CAREER PLANNING FOR GRAD STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS

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Territorial Acknowledgement

- I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.
- At UW our active work toward reconciliation takes place through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is coordinated within our Office of Indigenous Relations.

Introductions—Feel free to share what you like

For example:

- Name
- Program/department
- Pronouns
- Emoji describing how you feel today
- What are you hoping to take away?

Let's make this a safer space

Listen and learn from each other with respect

Participate in a way that works for you!

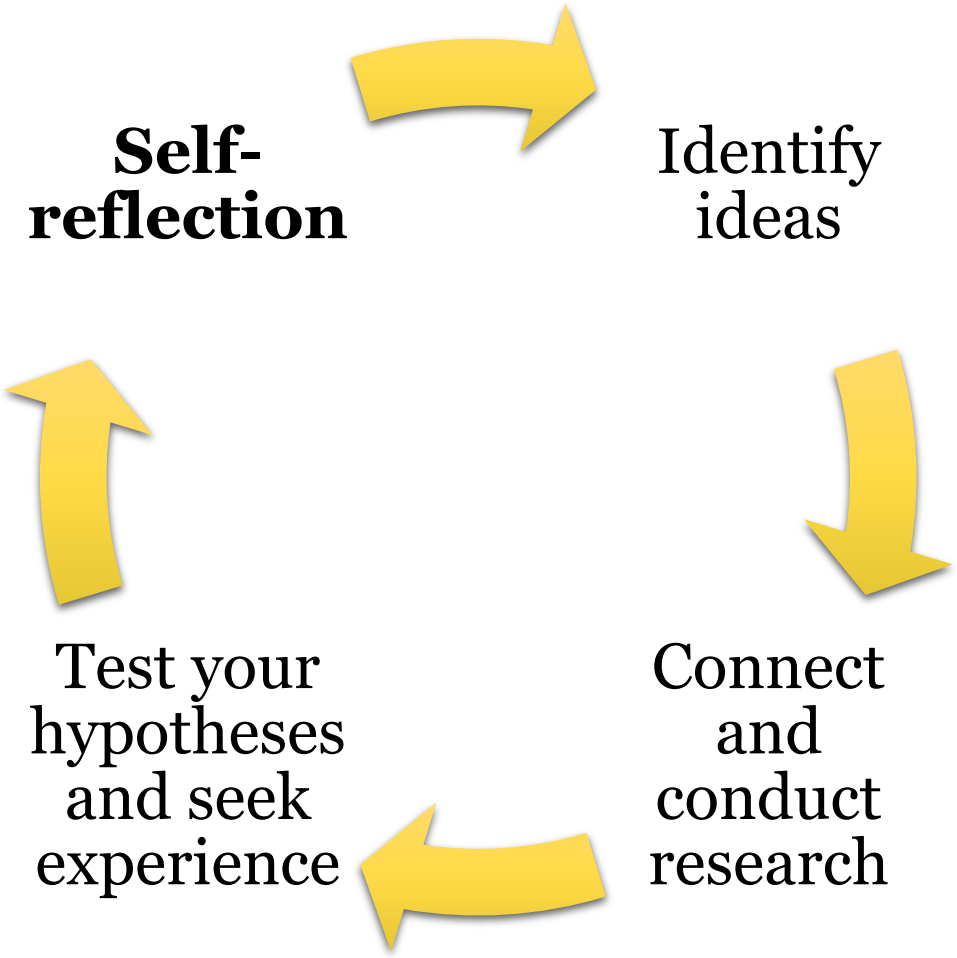
Make no assumptions

Other?

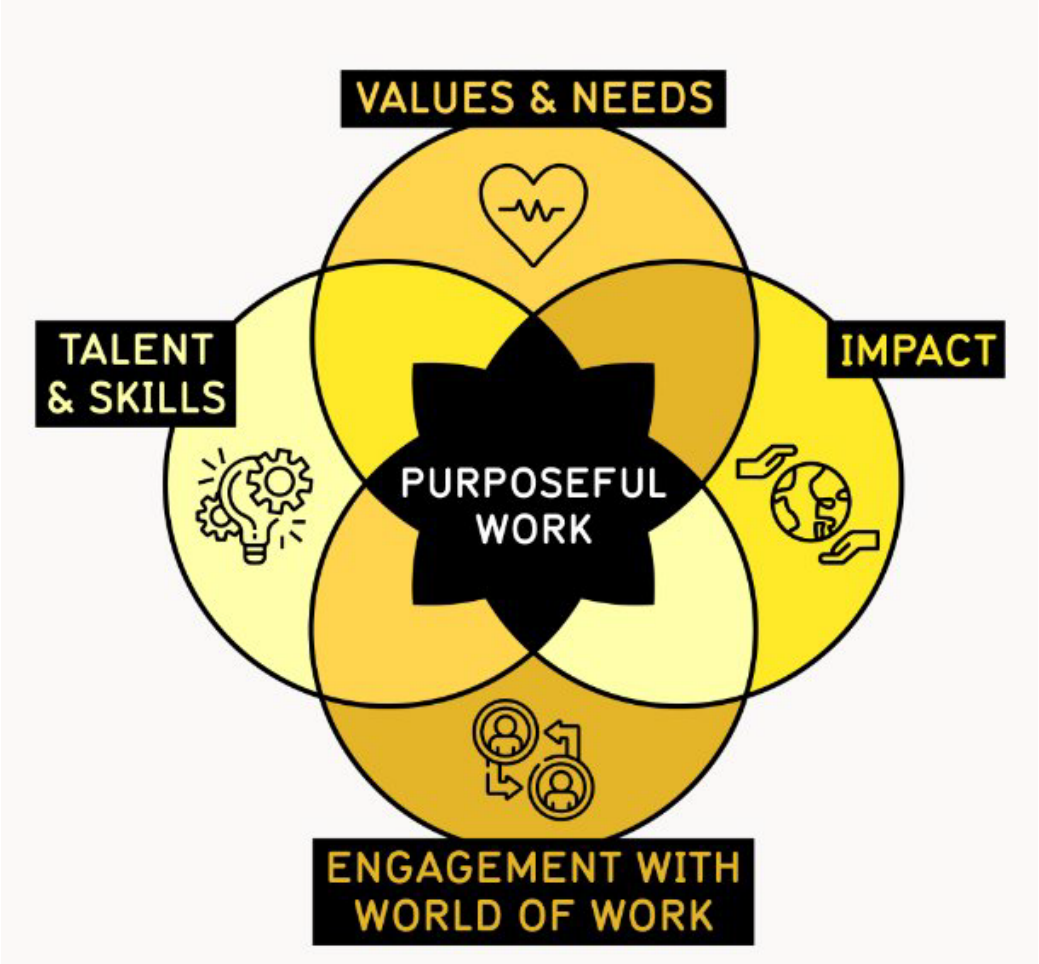
Agenda

- Introductions
- Career Decision Making models
- Identify key motivators and type of impact you'd like to make in your career via the Sparkpath Challenge Card sort
- How and where to research career opportunities
- Using Generative AI to assist you
- How to continue your reflections

A CAREER DECISION MAKING MODEL



*Adapted from “So Good They Can’t Ignore You” (Newport, 2011), “Where Good Ideas Come From” (Johnson, 2011).


