Teaching Associate (TO) Job Description Fall 2020
RAP General Education Course Instructor

Name of Instructor_____

Course Name _____ **RAP** _____

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 toward graduation.

PRIMARY RAP GOALS
Related to **student experience**:
- Support first-year students in achieving a **smooth transition** to college life.
- Promote the concept that attending to **personal wellbeing** is directly related to student success. Connect students to resources that enhance healthy living strategies that are essential for academic and personal success.
- Ensure first-year students are aware of the **multitude of** academic and co-curricular **opportunities** available on campus and in the community.
- Provide first-year students with structured guidance in the development/advancement of various **skills** necessary to be successful in college and be prepared to be **engaged members of a global community upon graduation**.

Related to **instructor experience**:
- RAP will provide **support** to instructors in their work; from syllabus development, exploring type of assignments, rigor/student workload, classroom dynamics, and interactions with and any concerns regarding students.
- RAP will provide **opportunities for instructors to learn and grow** through group meeting with other instructors (from various departments), mid-semester evaluation tool, as well as individual meetings with RAP staff.

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Qualifications:
- Experience working with first-year college students or willingness to participate in training
- Understanding of and agreement to comply with the *RAP Specific Responsibilities* (see below)
- Consent of department/Mastery of Content

Teaching Responsibilities: (refer to syllabus template documents for examples)
General Teaching responsibilities:
- Follow the departmental curriculum requirements 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.

RAP Specific Responsibilities
- Begin the semester by explaining what it means to be a "RAP" course. Tell them what is unique about it and engage students in conversation and/or activities that have them **articulate their expectations** to you.
- Establish a **dynamic classroom** environment that creates a sense of community and supports first-year students in achieving a smooth transition to the college life (encouragement of asking questions, speaking out in class, reflecting on their learning, utilizing technology opportunities such as Moodle discussion, sharing experiences, small group and/or individual activities and/or projects, etc.) and development of skills to enhance success in college.
- **Teach intentionally.** Clearly articulate to your students the WHY of what you are doing – Ensure that they are aware of the purpose and intent of each activity, exercise and assignment that you ask them to do.
- **Provide written feedback** to students regarding their academic progress on a regular basis.
- Encourage students to be thoughtful and reflective in their learning: **require analysis and revision of returned work** (demonstrating understanding of any comments or feedback you gave them).
- Integrate intentional dialogue about the **Gen Ed program** into the class. This is an opportunity to have students understand the value of the Gen Ed program for both the skills embedded as well as the benefit of exposure to breadth of information. See UMass Gen Ed for further details.
- Require your students to attend a **RAP GPS Event**. Details to be provided.
- **Encourage students to seek academic assistance** during your scheduled office hours as well as through other support venues across campus (Learning Resource Center, major department, Peer Mentor, etc.).
- **Encourage students to develop connections**/relationship with their academic advisors or advising office.

K. Weilerstein   4/17/2020

RAP meetings/collaboration	When	Where
What: Meet with Kathy (kathyw@umass.edu) or Maureen (porter@acad.umass.edu) before TO contract is submitted to Graduate Assistantship Office for processing **Why**: 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. Learn about any changes for the upcoming year • ALL: Discuss common resources that students will be receiving.	Spring	Goodell
What: Attend a lunch meeting with staff from the residence halls (choose one day from 2 options during **week #1** or **week #2**) **Why:** Community Development: Meet the folks working with your students in the residence hall and learn about ways that we can collaborate with each other	Early Sept.	Goodell 416
What: Meet 2x with Kathy and/or RAP staff and small group of instructors in a Faculty Learning Community Meeting **Why:** • Ensure instructors are learning new tools and skills – growing as teachers. • Ensure students are gaining an exceptional experience **How:** • In a facilitated environment, share information with other instructors regarding course content, classroom environment, successful teaching strategies, assessment techniques as well as instructor generated topics.	Week #4 and Week #10	Goodell

RAP specific expectations	When	Where
What: Submit course description for website. **Why:** Updated course descriptions provide students accurate information for to choosing a RAP	March/April	Email to RAP
What: A welcome email. 1. The RAP office will provide a template that you can personalize 2. Send your edits and confirm that we have your correct UMass email so the students can reply to you if they have questions/comments 3. The email will be sent from the RAP office once enrollment is complete **Why:** To connect early with students and help them get excited about the fall.	June/July	Email to RAP
What: Submit syllabus for review and feedback. **Why:** • Ensure that all elements on the Syllabus Checklist are included, including Gen Ed designation. • Ensure that information and expectations are well articulated and easily understandable by first-year students.	By mid-August	Email to RAP
What: Facilitate student completion of *RAP Mid-semester Feedback Survey* **during class time week #6** **Why:** Collect feedback for instructors with ample time remaining in the semester to make changes if needed.	Week #6	Classroom
What: Have students complete **SRTIs** on the last day of class **during class time**. **Why:** Get critical feedback for instructors and program analysis.	Last day of class	Classroom
What: Complete end of semester **instructor** RAP survey (if given). **Why:** Ensure that the RAP office gets meaningful information that could lead to programmatic changes for subsequent semesters.	By specified deadline	Online