

# A Pre-Major for History:

## The What and the Why

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# HISTORY PRE-MAJOR

Students who wish to become History majors must apply for admission after completing the Department's 30-credit pre-major program.

Provides a set of "foundation courses" in 3 areas:

- (1) **Surveys** of Western civ, World history, and U.S. history;
- (2) **General Education** classes that provide a strong background to historical studies;
- (3) **University "competency" courses** (writing/math)

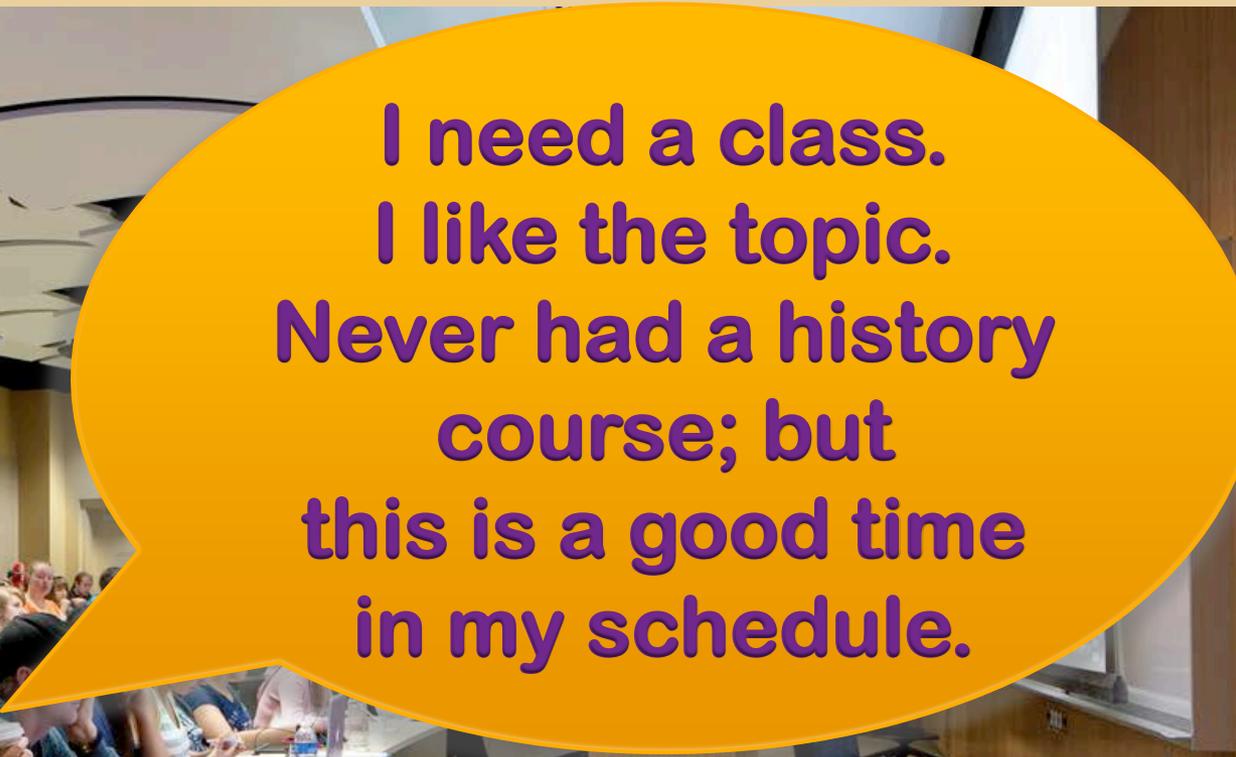
all of which prepare students for upper-division work in the major.

