**Behavioral Story Topic List**

1. **Mistakes & Failure (at work/school)**
2. Describe a failure and how you overcome it.

Munich Re has been my dream company since I was a freshman, but I didn’t get chance to work there. To be a qualified actuarial analyst, I have been making a great effort to pass the actuarial exams called SOA Exam P and FM by self-learning. I also developed strong coding skills such as Python, R, and VBA. All of these are highlighted in my resume. The next step is to attend a few resume workshops and try to take advantage of every chance to present my resume in person to company representatives by attending some info sessions hosted by insurance companies and networking with them in career fairs such as ASNA. This was done to show my keen interest in the positions and to deepen their impressions of me. I also actively attended some mock interviews with our career consultants. Finally, in the last fall term, I got Munich Re’s offer.

1. **Teamwork & Leadership** (at work/school)
2. Tell me about a time your team or organization was undergoing some change. How did it impact you and how did you adapt?/ Tell me a time when you were frustrated by change./ Describe a work situation where you set a positive example for others

When the pandemic started, our company switched from in-person to online working. I initially struggled to communicate with my coworkers because discussing projects online was inefficient. To address this issue, I decided to hold online meetings rather than sending messages when there was a problem with our project. When we are online face-to-face, we are able to discuss the project openly, quickly, and professionally. Moreover, when communicating with coworkers in an online meeting, I will respond with a smile, nod of the head, or a polite gesture that expresses my thoughts on their statements. Moreover, I will listen to their ideas first and then use the opportunity to demonstrate whether I understand the message or need clarification. If my ideas are different from those of my coworkers, I think it’s important to be respectful of their feelings. However, I will be open and honest with them about my thoughts.

1. Describe a past experience when you met a new group of people, and how you bonded with them./ Experience you tried to build connections with important people

I met our reserving team in the office on the first day of my internship at Munich Re. The first thing I did to connect with them was to greet them warmly and remember their names when they did their self-introduction. Furthermore, I scheduled one-on-one meetings or coffee chats with them during the first week to be familiar with each other. Whatever brings us together, I will strengthen that bond by focusing on what we have in common, such as shared work experiences or interests. Finally, asking questions is a great way to connect with others. As a new member of our team, I usually have a lot of questions. But I never assume answers and always reach out to my coworkers at the very beginning. Surprisingly, I have found that frequent communication allows our team to bond more stronger. With their positive feedback, I’m able to work more efficiently and smoothly.

1. Experience: Leadership experience in teamwork / How to display your leadership? / Tell experience working as a team. What's your role? How did you fulfill your responsibility? / Any extracurricular activities / your most successful teamwork? / tell us about a time when you took the initiative to set goals and objectives even though you were not prompted or directed by others to do so. / Do you prefer working alone or in a group?

I believe success as a leader requires one to have a passion for taking the initiative, thinking outside the box, and persevering in adversity. (I enjoy working on teams, and I find that I am more successful at work when I have a team supporting me.) In my second year, I started a non-profit association called the University of Toronto Chinese Volunteer Association, with the ambition of advocating equal access to education for students living in rural areas of China. To meet the fundraising goals, I scheduled brainstorming meetings where our group could come together to find innovative ideas and new tactics. We took the time to listen to everyone’s ideas, and by the end of the year, we succeeded to organize innovative fund-raising events such as Food Festival and Charity Run. By collaborating with local stores and achieving a better product price, we exceeded our fundraising goals by 20%. With the support of the “sponsors”, we are able to gain more revenue, enlarge our impact and bring in valuable fundraisers. My communication and innovation skills have significantly improved by working in a team. In the summertime, I collaborated with the local Chinese government to provide volunteer tutoring opportunities for UofT students and bring donations to the talented students there.

1. Qualifications: What personalities make you a good team member? / 最喜欢和什么样的人一起工作? / Your ideal work environment? / Describe the characteristics leaders needs to have. / Describe the attributes for a good teacher

I like to work with people who are very responsive, positive and actively listening. (These are also the qualifications that I have.) Effective communication is an important qualification for being a strong team player, which needs me to be very responsive. The best way to communicate with team members is through group meetings or 1-on-1 conversations or emails. Moreover, while it’s not a technical skill, positivity can be instrumental when looking to become a better team player. Bringing energy and enthusiasm to every team meeting will make our teammates feel more comfortable bringing ideas to the team or seeking support. Last but not least, it’s important to take time to listen and reflect. When listening to my peers, I will let people see my engagement by making eye contact, and keeping the body language positive such as smiling and nodding. Not only does this build trust; but it also encourages innovation and creativity.

