

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# CareerSTART: A Program for Fostering Student-directed Professional Development Planning

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[illinois.edu](http://illinois.edu)



# Professional Development Challenges at Illinois

## Students not taking advantage of existing resources

- Lack of awareness of many resources to support teaching, writing, job search, etc.

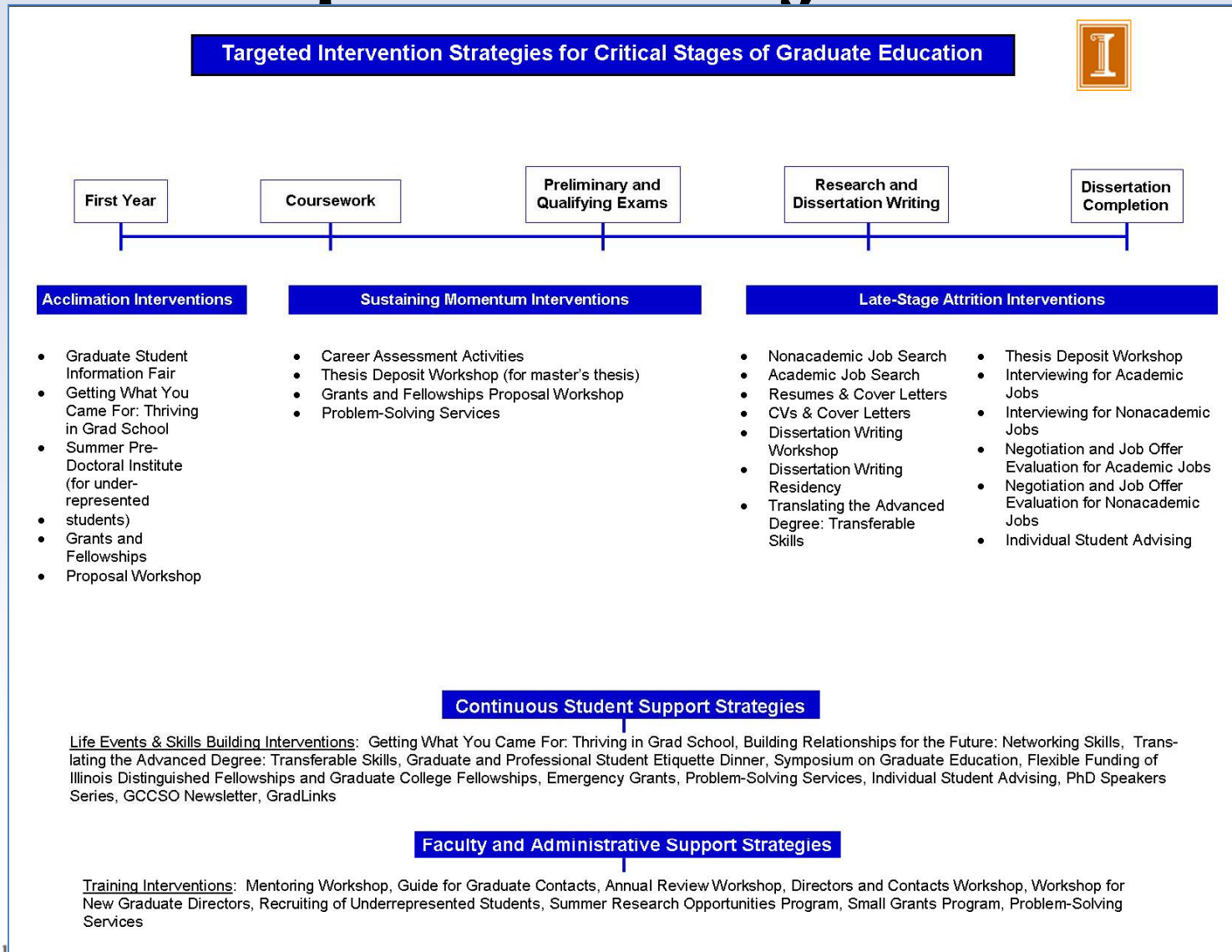
## Students not fully prepared for the careers they are moving into