The reasoning  
behind the pre-major

# QUESTION ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS



# QUESTION ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS



**I need a class.  
I like the topic.  
Never had a history  
course; but  
this is a good time  
in my schedule.**



# QUESTION ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

**This is HIST *3750*.  
But you've never taken  
any history surveys?  
Would you sign up for  
*CHEM* 3750 without  
first taking 1000 & 2000  
courses?**



*on the student's mind:*

**the topic**

**the schedule**

**the numbers**

*credit load*

*registration requirements*

*financial aid conditions*

*grade point average*

*on the student's mind:*

the topic  
the schedule  
the numbers

*on the Tuning faculty's mind:*

**the learning**

- not just adequate interest,  
but also adequate preparation
- knowledge & skills students bring to a course
  - ratcheting information & abilities higher
- building expertise & competency--not just credits/grades

*on the student's mind:*

**the topic**  
**the schedule**  
**the numbers**

*on the Tuning faculty's mind:*

**the learning**

**the curriculum**

- think of the class in relation to the larger curriculum
    - think of the history curriculum in relation to other post-secondary requirements
      - the knowledge and “cross-cutting” skills
- all components make to the meaning of the degree

*on the student's mind:*

the topic  
the schedule  
the numbers

*on the Tuning faculty's mind:*

the learning  
the curriculum  
the connections

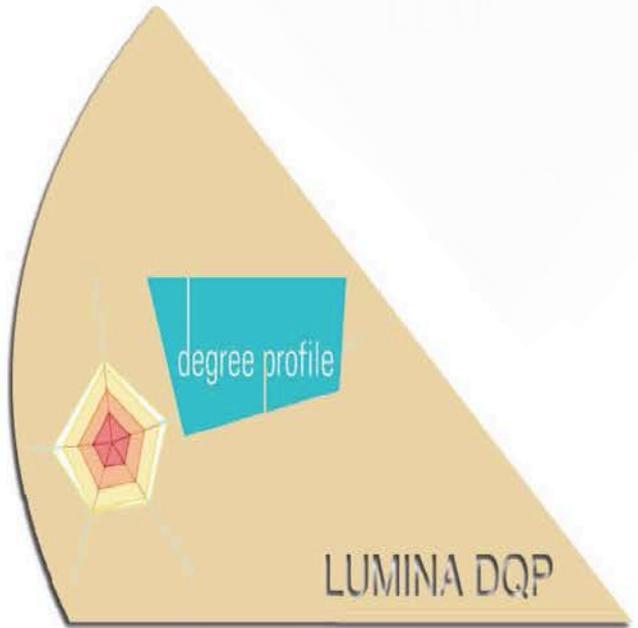
- beyond our department and our campus . . .
- one way of integrating different learning initiatives



LUMINA TUNING **the learning in a major**



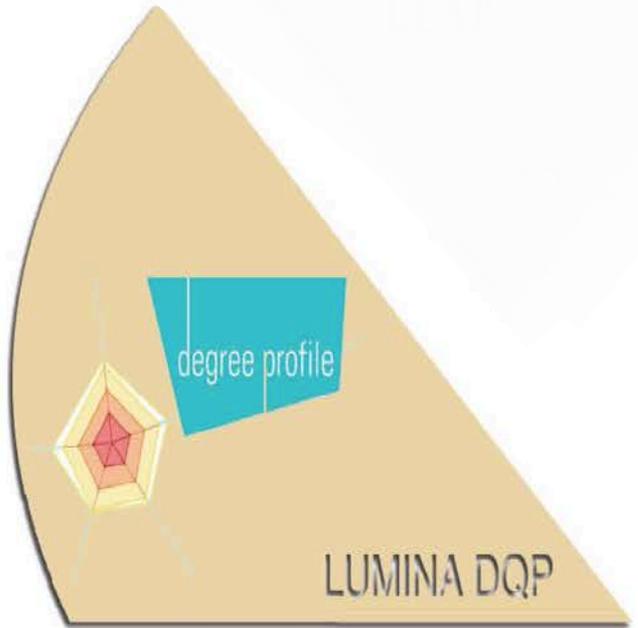
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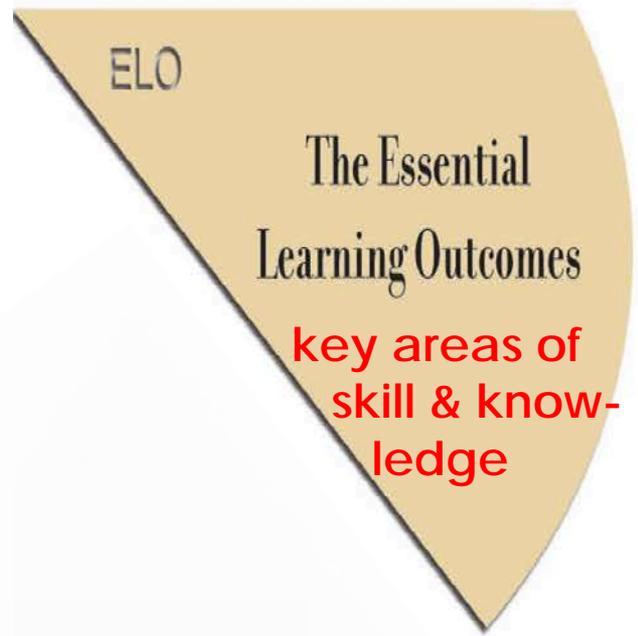
**the learning in a degree**