1. **Pressure** (at work/school)
2. What is your greatest fear?

I fear losing my identity. I moved to Canada for about five years. I developed a taste for eating steak, watching hockey, and enjoying Christmas. I gradually discovered that I shared fewer and fewer things in common with my family in China and maybe had some misunderstandings. I eventually realized the problem and began to talk with my family more frequently. As a result, my family is now more diverse and inclusive. We now celebrate Christmas as well as Chinese New Year. I am a little bit Canadian, but also my family’s daughter. Gender and nationality cannot define who I am. No matter what I eat or what festival I celebrate, I’m the only person who can define myself.

1. What would you do when you are feeling pressured? (multitasking)

I often find that stress is a great motivator for me, and I work well under the pressure. When I begin to feel stressed at work, I use a few strategies to help me stay focused. First, if I have a pressing deadline, I work to prioritize my most important tasks and get my work done. I find that being adaptable helps me handle pressure quite well. Another strategy I use is finding a positive mindset. I try to reframe every challenge as an opportunity. This helps me stay motivated and excited to try more difficult tasks. In a previous internship, there was a day I focused on a high-priority task. While doing so, management called my department into an all-hands meeting over the phone. I was unable to move away from my work, so I joined the call and continued. Due to the high-priority nature of my current task, I knew I had to keep working. Finally, I was able to deliver a great finished task, and my manager was happy with the final result.

1. **Multitasking** (at work/school)
2. Experience: Describe a time when you faced a significant amount of conflict in a job, school, or internship. / Tell us a time you had several assignments due. How did you make sure you complete all of them on time and did a good job? / Tell us about a time when you must cope with strict deadlines or time demands.

There was a time when I had several assignments due at university. To make sure I completed all of them on time and did a great job, I tried to have a to-do list and created a prioritization system. To assign low, mid, or high priority to each task on the list, I first considered the due dates. For example, I will work on projects that have earlier deadlines. The next consideration is how long it takes to complete a task. In many cases, I prioritize easier tasks. Doing so allows me to accomplish more throughout the day. If I have to multitask and finish all tasks in the same amount of time, I break down tasks into smaller objectives. With smaller objectives, I determine which ones are most critical for getting the full task done and prioritize them first. Then I work accordingly – taking care of the tasks with the highest priority first, regardless of the project they belong to. That’s what I always try to do.

(In a previous internship, there was a day I focused on a high-priority task. While doing so, management called my department into an all-hands meeting over the phone. I was unable to move away from my work, so I joined the call and continued. Due to the high-priority nature of my current task, I knew I had to keep working. I chose to multitask because I needed to complete both objectives at the same time, as they were both very important. Finally, I was able to deliver a great finished task, and my manager was happy with the final result.)

1. **Challenge & Risk** (at work/school)
2. Describe a project which shows your analytical / problem-solving ability / challenging project / an important project / Tell me about a project that asked you to code. Which code language? What did you learn? / A most challenging project, why challenging, and how it turned out / How do you handling challenges?

There was a time when I had a challenging project that required our team to use R to forecast the outcome of the 2020 American presidential election. We fitted the survey data with logistic linear regression model and predict the results of 2020. However, our progress stalled when the prediction output revealed that the probability of Donald Trump being elected as president is surprisingly high. After deeply investigating our R codes and conducting some online research, we discovered that the American president is elected by the Electoral College rather than all citizens, which makes our project get back on track. Finally, we revised our report's analysis and used the stratification sampling method to rebuild the model. Our final forecast was very close to the actual. What I learned from this project is that we should better understand the project's background or culture before embarking on any project, especially when we are given limited information.

1. Beyond expectation working experience / What was the best compliment that you receive? / Tell me your proudest professional accomplishment / most valuable achievement / Your creative solution to a problem, why valuable

During my internship at Intact, I was assigned to investigate reasons for broker orders of Motor Vehicle Records going over budget. I extracted data from SAS and imported it into Excel before performing cost analysis and presenting the results to the manager. I saw an opportunity to go above and beyond by making eye-catching charts and graphs comparing costs across months in PowerPoint. (The data looked messy in Excel, such that I decided to make some eye-catching charts and graphs comparing costs across months.) I also create a user-friendly and self-service interface in Power BI, which better visualized the cost analysis. I presented the final result clearly and precisely, using a slideshow in our meeting. My charts helped everyone in the meeting to stay engaged, and our brainstorming session about our next steps went well. Finally, the investigation helps our company saved the cost by 13%, and my PowerPoint and Power BI files are saved as templates and were used by Intact throughout Canada.

