Now more than ever, Arts & Science students and new alumni can benefit from the expertise of people who have been where they are now — and succeeded. Transitioning from university to a career is always a challenge, but it has been made even more so by the significant uncertainty brought on by the pandemic. The Next Steps Conference can help you kickstart your career with valuable insights and opportunities to grow your professional network. Learn about the new and surprising directions in which your Arts & Science degree can take you. What will your next steps be?

Now is the time to explore your future!
Get Ready for the Conference

This year’s conference will take place on Zoom from January 25 to 27. It will include a series of concurrent panels each morning, with the option to attend as many or as few as you wish.

What to expect

Panels

To allow you to fully engage with panelist alumni, each session will be an open discussion rather than a formal presentation. You are invited to bring your questions to each session and indicate your interest in asking a question by using the “Raise Hand” (to ask directly) or “Chat” functions. Throughout the session, listen to questions asked by others, reflect on speakers’ comments and note connections you might wish to follow up with afterward. Here are some questions you might consider asking:

- How did you handle the transition from U of T into your career?
- What is one thing you wish you had known when you were leaving university?
- How do you think your degree helped you in your career?
- What is an exciting area of growth in your field?
- How has the workplace changed since you started your career?
- What advice do you have for students and new alumni?
- How did you know you made the right choice in your career?
- What was the biggest challenge you faced when starting your career and how did you overcome it?
- What role did networking play in your job search?
- Did you plan to be in the role you are in today?
- What role did further education play in getting your current role?

Networking

More than ever, networking is an important tool in career exploration and job searches. Although networking in person is on hold, we can continue to make those important connections through online events such as this conference.

Immediately following each discussion, panelists and participants will move into breakout rooms for networking, Q&A and general discussion. To maximize your interaction with panelists, alumni and other participants, you are strongly encouraged to turn your camera on. This is an opportunity to practice — in a low-pressure space — engaging with professionals in an online environment.
Before the conference: How to prepare

- Review the schedule of topics and speakers and prioritize which panels best suit your learning needs and goals.
- Research the speakers for the panels you plan to attend and come prepared with questions.
- Set your learning goals by identifying what you hope to learn. Deciding on this in advance will make it easier to recognize when someone talks about a topic or issue related to your goals.
- Test your technology in advance of the Zoom meeting.
- Update your Zoom software to be able to move between networking rooms.

During the conference: How to participate

- We recommend you join the Zoom link at least five minutes in advance of the panel. This will allow you to:
  - Ensure your technology is working
  - Change your Zoom name to your T-Card name to gain admittance
  - Introduce yourself to others in the group via chat before the panel begins
- Post your questions in the chat as they come up.
- You are encouraged to turn your camera on. Ask questions by using the “Raise Hand” function; the emcee will call on you to speak. You may also ask your questions in the chat box.

After the conference: How to learn more / How to follow up

- Revisit your learning goals and reflect on what you have learned.
- Complete the post-event survey that will be emailed to you. This will help us improve the event for future years.
- Connect with the panelists! Send a thank you message within a few days of the conference to those who shared contact information.
- Continue your connections with U of T:
  - Attend alumni events such as SHAKER and Backpack to Briefcase (b2B)
  - Attend career exploration and education workshops, industry panels and events
  - Use your alumni credit toward continuing education with the School of Continuing Studies
  - Find more resources for career, advising, research, mentorship and co-curricular experiences at U of T’s Career & Co-Curricular Learning Network