- Some lacked teaching experience, teaching statements, etc.
- Students seeking advice on resumes, but who don't know what jobs they should be applying for

## Gaps in resources for acclimation stage students



# PhD Completion Project Model



# Program Development

## Graduate College

- Increase awareness of existing resources
- Flexible
- Lack resources to reinvent—need to instead leverage existing resources

## Student advisory committee

- PFF? PFP?
- Certificate in career development?
- Courses?
- Low awareness of current resources



# Defined Goals

## EDUCATE

- Educate students on the importance of professional development and available resources

## STRUCTURE

- Structure the concept of professional development through presentation of a model

## INCENTIVIZE

- Provide an incentive for student participation through an organized program with a clear progression and support elements



# Planning & Development

- Synergy
- Defined professional development areas
- Discussed name/marketing
- Piloted program activities



# Program Overview

- Identification of short- and long-term goals
- Skills assessment exercises
- Plan creation
- Reflection
- Flexibility

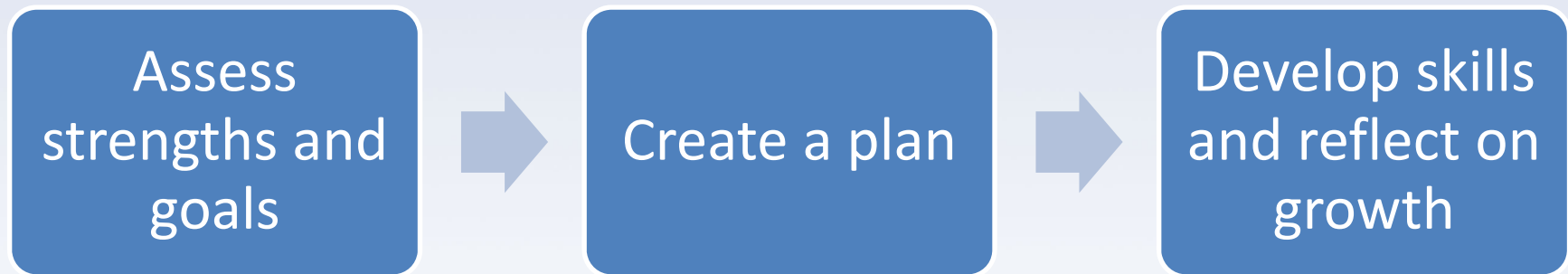


## CAREERSTART

Your personalized professional development plan



# Program Stages





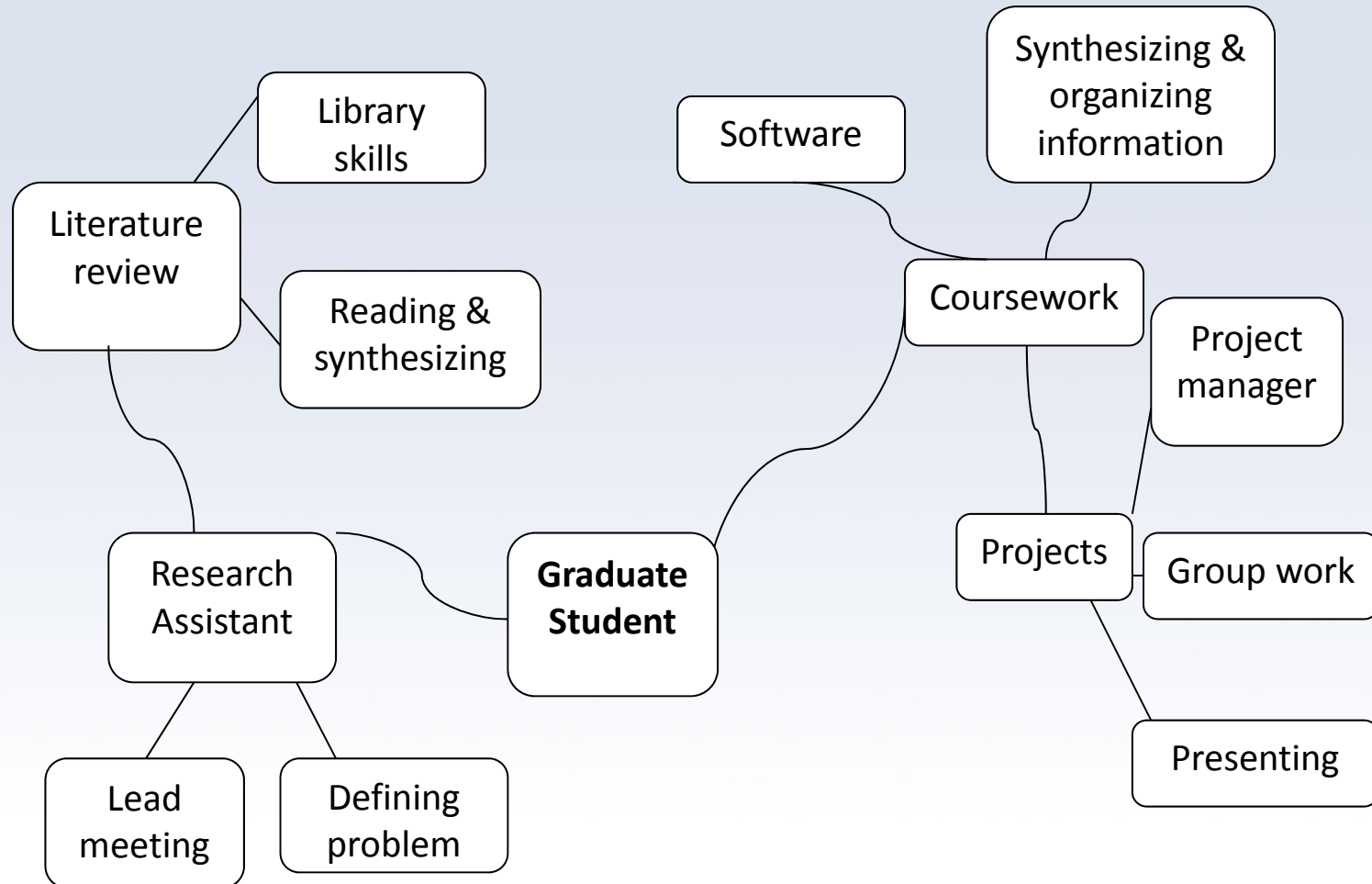
# Assess Strengths and Goals

- Think about skills gained through graduate school and other experiences
- Set short- and long-term goals
- Connect skills with future interests

