RAP Program Goals:

♦ 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 curriculum goals, with a focus on developing an awareness and appreciation for the specific skills that are found in all Gen Ed courses.
♦ Introduce students to the practice of thinking about, 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: the skills embedded in the Integrative Experience (IE) requirement (details below).
♦ Provide first-year students with structured guidance in the development/advancement of a variety of skills necessary to be successful in their college experience and prepared to be engaged members of a global community upon graduation.

The goal of the Gen Ed program is to prepare you for learning now and in the future, in the world of work, in pursuit of personal fulfillment and in responsible civic engagement.

The method of instruction together with the curriculum in the Gen Ed courses will guide you in ways that will help you:

Δ Maximize your college experiences and future career.
Δ Embrace a lifetime of learning.
Δ Engage in community activities to become an informed citizen.
Δ Understand our diverse and rapidly changing world.

In your Gen Ed courses, you will be introduced to, taught and required to master one or more of these skills:

Δ inquiry and analysis  Δ problem solving  Δ critical and creative thinking  Δ written and oral communication
Δ quantitative reasoning  Δ technology literacy  Δ ethical deliberation  Δ teamwork and collaboration

FIND MEANING AND LEARN MORE IN EVERY CLASS

One of the goals of the Integrative Experience requirement (a Gen Ed course you will take through your major department in your junior or senior year) is to help you identify value in every course you take.

When you think about, talk about and make connections between what you are learning in different courses you will deepen your engagement with the material and concepts and ultimately increase the depth of your understanding. This will lead to greater satisfaction in your educational experience and very likely enhance your likelihood of achieving high grades!

Guiding questions for this process:
1. What do I already know about the topic?
2. What am I hoping to learn about this topic?
3. How does this information relate to something I previously learned or am currently learning in another course?
4. How does the information I am learning connect to my interests and/or goals?

Start Smart: Making Use of your Course Syllabi

The first semester in college is critical. You want to be sure that you have enrolled in a course schedule that includes a manageable workload and that you are confident you can achieve a strong GPA. Follow these steps at the beginning of the semester to confirm that you can be successful in all of your courses:

Step 1: Gather all of your syllabi and look carefully at what will be expected.

Step 2: Plot your semester information in your Academic Planner (on paper or electronic).

Step 3: If you are concerned about any of your courses or your overall course load, speak with an advisor ASAP.
Your advisor/advising center is listed under “Primary Advisor” in the Student Center section of Spire.

Any changes MUST be made on Spire before the end of the Add/Drop period on Monday, September 19, 2016.
**Communicating with Civility & Respect**

Excerpts from Dean of Students Office (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/print/130)

Being civil and respectful when communicating with other people in our community is not just the right thing to do, it is **University Policy**.

**Civility in the Classroom**

“The University of Massachusetts Amherst strives to create an environment of academic freedom that fosters the personal and intellectual development of all community members. ... “A necessary condition for these pursuits is an acceptance of the spirit of inquiry and a respect for diverse ideas and viewpoints. For true academic freedom to exist, this acceptance and respect must exist in both the overall campus environment and in the classroom.”

“When students and faculty come together, the expectation is always that mutual respect and civility will prevail to ensure that every student has the optimum opportunity to learn and that each faculty member has the best opportunity to teach.”

“Differences of opinions or concerns related to the class should be welcomed if presented in a mutually respectful manner. The challenging of viewpoints is part of the academic experience, should occur in a manner that opens up dialogue and does not threaten any member of the learning community.” (full text in your Academic Planner for Student Success).

**Civility in Feedback/Evaluations**

As a university student, you will be asked to provide feedback to your instructors regarding your classroom experience. This opportunity comes with responsibility. As you complete evaluations be sure to:

* Take your time  
* Think carefully about your responses  
* Use the comment section to elaborate on your reasons for particular answers.

Keep in mind that the **manner** in which you communicate will have a direct correlation to the value given to your words. **Communicating civilly and respectfully makes your message more effective.**

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**Success Through Action & Interaction**

Developing relationships with professors / instructors / TAs and advisors will increase your success in college. Meeting with an instructor will help your motivation and engagement and often lead to a higher grade. And, when instructors know you, they can write reference letters!

