Greetings from Undergraduate Student Success. We are now soliciting proposals for Fall 2022 Faculty First-Year Seminars (FFYS) from instructors. As a High-Impact Practice (HIP), First-Year Seminars have proven to successfully increase academic engagement and student success in the first year.

First-Year Seminars (FYS) are an ideal way to welcome and support the newest members of our community and to make sure that we are consistent in reaching all of them with critical information and connections. FYS offer a structure to engage students intellectually and interpersonally, assisting them in their transition to college, while also providing useful information on resources and opportunities. All FYs offer engaging learning opportunities in a small class setting. This structure allows for the development of relationships between the students as well as with the instructor, increasing a student’s sense of belonging, another important contributor to persistence and success. Utilizing required Core Practices (formerly referred to as Common Goals/Content), our university FYS structure ensures that students will be introduced to information that builds a foundation of supports, leading to a smooth transition to college.

See below for a brief explanation of the structure, goals and specific requirements for our FFYS program – please note that there are some minor changes from past years.

**FYS Program Overview:**
At UMass Amherst, the First-Year Seminar (FYS) program falls into two basic categories:

- **FYSs offered within each School/College:** These are designed primarily for students within a particular school/college. New for Fall 2022, a portion of the seats in these seminars will be open to students outside of the sponsoring school/college.
- **Faculty First-Year Seminar** (FFYS): All sections/seats are open to any first-year student across campus. The FFYS is an opportunity for faculty to teach something about which they are passionate, being able to choose a topic of their liking.

All FYS are intended to provide a low-stakes way for students to engage a subject of interest or explore something new in a small class. The primary focus of first-year seminars is to connect with the students in an interactive manner and to support these students in their transition to college. The Faculty Senate supports the following features of all FYS:

- Meet once weekly in a 50-minute face-to-face session;
- Enroll a maximum of 19 students per seminar;
- Enhance students’ engagement by informing them about opportunities and resources available to them;
- Foster students’ connections with others on campus by helping students understand the transition from high school to college life and the core values and community standards defining what it means to be a member of the UMass Amherst community; and,
- Increase students’ ability to become self-guided learners through instruction in the time management, study skills, and planning ability needed for high academic achievement.
Core Practices: All FYs are required to incorporate these three Core Practices which have been streamlined from the goals agreed upon with Faculty Senate, (formerly referred to as Common Goals/Content):
1. Pay attention to the hidden curriculum of college. What leads to college success?
2. Make interpersonal connections
3. Practice the skills of life balance and self-care

The method in which these concepts will be addressed will vary depending upon the seminar topic and structure. Some faculty will choose to imbed these Core Practices within their seminar topic curriculum. Other faculty will choose to block out time on designated days to address the Core Practices separate from the main topic of the seminar. All will achieve the intended outcome, supporting student success and transition to college.

Faculty Support: The Student Success unit will:
1. Sponsor a First-Year Seminars page on their website (in development). This will highlight the FYs program and provide more information for instructors (resources, etc.), students, and academic advisors. It will explain the rationale for the seminars and get students excited to come to UMass.
2. Provide resources to instructors on covering the Core Practices in their seminar:
   a. A student facing guide that addresses the transition to college and the Core Practices. Hard copies will be available for instructors who request them.
   b. A link to on-line Student Success resources that aid students as they learn to plan their time and acclimate to college
3. Be available to any faculty member to aid in developing a syllabus, determining ways to address the Core Practices, and to answer any questions before and during the semester.

Application Details and Process:
FYs are taught outside a faculty member’s regular teaching duties, i.e., as an overload. Faculty teaching a FYs with enrollment of at least 8 students will receive a stipend of $2334. The faculty can select to receive this stipend as research funds, which may be used on any legitimate research or educational-related expense, or as one-time additional compensation subject to appropriate taxation and other deductions.

Please consider submitting a proposal to teach a FYs for Fall 2022, the 14th year of this successful program.

The application is posted on the Student Success website. Instructor materials will be available soon. Applications will be accepted anytime through March 24, 2022.