VALUES & NEEDS
TALENT & SKILLS
IMPACT
PURPOSEFUL WORK
ENGAGEMENT WITH WORLD OF WORK

Collect Your Data (self-reflect)

- Questions to ask yourself to reflect on values, skills, and interests:
  - What problems do I like to solve?
  - How do I like to spend my time?
    - What do I like to do?
    - What do I like to think about?
    - What energizes me?
  - What kinds of projects/ interactions/ activities consistently motivate me? **Why?**

WHERE/HOW DO YOU VALUE MAKING AN IMPACT?

SPARKPATH CHALLENGE CARD ACTIVITY

- Go to app.mysparkpath.com
- Create an account
- Enter the UW code: SparkChallenge799
- Sort cards (taking note of top cards and then select top 3)

SPARKPATH

Challenge Cards Reflection Prompts

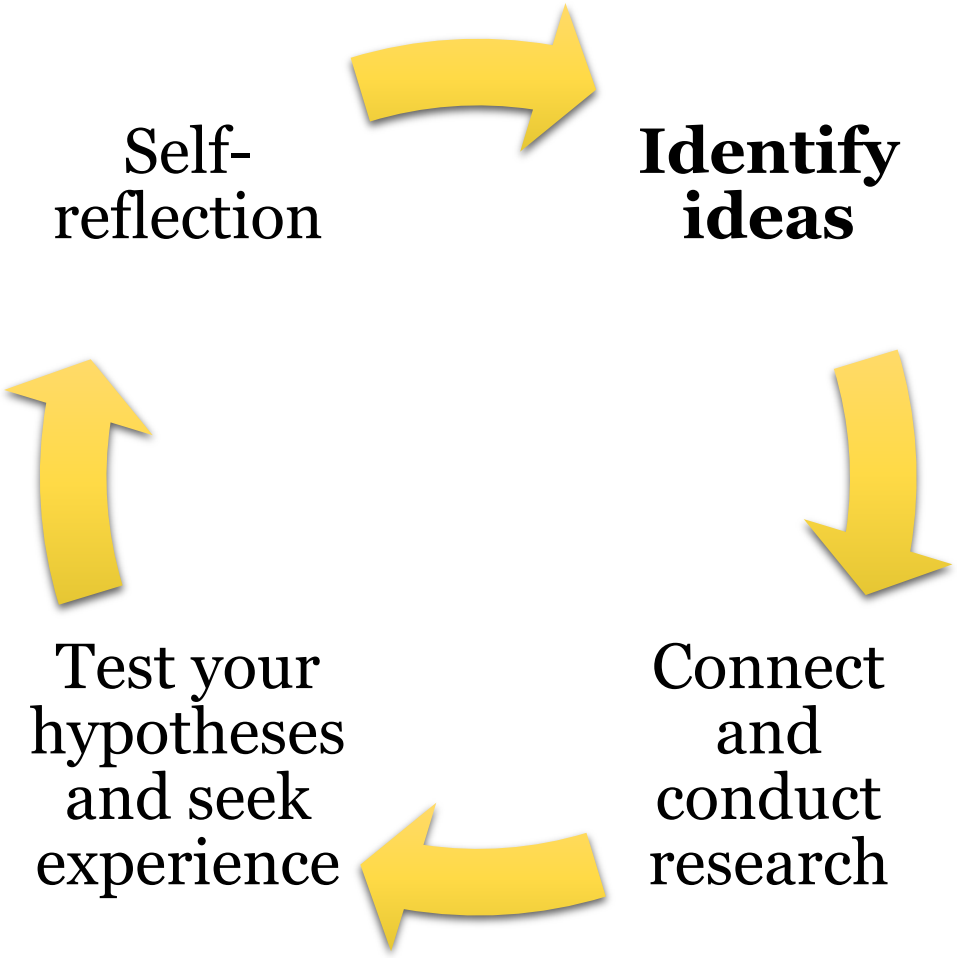
Pause before selecting your top 3

What words/ challenges stand out to you? Write them down!

What are the top challenges you identified?

What excites you or motivates you about these?

