

“TAYLOR Your Life” (TYL) Assessment Report

Course Description

Taylor Your Life is an eight-week career development program for undergraduate and graduate students to Taylor their life course by applying methods and mindsets of design thinking (human-centered design) to career development. By remaining curious, ideating multiple possibilities, and prototyping and testing different pathways while remaining centered on human relationships and communities, participants engage in a series of interactive, dynamic activities and learn how to design a life that makes a positive difference in the world and is “TAYLORed” to their unique person and personality.

History

- Fall 2016
 - TYL launched as two separate 5-week sections (non-credit bearing).
- Spring 2017
 - TYL expanded to an 8-week 1-credit curricular course.
- Spring/Summer 2017
 - Nine staff members completed a nine-week experiential training where they experienced the curriculum as students, while also learning how to teach future sections of the course
- Summer 2017
 - Julia Lang, with Amjad Ayoubi’s introduction, presented about TYL at the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Conference.
- Fall 2017
 - Five sections of TYL will be offered, with hopes of more section offerings in the future.

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TYL Summer 2017 Training Report (Staff)

Background:

In spring/summer 2017, 8 staff members completed the experiential TYL training, which consisted of nine 1.5 hour sessions (13.5 contact hours total). Staff were also expected to complete all design homework challenges typically assigned to students. The report below highlights staff insights and areas of growth for the next iteration of Taylor Your Life.

Biggest takeaways and areas of learning

“LOVE the class. I think it should be a graduation requirement for all students!”

“Amazing work designing this course! It was a pleasure to be taught by you. Our students are in great, guiding hands!”

“This course is awesome!

“I am super excited for students to take this course. This is exactly what I would have needed as a student. I can only imagine how my life would be if I would have had the opportunity to take as an undergrad. This course has offered so many opportunities for personal and professional growth. I am excited for the opportunity to teach the course. And I am excited about the opportunities I've envisioned and designed for myself. Now it's time to put my "side-hustle" into fruition!”

“I loved the general design thinking aspect of the curriculum. I also appreciated discussing internal beliefs about work and money - this is something that is not covered in CRDV and is critical for students to consider when designing different versions of their life.”

“My biggest take away was becoming more confident in the fact that what I've been doing doesn't necessarily equate to what I will be doing in the future. Using the skills and strategies in the class will help me make connections in other areas of interest to test out before making any decisions about next moves.”

“My greatest takeaways from this course is helping students better understand how to prototype their life ideas without taking too much risk, and the idea of having a parallel plan as apposed to a back-up plan.”

“The course really meant a lot to me. I often feel like my failures can take the shape of blaming others, institutions, or systems, and it gave me hope that I have more agency to make more changes in my life and be happier-- a better sense of what matters to me as well as how to get there so that I can be more fulfilled with my career... It gave me concrete steps and a plan for building a better life for myself. It also added meaning to my current work, in that as a former Tulane student, I really wish I had had this course ten years ago. My life would likely be a dramatically different and more successful one.”

“Design thinking has been on my mind nearly each day since starting the course. I feel empowered to take action even more than in the past without the hang-up of failure. I'm excited to try out and learn how to help others each day with fewer cautions/concerns”

“It gave me the opportunity to explore many of the fantasies and curiosities I've had in a safe and accessible way. I feel less frightened by my opportunities and feel more willing to embrace them.”

What immediate and/or future value do you think this course would provide for students?

“This is a course that every student needs to take before graduating. It helps students broaden their perspective of what is possible for their life, and helps them to identify their ‘why’s.’ This course can really provide clarity for those students who are exploratory, as well.”

“This class **teaches unique skills that help students think of their future in a way that encourages a positive outlook** about life after Tulane.... This **class encourages students to not just accept but lean into the fact that life cannot be completely planned.** It also helps students understand...[how to] **gain insight into themselves, their goals, and...**[make their] 'ideal life' become a reality.”

