



Civic Innovation

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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About Take Action Lab: Civic Innovation

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Take Action Lab with Tilting Futures is an immersive, interdisciplinary learning experience designed to develop student's capacity to analyze, engage with, and contribute to complex social systems through structured coursework, applied field work and integrative learning experiences.

Offered in Cape Town, South Africa, the Civic Innovation focus examines how individuals and communities participate in shaping social, economic, and civic systems. The program integrates academic instruction with community-based apprenticeship placements, enabling students to apply theoretical frameworks in real-world contexts.

Grounded in systems thinking and reflective practice, the curriculum is delivered through a combination of online learning, in-person seminars, and supervised field-based experiences. Emphasis is placed on analytical reasoning, communication, ethical engagement, and applied problem-solving within diverse and globally situated contexts.



Eligible to earn 12
 University of
Pittsburgh
academic credits

Take Action Lab is a holistic learning experience blending **personal, professional** and **academic** learning through all parts of our program.

Often these three areas are treated as separate entities, but we know that real life and learning are not like that. For example, how students lead will reflect who they are, as well as their knowledge, skills, and experiences. So, we've designed Take Action Lab to weave together all these aspects and be a program where theory meets practice.



Take Action Lab Syllabi and Learning Outcomes

With our Curriculum Pillars at the heart of all we do, students will:



Forge enduring relationships and develop community, trust, and a supportive culture within their cohort.



Analyze how their experiences and cultural identity have shaped their sense of self and worldview.



Discover how to responsibly and respectfully serve a community.

Transformative Learning

We encourage students to go beyond their comfort zone as they interrogate and challenge themselves, their ideas and the world around them. Our goal is that they leave Take Action Lab with new skills and mindsets and feel hopeful that they can make a difference in the world.



SELF AWARENESS

Students reflect on their values, identities, and assumptions to better understand their role in the world and how power, privilege, and history shape perspectives and experiences.



WELLBEING

Students develop resilience and emotional regulation in the face of complexity and uncertainty.



SENSE OF AGENCY

Students explore their role and motivation in relation to community and global challenges.



INTER-RELATEDNESS

Students recognize their interdependence with others and the natural world.



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

Students embrace curiosity and openness to multiple ways of knowing and consider how culture and identity shape worldview and action.



EMPATHY

Students cultivate empathy and deep listening across lines of difference and build trust and relationships rooted in mutual respect and care.

Systems Transformation

We support students to think about how they can play a role in creating more just and life-enhancing systems for all. Students build on their learning in Take Action Lab as they navigate the complexities of contributing to, and leading, positive change in their own communities and contexts.

Students apply critical self-awareness to lead or contribute meaningfully by challenging inequities and co-creating alternatives that center fairness and dignity.

Students engage constructively in change processes, even in ambiguous or high-stakes contexts, and sustain both their own and the community's wellbeing through the process.

Students align their actions with collective efforts to build fair and life-enhancing systems.

Students design or support solutions that honor relational systems and ecological balance.

Students integrate diverse knowledge systems into innovative, context-specific solutions and design or advocate for culturally responsive practices, policies, or programs.

Students facilitate inclusive dialogue and collaboration to address collective challenges and can mobilize collective action through community-building and partnership.

An Academic Credit Program

Take Action Lab Semester Program is a **12 Credit Program**. Those credits are shared across 3 syllabi that each have specific Learning Outcomes:

Eligible to earn 12
 University of
Pittsburgh
academic credits

Civic Innovation in a Global Context Syllabus

3 Credits

This interdisciplinary course explores Civic Innovation through global, cultural, and community-based lenses, with a focus on understanding how individuals and groups participate in shaping social, economic, and political systems. Students examine the structures, institutions, and dynamics that influence community life and collective wellbeing across diverse contexts, particularly in Cape Town. Finally, they will consider their own role and future in contributing to Civic Innovation.

Systems Thinking for Social Change Syllabus

3 Credits

Students will learn about the core ideas and concepts in Systems Thinking, and then learn how to use and apply different Systems Thinking tools to help deepen their understanding of Civic Innovation, particularly in Cape Town. They will consider how processes of change happen and the role of Systems Leadership in support of transformation. Students will reflect on their own future impact.