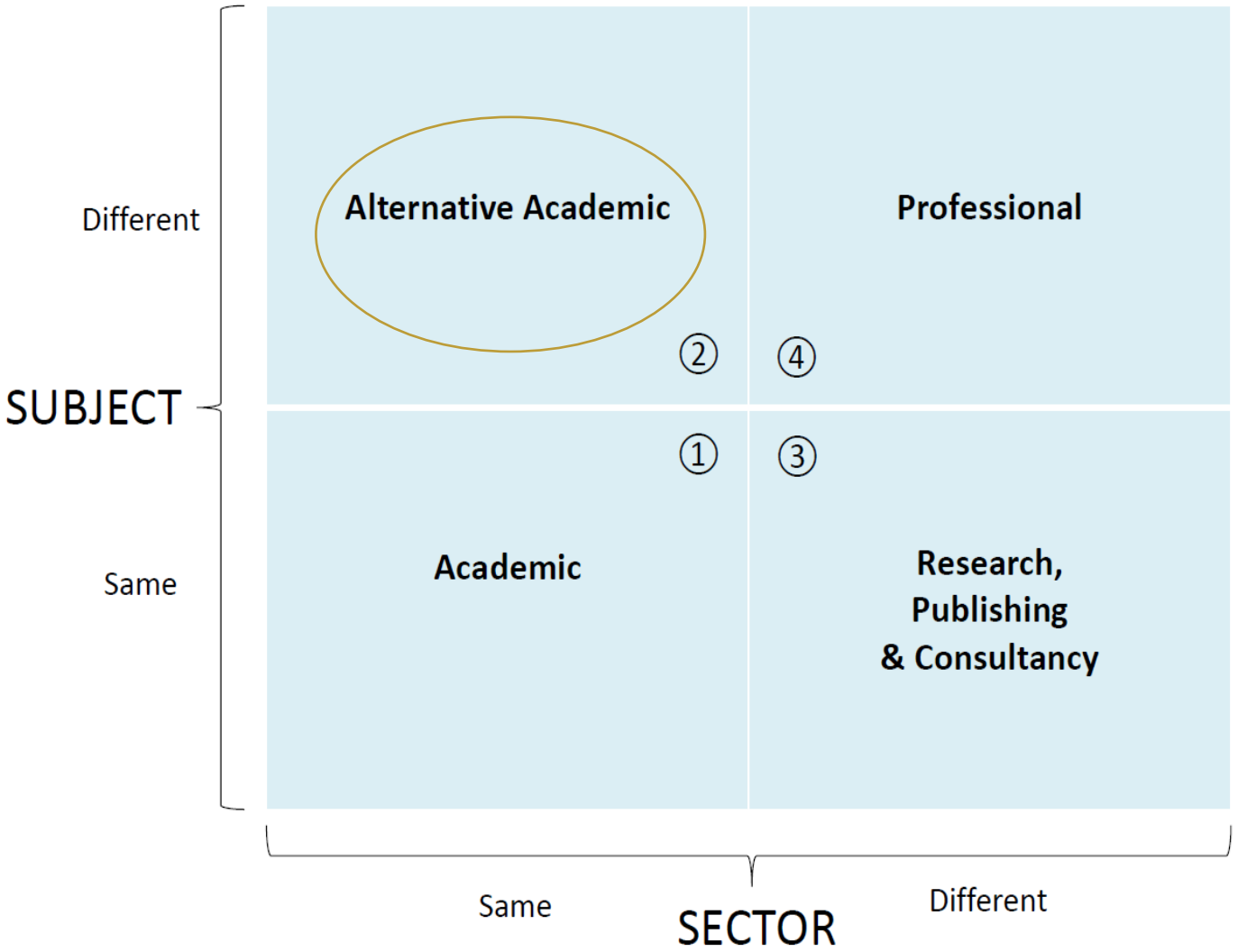
IDENTIFY IDEAS



Seeking Out Ideas

- Find out what other people with advanced degrees are doing
- Talk to your supervisor/peers
- Look up previous students from your lab/research group on LinkedIn
- Join Ten Thousand Coffees networks

Parallel Planning: A Diagram



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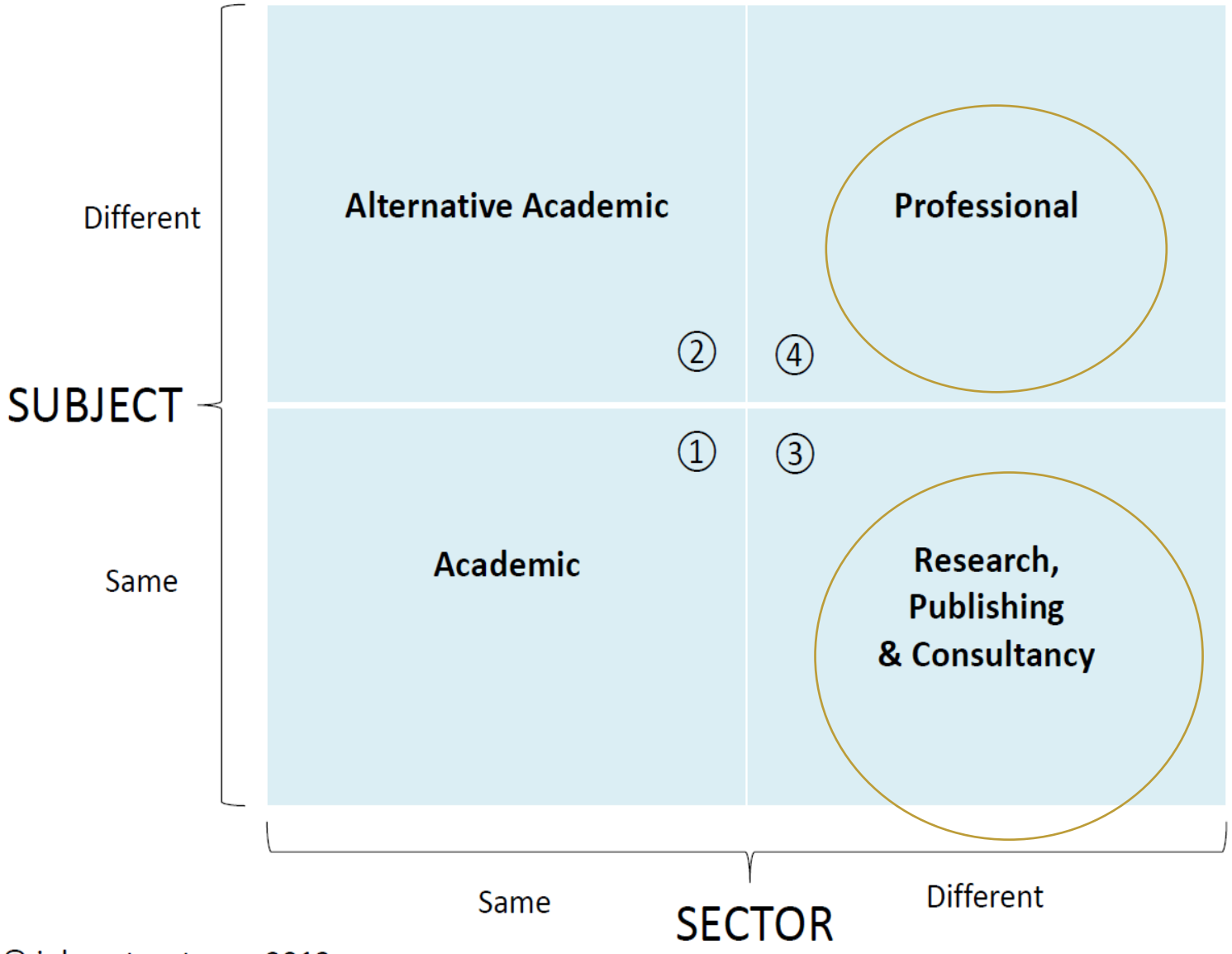
Have You Ever Thought About Alternative Academic Careers?