“[This course will help students] **feel at ease with ambiguity**....it's ok to not have everything planned out. I think the biggest takeaway is that **you can design several different career paths -- prototype your life!**”

“A design way of thinking that can be applied to any area of life. While the course covers the basic documents and strategies needed for the job search, the class does focus a lot on re-evaluating how you think about the process, testing out new things, and **learning from setbacks/failures.**”

“[TYL will help students] **move from the fog of the unknown** including being ashamed or angry when being asked, ‘What are you going to do next?’ or ‘What do you want to do with your life?’ Future value - help them **identify long-term goals by taking regular action steps of prototyping** and odyssey planning ways to get there in the short-term.”

“It allows students to **unlearn many of the harmful and constraining misconceptions** surrounding work, lifestyles, and values. This will **help relieve** many of the **fears** students have concerning their potential careers and life paths.”

“I think that in the immediate sense it will **help students identify interests and career opportunities** and encourage them to reach out to professionals so they **gain an understanding of how to bridge their academic interests with career goals.** How to get from i.e., "I'm a history major" to I will become a "project manager." Long term they are **building resilience and a better understanding of the value of failure** and how to push through it, which can be applied to all aspects of their lives. They are also **learning career skills such as 'networking,' salary negotiation, and prototyping** that will **benefit them throughout their entire lives.**”

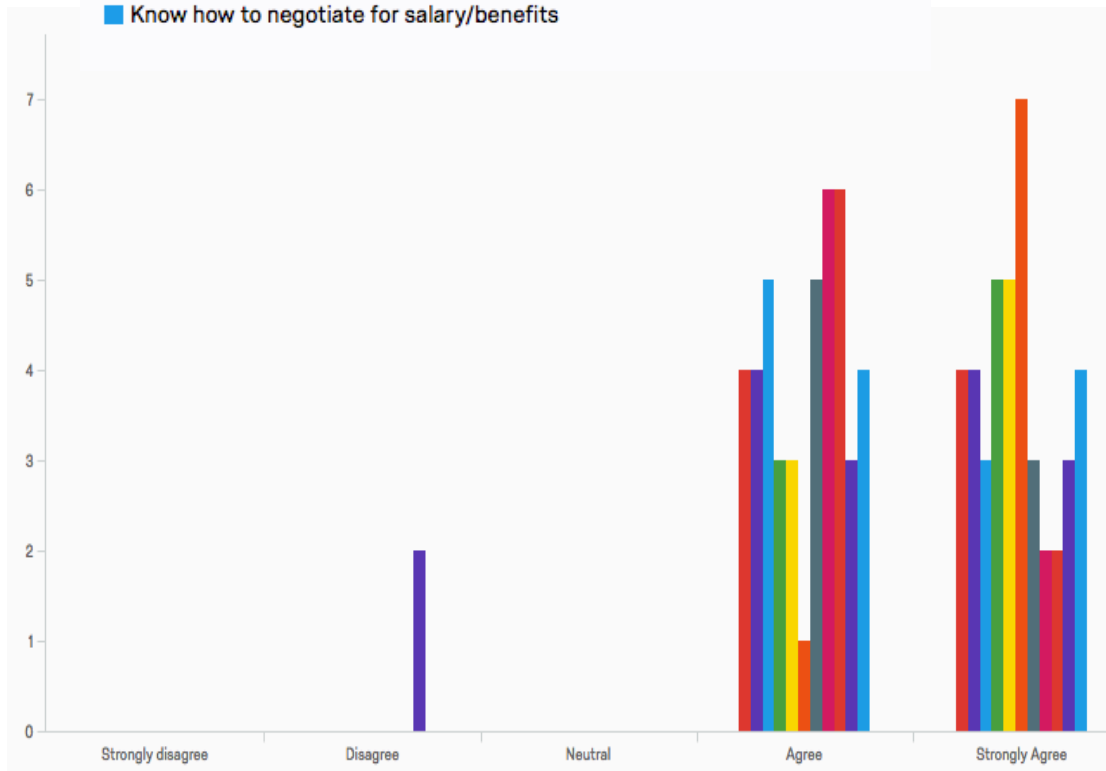
“I think **this is an amazing opportunity for our students.** I really look forward to seeing how this course affects student perception of careers/majors/life after college.”

