All right.
So why don't we go ahead and get started.
Hi everyone.
I wanna start by congratulating you all on your acceptance to Suffolk.
We're so excited to have you join us today as you continue through this journey of the college search process.
My name is Jordan Mason. I'm an undergraduate admission counselor here at Suffolk university.
I've been with Suffolk for about a year and a half now, my travel territories are Connecticut and Rhode Island.
So if any of our attendees today are from those areas it's likely that I had the pleasure of reading your application.
Joining me in today's session which is community engagement and service learning are some incredible Suffolk staff members and students.
So without further ado, I'll pass it over to Mr. Adam Westbrook.
Hi everybody.
I'm Adam, my pronouns are he, him and his and I'm the director of the Center for Community Engagement and we're really excited that you're here joining us and to hear a little bit about what we do in the center.
I won't say too much because we have our students here who are current either student staff, or student leaders who have worked with us over the last year or more and they're gonna share their experience with you all.
So I'm gonna stop talking and allow the other staff members to introduce themselves and then we'll get to hear from the students.
Dennis, would you like to introduce yourself?
Sure.
Hi everybody.
It's good to see all of you on zoom.
I'm Dennis and my pronouns are he/him and I am the assistant director of the Center for Community Engagement.
One of the big programs I work on are the international and domestic volunteer programs which I know you'll probably hear about.
So I will also stop talking and popcorn this over to Yvette.
Hi, am Yvette Velez.
She/her are my pronouns.
I'm the associate director for community partnerships.
So in the CCE, I'm oftentimes connecting our folks with outside nonprofits and the city organizations for both one-off initiatives,
So yeah, I guess the students should begin, right?
02:06 Should I pump four into a bed
02:09 - Just real quick before Ben goes
02:11 I just wanna remind everybody
02:13 that we will have time at the end for question and answers.
02:15 So feel free to throw your questions
02:18 in the Q and A box and we'll get to those as well.
02:22 Okay, just wanted to throw that in.
02:23 So Ben, go ahead.
02:26 - Thanks Adam.
02:27 So my name is Ben,
02:28 I've been with the Center for Community Engagement
02:30 for four years now.
02:32 I'm currently a senior I've been working
02:34 on their service after hours program that entire time.
02:38 I can't think of too much else to say
02:39 other than that, I majored
02:41 in history and public relations as well.
02:49 - Ben, do you wanna talk a little bit
02:50 about your experience with service after hours?
02:52 - Oh yeah.
02:53 So I'd see Dennis laughing at me for totally dropping it.
03:00 So through service after hours
03:02 I've kind of had the chance to really develop my own program
03:05 from initial conception to recruitment execution
03:10 and then even just individual development
03:13 with other students.
03:13 So I spent a lot of my time kind of working
03:16 towards being able to make experiences for students
03:20 on and off campus with our different community
03:22 partners that Yvette talks about.
03:24 And one of the things I'm actually doing right now
03:25 is a series of panels for students to be able to connect
03:28 with those community partners over COVID.
03:30 So it's been a big kind of jump
03:34 through everything I've done and it's almost
03:36 allowed me kind of now reflecting
03:38 on the past four years I spent
03:40 almost my entire time at Suffolk so far
03:43 it's made me think of things professionally
03:47 and just within myself a lot differently
03:49 than I would have within the classroom itself.
03:51 I've gotten so much more
03:52 practical experience than I think I would have
03:56 if I had just kind of volunteered or even
04:01 just stayed with things that happened
04:02 within the classroom and did internships.
04:04 It really allowed me to develop on my own
04:09 and be able to develop those professional skills.
04:14 - Awesome, thanks Ben.
04:16 Livia, would you like to introduce yourself
04:18 and talk a little bit about your experience?
04:21 - Sure.
My name is Livia, my pronouns are she/her and I'm a freshman global business and economics major. I just started working with Suffolk votes this year. And one of the reasons that I was mostly excited to get involved is because Suffolk votes really focuses on voter engagement. And when I first got to college the election of Biden versus Trump was happening and I felt very strongly about that and I really wanted to get involved in promoting youth engagement, especially on our campus. And I think a really proud moment for me was seeing the effects of my efforts pay off. I don't know if anyone has seen the statistics, but youth engagement has increased a lot this election season. And especially I think that on campus too it's increased a lot and it just feels great to be a part of that to be a part of such an engaged generation kind of. And yeah, that's pretty much it.