- Administration: Office of the President, Human Resources
- Academic Affairs: Office of Research, Registrar's Office
- Student Affairs: Accessibility Services, Student Success Office, Writing and Communications Office, Centre for Teaching Excellence etc.

EXAMPLE JOB TITLES:

- Cooperative and Experiential Education: Analyst, Records Coordinator, Business Developer, Co-op Advisor
- Research Office: Research Data Analyst, Grants and Contracts Manager, Research Equity Advisor, Research Financial Advisor
- CTE: Educational Research Associate, Program Coordinator, Educational Developer
- SSO: Data Specialist/Technology Integration, International Student Experience Manager

Parallel Planning: A Diagram



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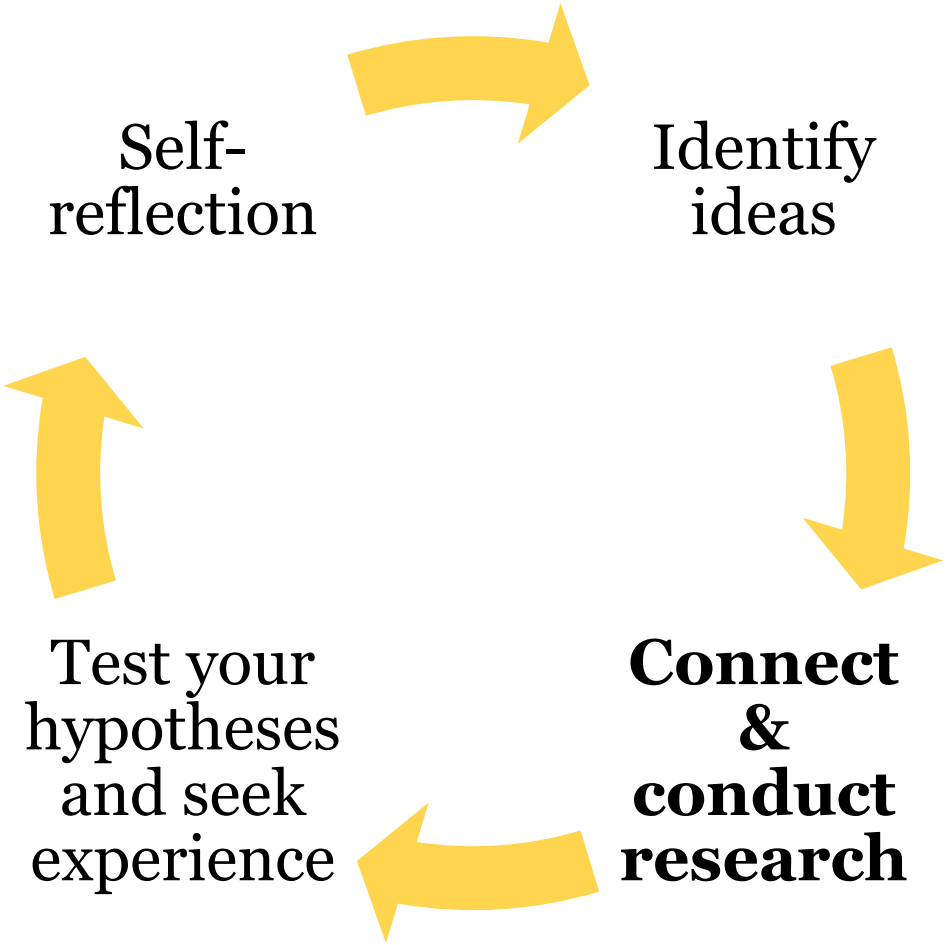
Apply Your Expertise

- How can your research be applied to new contexts?
  - Identify niche specialties connected to current field
  - Professional newsletters, magazines & blogs, professional association sites
  - Attend talks, events, conferences, workshops

CONNECT & CONDUCT RESEARCH



Labour Market Info:

Learn about industries in Canada

- https://www.ic.gc.ca

Job Boards

- www.indeed.ca
- www.communitech.ca
- www.charityvillage.com

Top Employer Lists

www.canadastop100.com

www.greatplacetowork.ca

Do Your Research

- What kinds of organizations are in your field?
- What kinds of jobs are available?
- What kinds of people do they hire?
- Make a list of organizations you would like to work for
  - Chamber of Commerce website for various jurisdictions
  - Job boards
  - Alumni search on LinkedIn

