment](#). In addition, section III.B. of this Policy applies to all Investigators on externally sponsored research. This policy shall be read in conjunction with [University Policy 4001: Conflict of Interest](#), which addresses interests and activities regulated by Federal and Commonwealth laws, including those pertaining to externally sponsored research. Outside Activities and commitments of Postdoctoral Fellows, and of Administrative and Professional Faculty, are governed by [University Policy 4018: Postdoctoral Research Fellows](#), and [University Policy 2227: Outside Employment](#), respectively.

II. Policy Statement

A faculty member's primary professional commitment is to their teaching, research, service, and administrative responsibilities at the University. Outside Professional Activities that interfere with a faculty member's, or an Investigator's, professional obligations to the University represent a conflict of commitment. A conflict of commitment is a situation in which an individual accepts or incurs conflicting obligations between or among the University and other entities. Any Outside Professional Activity a faculty member performs, or commits to perform, at or for an entity other than the University has the potential to create a conflict of

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

commitment. The potential for conflict of commitment depends both upon a faculty member's obligations to the University, and upon the nature and extent of the faculty member's obligations to other entities. Conflicts of commitment also can intersect with regulatory requirements pertaining to externally sponsored research. Faculty members must report to their Chair (or Local Unit Administrator) any activity that is likely to create a conflict of commitment as set forth in this policy. This requirement applies regardless of whether any compensation is received for the outside activity or commitment.

For Investigators on sponsored research projects, Outside Activities must be disclosed as required by federal regulations.

III. Definitions

Annual Certification: a report made at least once every twelve months to Mason's online disclosure system of Outside Professional Activities (Faculty) or Outside Activities (Investigator).

Investigator: means an investigator on an externally funded research project, as defined in the Externally Funded Research section of Policy 4001, Conflict of Interests.

Outside Activities: means an activity that an individual performs or commits to perform at or for an entity other than Mason.

Outside Professional Activities: means Outside Activities that are related to one's professional expertise.

IV. Compliance

Disclosure of Outside Activities shall be made via the University's online disclosure system. Failure to comply with this policy will result in discipline consistent with the nature and circumstances of the non-compliance.

A. Outside Professional Activities for Faculty Members

Faculty members must complete an Annual Certification of their Outside Professional Activities. Certification is made using the University's online disclosure system. Deans, in consultation with Local Academic Units (LAUs), will specify College-level Procedures that implement the Prompt Disclosure, Prior Approval, and Annual Certification requirements to fit the norms and expectations of their units. See the College Implementation Section of the Policy Procedures.

1. Prompt Disclosure

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

Outside Professional Activities with significant potential to create a conflict of commitment, such as those that require a significant professional commitment, require additional disclosure beyond what is expected in the annual faculty review process. Engagement in such Outside Professional Activities is limited to one day per week, and disclosure must be provided to the faculty member's Chair (or Local Unit Administrator) within 30 days. Examples of such Outside Professional Activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. Consulting or testifying as an expert or professional witness;
- b. Serving on a board of directors outside of the University
- c. Providing or presenting a workshop for industry (for-profit organizations); and
- d. Providing outside consulting services or referrals or engaging in professional practice as an individual or through a single-member professional corporation or sole proprietorship; However, if such activity constitutes a founding or co-founding role or an executive or managerial position with a company, it requires Prior Approval, see below.

2. Prior Approval

Outside Professional Activities that are especially likely to create conflicts, or that come under specific Federal or Commonwealth requirements, require prior approval from the responsible Dean. Examples of such Outside Professional Activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. Performing sponsored research, or administration of a grant or award, for an educational institution, trust, organization, government agency, foundation, or other entity outside of the University. Such arrangements, when undertaken as a Mason employee on a subcontract or subaward through OSP, are a matter of faculty workload and are not outside professional activities.
- b. Activities, affiliations, or appointments involving foreign entities or countries, including sponsored research, and including activities that would not otherwise need to be disclosed;

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

- c. Consulting or employment outside of the University that exceeds the one-day-per-week limit;
- d. Assuming a founding or a co-founding role or an executive or managerial position of a company or otherwise outside of the University;
- e. Assuming an executive or managerial position outside of the University; or
- f. Outside activities, including activities for professional organizations, in which a faculty member uses, or commits to using, university facilities, equipment, supplies, or computer time.