1. Tell us about a time you needed to get information from someone who was not very responsive. / Tell us about a time you had to work with someone whose personality was different from yours.

I can think back to a time when I was working closely with my director at Munich Re who is not very responsive. I was trying to get data and analysis ideas on cashflows from him, however, it would sometimes take two weeks before he would email me back. I could definitely empathize with this as I know he mentioned that he was very busy and worked out of the country, however, I also had to recognize that it was slowing down the planning for my project. What I did was first I would set a reminder for myself to follow up on my initial emails two days after I sent my first email. Next, I determined to set up Teams meetings to help us communicate more information at once. This really helped in our ability to meet the deadlines we both needed.

1. What kinds of problems do you deal with right now?

(Last year, my team won an award for most innovative process improvement. This achievement is beyond my expectation of working experience/This award is the best compliment that I receive. My role was to automate the sensitive test process, which investigates the factors that significantly affect final indication value. We used the industry-specific testing templates and implemented R and VBA for data scraping. This solution saw significant efficiency for the firm and is now used by Munich Re throughout the world.)

Developed an R program to summarize cash flows to a particular granularity and compared under IFRS 4 and IFRS 17 standards, utilized Power BI to visualize cash flow patterns across several quarters and lines of business. Supported the 2022 Appointed Actuary Report by conducting stress test, including financial condition test and scenario test, justifying the methods used, and reconciling data in the report with Excel

I will show my attitude directly that it’s the baseline for an employee to strictly abide by company policy under any circumstances. So I would definitely not do this Immoral thing. Moreover, I will consult experienced coworkers for suggestions and escalate to the director or HR to see what they would do to handle this situation. Finally, I will actively offer additional help, like figuring out how to achieve our goal morally.

1. **Conflicts**
2. 自己和别人的conflicts
3. Tell me about a time when everyone was against your opinion on a team and how you handle it.

As an entry-level actuary, my manager assigned me to a team working on cash flow analysis. The associates in the team frequently talked over me during brainstorming sessions and dismissed some of my ideas as inexperienced. Feeling frustrated, I reached out to the team lead, who advised me to speak to the associates about how their behavior affected me. So I did, and they apologized. We immediately developed a healthy working relationship. The experience taught me that communication can resolve most conflicts.

1. Give me an example of when you wish you work differently with your colleague or your team. / 想做但没做的事

There is a time when I was assigned to a team and wished I could react differently. (I wanted to rebuilt our professional relationship but I haven’t done yet.) I was responsible for summarizing cashflows in a particular granularity and creating pivot tables to compare them. But my teammates kept criticizing me for my work – and they had a point in their criticism cuz I failed to remove duplicates in my tables. Sure, they could have used better words, been more diplomatic, or perhaps chosen a more appropriate time to criticize me. But I still reacted inappropriately. My defense was an attack and started the fight. Even though we eventually calmed down after a few minutes, the bridges were burnt and since then we barely spoke to each other. I wish I could turn back the clock, and react differently to their criticism. But it isn’t possible, so at least I try to remember the lesson I learned, and react more appropriately to the conflict situations in the workplace since then. (Or even better, I could rebuild our professional relationship.)

1. Describe a time when you respond to feedback given by a professor or your boss./When your work is criticized.

While working for Intact as an actuary intern, I was asked to create presentation slides for my project on investigating the reason for broker orders of Motor Vehicle Records out of budget. After the manager reviewed my work, she commented that some slides looked messy. This manager had different design concepts in mind and was not impressed with many of the style decisions I made. She had a background working for a creative agency in the past, so I chose to listen to her feedback, absorb the lessons she provided, and then incorporate those ideas into the presentation. In the end, the presentation looked very professional, and the manager was pleased with my changes. I kept the template in my laptop and made a few similar versions to have a library of slides to choose from whenever she needed a project from me. I felt inspired by her ideas and today I feel much more comfortable creating eye-catching presentations.

1. Describe a time when you had a disagreement with a friend. How did you address it?

There was a time when I had a project that require us to analyze the reserve performance for automobile insurance. When it came to selecting Loss Development Factors, I had a completely different opinion than my friend because this process is highly subjective. She wanted to make LDF follow a consistently upward or downward trend which is able to predict the future trends. However, I believe that some special considerations, such as Covid 19, should be made. To address this problem, I organized a group meeting to show each of our ideas. We appeared to be at odds at first, but then I realized that we were both concerned with two halves of the solution. Finally, we combined our thoughts and our professor was impressed with our research methodology. As a result, we received 90% of the full mark. What I learned from this project is that putting myself in the shoes of others is essential for problem-solving.

