

Dear Prospective CMPSCI TAP Student,

Congratulations on your acceptance to UMass and your invitation to join the Talent Advancement (TAP) program. I know how difficult this time can be as you are bombarded with information and required to make a lot of decisions. I also know how daunting getting ready to go off to college can be.

If you choose to be in TAP, you will have one thing most other freshmen do not: security. You won't have to choose which living area, none of which you know anything about, that you want to live in. And come August, when other freshmen are freaking out waiting to find out where they got placed and who their roommate is, you will know exactly where you will be living.

When I moved in this past September, I didn't know anyone, I was all alone. However, that didn't last long because soon enough I met the other members of CMPSCI TAP, all of whom were in the same situation as I was. I quickly made a great group of friends who also had the same major as me. I wasn't placed in a floor of upperclassman who already had their friends; I was put on a floor with other freshmen. Making the transition to college life with other freshmen is much more comforting than having to do it by yourself.

Not only that, but if and when you need help with your classes, there will always be someone right around the corner to help you with it. In your first semester, you will take a math and computer science course with many of your fellow TAP students. I have found this to be extremely helpful, especially come exam time. Instead of trying to study by myself or attempting to swap notes with a classmate online, I usually meet in the lounge with the other TAP members who are in my class and study together. It's so much easier with other people, and TAP has given me that opportunity.

UMass is a very large and diverse campus, and getting dropped in a new situation isn't an easy thing to handle. But choosing to be part of the Talent Advancement Program will allow you to easily make a large group of friends you share the same interests as you. All of your fellow TAP members will share your interest for computers, but at the same time they are all unique and different. It's comforting to be part of a diverse group of friends who know exactly what you're dealing with in your major. It's nice to not have to try and answer the same question "What exactly do you do with Computer Science?" to all of your friends.

I hope to see you next fall and in the meantime feel free to email me with any questions you may have. Good luck choosing which school is right for you!

Sincerely,
Ashley Prudden
CMPSCI TAP Student Ambassador
aprudden@student.umass.edu