Reasons a Dean may deny a request for approval include, but are not limited to:

- interferes with the performance of regular employment;
- competes with coursework offered by the University;
- competes with services offered by the employee's unit, such as providing workshops to industry (for-profit organizations)
- competes with research conducted at the University.

A Dean's decision to deny a request for approval may be appealed to the Provost. The Provost's decision regarding any such appeal is final.

When engaging in any Outside Professional Activity as described in the above sections, faculty members should take care to preserve the distinction between projects undertaken through individual initiatives and projects sponsored or officially sanctioned by the University.

B. Externally Sponsored Research

This Section applies to all Investigators. In addition to the Federal disclosure conflict of interest requirements implemented in University Policy 4001: Conflict of Interest, Investigators who apply for any externally sponsored research also must disclose Outside Activities that have a significant potential to create a conflict of commitment. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Teaching at an educational institution outside the University;

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

2. Performing research or administration of a grant or award at an educational institution, trust, organization, government agency, foundation, or other entity outside of the University;
3. Activities, affiliations, or appointments with foreign countries or entities, including externally sponsored research, and including activities, such as those within the course and scope of University employment, that would not otherwise need to be disclosed. Such activities are subject to Federal regulations;
4. Consulting or employment outside of the University;
5. Assuming a founding or a co-founding role or an executive or managerial position of a company or otherwise outside of the University;
6. Consulting or testifying as an expert or professional witness;
7. Providing outside consulting services or referrals or engaging in professional practice as an individual or through a single-member professional corporation or sole proprietorship.
8. Serving on a board of directors outside of the University; and
9. Providing or presenting a workshop for industry (for-profit organizations);

In addition to the above, all Investigators must complete an annual certification that their prior disclosures are accurate and up to date. Certification is made using the University's online disclosure system.

V. Dates

A. Effective Date:

This policy will become effective on September 1, 2023.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

B. Date of Most Recent Review:

N/A.

VI. Timetable for Review

This policy, and any related procedures, shall be reviewed every two years.

VII. Signatures

Approved:

Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Date

Approved:

Provost and Executive Vice President Date

DRAFT

Proposed Revision of Faculty Handbook 2.10.7

2.10.7 Outside ~~Professional Activities Employment and/or Business-Financial~~ Interests

~~A faculty member's primary professional commitment is to their teaching, research, service, and administrative responsibilities at the University. Outside Professional Activities that interfere with a faculty member's professional obligations to the University represent a conflict of commitment. The University encourages faculty members to keep abreast of developments in their disciplines and to gain practical experience in their fields. In many instances, consulting work affords excellent opportunities for faculty to improve themselves professionally and to bring added prestige to them and to the University. The University looks favorably on appropriate consulting work by faculty members insofar as it does not interfere with full, proper, and effective performance of faculty duties and responsibilities.~~

~~A faculty member having a financial interest in a contract with Mason other than their employment contract, or a financial interest related to their sponsored research, represents a conflict of interest.~~

~~Outside employment and paid consulting cannot exceed the equivalent of one day per work week without written authorization from the collegiate Dean. Faculty may be required to document outside employment to insure compliance with these requirements. Although faculty members are state employees, they consult as private individuals, and the University is not responsible for their work outside the University. When consulting, faculty members should take care to preserve the distinction between projects undertaken through individual initiatives and projects sponsored or officially sanctioned by the University. Outside business interests must not violate the Commonwealth's conflict of interests laws at (<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodepopularnames/state-and-local-government-conflict-of-interests-act>) or the University's Conflict of Interests policy 4001.~~