Global Social Impact Apprenticeship Syllabus

6 Credits

While working at their Apprenticeship, students will apply their learning about Civic Innovation and Systems Change to deepen their understanding of their host organization. They will learn about stakeholder mapping and strategies for achieving organizational goals in the Cape Town context. They will get to practice intercultural and professional skills and learn directly from people working in the field.

Component Parts of Take Action Lab

The Take Action Lab Curriculum Pillars and Learning Outcomes are integrated into all parts of the program.



Pre Departure

101 Courses

Our 3 asynchronous 101 Courses give students foundational knowledge and level setting as they come into the program. Students can self pace through these courses once they have enrolled onto Take Action Lab.

➔ An Introduction to South African History

➔ An Introduction to Systems Thinking

➔ An Introduction to Civic Innovation

Foundations

Our Foundations Course is a 4 week online course with expert instructors, delivered in small group synchronous sessions 3 times a week, and supplemented by pre-work and reflections. These highly engaging sessions prepare students to be humble, curious learners, engage with the theme of the program and help them build an intentional community as they engage with their diverse cohort.



WEEKS 1 & 2

Take Action Lab Curriculum Pillars



WEEKS 3 & 4

Civic Innovation Case Studies from South Africa

In Country Orientation

Orientation week supports students as they transition into their host country and community. Students receive an introduction to Cape Town, co-living, and all aspects of the Take Action Lab program; gain important health and safety knowledge and skills; and continue to build community with each other and the TAL team.

Co-Living

Students find community and a sense of home in their shared house with other Take Action Lab students. Through cooking meals together, sharing stories, and making plans with new friends from all over the world, students experience deep intercultural immersion.



Apprenticeship

Students are placed in an apprenticeship with an organization working in Civic Innovation in Cape Town. They work at this organization Monday - Thursday each week, with guidance from their Apprenticeship Supervisor and supported by a Take Action Lab Program Coordinator Mentor. During the week they complete work for the organization, as well as specific tasks over the 10 weeks that support their learning and growth:

- ➔ 1:1 Meetings with their Supervisor and TAL Mentor
- ➔ A weekly Professional Reflection
- ➔ Weekly Work Plan
- ➔ A group project that help students contextualise their apprenticeship through the lens of Civic Innovation and Systems Thinking

Learning Connects

Students take part in 8 Learning Connects that take place on Fridays. Four workshops focus on theory and help students deepen their understanding of Civic Innovation and Systems Thinking. Students also go on site visits so they can learn how to apply the theory or see it in action.





Students focus on developing their own leadership skills as well as having the opportunity to exchange ideas with their peers and reflect on their learning. The sessions are themed:

- ➔ Seeing the System
- ➔ Understanding the System
- ➔ Being the Change
- ➔ Bringing the Change

Meetups

Students have the opportunity to explore beaches, go hiking, and visit other must-see attractions in Cape Town and its surroundings.

Cultural Series

Every week, students can participate in a workshop to learn more about the music, history, dance, and art of Cape Town, immersing themselves in the diverse aspects of the local culture.

Wrap Up

The final week in-country is spent consolidating learning and preparing for future impact. Students present their work, reflect on their learning, and take part in future-oriented workshops to consider how they will take the lessons from Take Action Lab forward and continue their development as ethical changemakers. They also get an opportunity to say meaningful goodbyes and to celebrate their achievements.

- ➔ Festival of Learning
- ➔ Leading Systems Change workshop
- ➔ Group and individual reflections
- ➔ Speak Ups



Portfolios

Take Action Lab centers experiential learning, taking a hands-on approach in a real-life setting. Work is captured in a Portfolio, embedded into the Take Action Lab experience and an integral part of the experiential learning cycle. Students do:



Weekly Reflections

- ➔ Professional Reflections focusing on the student Apprenticeship experience
- ➔ Thematic Reflections to deepen student understanding of Civic Innovation and Systems Thinking in the context of their Cape Town experiences

Group Projects

- ➔ Students work with their Apprenticeship peers to deepen their understanding of the organization and its work
- ➔ Students showcase their understanding of Civic Innovation and Systems Thinking through their own inquiries
- ➔ Students create their own Festival of Learning together

Individual Work

- Students complete a weekly Apprenticeship Workplan
- Students apply the different tools they learn in their Learning Connects to their Apprenticeship and to their own context
- Students create a future-oriented Personal Plan

Each syllabus has Learning Outcomes and students receive clear instructions and success criteria to guide them as they complete their Portfolios. Students can access a Resource Center with additional reading materials to help them deepen and extend their learning.

