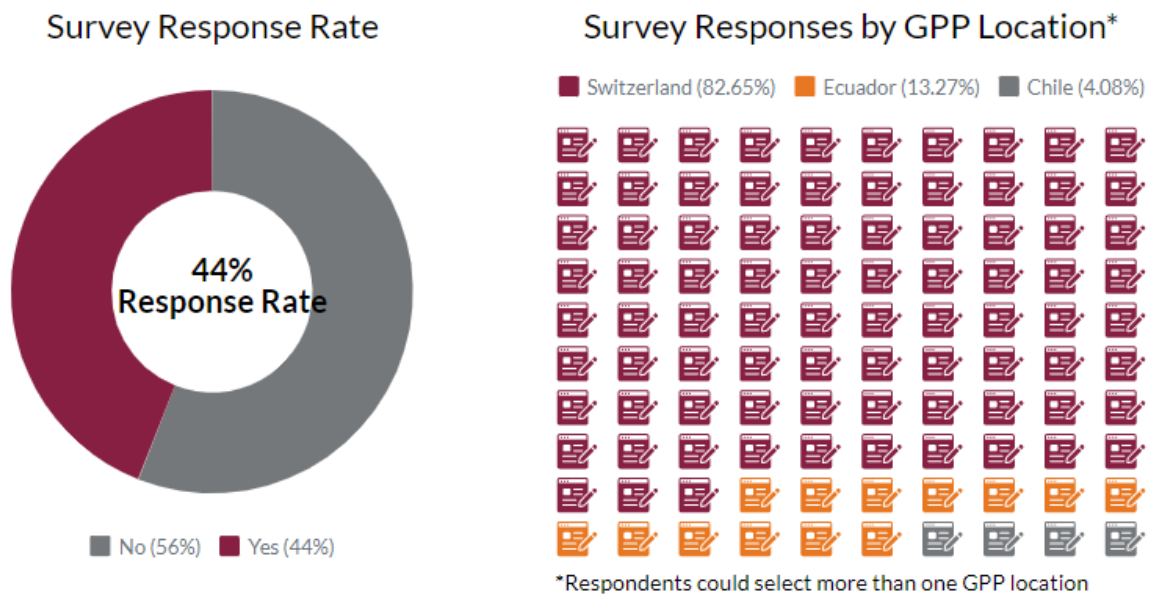


The Global Perspectives Program at Virginia Tech

Graduate alumni and current graduate students came together to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Global Perspectives Program (GPP) in August 2021. As part of the programming, a survey was sent to all GPP alumni asking participants to reflect on the value of the program and the impact it has had on their life. The survey sought insights related to how participation in the GPP impacted students personally and professionally, particularly related to global perspectives, academic pursuits, career path and experiences, and any international opportunities since the GPP. Overall, 84 surveys were completed with 86% of response from alumni while 14% of responses were from current students. Figure 1 shows a snapshot of the survey respondents.