~~University Policy: 4021: Outside Professional Activities and Conflict of Commitment and University Policy 4001: Conflict of Interest govern faculty members' Outside Professional Activities and Financial Interests. Faculty members anticipating engagement in Outside Professional Activities, or with related Financial Interests, must review these policies and, where required, report and receive prior approval in advance. Faculty members may use university facilities, equipment, supplies or computer time in their consulting only after obtaining the approval of the collegiate Dean. Faculty must also secure approval of the collegiate Dean before using university resources to support the activities of professional organizations.~~

CONFLICT OF COMMITMENT POLICY INITIATIVE

Chris DiTeresi, PhD
Director, Research Integrity
Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Elizabeth Woodley, JD
University Ethics Officer and Outside Interests Manager
Office of Institutional Compliance

Presentation to Faculty Senate
1 March 2023

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Why we are here

Mason is getting ready to roll out University Policy 4021: Faculty Outside Activities and Conflict of Commitment

Today we are

- Raising awareness about the upcoming policy
- Previewing the new requirements and responsibilities in the policy
- Informing discussion of the proposed revision to FH 2.10.7



Need for the policy

- **New federal regulations are expanding disclosure and reporting requirements for outside activities**
- **To comply, universities are updating their existing policies and practices around reporting outside activities and monitoring for conflicts of commitment (COC)**
- **At Mason, this means creating a new policy and practices where none existed before**
 - We currently have **no COC policy to update**
 - We **lack necessary infrastructure** for outside activity reporting and monitoring



How COC differs from COI

Conflict of Interest (COI)

- *Currently addressed in University Policy 4001*
- Concerns **Financial Interests** that may compromise objectivity in research or decision-making for the University
- **Centralized review** and oversight by the COI Committee

Conflict of Commitment (COC)

- *Not currently addressed in University Policy*
- Concerns **Outside Activities** that may conflict with obligations to the University
- **Distributed review** and oversight by Chairs/Directors and Deans



Changes needed

To bring Mason into compliance

- Create a **university policy on conflict of commitment**
- Establish
 - **requirements and a process for faculty to report outside activities**
 - a **process and criteria** for reviewing disclosed outside activities for **conflicts of commitment**
 - a **process** for requesting and granting **prior approval** for outside activities with high potential for conflict of commitment
- Replace existing COI Disclosure Management System with a **system that supports outside activity disclosures and COC review and pre-approval workflows**

Policy 4021

RAMP-COI system



COC Change Efforts

Achieving compliance at Mason involves two closely-coupled change efforts

- **COC Policy effort**
 - Began March 2022
 - Led by COC Policy Committee
- **COI System implementation**
 - Began October 2022
 - Led by RAMP COI Project Team



COC Policy Committee

The Conflict of Commitment Policy Committee was formed to lead the policy effort

Committee members include

- Dean's delegates from each of the ten colleges
- faculty representatives (Faculty Senate/Faculty Matters, Faculty Affairs, and at-large)
- *ex officio* administrators (Office of Research, Office of Institutional Compliance)

Members serve as

- agents of change to specify and implement COC policy and processes that fit Mason;
- ambassadors to their units/colleges communicating the need for disclosure of outside activities and COC review; and
- advocates to establish a Mason-wide culture of transparency.



COC Policy Committee Timeline



Policy 4021 Overview

The COCP Committee considered and prioritized

- Compliance needs
- Integrity of shared governance
- Low administrative burden for faculty disclosers and dean/LAU head approvers/reviewers

The overall strategy is to

(a) establish university-wide processes, and operationally-defined categories and requirements that afford everyone the benefits of the RAMP-COI system

while at the same time

(b) supporting and facilitating, wherever possible, local variation and college-by-college decision-making.



