Teaching Associate (TO) Job Description- Spring 2019
RAP General Education Course Instructor

Name of Instructor ____________________________________________________________

Course Name ___________________________________________________________________

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.
• Require students to attend a GPS event – details to be provided.

Methods:

• Engage students in conversation and/or activities that require them to articulate their expectations for this small course experience offered through RAP. (Purpose: To ensure students realize the unique nature of the structure of RAP courses AND so that instructors can be responsive to student expectations).
• 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 – key components in their required Integrative Experience course (taken junior or senior year).
• Provide written feedback to students regarding their academic progress on a regular basis. Require analysis and revision of completed work to ensure students recognize the value of assignments.
• 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.

Connections and RAP Activities:

• Be responsive to all materials disseminated from the RAP office by specified deadlines. (may include academic announcements, surveys, etc.).
• Attend two required meetings – see page 2
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### RAP General Education Course Instructor

#### RAP meetings/collaboration

| What: | Meet with Kathy (kathyw@umass.edu) or Maureen (porter@acad.umass.edu) 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.  
  - NEW INSTRUCTORS: learn about RAP mission, goals and structure and introduction.  
  - RETURNING INSTRUCTORS: discuss and reflect on prior experience. | When | Where |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why:</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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<tr>
<th>What:</th>
<th>Attend a lunch meeting with all RAP instructors during week #1 or week #2.</th>
<th>When</th>
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<tr>
<td>Why:</td>
<td>Semester kick-off</td>
<td>Late January or Early February</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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| What: | 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.  
  - Specific topics as initiated by instructors. | When | Where |
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<td>Mid-February AND Early April</td>
<td>Goodell</td>
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#### RAP specific expectations

| What: | Submit course description for website.  
  Updated course descriptions provide timely information for to choose RAP. | When | Where |
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<td>December</td>
<td>Email to Kathy</td>
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| What: | Submit syllabus for review and feedback.  
  - Ensure that all elements on the Syllabus Checklist are included. Note: Specific language for RAP goals is on the Syllabus Reference Guide.  
  - Ensure that information and expectations are well articulated and easily understandable by first-year students. | When | Where |
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| What: | 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. | When | Where |
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<td>Week #6</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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| What: | Have students complete SRTIs on the last day of class whether electronic or on paper.  
  Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis. | When | Where |
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<tr>
<td>Why:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Last day of class</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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| What: | 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. | When | Where |
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<tr>
<td>Why:</td>
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<td>Online</td>
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