“Students will learn about who they are, what they are interested in, and what they are good at. They may also learn about areas they need to learn more about or develop more, but not in a critical way. This course **gives them a tool set to look back on time and time again as their lives, goals, and priorities change.** So maybe they do not end this course with a specific career path, **but they leave knowing the steps to discover/explore.**”

Please rate how you believe students will grow after participating in TYL.

As a result of participating in TYL, students will:

- Have strongly considered social issues they care about
- Know how to create a personal work/life compass to guide life decisions
- Be able to distinguish internal vs external (parents, society) motives
- Belief they can design a life tailored to their interests/values
- Have a better view of their professional direction
- Be able to envision and explore multiple life paths
- Know how to effectively network in their professional community
- Be more confident talking about oneself/interests to a potential employer
- Have Improved their job search toolkit (resume, LinkedIn, interviews)
- Be able to recognize when fear is holding them back in unhealthy ways
- Know how to negotiate for salary/benefits



Summary: All staff agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements above, except two individuals who disagreed that the course would help students know when fear is holding them back in unhealthy ways. This is an interesting finding, as the fear activity was most mentioned as a favorite activity from staff in qualitative assessment. As this is a learning outcome of the course, I will discuss this section of the curriculum with staff teaching TYL in the Fall to revisit the activity and readings and explore ways in which we can strengthen that aspect of the course.

TYL Spring 2017 Report (Students)

Background:

In spring 2017, 10 students completed TYL, which consisted of eight 1.5-hour sessions.

Biggest takeaways and areas of learning

“This was a great class and I think every student should take it senior year. This class helped me network and reach out to people on linked in...[it] helped me put my life together and see all the different career paths that I could take.”

“It completely reframed my view of my future. Instead of blindly moving through college and going through the motions, I now know the steps I can take to end up in a career that I enjoy. Because of this class I have a more concrete idea of what I want to do in my future, both professionally and personally.”

“The program opened my eyes to see how many opportunities and resources we have, especially as students, and I feel confident I can tap into any of them to continue on my journey... The class really changed the way I look at things. I didn't realize I had been following a certain path to career objectives based on what I saw in my family and parents... now, I have a changed perspective where I realize I should do things that fit my interests and wants.”

“Before this course, I had no idea what I wanted to do and I wasn't really moving in any direction.... this course helped me discover feasible life paths and determine what I need to do to get there....[it] helped me distinguish my different interests and the potential careers that they could lead to. Creating and constantly updating the action plan helped me see exactly what and when I need to have internships, jobs, and activities.”

“This class helped me gain the skills that I need to successfully interview and get a job. This class has provided me with the skills...for networking... I learned to set goals and timelines for myself in order to stay on top of my job hunt and networking process. I found the activities and class workshops to be super helpful and effective. These are skills that students can definitely hold on to for the rest of our lives.”