1. 作为领导者如何解决团队中的conflicts

There was a time when I had a project that require us to analyze the reserve performance for automobile insurance. When it came to selecting Loss Development Factors, I had a completely different opinion than my teammates because this process is highly subjective. All of my teammates want LDF to consistently trend upward or downward because it can predict future trends. However, I believe that some special considerations, such as Covid 19, should be made. So I organized a group meeting to show my ideas. We appeared to be at odds at first, but I was able to understand their point of view and realize that we were both concerned with two halves of the solution. We would only be able to succeed if we consider all the aspects. Finally, our professor was impressed with our research methodology. As a result, we receive 90% of the full mark, placing us in the top three of the entire class. What I learned from this project is that putting myself in the shoes of others is essential for problem-solving.

1. **Decision**
2. Tell me about a time that influenced someone’s decision.
3. Describe a successful recommendation you have made and what is the result?

In my junior year, due to an interest in machine learning, I joined a research team to explore the relationship between heterogeneity described by a convolutional neural network (CNN) image features and the “between-group heterogeneity” of the dataset measured by population descriptors. The first challenge our team encountered was accessing and describing between-group heterogeneity, which was unfamiliar to us. Reckoning previous statistics courses, I proposed using Cochran’s Q as a metric to measure the deviation of each group’s mean deviation from the grand. The suggestion opened up new horizons for this project, and the data analysis process went smoothly. After that, we implemented K-means clustering analysis to record the predicted accuracy of each cluster. The predicted accuracy of the tested model result proved that Cochran’s Q was a solid measure in quantifying the between-group heterogeneity. The positive project results manifested my research capabilities and placed my analytical thinking and problem-solving skills to the test.

1. Tell me about a time you made a decision
2. What steps would you take before making a big decision / How do you make a decision under pressure?

When I have to make a big decision, the first thing I look at is the timeframe. If I have a week to make a decision, my approach is going to be different than if I have one hour. Once I’ve determined the time frame, I gather the key pieces of information that will help me make an informed decision. It’s not always possible to know the outcome 100%, but I try to gather as much information as possible to make an educated guess at what will give us the best result. There was a time when I received three university offers with the same concentration and had to choose one within one month. I spent a significant amount of time on each campus because it will be where I study, live, and grow. After comparing their academic backgrounds and career-related program performance, I decided to go to the University of Toronto.

1. What is the riskiest decision you have made?

The riskiest decision I ever made was to leave the actuarial science industry. I had a desire to move into workforce planning as a quantitative analyst. The risk meant that if I were unsuccessful, I would be looking for a new job in a plodding economy. The payoff would be that I would finally be in a sector in which I was truly interested. Through hard work and leveraging my connections, I try to make a great career for myself over the next two years. This hard work is what has brought me here today with an exceptional education opportunity in front of me.

1. **Ethics**
2. How do you define ethics?

I define ethics a system of standards of good or right conduct that provides the rules of behavior acceptable within any social, religious, or organized group. Every group has its own standards and may be contradictory to the standards of others. It is this contradiction among groups that deny the idea of absolute morality or moral behavior.

1. 如果上司让你做不道德的事,你会怎么做

In my previous intern, we worked on a project which required the team to use multiple tools and software packages. My manager provided the required software, but I noticed an issue with one of them immediately after I installed it. After researching the software application provider, I found we had a pirated version. I struggled with the dilemma of embarrassing or upsetting my employer, but I couldn't stand to use a software package that was illegally pirated. So I reached out to my manager and explained my findings. Since the company couldn't afford the licensed application, I recommended a cheaper alternative for the ongoing project.

1. Describe a time you acted against the policy but felt that you were morally right.

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1. What does integrity mean for you? How do you know when someone has integrity?

When I think of integrity, I think of someone who stands by their values. Of course, your values can change as you learn and grow. However, someone with integrity will stand by what they think is right. I try to maintain my values in all aspects of my life and always maintain my morals. I believe in transparency, independence, and respect both in my personal and professional life. This helps me maintain healthy relationships and boundaries.

**Behavioral Question List**

1. **Why questions**
2. Why this company/school?/Tell us about a company or organization you admire.
3. Why this division/program? / What skills you expect to gain from this program? / We are proud of our curriculum, what courses/topics are you excited about? / How did you prepare for this program? / How does this program fit your career goal? / What does operation research mean to you? / What factors attract you to apply for MSOR?