And then just what I heard you say Livia is just like coming to work in the CCE gave you an opportunity to take your passionate and do something with it and get other students involved and to see, like you said to see the actual change that you're making that's pretty powerful.

Awesome.

Thanks for sharing that.

Sure.

Hi, I'm Lindsay.

My pronouns are she her hers.

I'm a senior I'm American politics major and I will be staying at Suffolk grad school next year.

So I'll be around.

I've done alternative spring break all four years of my college career.

My freshman year, we went to DC and we did an LGBT advocacy or a group trip.

I actually went with Adam.

It was an amazing experience.

We met a lot of really great different organizations, briefly I'll just say that alternative spring break and the typical year not COVID year we usually have about eight different groups made of 10 people in each group.

And we go all over the country and we serve different communities.

And that's accompanied with a service a social justice curriculum to prepare you for that trip. So you'll either be working with habitat for humanity or racial justice trip or an LGBT trip.
So my freshman year I did that LGBT trip to DC and I ended up beginning an internship out of it. It was an amazing opportunity. It really shaped the trajectory of my college career. It made me have a minor in journalism. So that first trip really shaped the rest of my college career.

My second year, we did a habitat trip to Denver which was such a different experience and it made me really think about housing insecurity in a different way.

I was supposed to do another habitat trip but my junior year COVID kind of canceled that but we still were able to do that social justice training and curriculum, and still build that sense of community.

And then this year I'm actually a leader for our spring service program. So I am leading a team of six along with three other leaders, and we have completely built a new program, and it's really amazing. And so we will be working with, we can't travel, so we'll be working with the new England center and home for veterans.

And so we are currently working on that and it's really exciting. But I would say my main takeaways were I've met so many amazing people and it's just really opened up a lot of career opportunities for me. And I can't wait to see where things go with this new program.

