Teaching Associate (TO) Job Description - Spring 2018

RAP General Education Course Instructor

Name of Instructor ____________________________________________
Course Name ____________________________________________

Introduction: The general mission of RAP is to foster student success and satisfaction academically, personally and socially, while increasing retention and student progress toward graduation. RAP courses provide the framework for first-year college students to master course content, cultivate academic skills and develop valuable relationships with instructors and peers.

The primary goals of RAP are to:

- Support first-year students in achieving a smooth transition to college life.
- Ensure first-year students are aware of the multitude of resources and opportunities
- Promote the General Education curriculum goals, with a focus developing an awareness and appreciation for the specific skills (inquiry and analysis, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, etc.) that are found in all Gen Ed courses.
- Introduce students to the skills embedded in the Integrative Experience (IE) requirement – specifically the practice of reflecting (thinking about, talking and/or writing about) and making connections between courses and life experience in order to deepen engagement, understanding and to increase the value of their college education.
- Provide first-year students with structured guidance in the development/advancement of various skills necessary to be successful in college and prepared to be engaged members of a global community upon graduation.

Qualifications:

- Member of the UMass Amherst community
- Experience working with first-year college students or willingness to participate in training
- Mastery of content/consent of department

Specific Instructor Responsibilities:

Curriculum PLUS: (refer to syllabus template documents for examples)

- Follow the departmental curriculum for the course.
- Understand and adhere to campus policies and procedures. Links to campus policies and regulations: Dean of Students Office and Office of the Registrar.
- Integrate intentional dialogue about Gen Ed skills into the class.
- Integrate intentional dialogue about RAP goals into the class.
- Require students to attend a GPS Panel (either Part 1 or Part 2).

Methods:

- Engage students in conversation and/or activities that require them to articulate their expectations for this small course experience offered through RAP.
- Establish a dynamic classroom environment that creates a sense of community and supports first-year students in achieving a smooth transition to the college life (encouragement of asking questions, speaking out in class, utilizing technology opportunities such as Moodle discussion, sharing experiences, small group and/or individual activities and/or projects, etc.) and development of skills to enhance success in college.
- Teach intentionally. Be sure students are aware of and understand the why behind what you ask them to do.
- Provide written feedback to students regarding their academic progress on a regular basis
- Encourage students to be thoughtful and reflective in their learning. Require analysis and revision of completed work.
- Encourage students to seek academic assistance during your scheduled office hours as well as through other support venues across campus (Learning Resource Center, department, Peer Mentor, etc.).
- Encourage students to develop connections/relationship with their academic advisors or advising office.

Connections & RAP activities:

- Be responsive to all materials disseminated from the RAP office by specified deadlines. (may include academic announcements, surveys, etc.).
- Attend two required meetings – see page 2
### RAP meetings/collaboration

| What: | Meet with Kathy (kathyw@umass.edu) before TO contract is submitted to Graduate Assistantship Office for processing  
To understand expectations of a RAP instructor and confirm that it’s a good fit  
  - NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP mission, goals and structure and expectations  
  - RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience  
  - ALL: Discuss the “Guide” to Student Success and ways to incorporate the concepts into class and to steer students to the various resources listed | When | Where |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| Why: | Late fall  
Goodell | Mid-February and Early April | Goodell |

### RAP specific expectations

| What: | Submit course description for distribution.  
Updated course descriptions provide timely information for students and will help ensure that courses fill to capacity. | When | Where |
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<td>Why:</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>To Kathy</td>
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| What: | Submit syllabus for review and feedback.  
  - Ensure that all elements on the Syllabus Checklist are included, including Gen Ed designation  
  - Ensure that information and expectations are well articulated and easily understandable by first-year students | When | Where |
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| What: | Pick up RAP “Guide” to Student Success to be distributed no later than the beginning of the second week of class.  
Ensure that students receive the resource information in a timely manner. | When | Where |
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<td>By end of first week of semester</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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| What: | Facilitate student completion of mid-semester RAP survey during class time week #6 of the semester  
Collect feedback for instructors with ample time remaining in the semester to make changes if needed. | When | Where |
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<td>Week #6</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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| What: | Have students complete SRTIs on the last day of class.  
Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis.  
Note: SRTIs will be shared with RAP. | When | Where |
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<td>By specified deadline</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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| What: | Complete end of semester instructor RAP survey.  
Ensure that the RAP office gets meaningful information that could lead to programmatic changes for subsequent semesters. | When | Where |
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