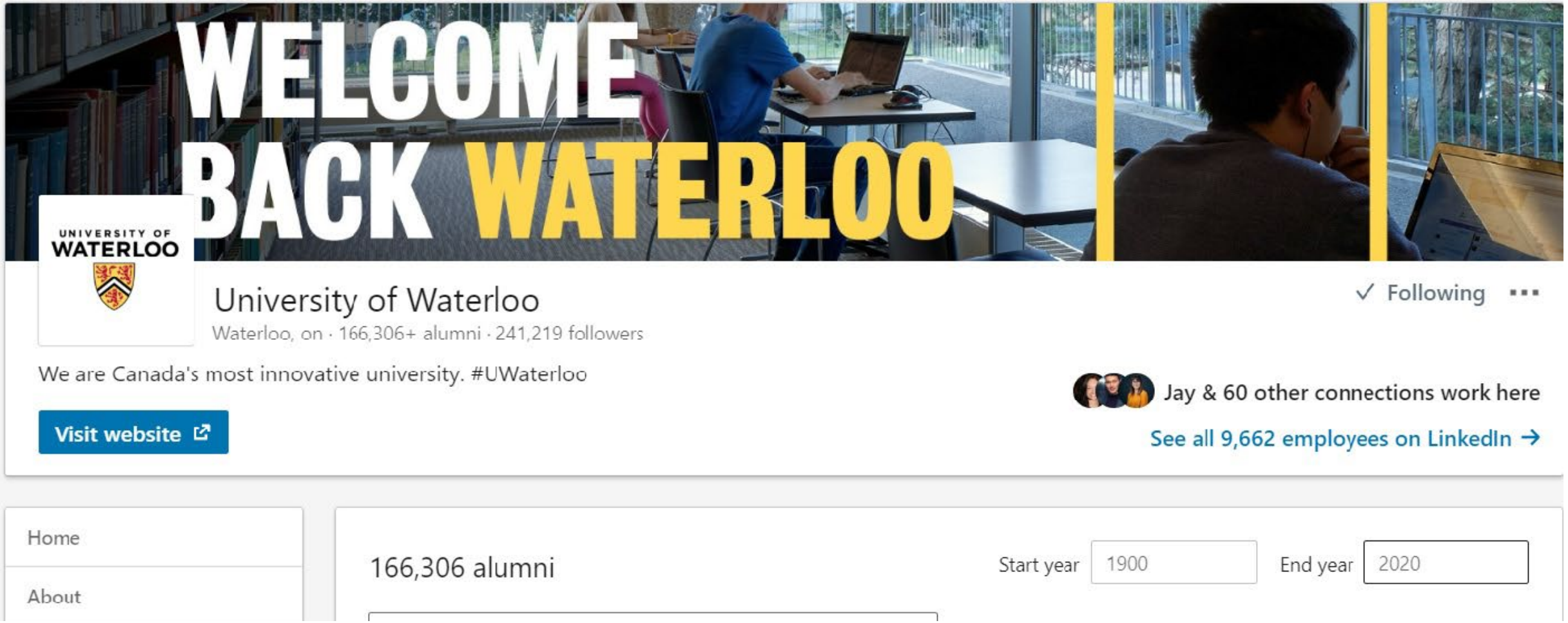
Do Your Research

- Develop metrics to evaluate those organizations
    - Glassdoor.ca
    - Website/LinkedIn
    - Media
    - Ask around!

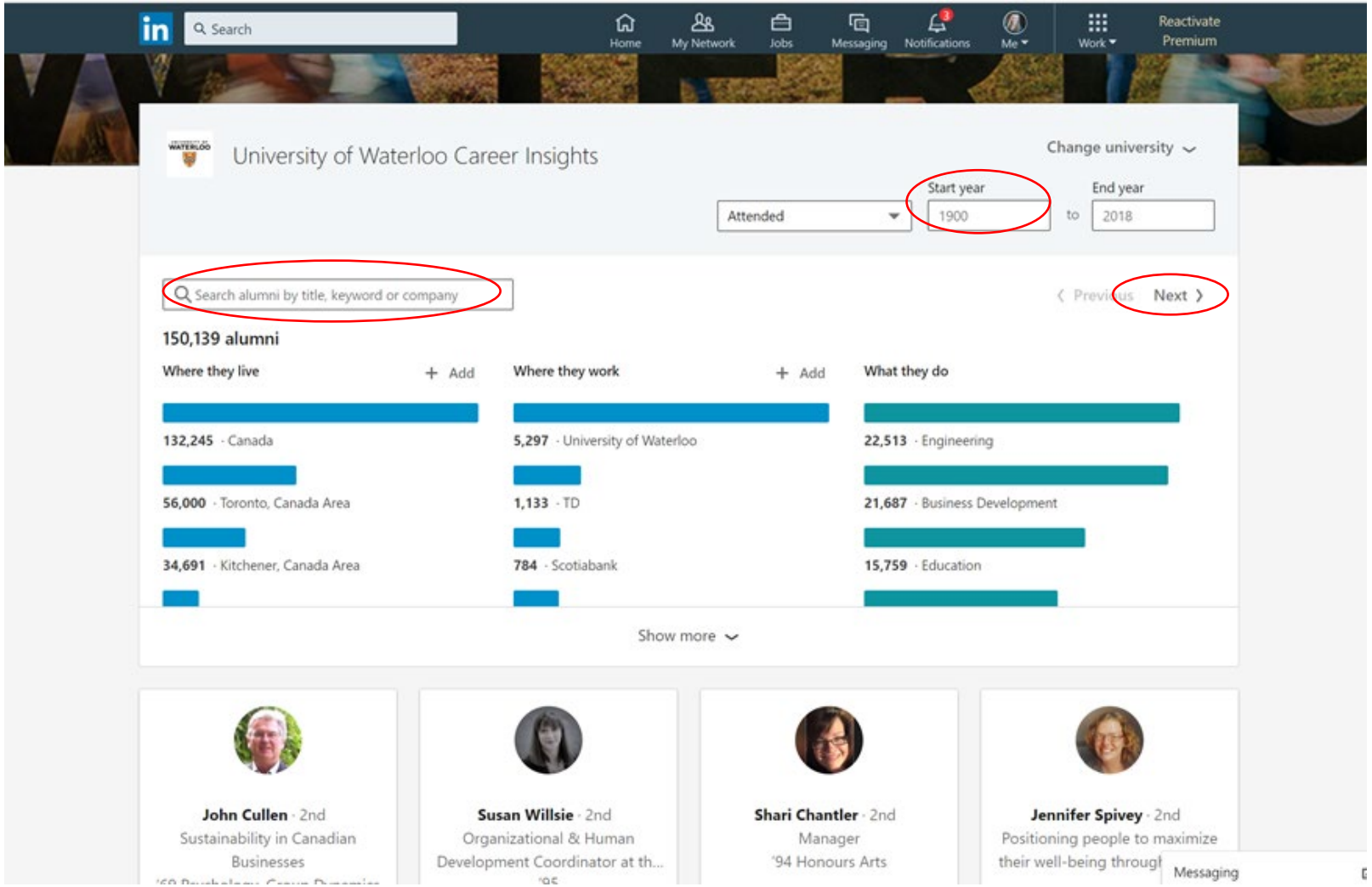
Your turn!

List 3 organizations/institutions/fields that you are interested in learning more about

What have others done from your department?



LinkedIn: Find Alumni



Boolean search in Google!

