

Where a Tufts Undergraduate Education Can Take You ...

"What will my child do after college?" This practical question underscores every aspect of your parenting as you watch your child move from college applications to internships to commencement and beyond.

Knowing this, we asked seven graduates, from 2011 to 2006, to discuss their first steps after Tufts. With one alumnus on the job for less than two months and another with five years of experience and a recent promotion, this group represents a developmental span that is both recent, yet still unfolding.

With its divergent interests and career aspirations, our student population defies branding. Likewise, our alumni panel reflects a variety of professional disciplines and industries: Government, Nonprofit, Healthcare Administration, Investment Consulting, Engineering, Clinical Research, and Marketing. One has begun graduate studies and two others are in the process of applying to graduate school where they will further refine their career plans. Their endorsement of Tufts and where it has led them is both unequivocal and deeply moving.

Elizabeth "Lilly" Bogis, 2010

Double Major: Economics & Art History
Consulting Associate, Cambridge Associates

Alexandra Cheetham, 2010

Double Major: Biopsychology & French
Clinical Research Coordinator
Department of Psychiatric Neurosciences
Massachusetts General Hospital

Matthew Cohen, 2008

Major: Psychology
Process Improvement Project Analyst
Faulkner Hospital

Moises Cohen, 2011

Major: International Relations
Resident in Social Enterprise,
Americorps Member at Year Up

Laura Espy, 2006

Major: Sociology
Minor: Communications & Media Studies
Senior Marketing Manager
Global Channel Marketing, EMC Corp.

Michelle Kelly, 2010

Major: History, Minor: Economics
Contract Specialist
U.S. General Services Administration

Brendon Providence, 2008

Major: Electrical & Computer Engineering
M.S. Electrical Engineering, expected 2013
Project Manager
Computer & Software Engineer
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

How has your Tufts education been of value to you?

I appreciate the freedom I had to study any subject that sparked an interest in me. I feel fortunate that I did not decide to attend a business school where the subjects I studied in school would have most likely led to a narrower job path. Having a liberal arts degree from Tufts allowed me to explore many different opportunities. Potential employers also recognized the value of my liberal arts education and what I could potentially bring to their organization.

~ Michelle Kelly

Specializing in the field of international relations has been equally as important as the general knowledge I acquired in adjunct courses and in fulfilling distribution requirements. My liberal arts degree allowed me to engage deeply with international relations by accumulating knowledge and experience, and having special access to professors in my field. Through my courses in international relations I gained skills that have been essential for me, ranging from writing papers with strong arguments to understanding the news. Many of the courses outside of my major, however, have expanded my mind in extraordinarily different ways that have been especially useful post-college. Through my electives – which ranged from contemporary Jewish fiction and psychology of negotiation to logic and environmental biology – I extended my intellectual interests to alternate subjects and learned to think critically in a variety of topics. More importantly, these courses have allowed me to think and relate intelligently to many kinds of people and topics.

~ Moises Cohen

When I graduated from Tufts in May of 2008, I was unsure as to where my first job would be and I questioned my decision to pursue a liberal arts degree. After all, friends who had more of a focus in their degree knew where to look and often had the specific skill set to immediately position themselves as competitive candidates. Now, more than three years removed from graduation, I understand the myopic nature of that viewpoint. In this rapidly changing world, having a very specific skill set is likely not as valuable as it had been in prior generations. My liberal arts education taught me to reflect and ultimately, it led me to discover my passions and my ambitions. It was the flexibility in terms of the classes that I could take and the exposure to different professors and peer groups that led me to learn about myself in a way that I otherwise may not have. Through several work experiences, my Tufts education has equipped me well to handle challenges and use these experiences to move forward.

~ Matthew Cohen

Coming out of school with a well rounded background supports you regardless of what you do in your first job. Being able to be articulate, knowledgeable, and global has served me well. Tufts really emphasized that last piece on being a global citizen. A huge piece of my job is to support our programs on a global level. This requires me to have an understanding of the world and how different cultures and economies might change how we function in that area.

~ Laura Espy

While I initially thought that I would be at a disadvantage in finance, coming from a liberal arts school rather than an undergrad finance or business program, my multi-disciplinary broad-based education has proven to be an invaluable asset. Investment consulting requires me to conduct research and think critically about the markets, develop an investment thesis, and make recommendations to our clients. I used many of the same skills to write a sound research paper or deliver a persuasive presentation in my courses at Tufts. A liberal arts education has given me the ability to think critically about the global economy.

~ Lilly Bogis

The most valuable part of my liberal arts education has been the ability to draw on knowledge from a variety of different disciplines to be able to make fully informed and educated decisions. At Tufts I often had intellectually stimulating conversations about race, culture, politics, the economy, and almost anything else. Interacting with people with many different perspectives at Tufts has given me a deeper understanding of the world and people around me, now that I have graduated.

~ Alexandra Cheetham

As an engineer, I can talk about the value of attending a liberal arts school. I purposely chose Tufts because it had a small engineering school. This allowed me to interact with people from a variety of majors unlike my own. Doing that prepared me for my interactions with professionals from extremely diverse backgrounds.