At (school name), I am eager to research the positive and negative aspects of big data and financial technology to identify and measure the magnitude of emerging problems and develop new technologies to address them. This detailed exploration will enhance my understanding of machine-learning models for consumer credit risk management and applications of secure multi-party computation to financial regulation. The Advanced Analytics and Data Science courses and Analytics Certificate are especially exciting as they will allow me to understand shallow models and train deep neural networks in an economic context. I also want to further improve my technical skills around asset pricing and the ensemble method, which are critical to forming accurately priced derivatives. Overall, I believe that (the program) will further sharpen my analytical skills to create advanced and intuitive approaches to simplify data processing such as alternative datasets to automate trading decisions and executions that I created at Munich Re.

My interest in performing this program is deeply rooted for many ways. The work I accomplished to get ready to do the best job possible in this program includes academic research, volunteer projects, and the ideal education to make me the best candidate. Several of my capstone courses for my major tied directly into the Financial Engineering such as data analysis and other statistic classes. I also collaborated with other group members to research altering heterogeneity by machine learning in Python. The positive project results manifested my research capabilities and placed my problem-solving skills to the test. These experiences will better prepare me for the hedge fund.

1. Why this location? How do you feel about New York city?

I think New York City in is full of opportunities. A lot of businesses operate in New York City, so while the competition for jobs is high, there are lots of different opportunities I could choose to work in. And it’s also well known that New York City is the financial capital of the world. Many big financial corporations are based in the city, including the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ. So there are a lot of networking opportunities in New York.

1. Why this industry? What do you like about the finance industry?
2. Why good fit for our company/school? / Why we hire/admit you rather than others?

I’m the person who is very responsive, positive and actively listening. I’m a great team player, and I really feel like that’s one skill that really sets me apart from other candidates. Whatever team I might be managing, I end up making fast friends. I’m also very effective at communicating and getting my teammates to be at their A-game without having to push them or be too micro-managing. This also reflects the fact that I am very responsive. Moreover, while it’s not a technical skill, positivity is another quality I have. Bringing energy and enthusiasm to every team meeting make my teammates feel more comfortable bringing ideas to the team or seeking support. Last but not least, it’s important to take time to listen and reflect. When listening to my peers, I will let people see my engagement by making eye contact and keeping the body language positive such as smiling and nodding. Not only does this build trust; but it also encourages innovation and creativity.

1. **Career related**
2. Career goals in the short (5 yrs)/long run (10 yrs)?/ When u were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?/ Do you want to be famous? In what way? 详细到公司地点
3. Where do you see yourself in XXX years?
4. Describe a goal and how you prepare for it

My short-term goal is to be a quantitative analyst, providing mathematical or statistical solutions to financial and risk management. I’m confident that if I do my work with excellence, opportunities will inevitably open up for me. My long-term goal is to return to China and establish my own quantitative “for-profit” hedge fund, expanding its operations overseas and investing in the North American markets, as they present significant growth opportunities. I will utilize my previous working experience in the hedge fund to that effect.

1. **Quality related**
2. Three traits / two things you are good at / your unique point / describe the qualities you think a success student should have / How would peers describe your characters

I have always believed that perseverance is a very rare and precious quality, which is also the weapon I push myself to be equipped with all the time. When I found that my academic performance was not satisfactory in my freshman and sophomore, I did not give up, but re-examined my choices, set up new goals, and executed step by step towards them in a planned manner. As a result, not only did I improve my academic performance and gain opportunities to intern at famous companies, but also participated in some significant activities, all of which have improved my professional and comprehensive skills. In the process, there were many challenges, but I persisted in overcoming all the difficulties and reaching one planned goal after another.

(I’m also communicative because I greatly enjoy collaborative work and would love the opportunity to learn from others if given this position. Finally, I will describe myself as reliable because I stick to my commitments. If I volunteer to do something, you can guarantee I'll get it done to the best of my abilities.)

1. Three weaknesses? What's your biggest weakness? How this program help you?

Working with top professionals during my internship made me realize my lack of work experience and professional knowledge, which even inspired my desire to further study. Although standing out among my peers, I still had a long way to go to master advanced technology and become an elite in the industry. Such awareness has become my motivation to move forward, and let me have a clearer study plan and goals at the postgraduate, I believe that a person with a plan can often get twice the result with half the effort.

To achieve my career dream, I need to acquire comprehensive training in advanced financial theory and methodology, top research platforms, and rich resources to refine myself in practical applications. As far as I know, the Master of Finance at MIT is a career-oriented degree that is dedicated to providing practical coursework in line with the demands of the financial industry. I believe it will well prepare me for my future career plan. At the same time, I have great confidence that with your rigorous training and inspiration, I’ll reach my full potential in financial and become an outstanding composite talent in the future.