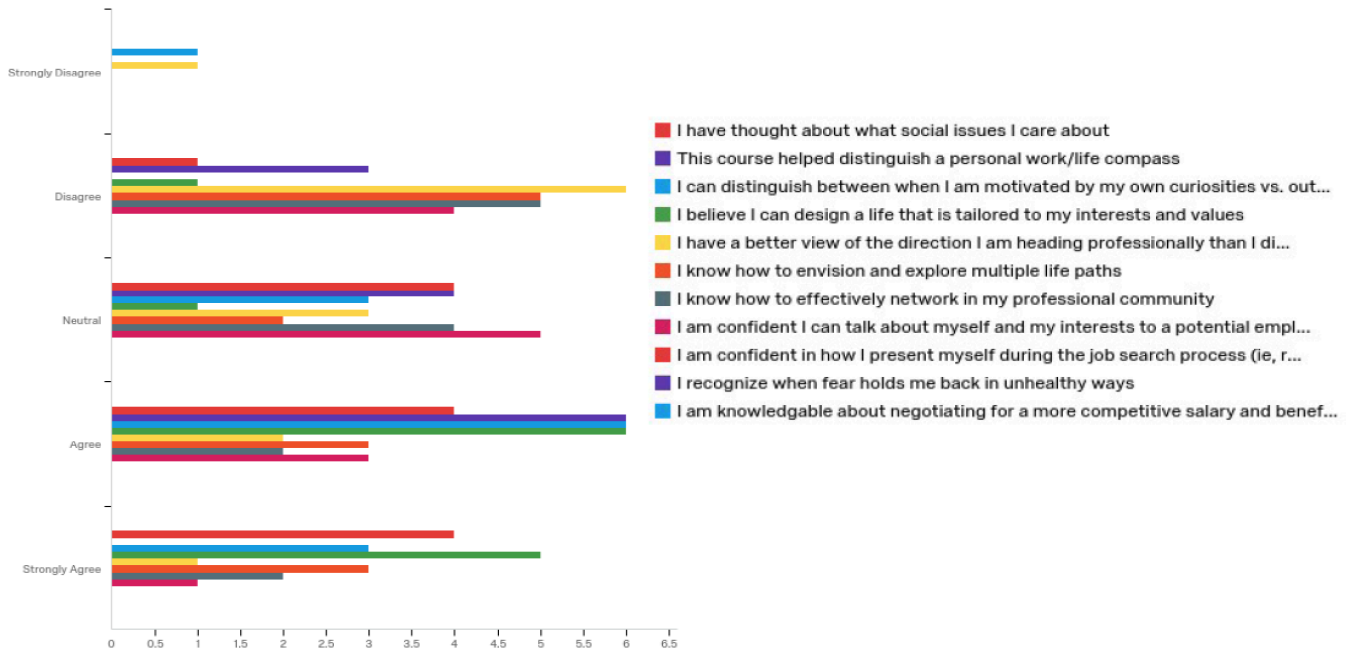
“I really enjoyed this class because it broke away from this idea and the expectations students have for life after college. This class encouraged us to look at different prototypes and life paths that may not fit the ‘norm.’”

“Ultimately, [I learned that] it is not about finding right job, but designing a career/life path compatible with personal and professional interests...”

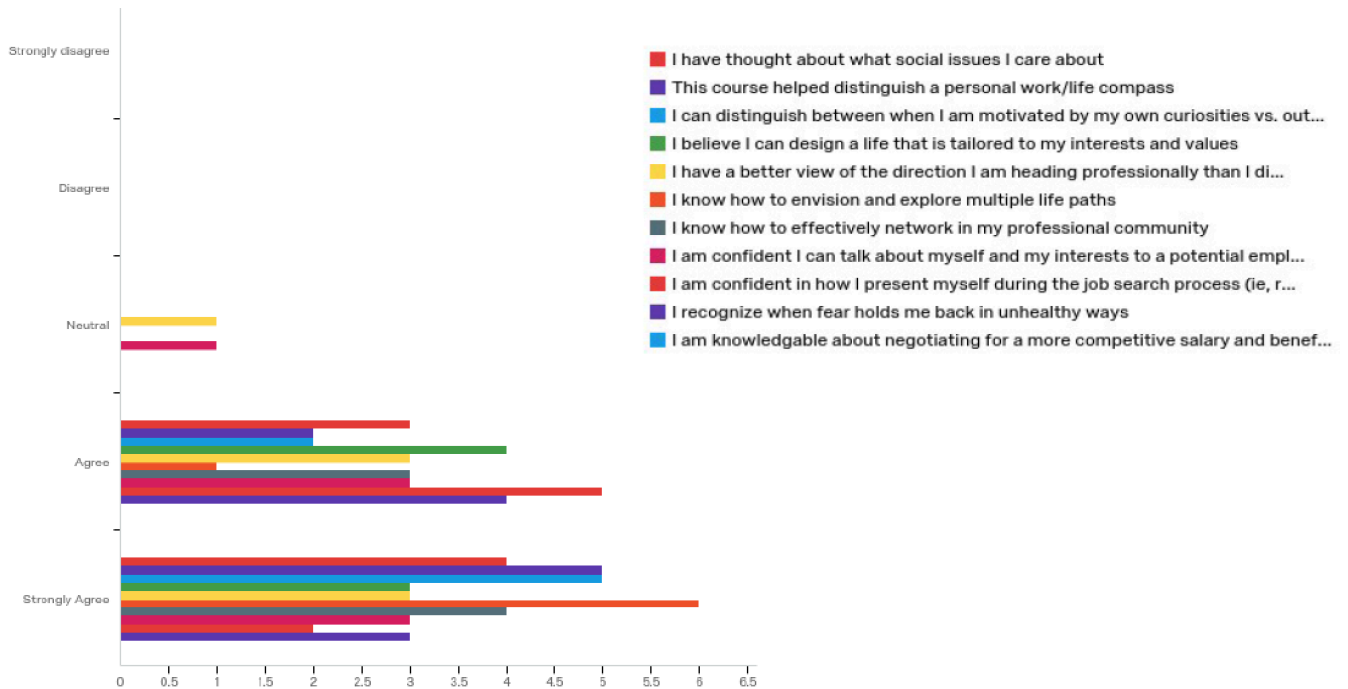
“The class really opened my mind up to thinking about social issues and what ones matter to me. I realized I want to work towards improving issues, and incorporating that goal into my career path.”