Awesome. Thanks for sharing that, Lindsay. And yeah, I think you said it so well that it can really shape your entire experience at Suffolk getting involved with the center for community engagement or any of the other opportunities that exist at Suffolk can really open up all sorts of doors. I've heard students say that over and over is once they start to get involved, it's kind of like a gateway into all sorts of other different opportunities for them to grow and develop, to meet people to get career opportunities. As you were talking, Lindsay, I was reminded that you had an internship that summer with one of the organizations that we worked down in DC after our ASB trips. So you just never know what kind of opportunities can come after getting involved. Thanks so much. Elizabeth, do you wanna talk a little bit about your experience?
First of all, my name is Elizabeth.
She, her pronouns, I am a Suffolk boats ambassador.
So I work with Livia on that
and I am a political science major.
So voting and civic engagement has always been something that's important to me
but Suffolk votes has really been an opportunity where I can expand on that and share my passion
for people to get out and vote
and make their voice heard and get active
in their government with the rest of this avid community.
So it has been a great experience.
We started that the election and we actually got to go
into freshmen and not just freshmen
but different classes and help students get registered.
So you see kind of the effects of firsthand of like first voters getting to registered
and seeing their experience in voting for the first time.
And we are currently working on a civic education series called activism and action
in which we have different speakers come in
date students the tools to get more involved
in their communities and in their government
just beyond voting.
So I think overall Suffolk votes has been a really great opportunity to share my passion for voting
and how Suffolk students get involved because many students wanna be active in their communities,
they wanna advocate for issues they care about.
So being able to be a resource and help and be starting point has been an incredible opportunity.
- Awesome.
Yeah, absolutely.
I'm kind of curious.
Thank you all for sharing your experience.
I'm kind of curious if y'all, would if there's one piece of advice that you would give
to an incoming students about getting involved
and why they should, or what they could gain from it,
what would you tell the folks here on the webinar?
Anybody can go first?
- I think I thought as a freshman that these people in grades above me
they had so much more experience than me
like I didn't really have a place there
but as soon as I really decided, okay
I'm just gonna start and do it,
I really found that sense of community especially working locally, especially with what Ben does with service after hours.
I think working in that local Boston community really acclimates you to learning more and being more involved
11:40 in where you're gonna be living for the next four years.
11:43 So I would say, get involved to learn
11:46 about where you are and have that sense of community
11:50 because I know it's cheesy but Boston is our campus
11:54 and we need to take care of it
11:55 and we need to build that sense of community.
12:01 - Yeah, and I think just to echo what you said as well
12:04 I mean when I came to Boston my freshman year
12:07 I was definitely a little intimidated with
12:10 others to do and just kind of being in a new place,
12:14 but just being able to get involved
12:16 with service after hours and be able to see
12:20 the people within the community and then what they do to try
12:24 and make a difference within the community where they live,
12:26 we kind of put a different perspective on
12:29 why I'm gonna school at Suffolk
12:30 why I'm doing the work I'm doing
12:32 and what I'm studying.
12:33 I think it helped me kind of see
12:36 that broader picture that I don't think I would have
12:38 if I hadn't just kind of jumped in
12:41 and started getting involved.
12:42 And then it also
12:45 it allowed me to meet some of my best friends.
12:47 I think that I've ever made while at Suffolk from going
12:50 on ASP and being on some of those trips, I still talk
12:55 to everybody from both the trips I was able to go on,
12:59 almost every week, just to catch up, catch up and say hi
13:03 to people that I lead through service after hours.
13:07 We meet every week and talk
13:08 about just school and how things are going.
13:11 And then just even people I met
13:12 while volunteering randomly as well,
13:14 it's just you ended up building
13:16 some really lasting connections
13:17 not only with professional partners
13:19 but even other students that are interested
13:22 in volunteering and giving back.
13:32 - I think one thing for me is I actually was not active
13:37 up until I'm a junior now up until this year
13:39 and this really the Suffolk community.
13:40 And I wanna say that's my biggest regret
13:43 was not really getting involved my freshman
13:45 and sophomore year because of all the connections
13:48 I've been able to make the relationships you build
13:51 and it's really great to be a part
13:55 of the community and like the Suffolk votes team
13:57 and we're all working together for this goal.
14:00 And it's a really incredible experience
14:02 so I wish I got more involved sooner.
14:08 - I would also say that I think
14:10 that fixed location is really important when you're thinking
14:13 about getting involved in the community.
14:15 Because if you think about how Suffolk is downtown
14:18 we're really close to a lot of tourist attractions
14:20 and we live in a really nice area of Boston.
14:23 So sometimes it can be really easy to live
14:25 in a little bubble
14:25 and not see the other things that are happening in Boston
14:29 and Boston is a city like a huge amount of inequality.
14:33 So I think that getting involved
14:35 in the community has kind of popped that bubble for me
14:38 and led me to understand the places that I live in better
14:41 and understand how my Boston experience
14:43 isn't necessarily the same as somebody else's.
14:46 So I think it's really important in that sense too.
14:51 - Great.
14:52 Yeah, those are, those are great, great pieces of advice.
14:55 Some of you all touched on meeting other people
14:58 and other students through, through this experience.
15:01 I know when you're first coming to college
15:04 a big thing that you're looking to do is to build community