Policy 4021 builds on existing FH 2.10.7

FH 2.10.7 (before proposed revision)	4021
1 day/week limit on paid consulting	1 day/week limit on activities for which prompt disclosure is required
Faculty may be required to document outside employment	Faculty must promptly disclose certain types of outside activities, and must certify annually (as they do for financial interests under 4001)
Dean's approval is required before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeding the 1 day/week limit • Using university resources for consulting • Using university resources to support activities of professional organizations 	Dean's approval is required as previously, and also before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing sponsored research (not through Mason) • Accepting an affiliation or appointment involving a foreign entity or country • Founding or co-founding a company or other outside entity • Assuming an executive or managerial position outside of the University



Policy 4021 and Governance

- Decision-making (COC review and prior approvals) will be done by deans and LAU heads, with an option to appeal decisions to the Provost
- Colleges and schools will specify local procedures for implementing the required disclosure, review, and approval processes
- The colleges have some flexibility to articulate the standards in the policy to fit their local circumstances, in accordance with the best practices of their disciplines
- Institutional Compliance and ORIA play supporting roles, providing guidance and fostering transparency



Takeaways

New federal regulations necessitate instituting a Conflict of Commitment policy

Policy 4021, and the proposed revision to FH 2.10.7, are the result of a collaborative effort to create a policy and processes that fit Mason

Mason is committed to making this transition as painless as possible

- **We are implementing a new disclosure system- RAMP COI**
 - Supports integrated disclosure of interests and activities
 - Automated workflows to streamline approval requests and review for conflicts
- **We are scaffolding distributed review at the college and LAU levels**
 - Local review allows for differences between units
 - Training for all faculty and reviewers



QUESTIONS?

We value your input!
Please contact us at
rampcoi@gmu.edu



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THANK YOU!



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Outside professional activities

- The **University encourages faculty to engage in Outside Professional Activities** that contribute to the growth of knowledge or advance the mission of the University.
- Outside Professional Activities afford faculty opportunities to
 - **collaborate and share their expertise with communities** beyond the university
 - **develop professional growth opportunities** for faculty and trainees
 - **enhance their expertise and teaching** in their chosen discipline
- A faculty member's primary professional commitment is to their teaching, research, service, and administrative responsibilities at the University



COC policy gap

Policy 2227: Outside Employment

- requires supervisor approval for any outside employment
- **does not apply to faculty governed by the Faculty Handbook**

FH 2.10.7 Outside Consulting and/or Business Interests

- establishes a 1 day/week limit on paid consulting
- requires Dean's approval to
 - exceed the 1 day limit
 - use university resources in consulting or to support activities of professional organizations
- **has no reporting requirement**
- **has no process for disclosure and review**
- **scope (paid consulting) is too narrow to satisfy new regulations**




**APPENDIX D
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ramadan 2023

Evening of March 22nd
- Evening of April 21st

What do Muslims do during Ramadan?



Fasting
For self-restraint and God consciousness No food or drink (not even water) from sunrise to sunset

Spirituality and Worship
Increased prayer, acts of worship, reflection, contemplation, and recitation of Qur'an

Charity and Community
Increased acts of charity (zakat), feeding others, communal iftars (breaking of the fast)

Key Terms



Ramadan - 9th month of Muslim year, commemorates revelation of the Qur'an

Suhoor, Sehri - pre-dawn meal


Iftar - meal to break fast

Salah - prayer

Laylatul Qadr -Night of power (overnight prayer)

Eid-Al-Fitr - holiday that marks end of Ramadan (April 21)

A Day in the Life of a Student



4:00am-dawn - Suhoor:
pre dawn meal

4:30-5:30am - Fajr:
morning prayer


8am-10pm - Daily Routine:
classes, work, prayer, etc.

7:30-8:00pm - Maghrib and Iftar:
Dusk prayer time and meal to break fast

10pm-12am - Taraweeh:
congregational prayers reciting entire Qur'an during Ramadan

HOW TO SUPPORT GMU MUSLIM STUDENTS THIS RAMADAN


Prayer Times



Many students are more observant during Ramadan.

