Teaching Assistant (TA) Job Description- Fall 2018

RAP Seminar Instructor

**Introduction:** RAP provides the framework for first-year college students to master class content, cultivate academic skills and develop valuable relationships with instructors and peers.

The general **mission** of RAP is to foster student success and satisfaction academically, personally and socially, while increasing retention and student progress toward graduation.

The primary **goals** of RAP are to:

- Support students in achieving a **smooth transition** to college life.
- Ensure first-year students are aware of the multitude of **resources and opportunities** that are available
- Promote the **General Education** curriculum goals, with a focus on 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 classes.
- Introduce students to the skills embedded in the **Integrative Experience (IE) requirement** – specifically the practice of thinking about, talking about and making connections between classes and life experience in order to deepen engagement, understanding and ultimately 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 their college experience and be 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
- Knowledge of the structure and breadth of support for first-year students on campus

**Teaching Responsibilities:**

**Curriculum:**

- Engage students in activities that explore the seminar topic.
- Incorporate information from the **RAP Student Resource Guide** (provided) into the seminar.
- **Require** students to complete:
  - At least one reflection activity verbally and/or in writing that articulates their expectations for the RAP Seminar experience
- **Promote** the **Common Read** initiative:
  1. Require all students to attend the keynote address (Monday, September 24th time TBD) **AND**
  2. Engage students in discussion and reflection of the Common Read book in your class **OR**
    - stay tuned – we MAY have a Common Read event outside of class time (we will let you know ASAP.)

**Methods:**

- Establish a dynamic classroom environment that:
  - Utilizes local newspapers, websites, field trips on and off campus, guest speakers, small group and/or individual activities and/or group projects to explore the seminar topic.
  - Encourages students to make academic, social, and extra-curricular connections across the university and the surrounding community.
  - Affirm student identity throughout the semester; employ age/course appropriate activities that provide opportunities for students to become better acquainted with their classmates with a goal of building a stronger class community. Detailed explanation and suggestions will be provided.
  - Supports first-year students in achieving a smooth transition to the college life:
    - Encouragement of speaking up in class, sharing experiences and asking questions
    - Utilizing technology opportunities such as Moodle discussion
    - Encourage students to seek assistance with any concerns by utilizing office hours as well as through other support venues across campus

**Additional Responsibilities:** See next page

K. Weilerstein 5/5/2018
### Meeting/Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What:</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Meet with Kathy ([kathyw@acad.umass.edu](mailto:kathyw@acad.umass.edu)) or Maureen (porter@acad.umass.edu) before TA contract is submitted for processing. To understand expectations of a RAP instructor and confirm that it's a good fit.  
- NEW SEMINAR INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP mission, goals and structure and introduction  
- RETURNING SEMINAR INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience  
- Discuss the Student Resource Folder and ways to guide students to access the various resources presented. | Prior to the end of spring semester | Goodell |
| Meet 2x with Kathy and/or RAP staff and small group of instructors in a Faculty Learning Community- week #4 and week #10 of the semester  
- Share information with other instructors regarding course content, classroom environment, successful teaching strategies and/or feedback regarding RAP Student Resource Folders  
- Specific topics TBD. | Late Sept AND mid-October | Goodell |

### RAP SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What:</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Submit seminar description for website  
Detailed seminar descriptions provide timely information for students and will help ensure that courses fill to capacity. | Spring | email to Kathy |
| Submit syllabus for review (template provided)  
- Ensure balance between topic and success/transition information  
- Ensure that information and expectations are easily understandable by first-year students. | By mid-August | In person or online |
| Respond to summer email template  
1. Let us know what you would like us to add to the basic email draft we send you and  
2. Confirm that we may enter your email address into the Constant Contact system so the student sees the email as from you.  
To connect early with students and help them get excited about the fall | June | Email to Kathy |
| Pick up RAP Student Resource Folder to be distributed no later than the beginning of the second week of class  
Ensure students receive information in a timely manner. | By end of first week of semester | Goodell |
| Reply promptly to all emails from RAP office, Kathy and/or Maureen  
Ensure that RAP programming needs stays on track | On going | Online |
| Facilitate student completion of mid-semester RAP survey during week #6.  
Collect feedback for instructors with ample time remaining in the semester to make changes if needed. | Week #6 | Classroom |
| Have students complete SRTIs on the last day of class whether electronic or on paper  
Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis | By specified deadline | Classroom |
| Complete end of semester instructor RAP survey  
Ensure that the RAP office gets meaningful information that could lead to programmatic changes for subsequent semesters | By specified deadline | Online |