“Because of this class, I was able to determine what I want out of a job, how to balance happiness and work, and the value of finding a career that fits what you need. Taylor Your Life was a huge benefit to me and probably saved me many years of trial and error to help determine potential life paths.”

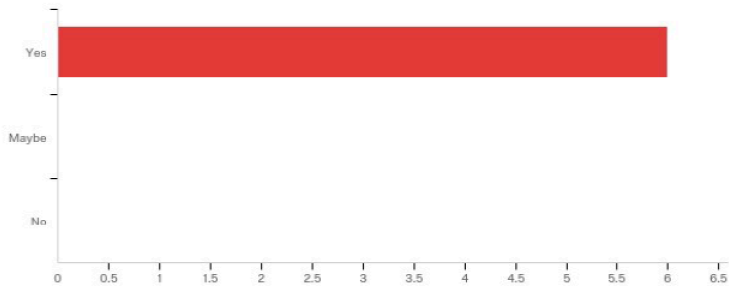
Before TAYLOR Your Life (survey taken before class began)



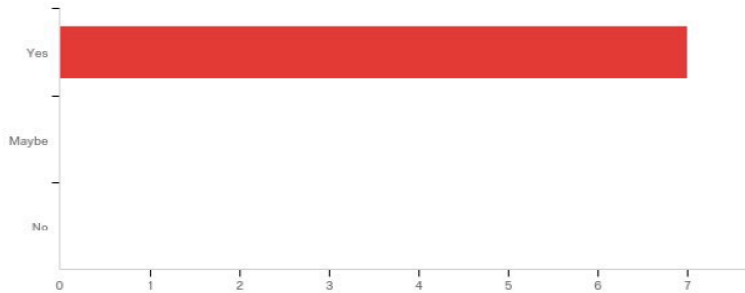
After TAYLOR Your Life (survey completed after our final session)



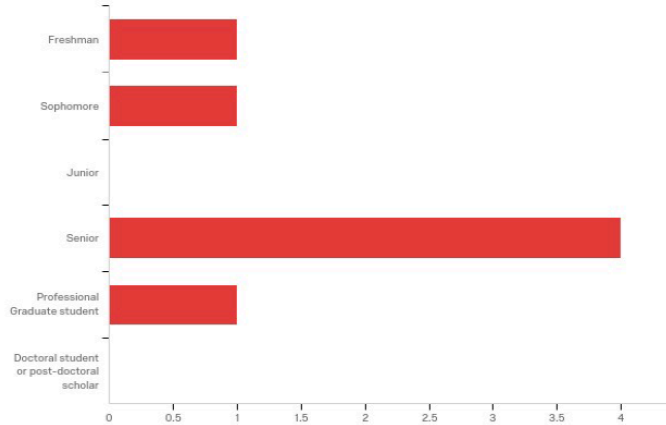
Would you recommend this course to others?



