UNDERGRADUATE NEW PROGRAM PETITION

1. Proposed Title of New Program: Pre-Law

2. Classification of New Program:
   - [ ] Major
   - [X] Minor
   - [ ] Other

3. Number of Hours Required: 21

4. Degree to which New Program applies: BA/BS

5. Implementation Date: [ ] Fall [X] Spring [ ] Summer I [ ] Summer II [ ] Summer III 2013


7. Provide an analysis of existing instructional resources and projected program needs. Include the preliminary tabular information on budget and enrollment projections that have been developed in consultation with the University Budget Director. (Refer to pages 9-16, Section E. Tabular Information of the Commission for Higher Education Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures for Developing New Academic Program Proposals and the New Program Data Checklist.) **Allow at least four weeks for this process.**

8. Attach a complete list of all required courses and a description of exact requirements for the proposed New Program.

9. **Initial** authorization must be received from the Academic Planning Council. The Academic Planning Council holds two formal meetings each year: the last Monday in October and the last Monday in March. Other meetings are arranged as needed.

   Date of initial approval: March '12

10. Department faculty signatures (majority required). If an interdisciplinary program, a majority of each department must sign this form. Number of Faculty in Dept(s): Interdisciplinary: 4 Dept's

   - [ ] Penn Semester
   - [X] liberal arts
   - [ ] Mark H. Nuckton
   - [X] Stephen Spare
   - [ ] Mary Hallcock-Morris
   - [ ] Ellen Claire Parker

11. Sent to Chair of College Curriculum Committee: ____________ Date: ____________

12. Received by Chair of College Curriculum Committee: ____________ Date: ____________

   College Curriculum Committee: Approved [ ] Not Approved [ ]

   Signature: __________________________ Date: ____________
13. Sent to program petition originator: Date: ____________

Originator responsible for numbers 14 through 19

14. Will funding be requested for additional library resources? Yes ☐ No ☒
    If yes, attach specifics developed in consultation with the Director of Library Services

        Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

        Director of Library Services

15. Does the program require additional computer resources? Yes ☐ No ☒
    If yes, attach specifics developed in consultation with the Computer Center Director.

        Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

        Computer Center Director

16. Does the program require additional instructional technology resources or support? Yes ☐ No ☒
    For example, development for distance education delivery or multimedia classrooms?

        Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

        Instructional Technology Services Director

17. Is the program a part, or to be a part, of teacher training? Yes ☐ No ☒
    If yes, have this program proposal reviewed by the Dean of Science and Engineering.

        Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

        Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

        Dean, Science and Engineering

18. Sent to the Dean of the College of ____________________________ Date: ____________

        Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

        Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

        Dean of College

19. Sent to Provost Office:
    (Original plus an electronic copy to Michele Duran at miduran@usi.edu) Date: ____________

20. Received in Provost Office: Date: ____________

21. Notified Chair of University Curriculum Committee: Date: ____________

22. Curriculum Committee Meeting date to discuss petition: Date: ____________

23. Meeting date to discuss petition published in USI Today: Date: ____________

24. Received by Chair of University Curriculum Committee: Date: ____________
University Curriculum Committee:

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Chair of University Curriculum Committee

25. Reviewed by the Faculty Senate (for majors only).

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Faculty Senate Chair

26. Sent to Provost Office:

Date: ____________

27. Received by Provost:

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Provost

28. Final consideration by Academic Planning Council

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
Academic Planning Council Chair

29. Reviewed by the President of the University (for majors only).

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
President

30. Review final budget and enrollment information with the University Budget Officer.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
University Budget Director

31. Reviewed by the University Board of Trustees (for majors only).

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐ Date: ____________

32. Sent to the Commission for Higher Education (for majors only).

Approved ☐ Not Approved ☐ Date: ____________

33. Notice of approval by Commission published in USI Today:

Date: ____________

34. Notified Registrar of final approval:

Date: ____________
To: University Curriculum Committee  
From: Mary Hallock Morris, Chair, Department of Political Science and Public Administration [on sabbatical]  
       Nicholas LaRowe, Pre-Law Coordinator, Department of Political Science and Public Administration  
       Rocco Gennaro, Acting Chair for Department of Political Science and Public Administration [Spring 2012]  
RE: Rationale for Pre-Law Minor  
Date: 1.26.2012

The 21-hour interdisciplinary Pre-Law minor will include 12 hours of required foundational courses that focus on critical thinking, oral communication and written communication skills. Students will also take nine hours of electives (3 hours at the 100-200 level; 6 hours at the 300-400 level) that are drawn from a list of courses that include economics, criminal justice, business, communications, political science and anthropology. Courses included on the list of electives will be approved by the Pre-Law Advisory Committee. Students will also be encouraged to complete a legal internship. Because this minor is aimed at students who wish to attend a law school, Pre-Law minors will be required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

BACKGROUND
The Department of Political Science and Public Administration is the home of the University’s pre-law program. Currently, the program revolves around advising, extracurricular activities and a set of recommended courses offered through the Department. At this time, the University does not offer a formalized major or minor in Pre-Law. The Department believes that we have enough student demand to warrant the addition of the Pre-Law and Legal Studies minors. First, approximately one-quarter of Political Science majors identified themselves as having a Pre-Law concentration (John Baburnich, March 24, 2011). Second, according to the Law School Admissions Council, approximately 35-40 USI students take the LSAT each academic year (39 students in 2009-2010, 35 students in 2010-2011). Finally, it is quite possible that the demand for these two minors might actually be higher as students who wish to go to law school may major in fields other than Political Science.

The Department of Political Science and Public Administration underwent an external review in Spring 2007. During our review, Dr. Stephen Wasby noted that students who wanted to go to law school tended to “specialize” at the undergraduate level by taking every law course that was available. For example, a law-school bound POLS student might take all law-related classes to fill his or her required electives for the major. This, according to Wasby, was not a good strategy for success in law school.

Wasby’s advice paralleled the advice offered by the American Bar Association. In the ABA’s document, “Preparing for Law School,” it states, “A sound legal education will build upon and further refine the skills, values and knowledge that you already possess. The student who comes to law school lacking a broad range of basic skills and knowledge will face a difficult challenge.” These core skills and values were listed as: analytical/problem solving skills, critical reading, writing skills, oral communication/listening abilities, general research skills, task organization/management skills, and public service and the promotion of justice. Following the receipt of a Major as Home Grant, the Department directed Dr. LaRowe to conduct two focus groups: one with an interdisciplinary set of faculty members (i.e., political science, sociology, criminal justice, philosophy, and economics), another with a group of attorneys from the region. Both focus groups concurred with the opinion of the external reviewer and the ABA. The consensus was clear: Students bound for law school should have a broad base of skills and knowledge – and should not “specialize” in law.