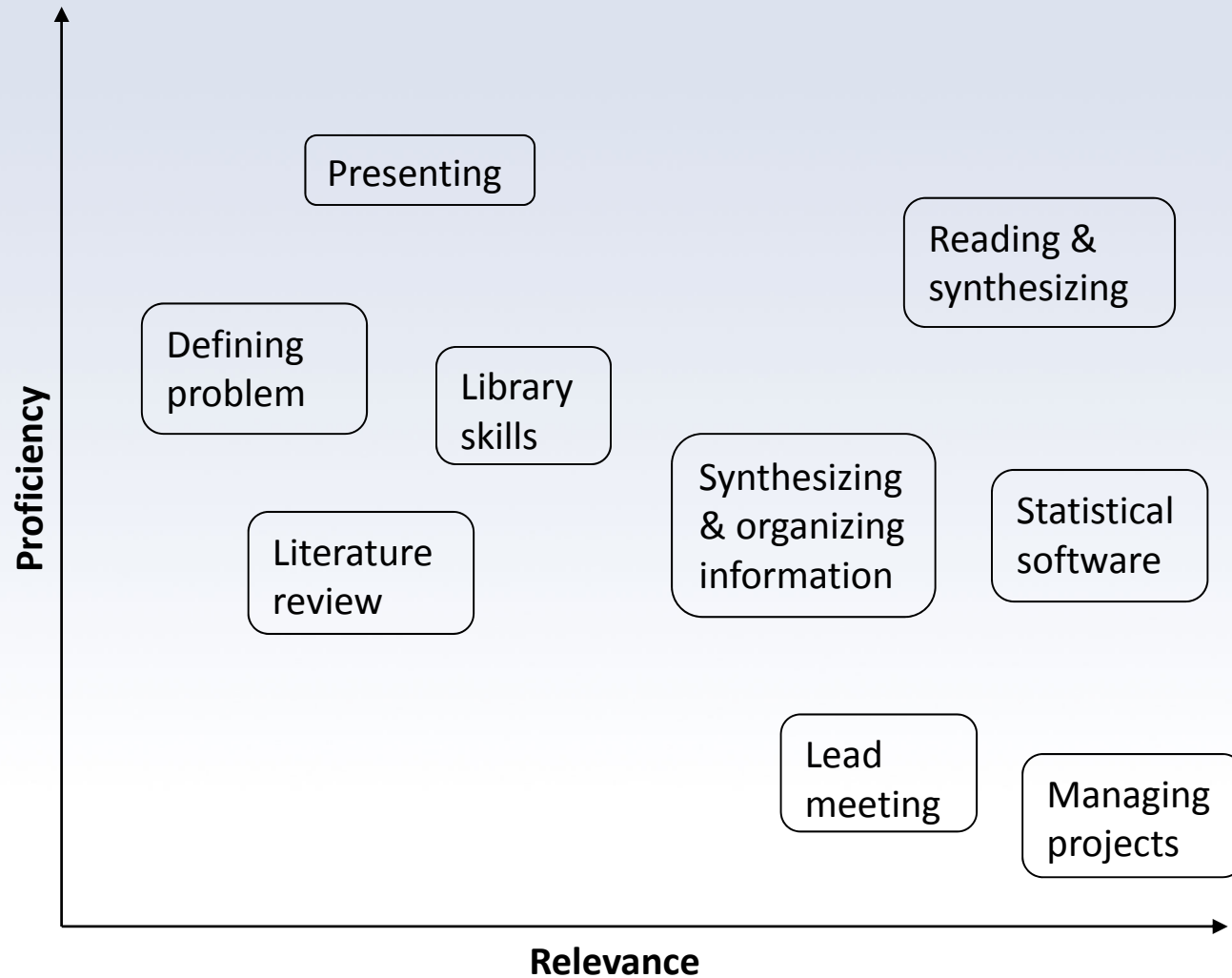
*“Identifying my strengths and even those not intimately associated with my field of study helped open my eyes to other possible career choices.”*



# Mapping Experiences



# Assessing Strengths



# Create a Plan

- Customized plan for each student
- Select 3 areas to develop
- Connected to career goals



# Skill Development

- Activities can be organized or student-initiated
- Connect students to campus resources through website



THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

Admissions Academic Support Resources Funding & Employment Student Life Diversity International

## CareerSTART: Teaching and Mentoring

Themes: [LEAD](#) and [ACHIEVE](#)

Teaching and mentoring skills are valuable in the classroom as well as for training and developing talent.

### Resources

- [Center for Teaching Excellence \(CTE\)](#)
- [College Teaching Effectiveness Network \(CTEN\)](#)
- [EOL 585: College Teaching](#)
- [LAS 490: Successful College Teaching Through Technology and Research](#)
- [Graduate minor in College Teaching](#)

### Ideas for Activities

- Participate in CTE workshops
- Get involved in the CTEN, a student organization
- Find the CTE certificate program that's right for you
- Seek feedback on a course you are teaching and incorporate changes
- Read literature on teaching in your field
- Attend CTEN programs
- Take advantage of an opportunity to teach a different course or develop new materials
- Volunteer to mentor an incoming graduate student
- Mentor an undergraduate researcher

# Sample CareerSTART Plan

Focus Areas	Presentation and Writing	Teaching and Mentoring	Career Development
<b>Activity 1</b>	Read <i>How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper</i>	Attend workshop from Center from Teaching Excellence	Attend CV writing workshop and revise my CV
<b>Activity 2</b>	Meet with Prof. Lee and learn about ways to organize and write a journal article	Arrange for a classroom evaluation of my teaching	Interview faculty member from a teaching-focused college or university and learn about teaching at this institution
<b>Activity 3</b>	Meet with Writers Workshop to get feedback on paper draft	At upcoming conference, attend session on pedagogical approaches in my field	Research funding options for a postdoc