As a result of the course, do you feel more confident about next steps/your future?



Students in TYL represented a wide array of majors, disciplines, and degrees



Majors/Degrees represented:

- BS, Public Health (2 students)
- BS, Public Health and International Development
- Masters of Public Health
- BS, Business Management; Minor in Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship
- BSM, Marketing and Management; Health and Wellness
- BA, Psychology and Gender Studies
- BSM, Marketing and Management (3 students)
- BA, Sociology, Italian; Minor in Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship
- BSM, Finance

TYL Fall 2016 Report (Students)

Background:

In spring 2017, 21 students completed TYL, which consisted of five 1.15 hour sessions.

Biggest takeaways and areas of learning

“I have been to tons of career service workshops/seminars over the course of my years at Tulane, but **none were as personal or ‘taylor-ed’ to my specific areas of interest and my non-professional life goals as TYL.** The program helped **change my perception of networking** and helped me feel more prepared and confident to **network with professionals in my field.”** – Graduate Student

“I am very grateful I took this workshop. Already have went ahead and recommended it to my close friends. This is a **very different approach to the job search** than I ever have experienced. **I hope this replaces CRDV classes** (lol). Or at least they adopt a lot of what we did in this workshop.”- Senior

“I feel much more confident and comfortable about my **professional future.** I am **excited to prototype and explore life paths,** rather than scared--as I felt prior to this course. I feel **empowered to create change** in the world in a way that will also make me happy.” - Graduate Student

“This program shook up what I thought I knew about my future, which is scary and confusing, but I am glad that it did. I now know that I need to do some serious soul searching, and I have a number of tools to help me do so.” – Senior

“I wanted the five weeks to be longer...I found it much more helpful than my regular career development class last year, also a semester long.”- Senior

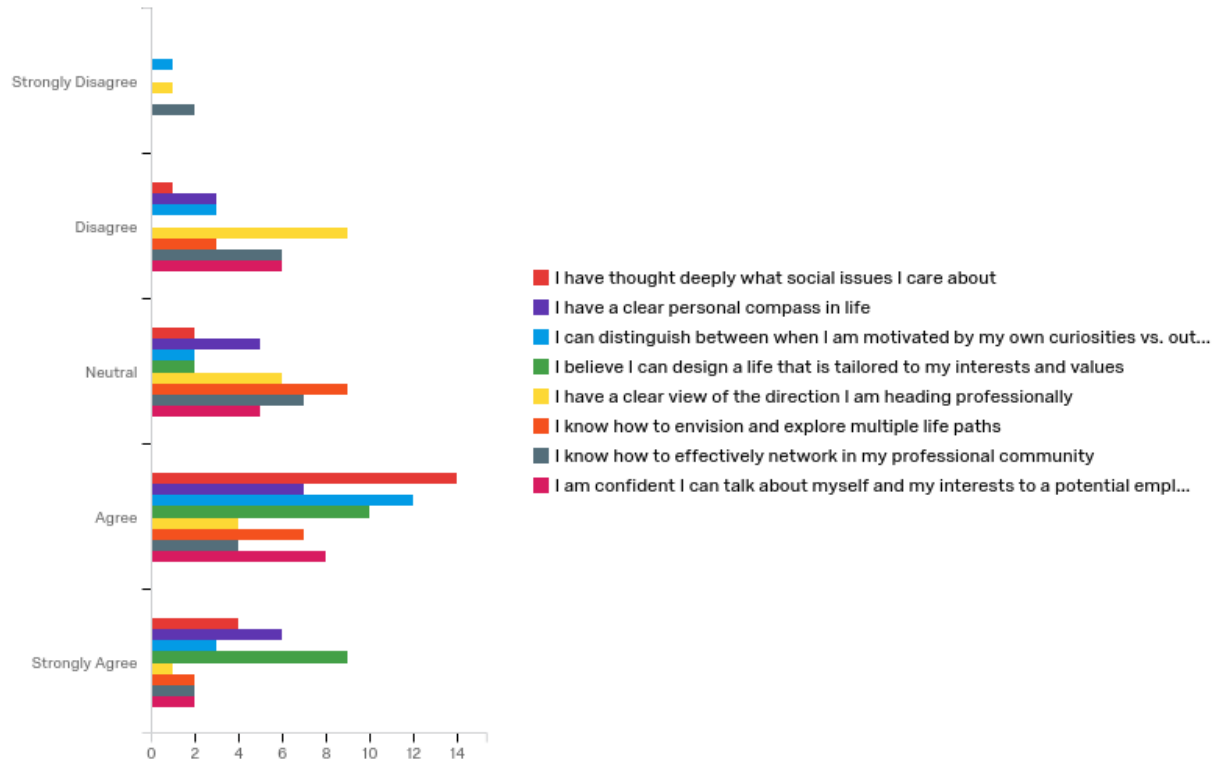
“It really helped me reconcile my various interests and potential life paths, while also helping me **identify ways to discern what truly interests and motivates me....I now feel very confident taking the next steps on my career path,** knowing that I am **preparing myself for a multitude of possibilities** in my future, and also knowing that I am **building up the skills and experiences necessary to have a job and lifestyle I love** after Tulane.” – Sophomore, Business