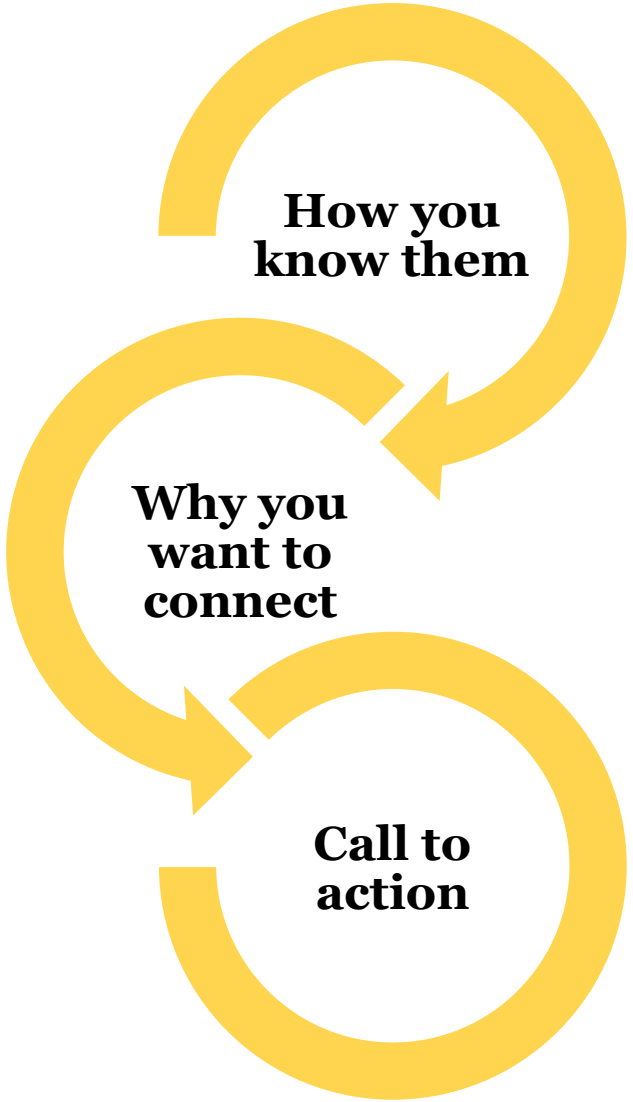
Master's AND LinkedIn AND

_____

What is an Informational Interviews

- What is an information interview?
  - Information gathering (i.e.., research!)
  - Intentionally growing your professional network
  - Reciprocal
    - You are offering to listen to someone talk about their success, they are sharing information with you

How Do I Connect With Someone I Do Not Know?



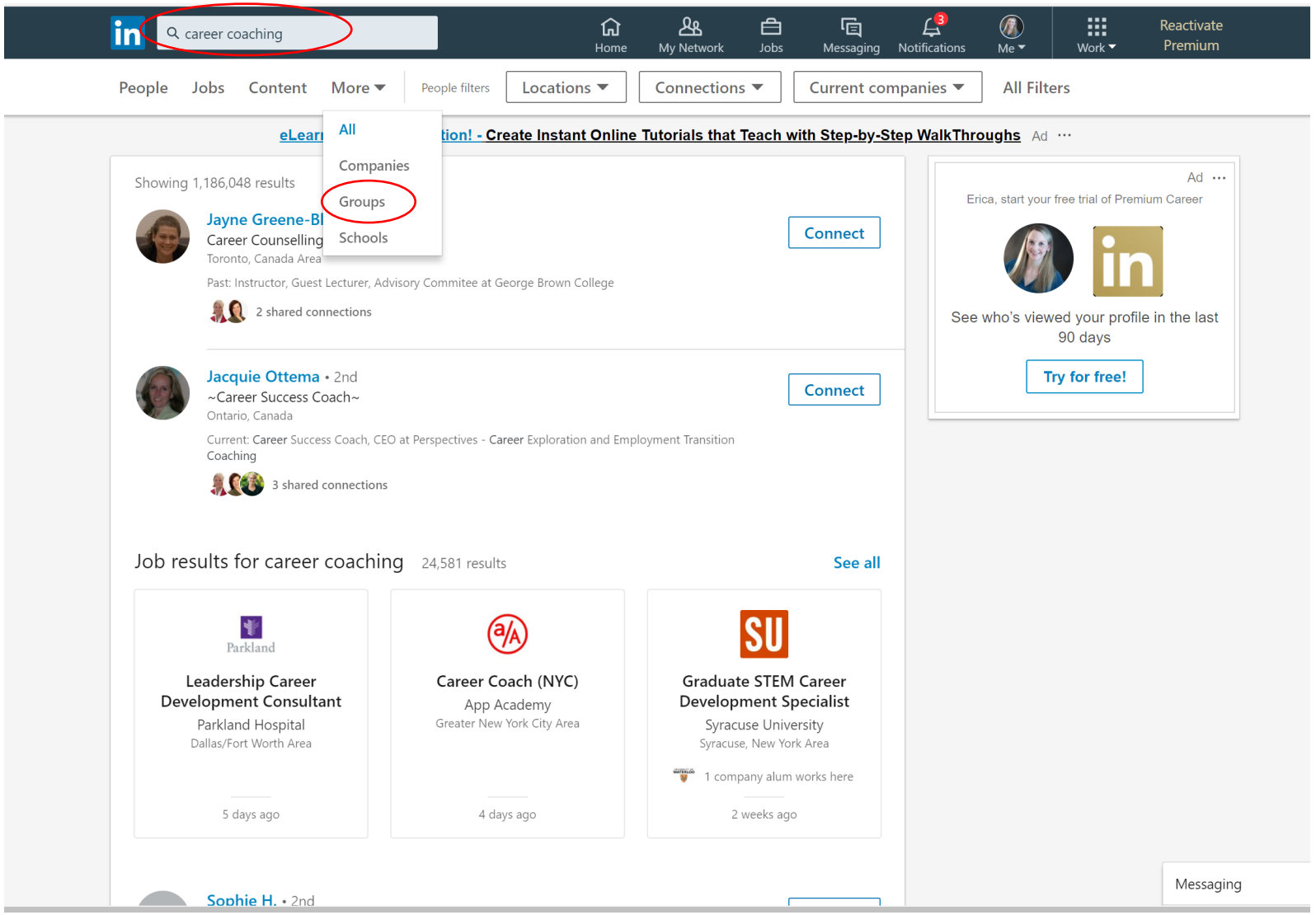
1) **How you know them**: did they take a class with you, co-worker, in same group, referred to you, someone you admire?
2) **Why you want to connect**: building your network, following for inspiration, link to someone else
3) **Call to action**: do you just want to connect, do you want to meet them, do you want them to share advice with you

- Keri Twigg, "How to write to people you don't know (but want to) on LinkedIn"

What Are You Asking?

- About their background
  - How did you get started in your field?
  - Why did you leave academia?
  - How did your degree in X prepare you for your current job?
- About their day-to-day job
  - What's your average day like?
  - What kinds of projects are you working on?
  - What skills are important in this field?
- About their recommendations for you
  - What skills, training or characteristics are important in a candidate?
  - What can I do to make my resume more competitive?