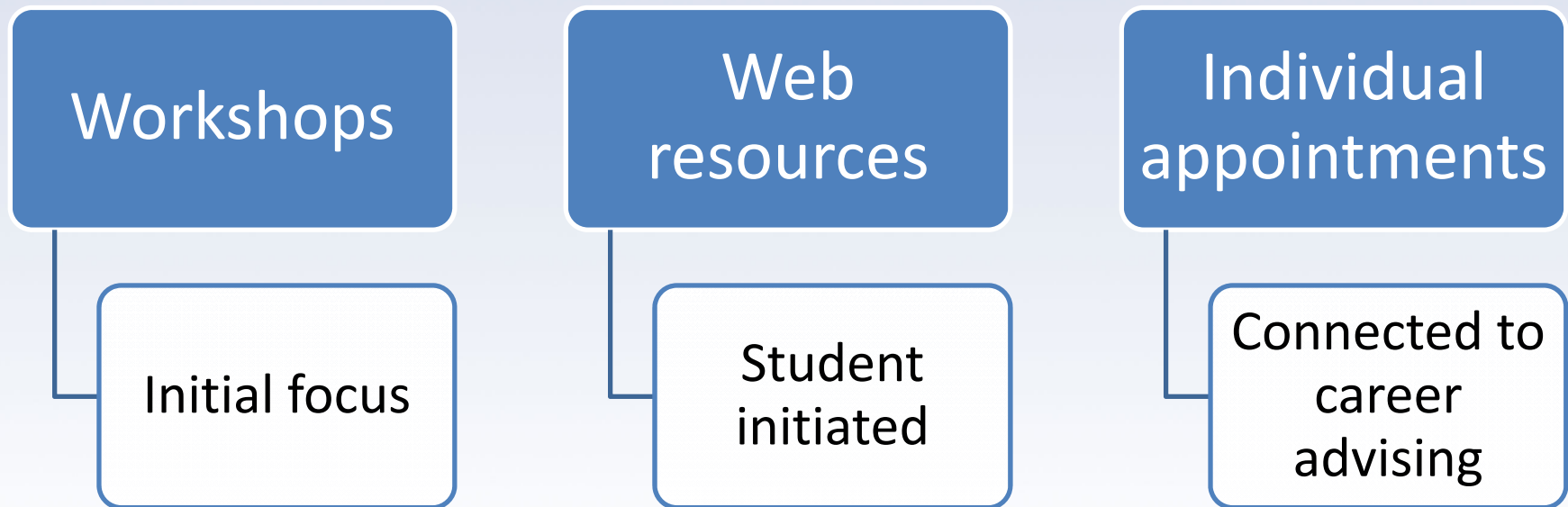
# Reflection Exercises

## Prompt to Consider

- Reasons for selecting activity
- Skills or knowledge gained and how this could be useful
- Follow-up activities, if any
- Any necessary adjustments to plan



# Delivery Methods





# Workshop Approach

## Format

- Co-facilitate interactive workshop
- Cover skills assessment and plan creation
- Brainstorm ideas with participants