Figure 1

Survey Respondent Overview

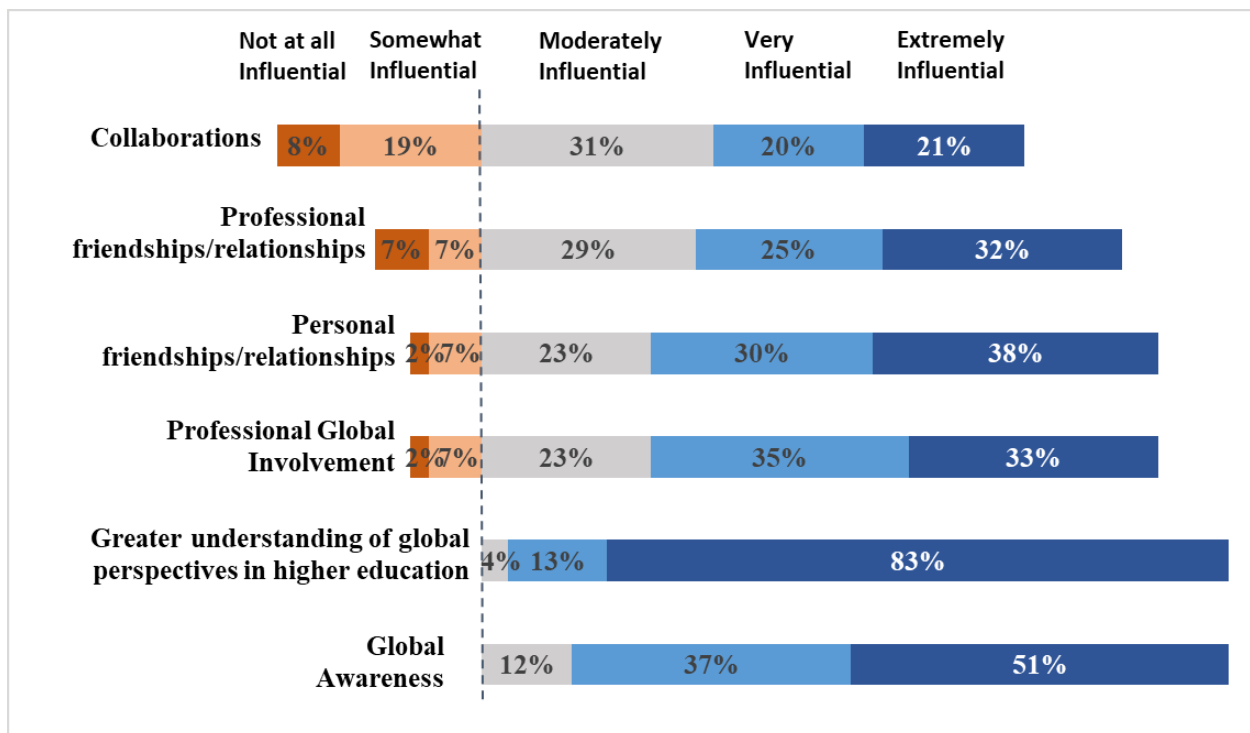


Purpose of the Global Perspectives Program

The purpose of the Global Perspectives Program is to inform graduate students as future faculty members with a global perspective of higher education. However, the impact of the program extends beyond the traditional curriculum in higher education, with participants building relationships with one another and developing as global citizens to acknowledge differences around the world and being encouraged to embrace a perspective beyond that of their own country of origin. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the GPP influenced their development in various categories. Figure 2 shows global awareness and greater understanding of global perspectives in higher education as the greatest areas of influence, with 88% and 96% of respondents indicating the GPP was very influential or extremely influential in the development of these areas. This finding aligns with the stated goal of the program.

Figure 2

To What Extend Did the GPP Influence the Development of:

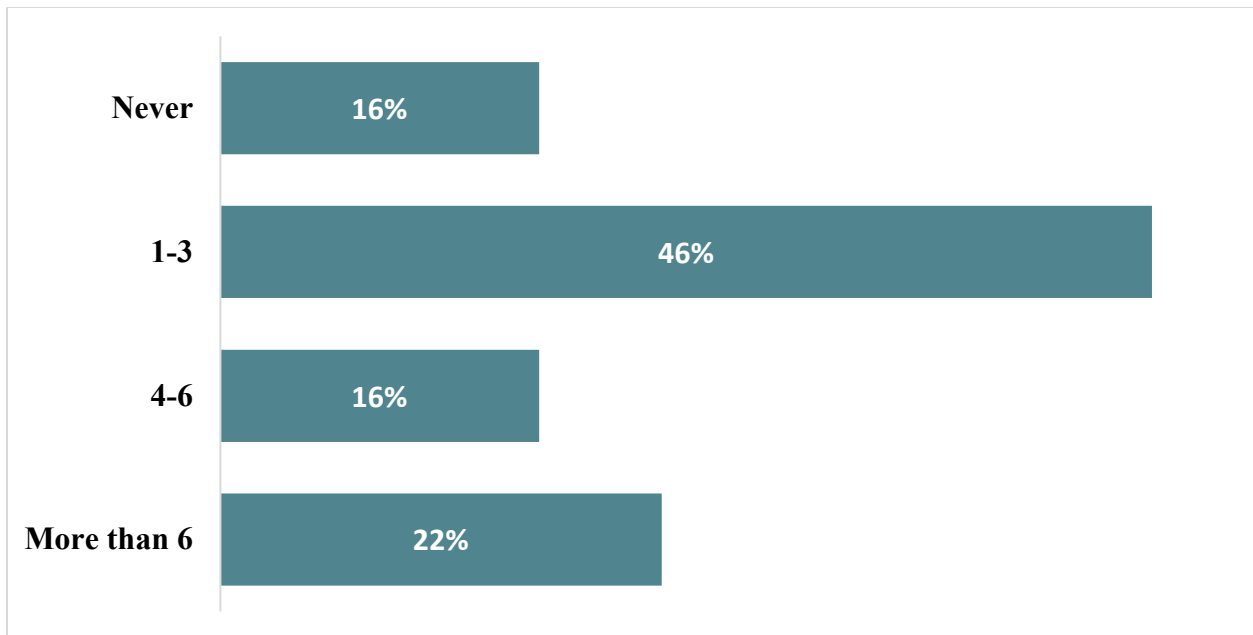


International Experiences

Another impact of the GPP is to provide the opportunity for international travel to those students who may not otherwise have the chance. The majority of expenses related to participation in the GPP are covered by the Graduate School. For many students, this was the first time they travelled abroad. Figure 3 shows that 16% of survey respondents said they had never travelled internationally before the program and almost half saying they had only traveled internationally 1-3 times.

Figure 3

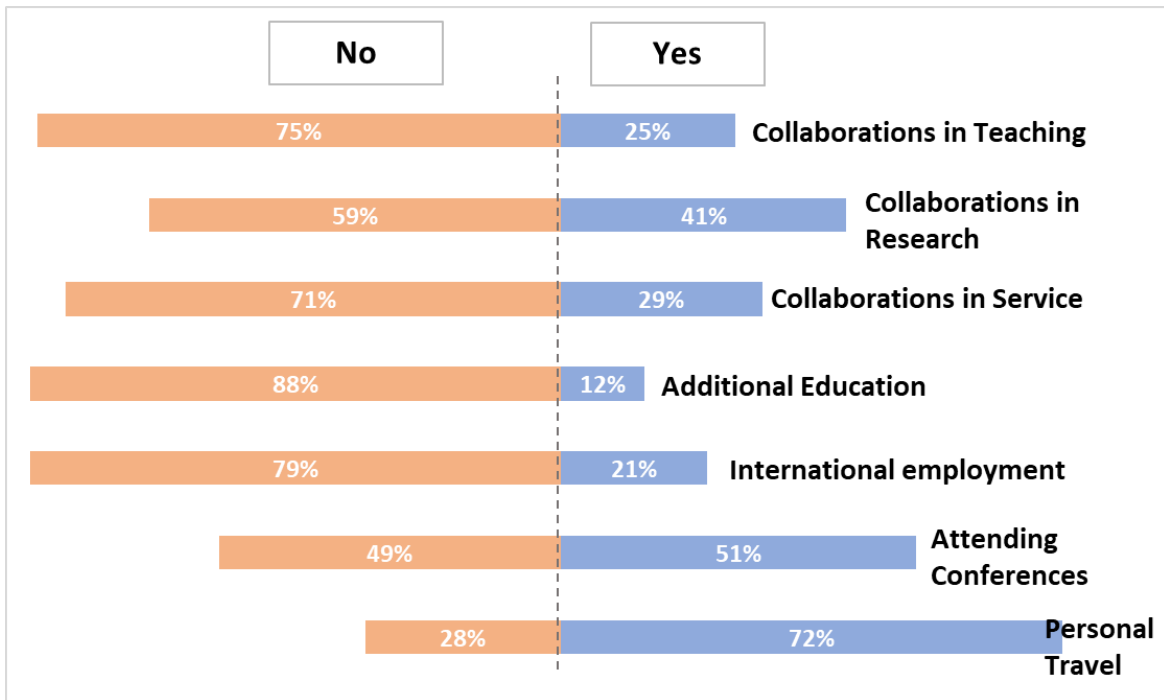
How many times had you travelled internationally prior to participation in the GPP?



For others, participation in the program impacted various international activities, such as collaborations in teaching, research or service, additional education, employment, conferences, or personal travel. Figure 4 shows that while international collaborations for research purposes and attending international conferences were frequently cited, personal travel was the most common international experience after program participation.

Figure 4

Have you pursued any international travel opportunities or experiences since participating in GPP?



Current Student Impact

GPP alumni who are current students were asked how participation in the GPP influences their assistantship, job, research, coursework, global understanding of higher education, general life experiences, and other activities. These responses showed how immediate the impact of GPP can be. Many students reported applying what they learned to their teaching assistant roles, to their research or dissertation work, and spreading the word to whomever would listen about how meaningful the experience was.

“I have more cultural competence with respect to international students experiences and how to meet those needs as a TA.”

“This also helps me as an educator because then I can better understand students' perspectives and form a more inclusive and empowering teaching environment.”