**Here are a few possibilities of WHAT you could discuss with your instructors / TAs:**

♦ You were interested in a lecture topic or idea and want to know more.
♦ There is an upcoming assignment you do not quite understand.
♦ You want to review your errors on an exam and get pointers in order to earn a higher grade on your next exam.
♦ You would like some guidance regarding future courses, or major or career goals.

Each instructor will have contact information on their syllabus. Attend office hours listed or email for an appointment or to ask a question.

**It is also critical to meet with your Academic Advisor.** The advising staff from your major/college can help ensure that you are on track making progress toward your degree. Your advisor/advising center is listed under “Primary Advisor” in the Student Center section of Spire.

Remember! **It is up to you to seek out these connections!**

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**E-Mail Etiquette**

When sending email to instructors, advisors and ALL adults on campus be sure to:

♦ Use your UMSS email address. Don’t run the risk of a message sent from your personal email account going to a spam folder.
♦ **ALWAYS** put your name and course name in the subject line.
♦ Begin all emails with a **salutation** – ‘Dear Professor Walker’. Messages that begin with ‘hey’ do not make a positive impression.
♦ Make the body of your email short, concise and grammatically correct.
♦ Avoid using ‘text speak’ that might be more appropriate when text messaging (BTW – by the way).
♦ Include your full name and your SPIRE ID NUMBER as a part of your closing. ‘Sincerely’, ‘Best’, ‘Regards’, even ‘Thanks’ all work well.
♦ **DO NOT** "reply all" unless specifically requested to do so.
♦ Be patient. Don’t expect a professor to respond instantaneously. Many professors state expected email response time in their syllabus.

Don’t forget to **proofread** your email before sending it! Autocorrect can be dangerous!

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K. Weilerstein August 2016
Be PROACTIVE:
Attend to both your academic and personal needs.

Create a schedule and be flexible at the same time!
- **Study time**: Determine the time you will need to study and get your work done.
- **What time of day are you most productive?**
- **Plan time**: Plan 3 hours of study time for each hour of class.
- **Play time**: Be sure to balance the pressures that life may bring with activities that are just for fun.
- **Daily life**: Plan time for meals, laundry, and errands.

Identify a study space & organize your study materials.
- **Locate an area where you can concentrate.** There are many to choose from!
- **Consider a space in the library, a study room in your residence hall or in an academic building.**
- **Gather the supplies and resources you will need.**
- **Place your materials in an organized area or develop a system to make them easy to carry.**

**Formula for Success: THE 3 Rs: REVIEW, REFLECT & REVISE**
1. **REVIEW**: Look back over your work (grades and instructor comments), your study methods, your life balance.
2. **REFLECT**: Think about what areas are going well and what could use improvement.
3. **REVISE**: Make necessary changes.

**CONSIDER:**
- **Your Work**: Ask others to review your work and give you feedback so that you can make improvements before turning it in. Be sure to read and consider the comments that instructors write on your papers/tests.
- **Your Study Methods**: Are you productive with your study time? Is the place where you study working well? Are you studying at the time of day when your concentration is strong? Are you using study strategies that are resulting in good grades?
- **Your Life Balance**: Are you getting all your work done on time? Are you eating well? Exercising? Do you take time for relaxing? Are you taking care of personal business, communicating with family and friends?

**NEED HELP?**
There are so many people who can help! Choose from: friends, RA, Peer Mentor, instructor, parent, relative, clergy, tutor, support center. Some resources are noted below—many more in your UMass Student Planner.