LUMINA TUNING **the learning in a major**



**the learning in a degree**



ELO

The Essential Learning Outcomes

**key areas of skill & knowledge**

align outcomes,  
practices, policies



LEAP



LEAP



LUMINA TUNING

the learning in a major

ELO

The Essential  
Learning Outcomes

key areas of  
skill & know-  
ledge

degree profile



LUMINA DQP

the learning in a degree

align outcomes,  
practices, policies



LEAP

LEAP



LUMINA TUNING

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LUMINA DQP

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VALUE

demonstrating achievement

align outcomes,  
practices, policies



LEAP

LEAP



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ELO

The Essential  
Learning Outcomes

key areas of  
skill & know-  
ledge

QC



facilitate transfer & mobility

VALUE



demonstrating achievement

LUMINA DQP

degree profile



the learning in a degree

align outcomes,  
practices, policies



LEAP

LEAP



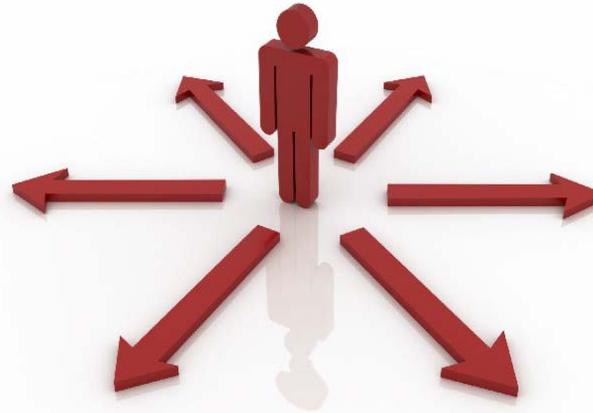
LUMINA TUNING

the learning in a major

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degree profile

LUMINA DQP

QC

Quality Collaboratives

facilitate transfer & mobility

VALUE



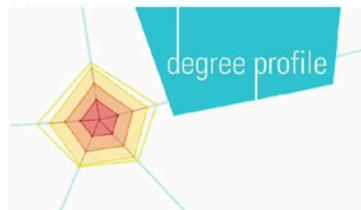
demonstrating achievement

the learning in a degree

# Key Initiatives Pose Answers to Six Related Questions:

## Liberal Education & America's Promise \*\*\*\*\*

### The Essential Learning Outcomes



### Quality Collaboratives

- How can we align educational outcomes, practices, and policies with the demands of our new global century?
- What key areas of skill and knowledge should all students develop in college?
- What specific competencies should be developed by all students at different degree levels (AA, BA, MA)?
- What should students' work in their major aim to achieve—overall and at different degree levels?
- How do we know whether students are achieving competence in the LEAP/DQP learning outcomes? Are they demonstrating achievement of the outcomes through their assigned work?
- What can we do to facilitate transfer and mobility while assuring that students demonstrate achievement at key milestone/capstone moments?

Adapted from presentation by Daniel McInerney, Utah State University, presented at AAC&U 2012 Annual Meeting (Atlanta, GA).

For more information about LEAP and other AAC&U initiatives, see [www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org) and for information about Lumina DQP and Tuning, see [www.luminafoundation.org](http://www.luminafoundation.org).