“My dissertation is on human and social capital. It was enlightening to see how those variables are valued in other countries and then compare/contrast those valuations to reception here in the USA.”

Additionally, current students were asked whether their career aspirations changed due to the influence of the GPP. For some, it reaffirmed their desire to teach, some gaining an interest in teaching in another country, while for others, it led them to pursue a different career path leveraging their new knowledge and new connections.

“The program helped me realize that the academic path I was on (the PhD) was not the best path for me. The assistantship opportunities I received as a result of the GPP network and knowing Dean DePauw helped me transition away from academia into the government sector.”

“Our visit to the architecture & design schools showed me how different academia for my discipline is in other places. Before, I had only thought about higher ed in the U.S., but during/after GPP, I started thinking that there might be more global opportunities out there for me than I had considered before. It might be nice to go teach and do research somewhere abroad for several years and then return to the U.S. (or not) after that.”

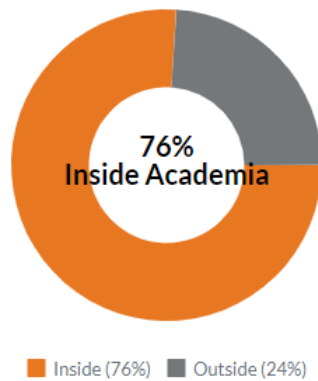
Career Path Data:

While the main audience for the GPP is future faculty, the program attracts individuals who are interested in careers both inside and outside of academia. The curriculum also prepares students who want to pursue a job in academia with a multitude of paths to get there. Figure 5 below shows how many respondents held jobs inside academia in their first position after participating in the GPP and in any position since participating. Additionally, Figure 6 shows a more detailed breakdown of first positions after GPP participation whether inside or outside of academia.

Figure 5

Career path after GPP participation

First Job after GPP: Inside or Outside Academia



Any Job Inside Academia

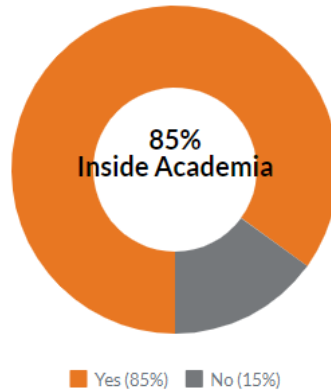
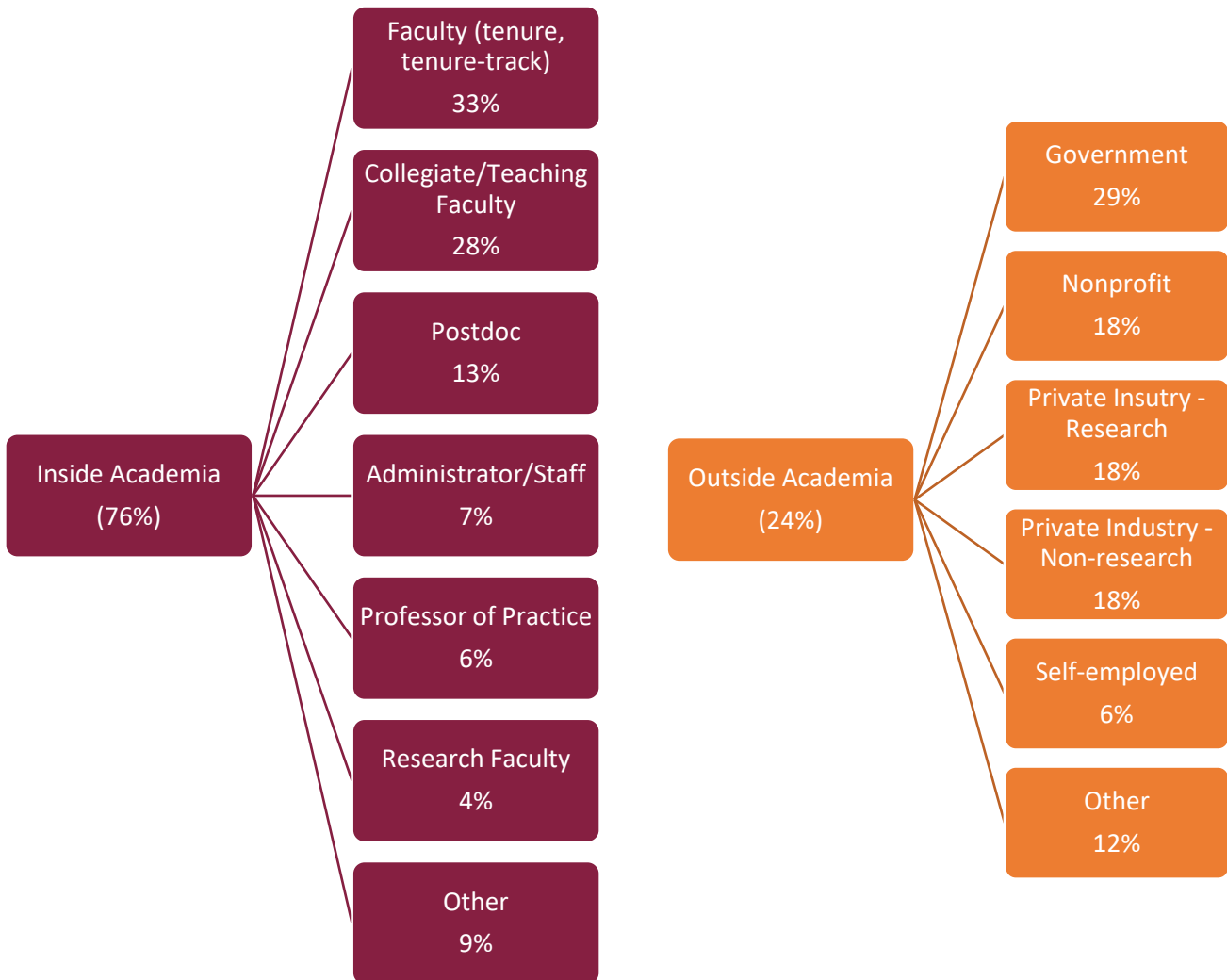