If students are getting credit from the University of Pittsburgh, they will receive a letter grade for each Portfolio, which correlates to each syllabus.

Alumnihood

The alumni's journey after graduating is divided into two key components, Pathways and Possibilities, and Alumnihood.



Pathways and Possibilities

Pathways and Possibilities is the final pillar of the programme supporting students' transition from participants to Tilting Futures alumni. With more focussed programming alumni will have the opportunity to participate in:



Induction

IN PERSON | IN COUNTRY

Aimed to celebrate the successful completion of their programme and to induct students into the exclusive Tilting Futures Global Community of Alumni.



Outroduction

VIRTUAL | 2 WEEKS
AFTER LEAVING COUNTRY

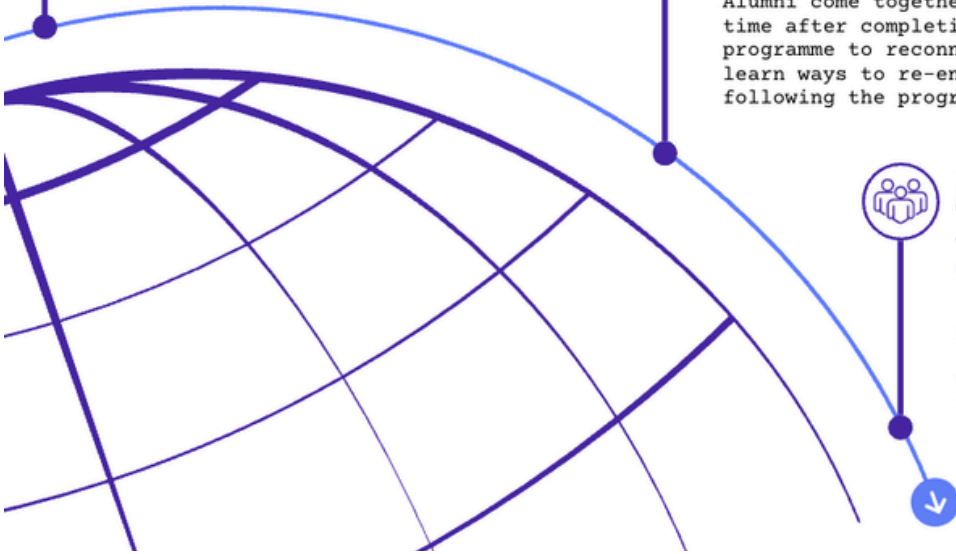
Alumni come together for the first time after completing their programme to reconnect, debrief and learn ways to re-enter life following the programme.



