

TFI Launches Second Annual ASPIRE Challenge for Post-Secondary School Students

The industry-led innovation competition provides students with exposure to financial services industry and paid summer internships

Toronto, Sept 10, 2019 – Toronto Finance International (TFI), a public-private partnership between Canada's three levels of government, the financial services sector and academia, today announced the launch of its second annual industry-led innovation competition, the ASPIRE Challenge, which provides 2nd year post-secondary school students with opportunities to:

- gain industry exposure and interact with financial services employers early in their academic careers;
- proactively engage with their on-campus Career departments; and
- access work integrated (WIL) opportunities through a potential summer internship.

How the ASPIRE Challenge works

Students enter the ASPIRE Challenge by registering at www.aspirefs.ca/register/. They then set out to identify an opportunity for innovation in their respective communities and develop a solution with input from a relevant employer or subject matter expert. Each applicant submits their solution, along with their resume to TFI by the application deadline of November 25, 2019.

A short-listed group advance to the next level of the competition, and present their solutions to a panel of ASPIRE employers. 50 finalists are invited to participate in an Innovation and Industry Insights Weekend (Jan 31 – Feb 2) in Toronto hosted by TFI, featuring presentations on disruption and innovation in the financial services sector, office tours, innovation skills development workshops, a team competition and numerous opportunities to engage and network with employers and fellow Challenge winners.

The Challenge culminates with the awarding of several paid summer internships with one of ASPIRE's participating financial services employers, who will offer up to two placements each.

Eight employers participated in the first year of the Challenge, including Aviva Canada, Bank of Montreal, CIBC, OMERS, Royal Bank of Canada, Scotiabank, Sun Life and TD Bank Group. This year's participant list continues to grow, and will be announced next month.

"We are excited to return with the ASPIRE Challenge for a second year to help more students uncover innovation and opportunity in the financial services sector, and to build skills that will help them to succeed in the new world of work," said Jennifer Reynolds, President and CEO, Toronto Finance



International. “The Toronto Financial Centre is North America’s second largest financial centre, directly employing 1 in 12 people. Its size and importance, combined with its focus on technology and innovation makes this a great time for students studying in all disciplines to learn more about the sector, through work-integrated learning experiences such as the ASPIRE Challenge,” said Reynolds.

TFI’s ASPIRE team will be on 11 campuses in the Toronto region over a five-week period (Sep 10 – Oct 3, 2019) to promote the Challenge. Campuses include: University of Toronto (St. George, Scarborough and Mississauga campuses), University of Waterloo, Centennial College, University of Guelph-Humber, Humber College, George Brown College, University of Ontario Institute of Technology, McMaster University and York University. Their on-campus schedule can be found [here](#).

About ASPIRE

ASPIRE is a work-integrated learning pilot led by Toronto Finance International to help grow and sustain Toronto’s long-term talent advantage in financial services. ASPIRE aims specifically to both improve student transition from school to the workplace and grow the pipeline of in-demand skills needed in the sector. Its marquee initiatives include the annual ASPIRE Challenge and Innovation & Industry Insights Weekend, and a soon-to-be launched business skills development program for students. To learn more visit www.aspirefs.ca

About Toronto Finance International (TFI)

TFI is a public-private partnership between Canada’s three levels of government, the financial services sector and academia. TFI’s mission is to lead collective action that drives the competitiveness and growth of Toronto’s financial sector and establishes its prominence as a leading global financial centre. (TFI was formerly known as Toronto Financial Services Alliance.) Visit us at www.tfi.ca.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Susan Floyd

VP, Marketing & Strategic Alliances

Toronto Finance International

416-933-6793

sfloyd@tfi.ca