Figure 6

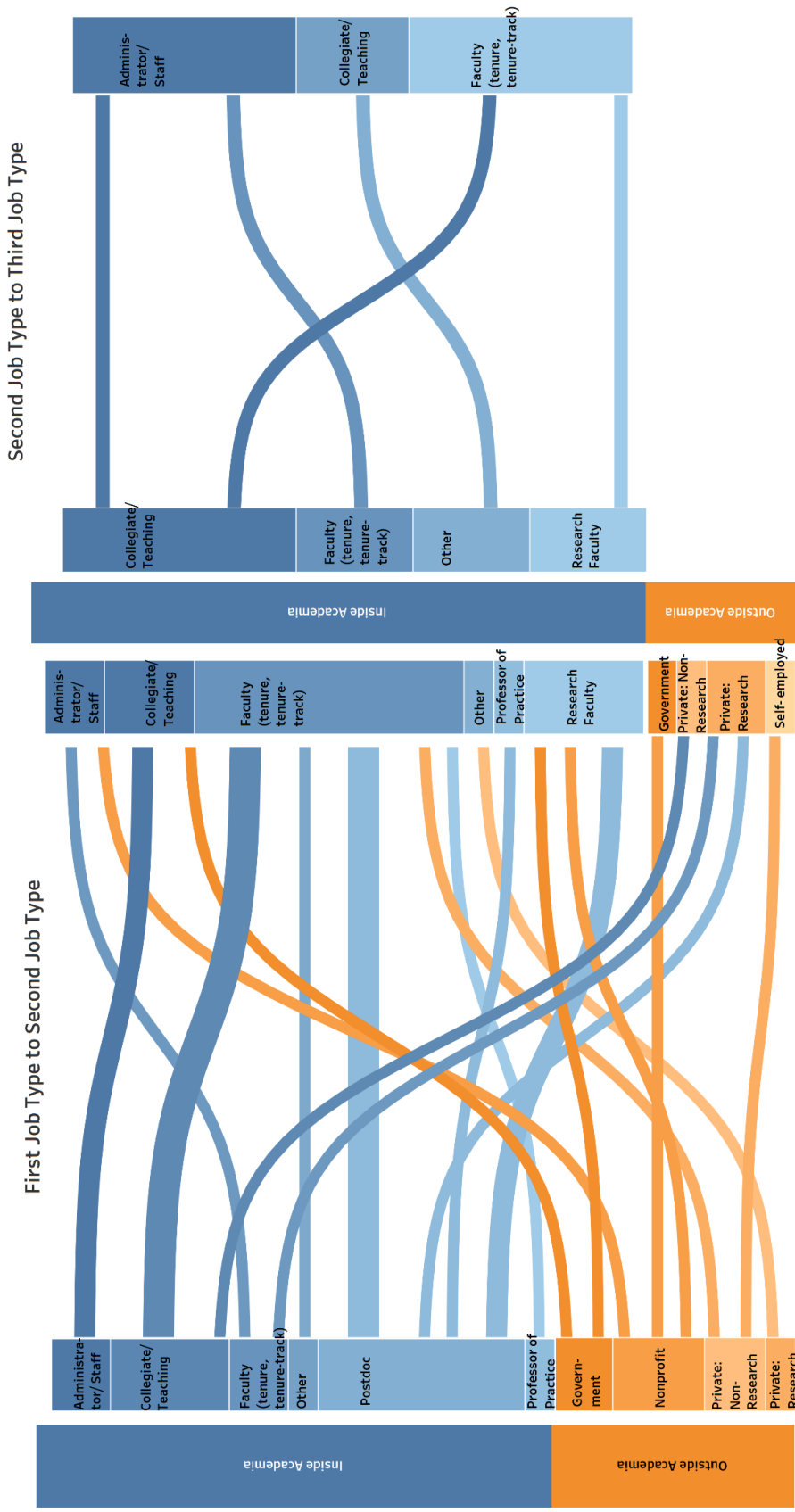
First job after participation in the GPP