“[TYL helped me to] explore potential future opportunities and lifestyles for myself that I had **not previously thought of.** I went into this program clueless about what career path I wanted, and while this program definitely opened my eyes to many questions I need to figure out, it more importantly gave me a **positive sense of direction in the path** I want to head down and the **motivation to start exploring** my options now.”- Freshman

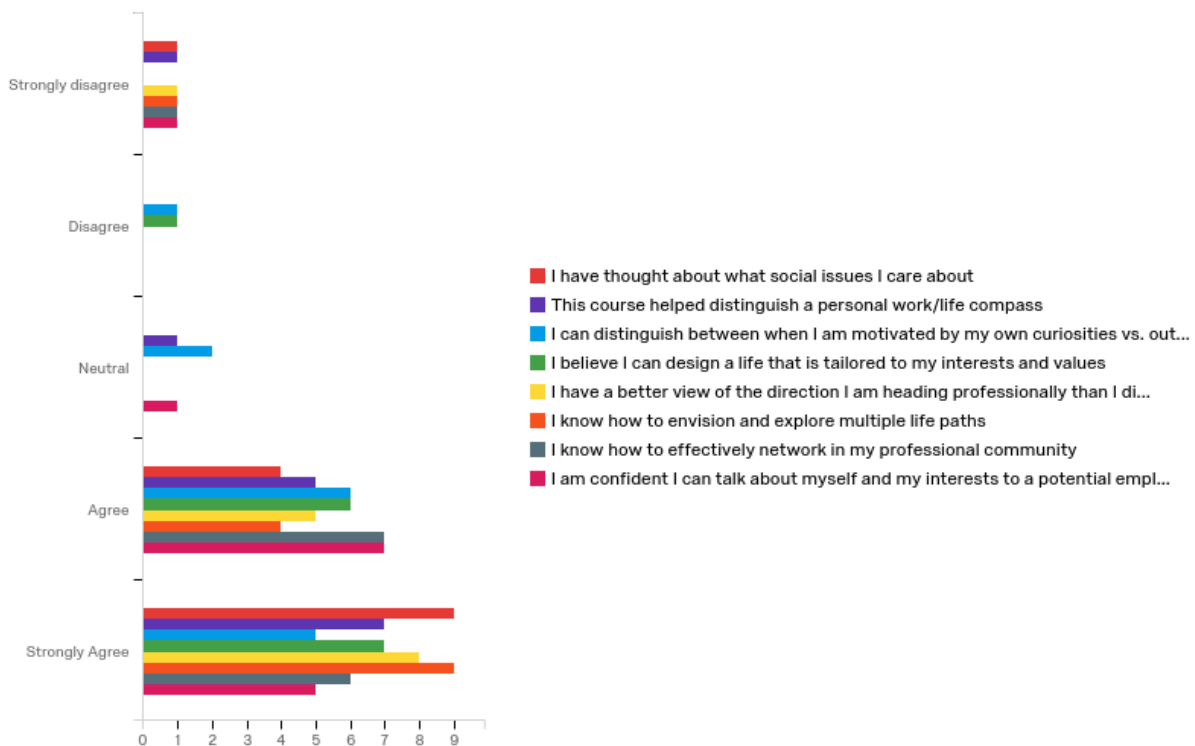
“TYL helped me understand the power of networking and importance of actively pursuing opportunities vs falling into a job. I helped me realize that **I can really make my “changemaking” career** what I want it to be...if I learn what's out there and **prototype possibilities”** – Sophomore