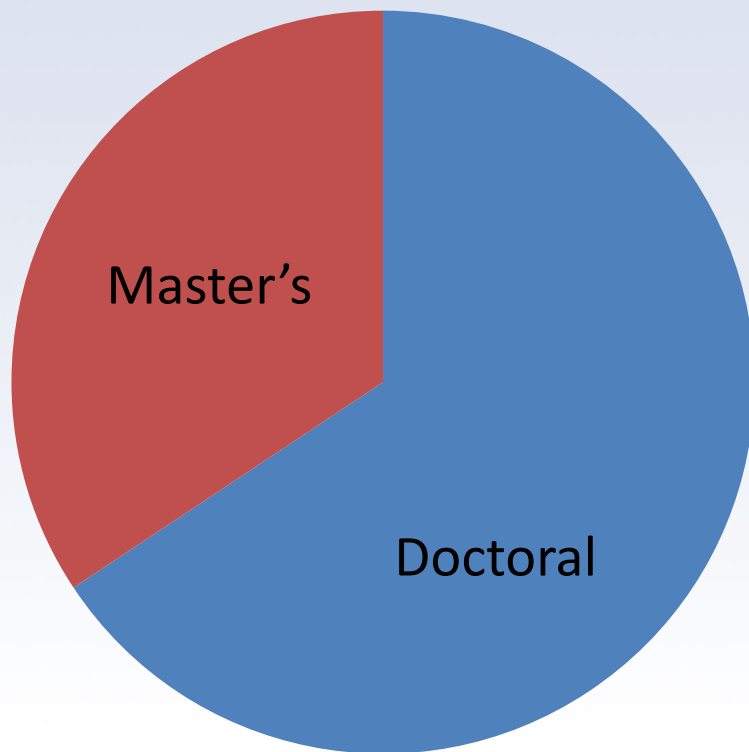
## Frequency

- Started spring 2010
- About 20 students per workshop
- 2 hour workshop held 5 times a year