1. introvert or extrovert

I think I’m more extrovert than introvert because I enjoy working on teams, and I find that I am more successful at work when I have a team supporting me. In my second year, I started a non-profit association called the University of Toronto Chinese Volunteer Association, with the ambition of advocating equal access to education for students living in rural areas of China. To meet the fundraising goals, I scheduled brainstorming meetings where our group could come together to find innovative ideas and new tactics. We took the time to listen to everyone’s ideas, and by the end of the year, we succeeded to organize innovative fund-raising events such as Food Festival and Charity Run. By collaborating with local stores and achieving a better product price, we exceeded our fundraising goals by 20%. With the support of the “sponsors”, we are able to gain more revenue, enlarge our impact and bring in valuable fundraisers. My communication and innovation skills have significantly improved by working in a team.

1. 岗位/项目需要的三个特质
2. What do you think people should at least do once in their lives? / what do you do for fun? / Describe the best travel experience that you have / what do you do for fun? If you were to enter an academic/career path entirely unrelated to science and engineering, what would it be and why? / Tell us something that is not on your application

I think I will be professional diver or diving coach.

Scuba diving was an incredibly interesting sport that piqued my interest while traveling in the Maldives. I almost immediately signed up for a diving course. My extensive involvement in diving has enabled me to develop persistence and increased focus in facing challenges. My first failure of diving deep made me almost gave up because I have aqua/phobia. By signing up for more breathwork classes and practicing the technique constantly, I got the free diving certificate from PADI finally.

1. Who is the smartest person you know / Describe an MIT aluminum that you know / Describe one of your role models / Who do you want to have dinner with? / Tell us about an academic/professional mentor you have had. What are some things you learned from them?

The smartest person I know / My role model is Willian Li, who researches the positive and negative aspects of big data and financial technology to identify and measure the magnitude of emerging problems and develop new technologies to address them. He is currently working on Software Engineering and the Structure and Evolution of the United States Code which I’m pretty interested in. Exploring the publications he wrote enhanced my understanding of machine-learning models for consumer credit risk management and applications of secure multi-party computation to financial regulation. He is my role model because of his strong work ethic and continuous drive to learn new things to stay relevant in the field. I look for opportunities that are relative to my position, ones related to developing soft skills and opportunities that can help me reach my professional and personal goals. I’m looking forward to working with him in the future.

1. What was the last thing that makes you laugh out loud? / a fun story / Tell a joke

I let my cat lick the inside of plain yogurt containers when I have finished the contents. Yesterday I was finishing up the lunch dishes when he looked up from the cleaned yogurt container on the floor. His face was dotted with white yogurt, including the tip of his nose. I burst out laughing. He looked silly and adorable all at the same time. I love my cat.

How many lips does a flower have? Tulips

1. What’s the most important thing on your resume?

The most important part in my resume is working experience. The invaluable internship opportunities with The Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company and Intact Financial Corporation in 2022 honed my data analysis-related skills learned from class, further expanded my mastery of Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), SAS, SQL, and prepared me for the challenging actuarial internship with Munich Reinsurance Company of Canada. On the one hand, it was arduous because I was recruited to the Reserving - IFRS 17 team which is hard-core, and specialized, and took charge of handling big data. The traditional software or method to deal with big data in our team was Excel which was time-consuming. To improve efficiency, I suggested using R to sum the loss of a particular granularity and Power BI to further visualize results. On the other hand, it was rewarding because the new “bundle” saved 80% of our time and was indeed a life-saver for our team. My enhanced ability in data science, teamwork, communication, and time management further assures my potential to succeed in your Finance program.

1. Why is it important to make a good first impression?

There are many reasons why first impressions are important. Usually, I think first impressions involve some form of evaluation and result in an initial perception or mental idea of a person. For example, hiring managers often assess a candidate's tone and body language during the first meeting to determine if that person is a good fit for the company. Making a positive first impression at a job interview offers several benefits, including an increased likelihood of success, attracting the interview’s attention, and facilitating a good interview start. A good first impression can help reduce or eliminate tensions during an interview and will have a lasting effect. For example, when I did an interview with Munich Re, I made a joke before we started and it broke the tension of the interview. Finally, I was able to work there and maintain a positive working relationship with my coworkers.

1. The motto that influences you the most / What’s the most valuable thing that you have learned in your life

There is a motto saying “birds of a feather flock together” which influencing me the most, and this doesn’t change when I get older. I’ve always tried to be friendly to everyone I meet, but at the same time, I remember this motto and have also become pickier about whom I spend the majority of my time with. I’ve learned to spot certain positive qualities in people and seek these qualities out. Surrounding myself with people who inspire me will make me a better person. Some friends come and go but the ones who have stayed have had a huge impact on my decisions and happiness. They have supported me and cheered me on and they have shaped me into the person I have become.

