Teaching Associate (TO) Job Description- Fall 2016

RAP General Education Course Instructor

Name of Instructor_________________________________________________________

Course Name ____________________________________ RAP _______________________

**Introduction:** RAP courses provide the framework for first-year college students to master course content, cultivate academic skills, become engaged members of the UMass community 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 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, 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 their college experience and be prepared to be engaged members of a global community.

**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.
- Include a required “Movie Night”. Identify the week in the semester for viewing (arranged with RA).
- Include required attendance at GPS events in syllabus. Details will be provided soon.
- Ensure that students are engaging in the activities promoted through RAP.

**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 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.).
- Provide written feedback to students regarding their academic progress on a regular basis (especially prior to the ‘W’ date of the semester).
- 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 required meetings** – see page 2
- **Connect with the Residence Director (RD) to enhance** collaboration. Be supportive of residence hall programming – be aware of and encourage students’ participation. Assign activities such as movie viewing, study groups and field trips that can be planned in collaboration with RFYE staff.

K. Weilerstein 3/29/2016
### RAP meetings/collaboration

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<td>Meet with Kathy (<a href="mailto:kathyw@umass.edu">kathyw@umass.edu</a>) before TO contract is submitted to Graduate Assistantship Office for processing</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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| 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 introduction  
  - RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience  
  - Discuss the RAP **Student Resource Guide** and ways to steer students to access the various resources presented |   |   |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| 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 Guides**  
  - Specific topics TBD | Late Sept AND mid- October | Goodell |

### RAP specific expectations

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| Submit course description for website.  
  Updated course descriptions provide timely information for to choose RAP | April | Email to Kathy |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| Submit syllabus for review and feedback.  
  - Ensure that RAP and Gen Ed goals are incorporated into the syllabus. Be sure to adhere to guidelines on syllabus checklist and template documents.  
  - Ensure that information and expectations are well articulated and easily understandable by first-year students. | By mid-August | In person or online |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| Pick up RAP **Student Resource Guide** 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. | By end of first week of semester | Goodell |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| Reply promptly to all emails from RAP office, Kathy and/or Maureen.  
  Ensure that RAP programming needs stay on track. | On going | Online |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| 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. | Week #6 | Classroom |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| Have students complete **SRTIs** on the last day of class.  
  Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis. | Last day of class | Classroom |
| Why: | What: | Where |
| 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 |