“The initial Family Influences activity was really moving. It helped me identify and accept that there are some ways that I do not want to live my life. **I have felt obligation to create those conditions because my loved ones have normalized them, but they do not have to be my standard”** - Graduate Student

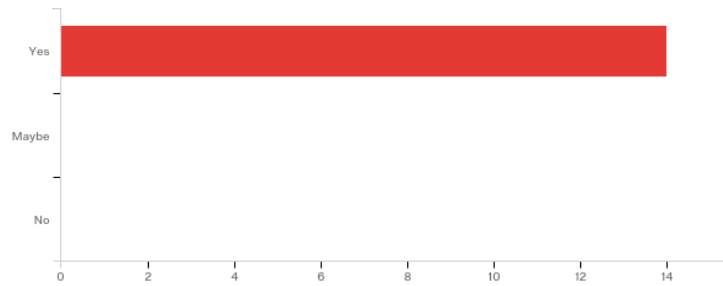
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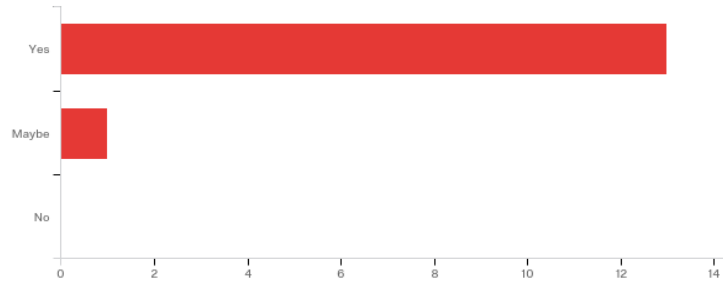
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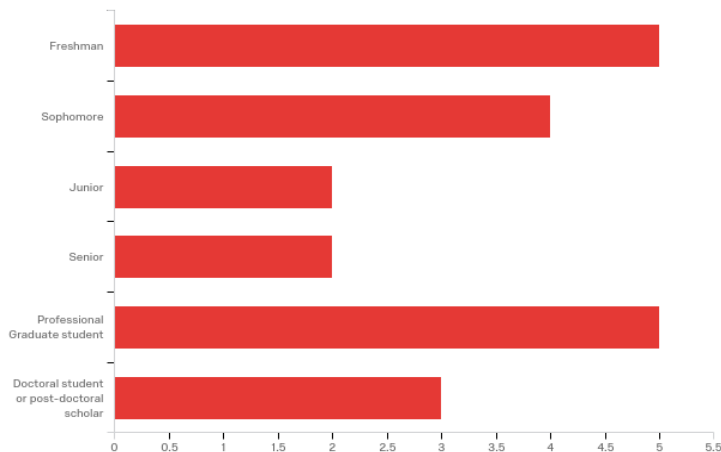
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Majors/Degrees represented:

- PhD, International Development
- PhD, Public Health
- Masters in Public Health (MPH), Nutrition
- MPH, International Health and Development
- MPH
- MS, Biostatistics
- BA, Environmental Studies
- BA, Political Economy, Communication, Gender & Sexuality Studies
- BA, Political Economy (3 students)
- BS, Public Health (2 students)
- BSM, Management and Marketing
- BSM, Finance; BA, Economics
- BA, Business
- BA, Undecided