Residential Academic Programs (RAP) in U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges 2016 Edition

University of Massachusetts Amherst: by Chris Gearon  Excerpts from page 46 & 47
The largest public University in New England gets overshadowed in this college-rich commonwealth. But UMass-Amherst has been coming on strong. In the last decade, the university’s six-year graduation rate has jumped from 68 percent to a historic high of 75 percent along with the caliber of the student body, while first-year retention rates have jumped from 83 percent to 89 percent in the last 8 years. ......

The school’s improving retention record can be traced in part to a strengthened focus on academic support and advising and on faculty-student and peer interactions in first-year seminars and living-learning programs.

The 51-year-old Residential Academic Programs plan, or RAP, offers a package deal: an opportunity to live on a floor or in a wing with a group of students sharing an interest plus classes with the group, often taught in the dorm.

Forty percent of freshmen choose to join one of the 50 RAP’s offered, which range in theme from social justice and activism to politics today

“Our intro to psychology class was just 30 students in the RAP rather than 300,” recalls Joanna Imbert, a 2015 grad from Everett, MA. “I’m best friends with my first-year roommates.”

Visit the RAP website
rap.umass.edu

Small Communities, Big Opportunities