

# First Year Seminar Student Resource Guide

## Fall 2020

### Welcome to UMass Amherst

**Congratulations**, your college experience has officially begun! We all know that COVID-19 has caused Fall 2020 to look different than you have hoped for your first semester of college. But be assured, this university is filled with individuals committed to creating a wonderful experience for you - be it virtual or face-to-face. You will find our core values and community standards woven into classes, programs, and activities and a wealth of services and opportunities dedicated to support the personal and intellectual growth of all students.

The First-Year Seminar (FYS) program provides the foundation for your path to success. Although each seminar will be unique in structure, style, and content, they will all address common goals focused on strategies proven to enhance success in college. We encourage all students to embrace these three basic concepts. They will empower you to get the most out of your college experience and be well prepared for life beyond college:

#### Own Your Education

Embrace self-guided learning strategies: focus on time management and study skills, actively engage in class, utilize support services, and you are likely to experience high academic achievement.

#### Cultivate Connections

Connecting with people is the foundation for your relationship with the UMass Amherst community. Explore student groups, attend virtual events, talk with your instructors and advisors.

#### Expand Your Horizons

Take advantage of the wide array of academic and co-curricular opportunities. Explore the numerous options to get involved in research, travel, service learning, etc.

#### Student Success Planner

In addition to exploring these themes in your FYS, you will find a wealth of related activities and resources in the Student Success Planner. This comprehensive online document contains contact information for numerous offices and services across campus including academic advising, career services, health and wellbeing, identity-based resources, tips for academic success, monthly resource pages...And so much more!

##### Wellbeing

Pages 19-20

##### Financial

Pages 25-26

##### Academic

Pages 9-11 & 29-31

##### Activities

Pages 23-24 & 27-28

### STRIVE TO THRIVE

Be Kind to Yourself and Others

| Embrace Flexibility

| Trust You Are Not in This Alone

# Tips for Success

## 1 Conquer the Technology

Be sure you have the hardware, software and internet service to be successful. Check your camera and audio. Confirm you have the correct links for virtual lectures. Regularly check your courses to see updates and important information.

## 2 Stay on Top of Your Work

Develop a system to keep track of your assignments. Put due dates in a planner, paper or electronic. Create timelines for yourself with mini-deadlines. Record progress as you go, note when assignments are completed and grades earned.

## 3 Prioritize Connections

Although challenging during the pandemic, it is critical to maintain old and develop new relationships. Check-in with your classmates, instructors and advisors as often as possible. Utilize email, discussion posts, chat systems. Stay in touch with family and friends from home.

## 4 Establish a Routine

Develop a study schedule. Share your plan with those around you to develop expectations and set boundaries. Consider having a virtual study buddy or forming a virtual study group to connect with when doing work.

## 5 Maintain a Balance

When so much of your life is confined to so few spaces it is important to be mindful about not getting in a rut. Create a schedule around your class meetings for when you will do things other than studying. Make plans to go outside, engage in exercise or projects, etc.

## 6 Create Your "Classroom"

Designate an area for "going to class". Be sure you have space for your computer, a pad of paper to take notes, a place to put your water bottle and have proper lighting for participating on Zoom.

## 7 Master the VIDEO Lecture

Listen at normal speed. Determine how to ask questions; Chat? Discussion board? Other? Take notes using headings and summaries.

## 8 Attend to Your Wellbeing

Good physical and emotional health are directly correlated to your success. Get enough sleep, eat well, get exercise, stay engaged. Find ways to reward yourself for achieving goals both small and large.

## 9 Avoid Multitasking

Close distracting tabs and apps during class and when listening to a lecture. Plan breaks to check your email and social media.

## Attend to Your Health

### Center for Counseling and Psychological Health

CCPH has a wealth of services and programming for students.

### University Health Services

UHS provides in-person and virtual visits as well as 24-hour health advice by phone.

### Campus Recreation

Check out the variety of virtual activities available for Fall 2020.

## 10 Embrace Remote Learning

Develop routines to increase success in synchronous classes. "Arrive" early – check your technology, connect with classmates and the instructor. Be prepared to be at your desk for the duration. Find ways to 'participate' – ask questions, use the chat etc.

## Get Involved

### Student Engagement & Leadership

Explore the new ways for UMass students to engage with each other across the internet. Check out the variety of exciting and enriching opportunities offered multiple days each week! Invite a classmate to go to an event with you. Tell your classmates about the events you attend.

## More Ways to Stay Connected and Strive for Success

Follow [@SuccessUMass](#) on Instagram – Discover tips on wellbeing, remote learning, diversity.

[Success Toolkit Workshop](#) – Attend virtual workshops on popular topics.

[Trajectory Podcast](#) – Listen to stories from your peers about their struggles, triumphs and more!