LinkedIn: Join Groups



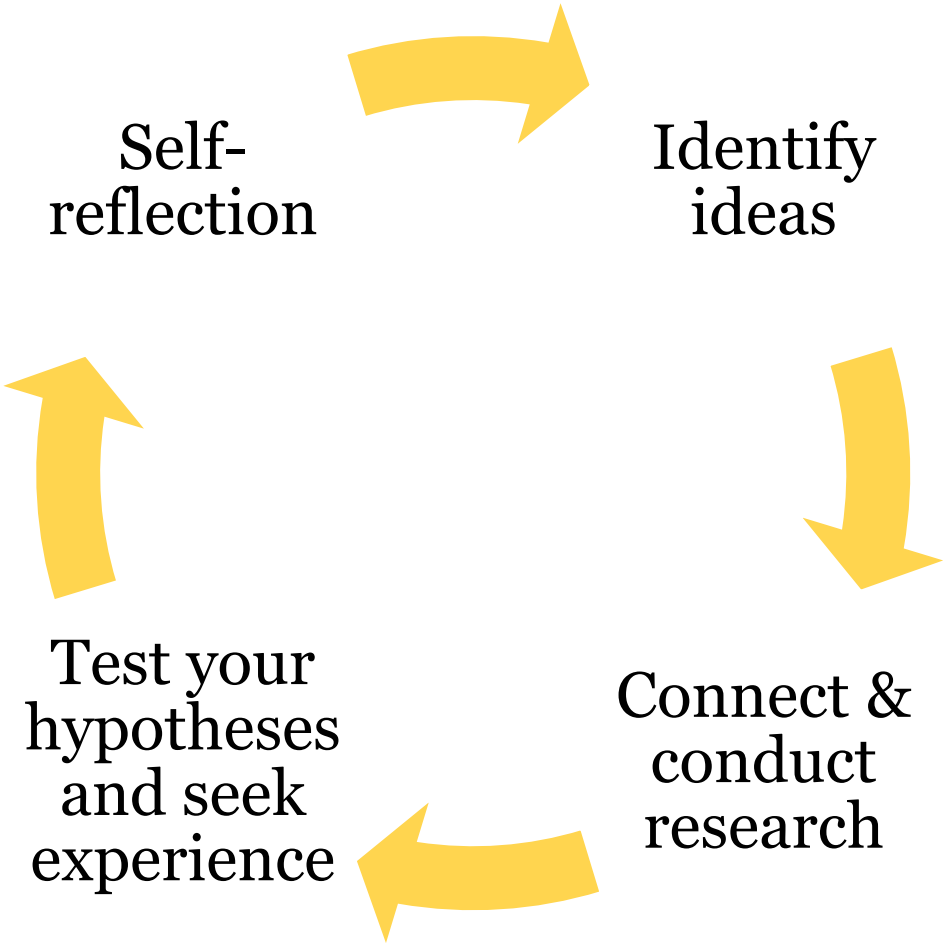
Join groups of interest and *engage*:

- ✓ **Ask questions**
- ✓ **Post comments**
- ✓ **Share an article/blog**
- ✓ **"Like" other posts**
- ✓ **Connect with people (you can send a direct message to anyone in the grp)**

Your turn!

Jot down questions you could ask in an informational interview

RETURN TO SELF-REFLECTION OFTEN



Keep track of what you notice...

- For example:
  - Every time you wrap up a new project
  - Every time you've learned a new skill
  - Every time you encounter information that matters to you
- Take the time for you!

Career Planning & Gen AI: Prompts

Analyze academic background

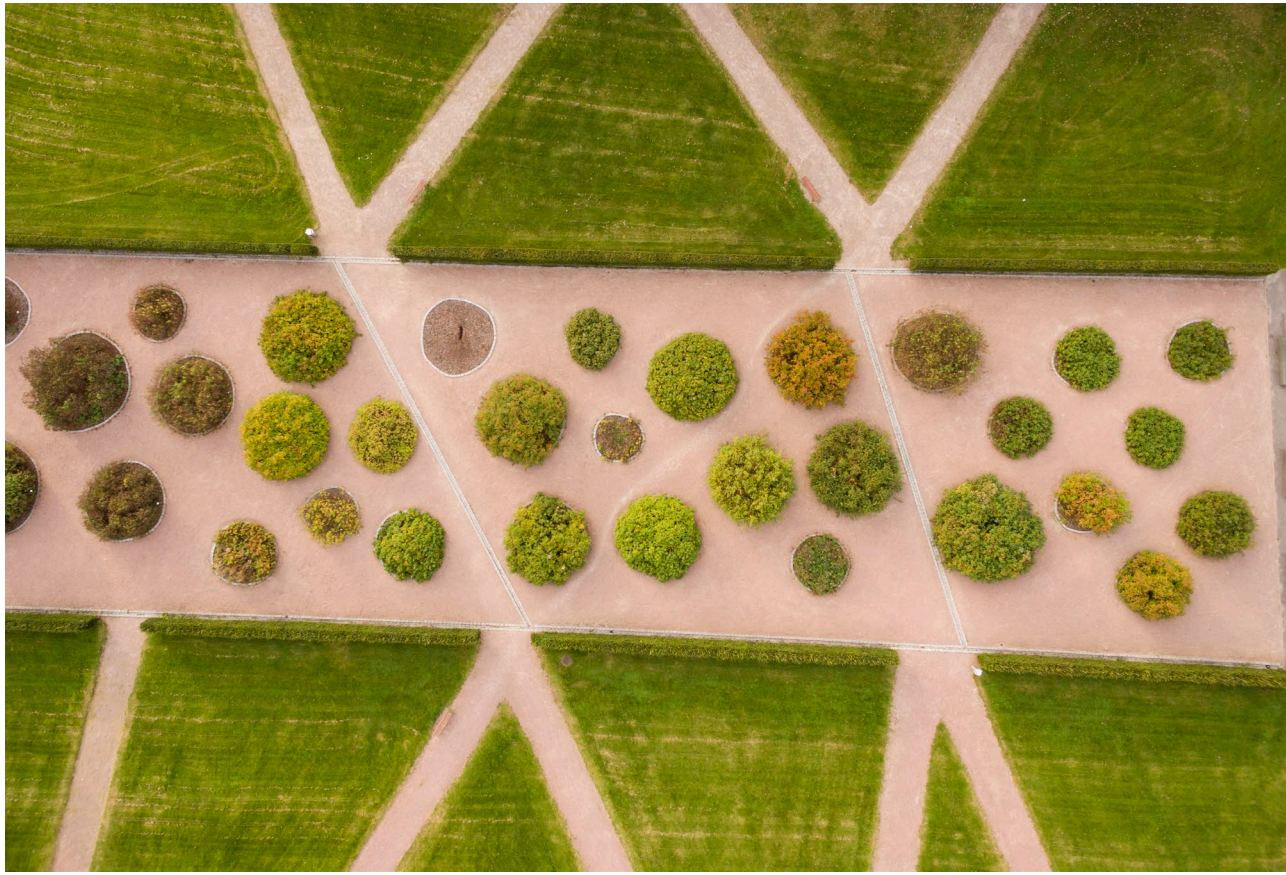
- "I have a degree in [major or field] and my favourite classes and interest areas are [insert here]. Suggest career options that align with my academic background and interests."