COMPLETION  
AGENDA

PREPARATION  
AGENDA

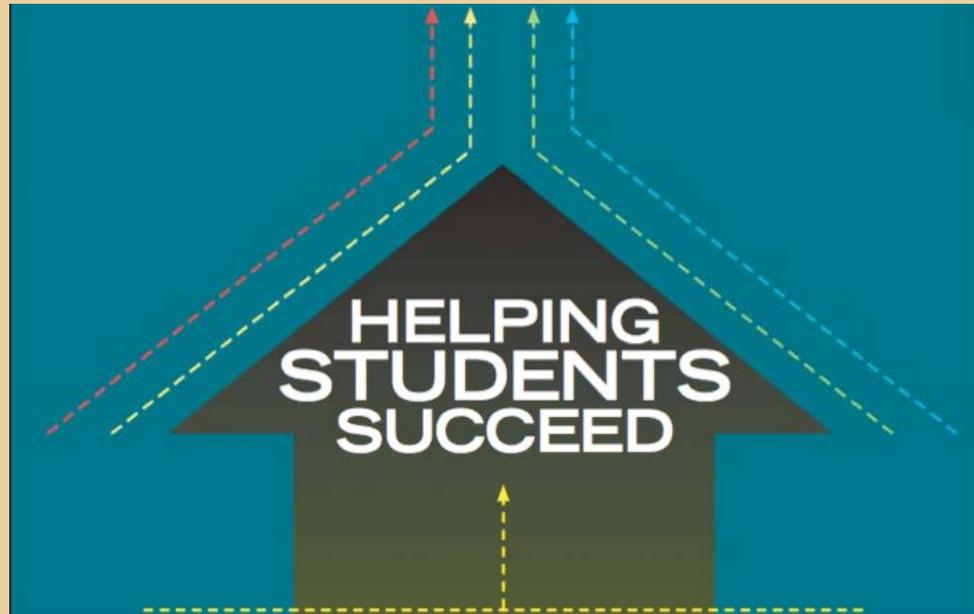


ACCESS  
AGENDA

EQUALITY  
AGENDA

COMPETENCE  
AGENDA

above all



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Gateway Education @CityU

# A Useful Explanation: Describing Gen Ed Goals in Hong Kong



- \* City University is committed to providing students with a quality education that develops their intellectual abilities while providing them with the skills and knowledge base they will need to successfully navigate the complexities of the 21st century.
- \* To lead a fulfilling and successful life against a backdrop of rapidly changing global needs requires a wide range of skills and knowledge. These include the ability to think critically, to reason logically and quantitatively and to communicate effectively. In addition, it is important that everyone has an understanding of sciences that increasingly shape our environment, an awareness of the cultural movements and diversity that have shaped societies and their values, and an appreciation of the enduring arts that express, inspire and continually challenge these values.
- \* GE, in essence, augments and rounds out the specialised training students receive in their majors by enabling them to achieve a breadth of knowledge through exposure to multiple disciplines. GE is the glue that holds disciplines together.
- \* GE is the core of an undergraduate education. It is “general” in that GE provides students with a comprehensive educational experience and prepares them for lifelong learning; it promotes intellectual curiosity and a love of learning.
- \* In other words, GE gives our students an EDGE

# STRUCTURE OF THE PRE-MAJOR

**USU "competency" courses:** complete both ENGL 2010 (Research Writing) and STAT 1040 (Intro to Statistics)

**Gen Ed:** complete 2 of the following

ANTH 1010 (Cultural Anthropology)  
ANTH 1020 (Biological Anthropology)  
ANTH 1030 (World Archaeology)  
ENGL 2200 (Understanding Literature)  
ENVS 2340 (Natural Resources & Society)  
GEOG 1300 (World Regional Geography)  
GEOG 1400 (Human Geography)

PHIL 1000 (Introduction to Philosophy)  
PHIL 1250 (Practical Logic)  
PHIL 2200 (Deductive Logic)  
POLS 1100 (US Government and Politics)  
POLS 2300 (Introduction to Political Theory)  
RELS 1010 (Introduction to Religious Studies)  
SOC 1010 (Introductory Sociology)  
ANTH/ENGL/HIST 2210 (Intro. to Folklore)

*Other courses may be applied upon approval of the History Department*

**History surveys:**

A. Premodern History: complete 1 of the following

HIST 1060 (Introduction to Islamic Civilization)  
HIST 1100 (Western Civ.: Ancient and Medieval)  
HIST 1500 (Cultural and Economic Exchange Pre-19th C World)

B. Modern History: complete 1 of the following

HIST 1110 (Western Civ.: Modern)  
HIST 1510 (The Modern World)