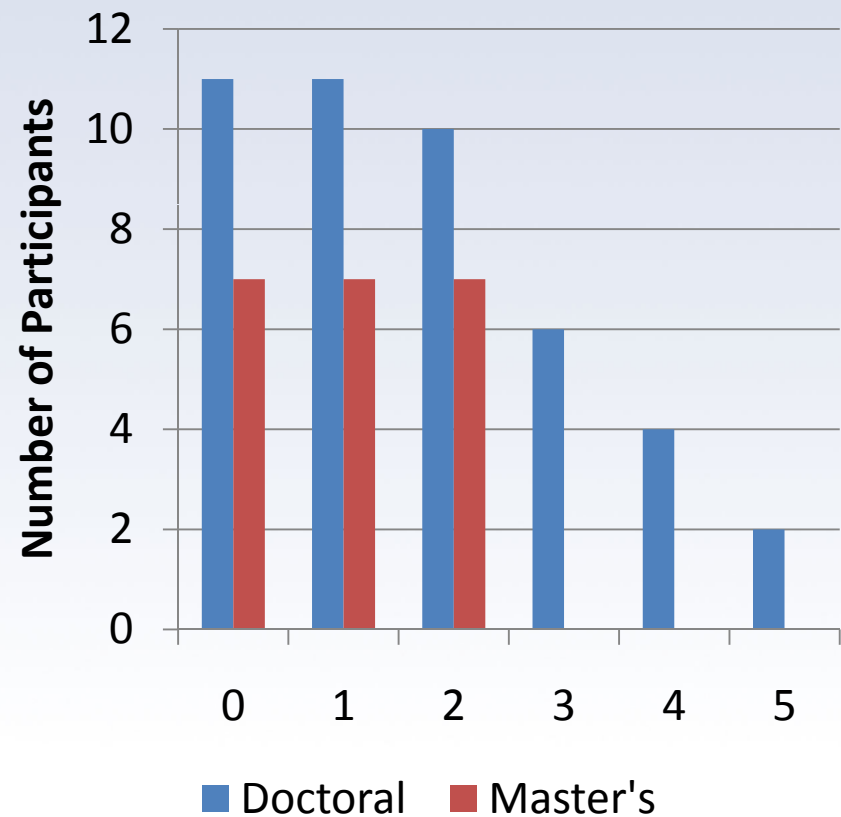


# Workshop Participants

## Degree Level



## Years Until Graduation



# Seeking Student Feedback

## Workshop evaluations

- Same day as event

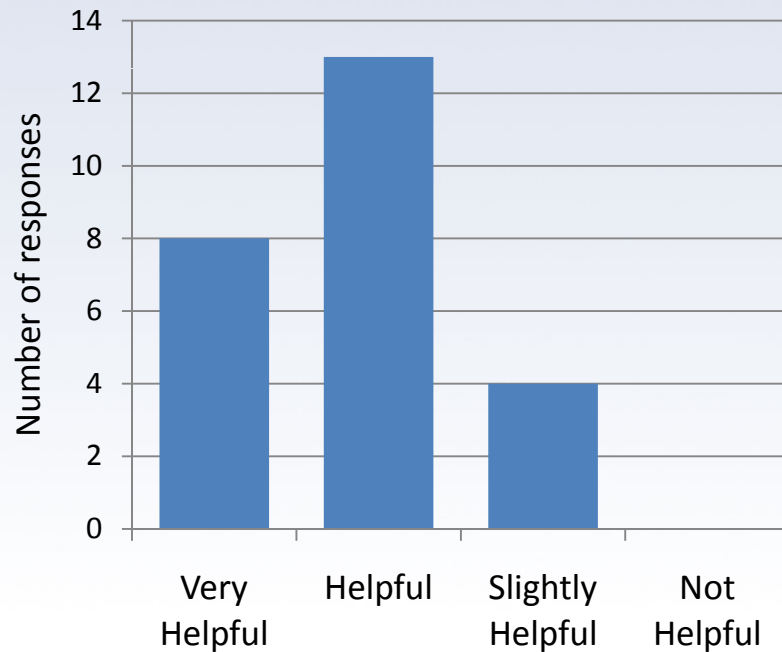
## Follow up email survey

- About 3-6 months after workshop
- 33% response rate

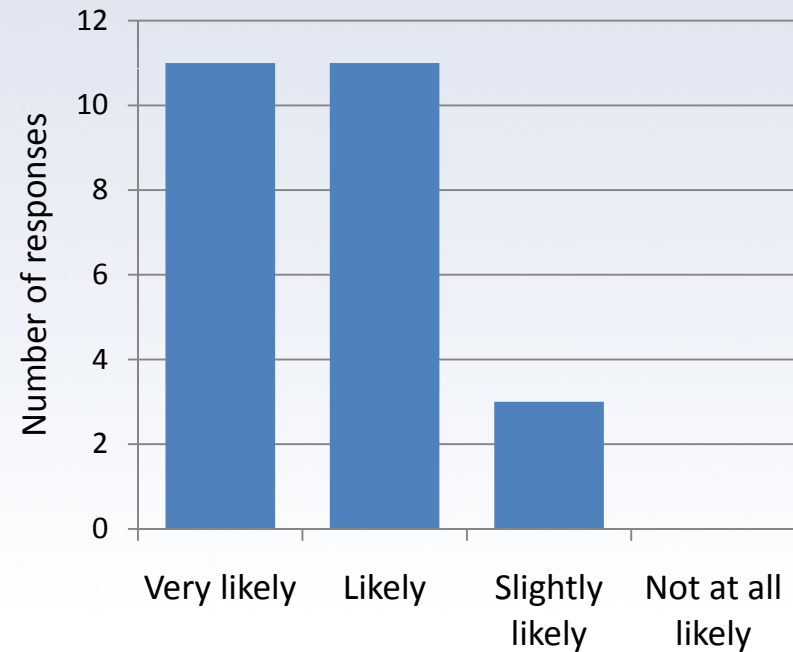


# Student Response

Was the workshop helpful in developing a plan for your professional development?



How likely would you be to recommend CareerSTART to a friend?



# Student Feedback

*“I like actually sitting down and making plans. It helps me to think about my goals, and how I'll actually go about attaining them.”*

*“Organizing [my strengths and goals] and visualizing the connections between them gave me a more cohesive vision for my career.”*



# Future Directions

## Examine student suggestions

- Break workshop into two sessions
- More contact (email list, weekly assignments)

## Expand online tools

## Promote as a resource for departments



# CareerSTART in Conclusion

- Provides professional development tools for early and mid-stage graduate students
- Developed in partnership with students
- Connects students with campus resources



# Final Thoughts

*“Writing out specific goals/activities helped me figure out how I would go about preparing for the career path I have in mind, and I have already begun pursuing those activities.”*





# How many activities from your plan have you completed?