Combine skills and interests

- "Identify potential career paths based on my skills in [list specific skills] and my interests in [list specific interests]"

Assess values and goals

- "Assess careers that align with my values, including [list specific values], and help me achieve my goal of [describe career goal]."



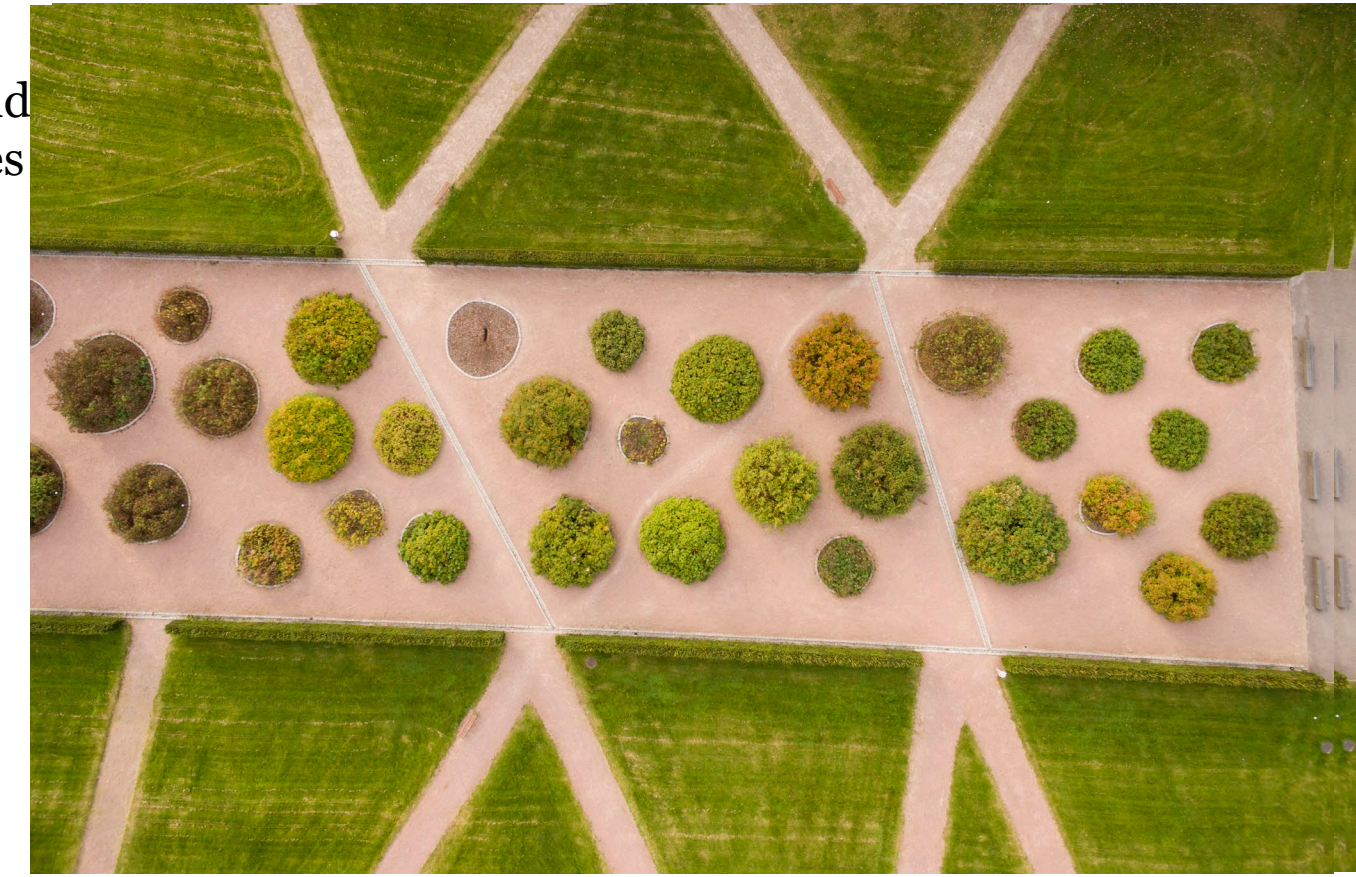
Career Planning & GenAI: Prompts

Explore industries
"I'm interested in the [industry or sector] field. Could you provide insights into potential career trajectories within this industry?"

Explore companies
"What are the best employers in British Colombia working on solving X problems?"

Support a career transition
"I'm considering a career transition from [current academic pathway or career] to something new. What steps can I take, and what options should I explore?"

Prepare skills assessment
"Prepare me for technical skill assessments commonly used in [industry]"



Other Places to Look: Online Resources

- CAREER HUB (CCD resource)
- www.versatilephd.com
- www.imaginephd.com
- https://fromphdtolife.com/
- www.jobsontoast.com
- LinkedIn Group: PhD Careers Outside Academia
- www.beyondprof.com

Wrapping up with final reflections...

What is one thing you're taking away from today's talk?

What is one thing you will try as a strategy for career development?

How can the CCD support you?

- Meet with Career Advisors
- 30-60 minute one-on-one appointments:
  - Career planning
  - Résumés, Cover Letters, CVs
  - Work search strategies
  - Mock interviews
  - Managing your online presence
- Workshops, employer panels, etc.

VISIT US!

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https://uwaterloo.ca/career-development/

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Our greatest impact happens together.