C. American History: complete both

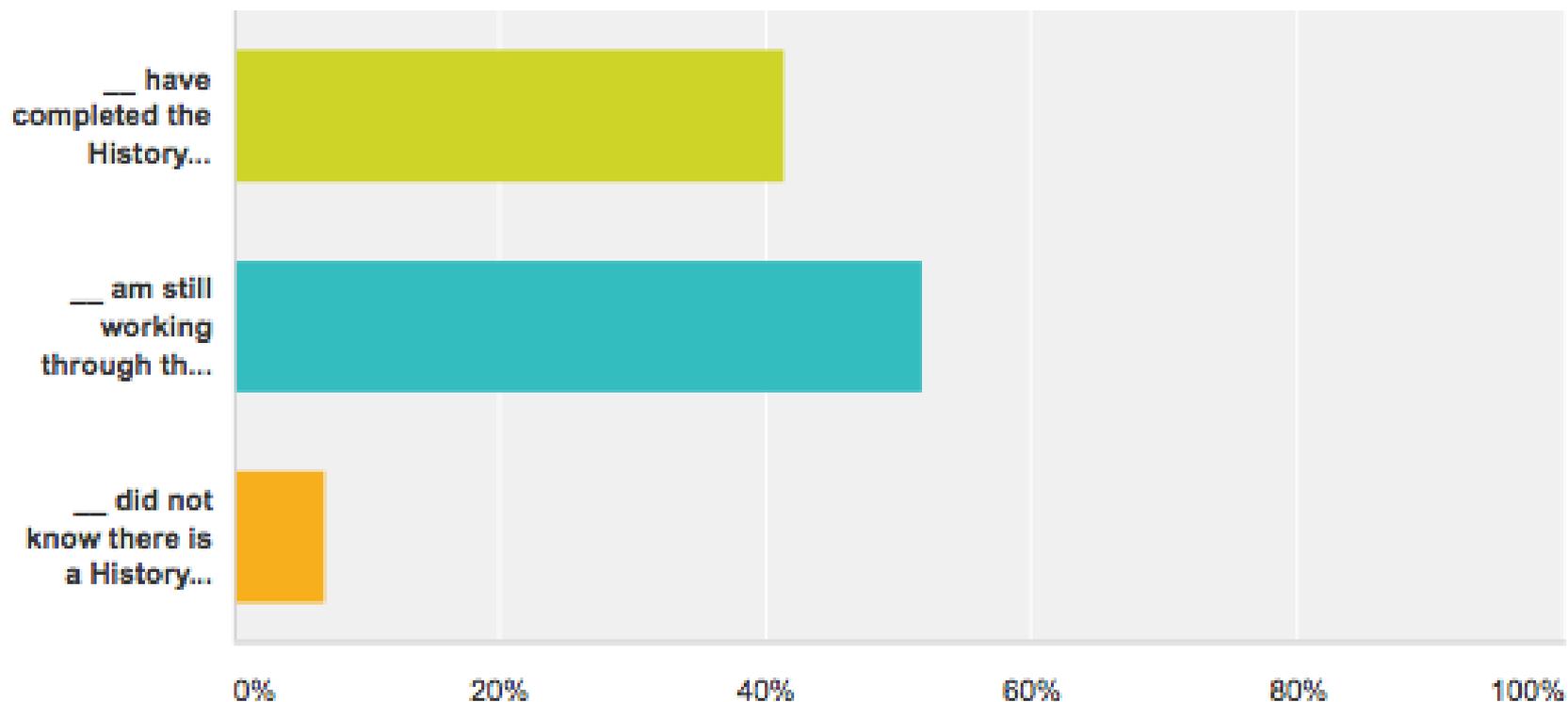
HIST 2700 (United States to 1877 )  
HIST 2710 (United States 1877-Present)

*Students may count more than 12 credits of lower-division coursework in History toward the history major.*