Additionally, 54% of respondents reported holding more than one position since participation in the GPP. For those reporting more than one position, the chart below shows how respondents' careers flowed within and between academic or non-academic positions. After their first position, 8% moved from inside academia to outside academia, 15% moved from outside academia to inside academia while the other 77% stayed within the same category.

Figure 7

Survey respondent career movement if more than one



GPP Impact on Career

While the focus of the program is on learning about higher education from a global perspective, the lessons learned are valuable in many different settings beyond higher education. The long-lasting and wide-reaching impact of this program can be seen through an examination of the various positions participants' have held since participation in the program. Many respondents who have held a position in academia identified directly with the main goal of the GPP, which is to inform graduate students as future faculty members with a global perspective of higher education, and reported how they are applying what they learned in their work. Alumni who have held teaching positions reported the GPP's influence on pedagogical approaches, incorporating global perspectives in their field, creating new study abroad opportunities, building new majors and curriculum, and challenging the status quo.

“I helped to build a new communications major, and my experience in GPP (as well as the PFP program, broadly) specifically shaped how I approached designing and teaching the communications ethics part of the program.”

“B/c the focus of GPP is inclusion of all students, I was very aware of how I facilitated the class could impact students, positively or not, so I went (and still go) to great lengths to focus on student-centered learning through a wide variety of projects, activities, readings, and discussion methods to ensure that students of all learning types can be reached.”

“GPP influenced profoundly the way I teach. My classes are specifically designed to develop my students' global competences, as well as their global citizenship. Both important aspects that -nowadays- need to be consider in every curriculum.”

Program participants who have held jobs in higher education, but outside of teaching roles, also shared how the GPP shaped their work.

“I initiated a new international group of thought leaders on assessment in higher education. We met regularly, had exchanges, and published a special issue of a journal. GPP was instrumental by instilling confidence that this could even be possible.”

“I did International Engagement work, running a study abroad program and establishing relationships and collaborations with international scholars, and the GPP experience helped tremendously with that.”

Participants were given the opportunity to describe how the GPP did or did not affect their career plans. For many, it affirmed plans to continue to pursue a career track in academia.

“The GPP certificate and study abroad experience solidified my decision to stay in academia. These rich and valuable experiences made it so much easier to navigate the university culture.”

“First, GPP showed me the diversity of higher education. Without the program, I would not have known much about the structure of higher education outside of the US-based system. That said, it affirmed my desire to pursue a career in higher education.”

“GPP permitted me to embrace my passion to teach. It provided me with enough insights to shape my future endeavors.”

Even for those participants who did not pursue a career in academia the program left a lasting impression:

“While at this time I don't hold a direct position in higher education, my current role in private industry has been enhanced by the knowledge and wisdom gained via GPP.”

“GPP prepared me well for understanding cultural norms and allowing me to navigate these cross-cultural interactions more comfortably..... Even in my non-academic position, I find I use plenty that I learned through GPP.”

“It reinforced that I enjoy education and that I wanted to stay connected to the classroom even if it wasn't my full time position. I'm not currently in academia except to guest lecture and I took over a public health course for a semester when the instructor left right before the class started.”