Allow students to leave class to pray or break fast (10-20 minutes). Be mindful of programming events that conflict with prayer times or to break fast.

Academics



Accommodations such as moving exam times and/or allowing more time for students to eat for Iftar, pray, or celebrate the Eid holiday (April 20 - April 23, allowing for travel)

Recognition



Recognize the changes students are making to their schedules and eating habits.


Acknowledge their practice by wishing them a happy Ramadan and Eid.

Check in on students and offer support.

Questions?

Contact Austin A. Dera, Assistant Director of Graduate Student Life
aderay@gmu.edu

Well Wishes



"Ramadan Mubarak!"
"Ramadan Kareem!"
"Happy Ramadan!"



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY Graduate Student Life

This flyer was adapted from the Islamic Center at NYU and the UC Riverside Middle Eastern Student Center

March 1, 2023
LIST OF ATTENDEES

116 Total Listed Attendees (41 Senators and 75 Visitors)
5 Additional Visitors attended who chose not to be listed

41 Senators present: Alan Abramson, Karen Akerlof, Jatin Ambegaonkar, Dominique Banville, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Virginia Blair, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Jamie Clark, Richard Craig, Tim Curby, Delton Daigle, Doug Eyman, Daniel Garrison, Charlotte Gill, Victoria Grady, Liling Huang, Kerri LaCharite, Lisa Lister, Tamara Maddox, Alexandra Masterson, Laurie Miller, Anna Pollack, Marvin Powell, Keith Renshaw, Greg Robinson, Pierre Rodgers, Esperanza Roman Mendoza, Catherine Sausville, Jessica Scarlata, Zachary Schrag, Gene Shuman, Solon Simmons, Cristiana Stan, Kun Sun, Matt Theeke, Mohan Venigalla, Anne Verhoeven, David Wong, Thomas Wood, Jie Zhang.

11 Senators absent: Michelle Boardman, Meagan Call-Cummings, Edward Gero, Timothy Gibson, Bijan Jabbari, Eugene Kontorovich, Kumar Mehta, Kathleen Roberts, Benjamin Steger, Rebecca Sutter, Theresa Wills.

75 Visitors present: Abena Aidoo Hewton, Eman Alalawi, Ann Ardis, Sharnnia Artis, Jennifer Beck-Wilson, Heidi Blackburn, Lisa Breglia, Emily Brennan-Moran, Amanda Bryan, Tom Butler, Martha Cardoza, Aurora Chang, Jenny Chism, Shannon Davis, Austin A. Deray, Truman Deree, Deb Dickenson, Kimberly Dight, Christopher DiTeresi, Ed Dittmeier, Kelly Dunne, Kim Eby, Kimberly Ford, Kimberly Ford, Cynthia Fuchs, Mark Ginsberg, Ingrid Guerra Lopez, Renate Guilford, Pallavi Gullo, Steven Harris-Scott, Sara Heming, Ginny Hoy, Seth Hudson, Erin Iacangelo Rogers, Kimberly Jackson Davidson, Jason Kinser, Kristen Koehler, Charles Kreitzer, Misty Krell, Vin Lacovara, Mike Laskofski, Tim Leslie, Jordan Locke, Laina Lockett, Stephanie Lowe, Jenna McGwin, Doug McKenna, Jason McKnight, Jennifer Meslener, Ilona Moore, Janette Muir, Bobbi Nelson, Cindy Parker, Sarah Parnell, Gina Polychronopoulos, Laura Poms, Shelley Reid, Marguerite Rippey, Joyce Rose, Pamela Shepherd, Ariela Sofer, Charlie Spann, Frank Strike, Debra Stroiney, Nusrat Sultana, Ahmad Taheri, Girum Urgessa, Bethany Usher, Liz White, Tricia Wilson, Paige Wolf, Elizabeth Woodley, Courtney Wooten, Shun Ye, Andrea K. Zach.