- a major with criteria and expectations
  - not just a default major – or a grab bag of courses slapped together
  - one actually needs certain types of knowledge and competencies
- a structured, sequenced, intentional, Tuned curriculum
  - prepare students to succeed in upper-division courses
    - not simply with a sufficiently high grade, but with the knowledge and skills they'll need to junior- / senior-level work
- integrated with other academic initiatives
  - putting together the pieces of academic reform
    - Tuned learning outcomes
    - DQP
    - LEAP initiative
    - reformed College Gen Ed (Pathways)
    - Complete College
    - VALUE
    - Essential Learning Outcomes
- flexible
  - for transfer students, returning students
  - for course “articulation”
  - for faculty & advisor judgment
- problems: “counting” majors; declaring the major
- student responses

# Survey of History graduates at Utah State University

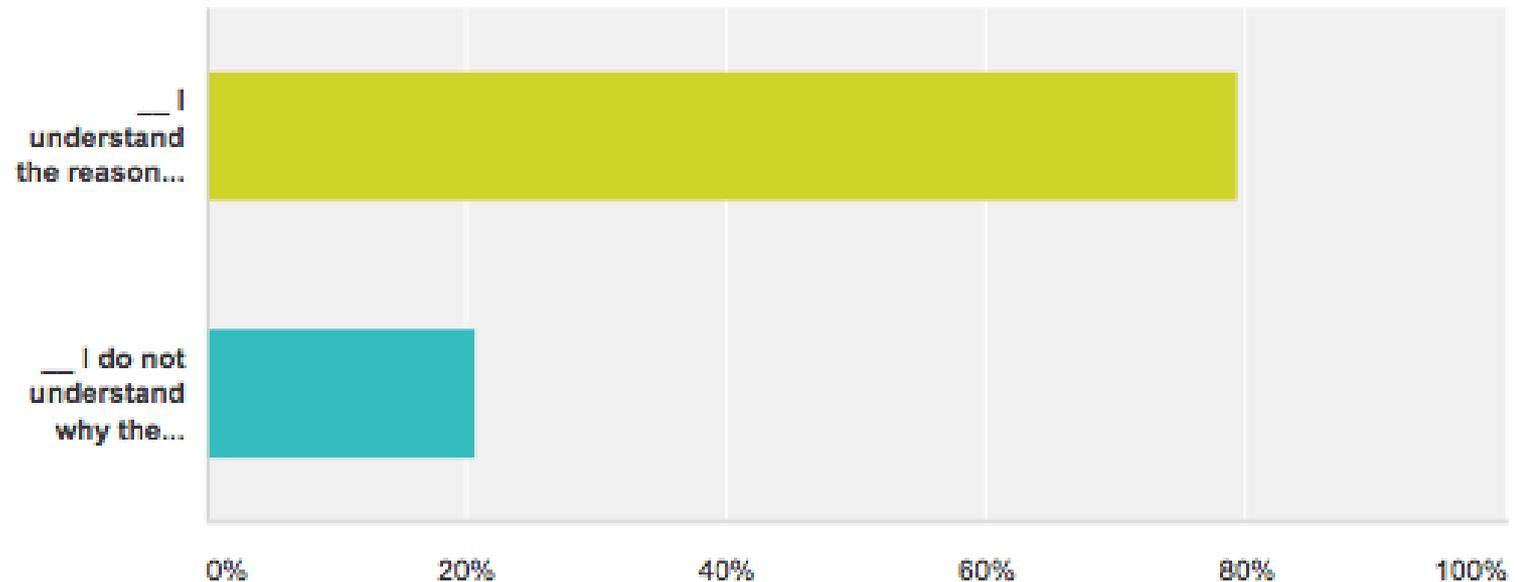
Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
___ have completed the History Department's pre-major	41.38% 24
___ am still working through the courses in the History pre-major	51.72% 30
___ did not know there is a History pre-major	6.90% 4

# Regarding the History Department's pre-major program (requiring students to take foundational survey courses and key Gen Ed classes before registering for upper-division history courses)

