UGC Policy Recommendation on Pre-majors

**Policy:** Any department offering an undergraduate major may, with the approval of the Undergraduate Council Chair and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, establish a pre-major. In cases where there are substantive questions about the proposed pre-major, the Undergraduate Council Chair may bring it to the Undergraduate Council for approval. Official approval is confirmed through the Senate curriculum report. A pre-major does not require approval by the UO Board of Trustees or the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

**Definition:** A pre-major is typically a subset of an undergraduate major’s degree requirements meant to prepare interested students for entry into major. Pre-majors are described in the UO Catalog and appear on the student’s transcript and in other official records.

**Rationale:** A pre-major functions principally as an advising tool that helps departments guide interested students into required preparatory coursework and to advise them on any other major requirements. Departments that are able to accomplish the same end by editing the catalog description of their major and/or restructuring the prerequisites to their courses are encouraged to do so rather than establish a formal pre-major.

**Requirements:** Departments must demonstrate that they can adequately assume particular advising responsibilities for students in their pre-majors, recognizing that some may elect not to enter the major or may fail to gain admission to the major. In declaring a pre-major, students are removed from the population of officially undeclared students. Departments should therefore treat pre-majors as “exploring” students for advising purposes. The Undergraduate Chair and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies may wish to consult with departments on their advising capacity and/or refer them to the Undergraduate Council for further discussion before granting approval for a given pre-major.

In addition, departments should demonstrate that pre-major requirements align with the general education goals of the University. Pre-major requirements should not be so extensive or burdensome as to preclude students from experiencing the benefits of the general education curriculum.