Alumni Stewardship

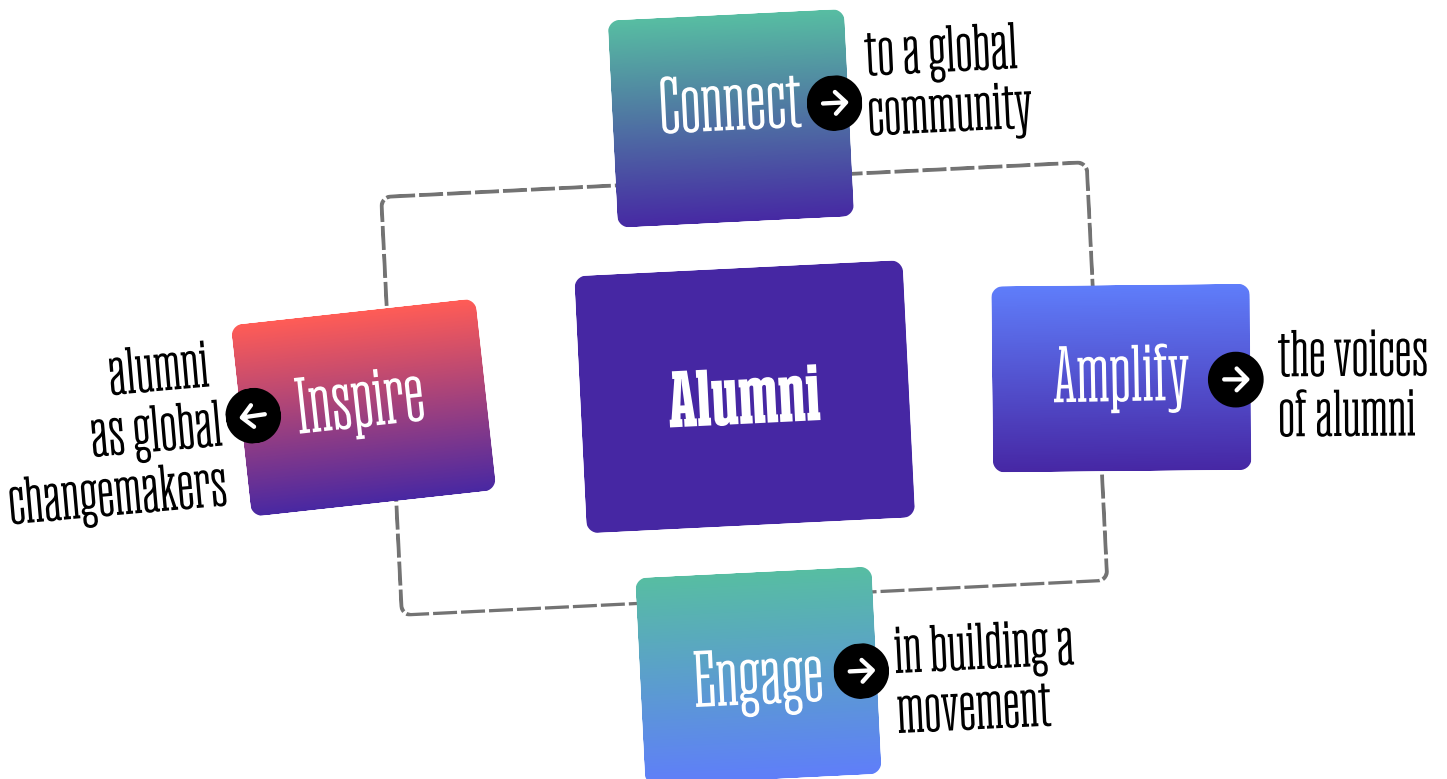
VIRTUAL | REST OF
THE YEAR

Intentional and additional touch points with our most recent graduates, 1on1 calls, a reconnect at 6 months with a final self reflective survey at the end of their 1 year of alumnihood.



Alumni Programming

Programming for alumni follows 4 key initiatives:





ALUMNI AMBASSADORS

A diverse group of dedicated graduates who believe in Tilting Futures' mission and actively collaborate to empower young people to drive global change. They also gain access to exclusive trainings and opportunities for continued growth.



LEADING IDEAS

Showcases innovative ideas and perspectives that are influencing and transforming the world today.



WORK WONDERS

A virtual session where Tilting Futures alumni share their career journeys to inspire others exploring diverse professional paths.



EXPERT-LED WORKSHOPS

Brings experts together with Tilting Futures alumni to share insights, build skills, and spark inspiration.



GLOBAL GATHERING

An annual virtual gathering of alumni with speakers and events.



PARTNERSHIPS

Exclusive collaborations with global organizations that offer valuable opportunities for internships, continued learning, and leadership development.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Amplifying the voices of our alumni doing impactful work across the globe.



ALUMNI DIGEST

With news and updates on opportunities curated for our alumni.



APPLY NOW

Our Other Programs

TAKE ACTION LAB Environment & Sustainability

PENANG ISLAND, MALAYSIA

FULL SEMESTER
FEBRUARY TERM | AUGUST TERM

Students get to be at the forefront of environmental and sustainability efforts while living in a vibrant, multicultural city.

They'll work side-by-side with organizations advancing sustainability, protecting nature, and building climate-resilient communities.

TAKE ACTION LAB Accelerator

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA OR
PENANG ISLAND, MALAYSIA

SUMMER PROGRAM
JUNE TERM

Based on the semester-long program, Take Action Lab Accelerator offers the same transformative experience as the full-term Take Action Lab in a condensed nine-week format.

Open to students currently enrolled in college or university anywhere in the world; this program is designed to democratize access to immersive global learning.



APPLY NOW



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FUTURE - TILT IT**

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