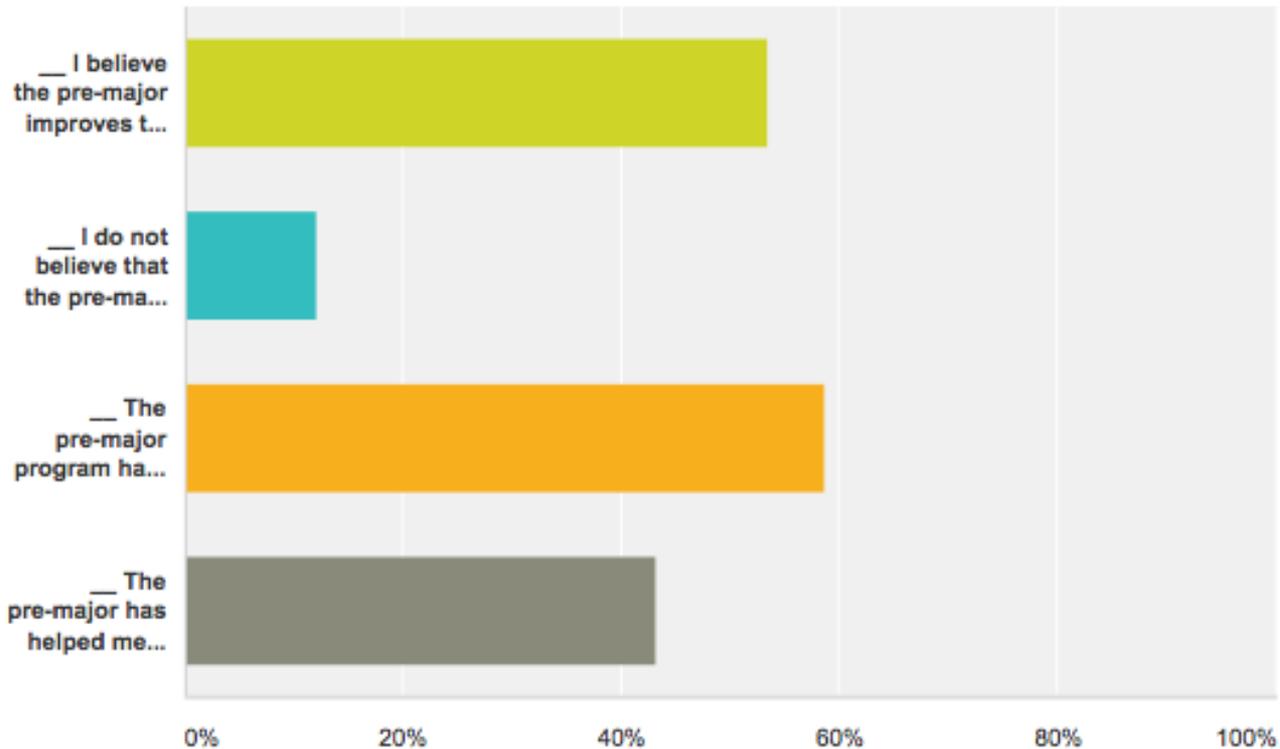
Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
<input type="checkbox"/> I understand the reasons why the department has implemented this structured, sequenced series of courses	79.31% 46
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not understand why the department has implemented this requirement	20.69% 12

# Having progressed through the history program [check all that apply]

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
<input type="checkbox"/> I believe the pre-major improves the history major.	53.45% 31
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not believe that the pre-major serves its intended purposes.	12.07% 7
<input type="checkbox"/> The pre-major program has lengthened the number of semesters it will take me to graduate.	58.62% 34
<input type="checkbox"/> The pre-major has helped me better prepare for work in upper level courses.	43.10% 25

# PRE-MAJOR ADDRESSES SEVERAL ISSUES:

## STUDENT CONCERNS

- succeeding in a course: students who are interested but poorly prepared
- offer a grounding for success

## ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

- enrollment crunch: provide sufficient range of upper-division choices to declared majors

## DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS

- connecting academic initiatives  
(esp. *substantive* connection to Gen Ed)
- intentional curriculum: accumulation of skills/competencies – not just credits and grades, or check-list of requirements
- sequenced/ratcheted skill levels

# WHAT HAS COME OUT OF THE PRE-MAJOR

- \* the pre-major's played a role in a new and broader conception of Gen Ed in the College and the University;
- \* the pre-major model responds to the initial concerns that moved our department into the Tuning project back in 2009 (faculty concerned about students who did not have the knowledge, skills, and thinking necessary for success in the research capstone);
- \* broader discussion of majors and Gen Ed issues in the State of Utah's Tuning project;
- \* the nature of history and Gen Ed discussions within the AHA Tuning project; and
- \* the ways in which a pre-major speaks to larger issues of sequential and intentional curricula.