**IMPORTANT RESOURCES**

**Learning Resource Center (LRC) 10th floor Dubois Library**
- Free, Drop in services Sundays -Thursdays 1:00 -10:00 PM
  - 1:1 tutoring for over 200 courses
  - Supplemental Instruction: large group review
  - Excel support: small group learning
- OURS: Connecting students to research opportunities on & off campus, by appointment
  - Opens September 12th  SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS
  - www.umass.edu/lrc  413-545-5334

**The Writing Center**
in the Learning Commons, lower level of the DuBois Library
- Free 1:1 assistance
  - Face to face and on line options
  - Assistance at any stage of writing
  - Appointments begin on the hour and last 45 minutes
- Register on line to make appointments
  - Opens September 12th  SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

**Center for Counseling & Psychological Health (CCPH)**
- Mondays—Fridays  9-5 call 413-545-2337
- After 5PM, weekends and holidays 413-577-5000
- Life threatening emergency—call 911
  - www.umass.edu/counseling

**Center for Multicultural Advancement & Student Success**
- **CMASS**: 101 Wilder Hall
  - Peer mentoring, social connections, help navigating offices: Financial Aid, Bursars, Registrar and more.
  - www.umass.edu/multiculturalaffairs

**Disability Services**
- 161 Whitmore Building
  - 413-545-0892
  - www.umass.edu/disability

**Financial Aid Services**
- 243 Whitmore Building
  - 413-545-0892
  - www.umass.edu/umfa

K. Weilerstein August 2016
EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS: GPS Student Panels

There are some fantastic ways to enhance your college experience ……. It’s not too early to start planning!

GPS Student Panels are designed to get first-year students excited about a variety of opportunities that will enhance their college experience and enable them to develop the skills, tools and knowledge to take charge of their college education and lead them to become an active and engaged member of the global community upon graduation.

Come hear upper class students talking about their experiences participating in the opportunities listed below—and more!

Five College Interchange:
You can enroll in courses at Amherst, Hampshire, Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges. You may participate if you are:
♦ A second semester freshman - or beyond – AND
♦ In good academic standing AND
♦ Registered for at least one 3-credit UMass course
For more info:
Go online at umass.edu/fivecollegeinterchange
Visit the office in 613 Goodell or call 413-545-5352.

Domestic Exchange:
UMass Amherst students can choose to spend:
♦ One semester OR A full academic year at a participating state school through the National Student Exchange (NSE) program.
Check it out!
♦ Attend an information session held on Thursdays and Fridays at 2:30 PM in the Domestic Exchange Office located in 613 Goodell or Call 413-545-5351
♦ More information at umass.edu/domesticexchange/

Student Engagement Opportunities:
There are numerous ways for students to get involved in the UMass community. Get connected to volunteer and service opportunities that fit your interests.
♦ Student Government
♦ Student Run Businesses
♦ Registered Student Organizations (RSO)
♦ Service Learning opportunities / Alternative Spring Break
Civic Engagement & Service Learning: umass.edu/cesl
UMass Alliance for Community Transformation: www.uactumass.org
Campus Pulse: umass.edu/campuspulse

Study Abroad: International Programs Office
♦ Students in all majors can study abroad
♦ Over 400 program options
♦ More than 50 countries
♦ Explore the many options- semester, year, or even summer
So many choices! Before you begin:
Meet with a Study Abroad Peer Advisor at
The Education Abroad Advising Center,
455 Hills South, M-F 10AM-4PM OR
Go online at umass.edu/ipo/ for more information

Office of Undergraduate Research and Studies (OURS):
OURS is a resource for all undergraduates in all majors and at all stages of experience. OURS helps students find research and scholarly opportunities on and off campus throughout the years. Students are also supported in preparing for and navigating the application process.
Check it out online at umass.edu/ours

Internships:
♦ Gain valuable work experience on or off campus:
♦ Learn new skills
♦ Work alongside professionals in the field
♦ Explore your career goals
♦ Part-time and full-time options
Attend an information session in Career Services (508 Goodell).
umass.edu/careers/career-services-calendar

Fall Semester 2016 GPS Student Panel Dates:
All panels will be from 7:00-8:30PM.

CHOOSE ONE

Tuesday, November 1st
Monday, November 7th
Location: Herter Auditorium 227

Wednesday, November 9th
Tuesday, November 15th
Thursday, November 17th
Location: Herter Auditorium 231

K. Weilerstein August 2016