Teaching Associate (TO) Job Description - Fall 2015

RAP General Education Course Instructor

Course Name _____________________    RAP ___________________    Instructor ___________________

Introduction: 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 general mission of RAP is to foster student success and satisfaction academically, personally and socially, while increasing retention and student progress towards 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 at UMass.
• Promote the General Education (Gen Ed) curriculum goals, with a focus on developing an awareness and appreciation for the specific skills (inquiry and analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, etc.) that are in Gen Ed courses.
• Introduce students to the skills embedded in the Integrative Experience (IE) requirement – specifically the practice of reflecting on, talking about and making connections between courses 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
• Mastery of content/consent of department

Specific Instructor Responsibilities:

Curriculum:

• Follow the departmental curriculum for the course.
• Prepare a syllabus that integrates UMass General Education and RAP goals.
• Integrate intentional dialogue about Gen Ed (including IE) skills into the class.

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 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 meaningful 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.).

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 (minimum of three); one with the Director of Academic Programs for First-Year Students prior to signing contract and a minimum of two additional required meetings during the semester. (detailed description on reverse side)
• Be educated about the opportunities available to instructors through the collaboration with Residential Learning Communities (RLC) programs. Activities such as movie viewing, study groups and field trips can be planned and supported by contacting RLC@sacl.umass.edu
• Encourage students to develop connections/relationships with their academic advisors or advising office.

Kathy Weilerstein 4.15.15
### RAP meetings/collaboration

| What: | Meet with Kathy (kathyw@acad.umass.edu) before TO contract is submitted to Grad Assistantship Office for processing  
To understand expectations of a RAP instructor and confirm that it's a good fit  
- NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP and its mission, goals and structure  
- RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience and review any RAP structure changes  
- Look over the Student Resource Booklet and discuss ways to guide students to access the various resources presented | When: Prior to the end of spring semester  
Where: 612 Goodell |
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| What: Connect with RAP staff for assistance if needed with:  
- Syllabus  
- Classroom management/teaching strategies | Why:  
- NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP and its mission, goals and structure  
- RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience and review any RAP structure changes  
- Look over the Student Resource Booklet and discuss ways to guide students to access the various resources presented | When: Spring/summer  
Where: On campus or via email (if necessary) |
| What: Attend RAP/RFYE luncheon in September  
- Meet other RAP Gen Ed instructors  
- Meet residential staff to learn about opportunities for support and collaboration | Why:  
- NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP and its mission, goals and structure  
- RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience and review any RAP structure changes  
- Look over the Student Resource Booklet and discuss ways to guide students to access the various resources presented | When: September  
Where: Campus Center |
| What: Meet with Kathy/RAP staff/small group of instructors in a Faculty Learning Community  
- Discuss ways to enhance students' academic success and RAP experience satisfaction.  
- Improve teaching by sharing information with other instructors regarding course content, classroom environment, successful teaching strategies and utilization of the Student Resource Booklet  
- Discuss ideas and/or activities i.e. field trips, guest speakers, projects | Why:  
- NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP and its mission, goals and structure  
- RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience and review any RAP structure changes  
- Look over the Student Resource Booklet and discuss ways to guide students to access the various resources presented | When: 3rd and 4th weeks in September  
Where: Goodell |
| What: Meet with Kathy/RAP staff/small group of instructors in a Faculty Learning Community  
- Review mid-semester survey results and discuss/develop an action plan if needed  
- *Extra meeting if mid-semester survey results indicate concerns  
- Share information with other instructors regarding classroom environment, successful teaching strategies and utilization of the Student Resource Booklet | Why:  
- NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP and its mission, goals and structure  
- RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience and review any RAP structure changes  
- Look over the Student Resource Booklet and discuss ways to guide students to access the various resources presented | When: Oct/November  
Where: Goodell |

### RAP specific expectations

| What: Submit course description and photo for website.  
Updated course descriptions provide timely information for students and will help ensure that courses fill to capacity | When: Spring  
Where: Send to Kathy |
|---|---|---|
| What: Submit syllabus for review and feedback  
- Ensure that RAP and Gen Ed goals are incorporated into the syllabus  
- Ensure that information and expectations are easily understandable by first-year students | When: By mid-August  
Where: In person or online |
| What: Pick up classroom key, temporary RAP parking permit and complete other paperwork  
Make certain all details are attended to before the beginning of the semester | When: By beginning of semester  
Where: Hampden 200 |
| What: Pick up Student Resource Booklets to be distributed  
Ensure that students receive the resource information in a timely manner | When: By end of first week of semester  
Where: Goodell or Hampden 200 |
| What: Reply promptly to all emails from RAP office, Kathy and/or Maureen  
Ensure that RAP programming needs/ survey completion stays on track | When: On going  
Where: Online |
| What: Ensure students’ completion of mid-semester RAP survey – allow class time if necessary  
To get valuable student feedback. Results will be analyzed and shared with instructors with ample time remaining in the semester to make changes if needed | When: By specified deadline  
Where: Classroom |
| What: Have students complete SRTIs  
Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis | When: By specified deadline  
Where: Classroom |
| What: Complete end of semester RAP instructor survey  
Ensure that the RAP office gets meaningful information that could lead to programmatic changes for subsequent semesters | When: By specified deadline  
Where: Online |