~ Brendon Providence

Which aspects of your Tufts education contributed to your readiness for your first job?

The skills I learned for time management, prioritizing tasks, and thinking independently prepared me best for working full time. I believe the strength of my writing and comprehension has also contributed to my success in my current position. In my biopsychology major, I was also able to concentrate in courses that taught me anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology. These topics have been instrumental in my understanding of neuro-anatomy and the results obtained in my current research.

~ Alexandra Cheetham

A number of factors contributed to my readiness for my first job after college. At Tufts, I gained experience in the Socratic tradition of inquiry and debate; a sound grasp of economic theory; the ability to think critically and to question assumptions. This training allows me to approach an issue or problem from multiple angles. The collaborative environment at Tufts led me to be proactive and solutions-oriented in my job. When I started working on client teams, I already had substantial experience collaborating with peers. In addition, I benefitted from leadership opportunities on campus, such as my role as president of the Tufts Financial Group.

~ Lilly Bogis

When I was a junior at Tufts University, I was chosen to be a researcher with a professor working on a project which demanded a pretty heavy Computer Science background. Such a background was one that I did not have. Even so, I got the project and was forced to catch up and bring my skills up to par. Not only were these skills a direct influence at my job, but the "thrown into the fire" environment has been my entire career at Volpe.

~ Brendon Providence

Being a good writer contributed to my readiness for my first job. A huge portion of my job is being able to accomplish two things: 1) Cohesively and concisely take vast amounts of detailed data and create compelling messaging for a target audience and 2) Be able to take those ideas and express them in multiple formats such as presentations and newsletters. If you are able to communicate your message well, you can accomplish your goals. My liberal arts classes emphasized writing and this allowed me to confidently take on these challenges at work.

~ Laura Espy

One of the many benefits of graduating from a school like Tufts is the expansive and impressive alumni network. It was through two different Tufts alumni that I acquired internships, during my sophomore and senior years, which helped set the foundation for much of my path. Throughout my time at Tufts, I was fortunate enough to have been connected with several other alumni who offered invaluable insight as I transitioned out of school.

~ Matthew Cohen

Working with diverse groups of people through Tufts courses and extracurricular activities has been very helpful in training me how to talk to others. Tufts is an institution filled with smart people who constantly encourage intellectual, meaningful, and fulfilling conversations about any range of topics. This has helped me better engage with many types of people in my workspace, especially those who are in senior positions. Attending professors' office hours, being honest about the subjects that are especially challenging for me, and asking a lot of questions have tremendously contributed to my readiness for my job. Some people at work act like they understand when they don't and arbitrarily agree with people (especially people in positions of power). At Tufts, I learned that people appreciate when you express confusion and dissenting opinion because it shows that you are genuine and truly interested in learning. I also learned from applying my studies in extracurricular activities. For instance, I took courses about leadership and negotiation while at the same time having a leadership role in a group at Tufts. This allowed me to be conscious and think carefully about my actions in the group. For example, I was able to analyze my actions as a leader based on leadership models I was learning in class, or apply a negotiation strategy I had read about in a textbook to real life situations. This has been helpful for my job because I had the opportunity to practice analyzing my actions based on academic material. Whenever I have a task at work, I first analyze the task from an intellectual point of view and try to understand why it is important, and then strategize the best and most efficient way to complete the task.

~ Moises Cohen

The core of a liberal arts education is helpful in almost everything I do. Specifically, the ability to reason through an issue, research, and present an argument with supporting laws and regulations is very similar in structure to how I completed most of my college work. In addition, time management, self-discipline, and teamwork (as the result of being a member of an athletic team) have been invaluable.

~ Michelle Kelly

Which experiences and resources at Tufts did you find most helpful in preparing you for life after Tufts?

I spent a large amount of time in the theater and dance departments. Believe it or not, this directly correlated with my skills as a project manager. Being a part of a team with different personalities that must work together towards an immovable deadline is no different than accomplishing that goal in a workplace atmosphere. While I participated in these activities for fun, they too prepared me for my career.

~ Laura Espy

I used Career Services extensively for resume writing and interview preparation. I also met often with the pre-health advisor. I appreciate that I can still use these resources as an alum, and find that many people from other institutions don't have this luxury. My experiences volunteering in research labs at Tufts helped give me the foundation of skills to build on in my position now in clinical research. The opportunities to work with professors, and be a part of different labs was definitely an asset on my application to jobs and has also helped me decide on my career path.

~ Alexandra Cheetham

Career Services was one of the most helpful resources at Tufts, from the advice they provided me during intern and job searches to the experience I gained working in a friendly and helpful environment as a volunteer Peer Advisor (in Career Services). Classmates, teammates and friends who graduated before me were also helpful in passing down useful advice regarding everything from job searches to places to live.