1. If you had a time machine, what point in the past or future would you visit? / Tell me about a piece of news that you lately follow. / If you were a superhero, which super force do you want to choose and why?

(I'd like to go back in time to the ten years before WWII because I want to experience the social environment prior to WWII and learn deeply why the war happened.) / (Well, it is essential to follow the news to remain up-to-date with current affairs. Along with, national news I also follow international news.) According to some historians, our society follows the same pattern and these are all signs of world war III. There was an epidemic prior to WWII that resulted in an increase in social tensions and a high level of anger in society. The Covid19 pandemic is coming to an end, social tensions are rising and economic growth has not been great. For example, some technology companies in the United States are experiencing layoffs recently. Furthermore, the war in Ukraine has been going on for a year. (I felt so bad about this and that’s why I want to go back and try to figure out how to stop the world war.) / (I felt very bad about this news cuz world war may make many innocent people lost their lives in it.)

1. 被录取后最想做的事

I'll inform my family and friends of the good news. I'm thinking about printing a copy of my admission letter to show a close friend and my family, just to make sure I wasn't in some sort of hyper-realistic dream or something. I'm going to sit down after a few parties and think about what else I want to do before going to the class. I intend to continue taking courses on Coursera, particularly those related to the topics that will be covered in the program course curriculum. Furthermore, I plan to connect with my classmates such as on LinkedIn or Quera, and get more enrolled in MIT communities. Last but not least, I will travel to Cambridge a few months before the fall semester to become more acquainted.

1. Book/movie

The last book I read was 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' by Arthur Conan Doyle. It's a Sherlock Holmes mystery novel that features the legend of a supernatural hound. I enjoy mysteries because they present interesting problems to solve and allow me to think critically while I read. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are characteristics I pride myself on having. When I worked as an actuarial analyst, I often needed to make decisions about the overall strategy of our data analysis. Once, during my internship at Intact, I was assigned to investigate reasons for broker orders of Motor Vehicle Records going over budget. The data looked messy in Excel, such that I decided to make some eye-catching charts and graphs comparing costs across months. I also create a user-friendly and self-service interface in Power BI, which better visualized the cost analysis. I presented the final result clearly and precisely, using a slideshow in our meeting. My charts helped everyone in the meeting to stay engaged, and our brainstorming session about our next steps went well. Finally, the investigation helps our company saved the cost by 13%, and my PowerPoint and Power BI files are saved as templates and were used by Intact throughout Canada.

1. What are three of the most significant numbers in your life

The first number is my Social Insurance Number. With this number, I’m able to be employed in Canada. Working is extremely important for me. It means more than just getting paid. It means being able to make my own choices about how I want to live my life.

The second number is my parents’ birthday. They are important days to show appreciation towards my parents for their commitment to raising a family, strengthening the bond of love, and creating an atmosphere of happiness and understanding between family members.

The third number is the number of the library card. Reading is important for me because it improves my focus, memory, empathy, and communication skills. It can reduce stress and improve my mental health. Reading also allows me to learn new things to help me succeed in my work and relationships.

1. Do you prefer laboratory classes or lecture classes, and why?

I prefer laboratory classes because it involves more working on teams, and I find that I am more successful at work when I have a team supporting me. For example, in my second year, I started a non-profit association called the University of Toronto Chinese Volunteer Association, with the ambition of advocating equal access to education for students living in rural areas of China. To meet the fundraising goals, I scheduled brainstorming meetings where our group could come together to find innovative ideas and new tactics. We took the time to listen to everyone’s ideas, and by the end of the year, we succeeded to organize innovative fund-raising events such as Food Festival and Charity Run. By collaborating with local stores and achieving a better product price, we exceeded our fundraising goals by 20%. With the support of the “sponsors”, we are able to gain more revenue, enlarge our impact and bring in valuable fundraisers. My communication and innovation skills have significantly improved by working in a team. In the summertime, I collaborated with the local Chinese government to provide volunteer tutoring opportunities for UofT students and bring donations to the talented students there.

1. What's your favorite food and why?

Ice cream is my favorite snack because it's always hot and dry inside my condo in wintertime Toronto. I enjoy having an ice cream after dinner. It makes me relaxed.

