Teaching Associate (TO) Job Description - Fall 2018
RAP General Education Course Instructor

Name of Instructor_____________________________________________________________________

Course Name _______________________________    RAP _______________________________

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 on developing an awareness and appreciation for the specific skills (inquiry and analysis, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, etc.) that are found in 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 and RAP goals into the class.
• Promote the Common Read initiative:
  1. Require all students to attend the keynote address (Monday, September 24th time TBD) AND stay tuned – we MAY have a Common Read event outside of class time (we will let you know ASAP.)
  2. Engage students in discussion and reflection of the Common Read book in your class OR
• Require your students to attend a GPS Panel. Details in Student Resource Folder.
• Personalize an email that will be sent to your students during the summer –RAP office will create a template that will be sent to you in June and you must reply with your edits. We will send the email from Constant Contact.

Methods:

• Establish a dynamic classroom environment that supports first-year students in achieving a smooth transition to the college life (create a sense of community between the students, encourage students to ask questions and speak out in class, utilize technology opportunities such as Moodle discussion, sharing experiences, small group and/or individual activities and/or projects, etc.).
• Teach intentionally. Be sure students are aware of and understand the why behind what you ask them to do.
• Encourage students to be thoughtful and reflective in their learning. Require analysis and revision of completed work.
• Affirm student individual and group identity throughout the semester; employ 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.
• Provide written feedback to students regarding their academic progress on a regular basis. Be mindful of the last day for students to withdraw from a course.
• 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/relationships with their academic advisors or advising office.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAP meetings/collaboration</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong> Meet with Kathy (<a href="mailto:kathyw@umass.edu">kathyw@umass.edu</a>) or Maureen (<a href="mailto:porter@acad.umass.edu">porter@acad.umass.edu</a>) 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. <strong>NEW INSTRUCTORS:</strong> learn about RAP mission, goals and structure and introduction. <strong>RETURNING INSTRUCTORS:</strong> discuss and reflect on prior experience. <strong>ALL:</strong> Get a copy of the Common Read book and discuss the RAP Student Resource Folder and ways to incorporate the concepts into class and to steer students to the various resources listed.</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Attend a lunch meeting with staff from the residence halls (choose one day from 2 options) Meet the folks working with your students in the residence hall and learn about ways that we can collaborate with each other.</td>
<td>Early Sept.</td>
<td>Berkshire Dining Hall</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Meet 2x with Kathy and/or RAP staff and small group of instructors in a Faculty Learning Community Meeting - 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 the RAP Student Resource Folder. Specific topics as initiated by instructors.</td>
<td>Late Sept. AND mid-October</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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<th>RAP specific expectations</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong> Submit course description for website. Updated course descriptions provide timely information for to choose RAP</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Email to Kathy</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> 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.</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Email to Kathy</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Submit syllabus for review and feedback. Ensure that syllabus references the RAP and Gen Ed goals included in the Student Resource Folder (and that you have plans to incorporate them into the context of the content of the course curriculum). Ensure that all elements on the Syllabus Checklist are included. Ensure that information and expectations are well articulated and easily understandable by first-year students.</td>
<td>By mid-August</td>
<td>In person or online</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Pick up RAP Student Resource Folders 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.</td>
<td>By end of first week of semester</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Facilitate student completion of mid-semester RAP survey during class time week #6 Collect feedback for instructors with ample time remaining in the semester to make changes if needed.</td>
<td>Week #6</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Have students complete SRTIs on the last day of class whether electronic or on paper Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis.</td>
<td>Last day of class</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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<td><strong>What:</strong> Complete end of semester instructor RAP survey (if given). Ensure that the RAP office gets meaningful information that could lead to programmatic changes for subsequent semesters.</td>
<td>By specified deadline</td>
<td>Online</td>
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