~ Michelle Kelly

Tufts is known for its talented professors and a broad range of opportunities to gain exposure in many different arenas, but in terms of preparation for life outside of school, the Career Services office was equally valuable. Between the different panels and the networking events, starting as early as freshman year, I understood the scope of opportunities available to me. More than that, I learned how to explore those opportunities. Beyond the group presentations, the individual career counseling kept me focused and grounded throughout my college career. The unwavering support and guidance that I received have done as much to shape my path as any of my classes. I can say with certainty that the clarity and direction that I now have would not be present if not for Tufts Career Services.

~ Matthew Cohen

Through my extracurricular involvement, I learned to take initiative, conduct research, analyze my findings, implement the conclusions, and manage projects. I founded a group dedicated to social change, planned events, recruited other students to work on projects with me, and pitched my group to people from all corners of the Tufts community. This experience has been instrumental in my success at work, and conveys to interviewers that I am willing to try new things, take on challenges, and adapt to new situations.

I also have found that Tufts acts as a great idea incubator. The campus is full of individuals who are very willing to encourage student innovation and provide feedback. Receiving support from friends, professors and staff has trained me to be motivated and utilize available resources. I hope that my involvement at Tufts will be the first step in my entrepreneurial career.

~ Moises Cohen

There is nothing more valuable than an encouraging and insightful mentor. When at my worst, both academically and emotionally, a professor took me aside and asked me to visit her office. In her office, she looked at me and asked me what was wrong. She explained that what she saw in me during conversation and class did not reflect what she saw on my exams and quizzes. With that, she started encouraging me and lifting my self esteem. To me this was the first step to where I am today. It is amazing to me that so many of my peers have found mentors in professors, Teaching Assistants, and even other students at Tufts.

~ Brendon Providence

The Tufts Career Advisory Network, Tufts Financial Network, Tufts Financial Group, and networking at alumni events were most helpful in preparing me for life after Tufts. Tufts' focus on active citizenship and abundance of student organizations provided leadership opportunities. Involvement with the Tufts Financial Group gave me hands-on investment experience.

~ Lilly Bogis

What was most helpful to you in connection with your career decision-making and your job search?

There is nothing like networking and experience. While at Tufts, Career Services always stressed how important it was to network. At the time, I did not realize I was already networking by attending class and going to the dining hall with my peers. Through other students, I was able to get all my internships. My internships not only clarified my strengths and weaknesses, but also showed me what I enjoyed in a work day. I was fortunate enough to fall in love with my work during my summer post junior year, which is where I still work today.

~ Brendon Providence

Talking with family, friends, and acquaintances was helpful in leading me towards my current job. For my job search, the Tufts Career Fair was where I met my future employer and the person I spoke with there is still involved in my current training program. I also utilized job search websites and Tufts Career Connect (job and internship database).

~ Michelle Kelly

The most helpful parties in my decision-making and job search were undoubtedly my connection to faculty and Career Services. Throughout the years I established relationships with people across the Tufts faculty who constantly gave me advice, supported my endeavors, and helped me understand how to proceed after graduation. This was a fantastic support system that taught me how to maneuver my job search and encouraged me to think critically and ambitiously about my next steps, and I know they will continue to do so in my future. This supportive group also connected me with Tufts alumni working in the fields that I am interested in, who provided important insight in my decision-making. I would strongly recommend making use of Career Services, and not just as a senior. I met with the same career counselor throughout my four years at Tufts who supported my professional development and was an amazing source of knowledge and encouragement.

~ Moises Cohen

Speaking to Tufts alumni in finance was the most helpful thing I did to prepare for job interviews and navigate the job market to determine which industries and opportunities I wanted to focus on. There is only so much information you can get from a company's website or recruiting literature and it is not always easy to determine whether the job is a good fit for you from the job description alone. I found this especially true in finance, which is a complex industry with its own vocabulary. Reading the newspaper is important regardless of which industry or job you are interviewing for. The ability to discuss current events allows you to connect with alumni or interviewers and demonstrates an interest in your community/society. It's easy to get stuck in the college "bubble."

~ Lilly Bogis

I had the opportunity to interview at several positions (because I applied to a LOT of jobs). Seeing the different environments and interacting with different investigators and managers was most helpful when I made my decision. A huge part of why I enjoy my job is the people I work with, so this was an important factor in my decision.

~ Alexandra Cheetham

The network of Tufts alumni and Tufts Career Services were instrumental in my career decision-making and in my job search. It was my time in Career Services that allowed me to understand the importance of informational interviewing and networking. Ultimately, it was these skills that allowed me to connect with alumni. Though some of these conversations led to internships, it was through other informational interviews that I gained clarity in terms of longer-term career questions. Experience and perspective come with time and it was hearing others' stories that helped me to understand where I best fit.

~ Matthew Cohen

My internships and my first job in a rotation program were most helpful in connection with my career decision-making and job search. I really recommend this to students. The rotational program allowed me to work in 6 different areas of marketing within a year and a half and allowed me to understand what it is I really like to do. Most careers, it seems, are much more specific than a general major. Just as engineers at Tufts specialize in a field, so do marketers. Many companies offer programs like mine and it's a great tool in terms of discovering what you like to do. If that does not appeal to you, I would recommend getting as many internship experiences as possible.

~ Laura Espy