1. Do you feel your academic record accurately reflects your abilities and potential?

I believe that my academic record should be broken down into two phases: the freshman and sophomore years, and the junior and senior years. I was uncertain of my major when I first enrolled in college, and this state of confusion prevented me from giving my studies my entire attention. Therefore, this inefficient study model directly resulted in my unsatisfactory academic performance in the first two years. It wasn't until my junior year that I matured quickly and realized I’m talented in actuarial science. After figuring out my direction and setting a goal, I have been making great effort and did exceptionally well in all of my major courses, particularly those that were related to actuarial science and received grades of “A+”. As long as I put in the effort, I’m able to reach my full potential and get great performance. This also boosts my confidence I can overcome all the challenges of graduate school and achieve my academic goals.

1. How do you define/measure success?

I consider reaching both small and large milestones towards a goal as a success. My short-term goal is to be a quantitative analyst, providing mathematical or statistical solutions to financial and risk management. I’m confident that if I do my work with excellence, opportunities will inevitably open up for me. My long-term goal is to establish my own quantitative “for-profit” hedge fund, expanding its operations overseas and investing in the North American markets, as they present significant growth opportunities. I will utilize my previous working experience in the hedge fund to that effect. I view success as a process where challenges encourage me to look at things from different perspectives and to find creative solutions to problems. Facing those challenges helps me progress personally at the same time that I hopefully make progress toward company objectives. I can leave work feeling successful as long as I have made some progress toward solving a problem or reaching a goal, even if I have not reached every personal goal at the end of the day.

1. Which course have largest impact on your academic life? Tell us about the course you took in which you learned the most from?

A course “Financial Principles” have the largest impact on my academic life, which exploited my knowledge of portfolio management, enhanced my execution ability, and further assured my confidence in digging into financial engineering field. The project in this course aims to manage risks for ten companies by mimicking real-world trading in financial derivatives. After fulfilling my responsibilities as an “employee,” out of curiosity, I continued to work as a “trader” who has $200 million in a real-time trading platform called RPM. My portfolio value increased drastically, and the strategies learned from this course made me gain $42 million out of $200 million in one month. Due to the rapid increase, I was awarded the title of “Class Best Trader”. The satisfaction of designing portfolio strategies and the sense of accomplishment motivated me to take a further step in financial engineering. With advanced data analysis and coding skills accumulated in undergraduate study, I have confidence in succeeding in my future quantitative analyst journey.

1. What do you think the next big society-changing technological innovation will be?

I think in tomorrow’s world, cancer will be managed like any chronic health condition — we will be able to precisely identify what we may be facing and be empowered to overcome it. In other words, a new normal will emerge in how we can manage cancer. We will see more early and proactive screening with improved diagnostics innovation, such as in better genome sequencing technology that promises higher ease of testing, higher accuracy and ideally at an affordable cost. Early detection and intervention in common cancer types will not only save lives but reduce the financial and emotional burden of late discovery. We will also see a revolution in treatment propelled by technology. Gene editing that brings fewer side effects will have made greater headway. With advances in early screening and treatment going hand in hand, cancer will no longer inspires such fear among people.

1. How to spend $10 million?

I’d first sit on the $10 million for three months to let the initial excitement wear off. Money is most easily blown when it first comes in. Then I’d do a net worth analysis to see where I’m light on assets. I’d allocate money towards public equities, risk free assets, and private equity investments. By keeping 40% of the $10 million windfall, I know I’ll be safe no matter what I do with the other 60%. Then I’d ask my parents, close friends, and other loved ones if they are in need of any financial assistance. Finally, I will create a perpetual giving machine. I’d set up a $3 million trust to perpetually donate to a particular charity based off the returns generated from the principal. With a 2% – 5% rate of return, I could donate $60,000 – $150,000 a year forever.

1. Describe your ideal learning environment

My ideal learning environment is one where I'm able to work as part of a team and that allows everyone's talents to grow. I've found that this type of environment is most conducive to my productivity and allows me to remain passionate about my study and helps me express my creativity to the best of my ability."

1. How engineering affects the world?

I think engineering is a subject which tackles some of the world’s biggest problems; helping to save lives and create fantastic new technological advancements that can improve the way we live. For example, the advancements in medical technology are down to the work conducted by engineers as well as the creation of devices that help to save lives and improve the quality of life for others.

1. If your home is in fire, what would you save?

I think I will save my laptop. I know it sounds odd and an impersonal item to pick, but it seems to hold my life. Think about how many passwords you have saved on there… contact information for people… it seems like not many photos are printed anymore, they’re all on my computer. I also have all the study materials in it, these are the most valuable things for me.

1. Any question for us?

In your opinion, what is the single most important indicator of success in this role?