15:06 and build friends and that kind of thing.
15:08 I just wanted to ask
15:09 if anybody else has any other things they wanna say
15:13 about how getting involved has kind of helped you
15:17 build friendships with other students
15:20 in addition to the larger community as well.
15:26 - I didn't actually mention this, but we also have
15:28 an alternative winter break, which is where we
15:31 go international.
15:33 And I did that my junior year, this past year,
15:36 beginning of 2020 and we went to Myanmar
15:39 and that is just a completely different experience.
15:42 Like it is unlike anything I've ever done before.
15:45 And it put me really outside of my comfort zone
15:48 and it was such a good thing.
15:51 I've never been that far away from home,
15:52 I've never been on a, I think it was a 16 hour flight.
15:57 I think there are opportunities with this center
16:01 that will push you in a good way.
16:03 And I think that's what I needed.
16:05 And I've noticed since I've come back from the trip
16:07 after I really pushed myself and it wasn't a totally
16:10 different culture.
16:11 I become a more confident person.
16:12 I'm I speak better, I'm just more confident in my abilities.
16:17 Cause I kinda was able to beat like this underlying fear
16:20 of mine of being outside of my comfort zone.
16:23 So I think there's definitely, I think just really
16:26 being involved with the center has really changed
16:28 my perspective and opened a lot of doors for me.
16:32 And I just really appreciate that.
16:33 So I think there's just opportunities that were
16:38 really brought in your community and your way of thinking.
16:49 - Anyone else wanna add to that?
16:57 Or I also wanna invite the students who are
17:00 on the webinar, feel free to, again go ahead
17:03 and put your questions in the Q and A box,
17:06 we're more than happy to answer them.
17:09 But kind of building off of what Lindsay
17:10 started to talk about, like kind of
17:12 what are some of the big skills or big like moments
17:16 that you feel like have have happened
17:20 in your time in the center that have allowed you
17:22 to grow you know, in what ways have you been pushed?
17:25 We talk about this a lot
17:26 in the work that we do is
17:27 kind of stretching our comfort zone
17:29 and moving beyond kind of at that comfort zone.
17:33 How has that happen for you and the others in your time
17:37 so far at the CCE?
17:43 - I think for me, what really improved my skills
17:46 I guess when we did the classroom presentations
17:49 Suffolk votes.
17:51 I mean, like personally I was a freshmen
17:53 and this was first semester.
17:54 So I first came in and I was doing presentations
17:58 to groups of like seniors and upperclassmen
18:02 and it was very nerve wracking, especially because some
18:03 of them were in person, but now I have a bunch of confidence
18:07 with presentations and it doesn't stress me out at all.
18:10 And I work for the career center now
18:12 and I did a similar type of presentation
18:16 so that kind of gave me experience in that aspect.
18:19 So yeah, I don't feel intimidated
18:21 by people being older or more knowledgeable
18:23 about things than me when I'm giving presentations.
18:25 If that makes sense.
18:31 - I'll start then.
18:34 I think of my freshman year when I was a work study
18:37 in the office originally
18:39 and got asked to be a project leader
18:42 for one of the events that we had just kind of
18:45 on a whim and I decided to just do it,
18:48 it couldn't be that bad.
18:49 I knew they wouldn't have asked me
18:51 if they didn't think I could do it.
18:53 So why not?
18:54 I'm just gonna try it and see how it goes.
18:56 And I think especially as past four years,
18:59 you had asked me that day
19:01 if I'd be sitting here talking about what I've been doing
19:05 I would never be able to cause I was just really shy
19:08 but being able to see that, Oh
19:10 I that's something I could do.
19:11 I went and I let a group
19:12 of kids down to Dorchester to be a greater Boston food bank
19:17 and I did that all on my own and they gave me the tools
19:22 to make sure it went right
19:23 and it was like, okay, it's not that bad.
19:26 It was something I could see myself doing more
19:29 of and that kind of grew and grew.
19:31 And now as I'm graduating, I think
19:35 of all the different skills I learned and I've put them
19:38 on my resume and got, okay, I'm comfortable now knowing
19:42 that I have the skills I need to be able to move on,
19:45 but also reflect on what I've done as well.
19:52 - Elizabeth, what are you gonna add to that?
19:56 - Yeah, I'm very similar where you're taking on new roles
20:00 and new things that you didn't think you'd be able to do.
20:04 For me, I'm planning with the help
20:06 of the Suffolk quotes ambassadors, am planning a whole
20:09 like workshop series and contacting speakers and organizing.
20:14 And I had never really had experience with it,
20:16 but you're in an environment where you get to learn
20:20 and you have people who are willing to help you
20:22 and work with you.
20:24 And so it really does develop your skills.
20:27 And it's a great way if you're passionate
20:29 about community service
20:31 or civic engagement, it's a great way to gain skills
20:35 from your passion and use it in the future.
20:39 You come out with a ton of experience.
20:42 So, yeah.
20:46 - Awesome.
20:47 Thanks.
20:48 And yeah, I did notice there is a question
20:49 in the Q and A.
20:51 Is community engagement much more difficult
20:53 for a freshman who is not a native speaker?
20:56 One thing that comes to mind for me is I know interacting
21:00 with the community as an opportunity to continue
21:02 to practice your language skills.
21:06 It's more opportunities to interact
21:07 with different kinds of people.
21:09 It's more opportunities to interact with
21:12 members of the community.
21:14 So that's what comes to mind for me.
21:17 I don't know if anybody else wants to add to that question.
21:22 - Yeah.
21:23 I was actually gonna say
21:25 technically I'm not a native speaker either.
21:27 I was born in Brazil.
21:28 So my first language is Portuguese
21:30 and I haven't found that it's any different.
21:33 I mean, I know my English is really well now
21:36 but I recently got offered an opportunity to volunteer
21:39 with a nonprofit that operates out of Brazil
21:42 and they want me to like translate their brochures
21:44 from Portuguese to English.
21:47 So if anything, I would say
21:48 that it just gives you more skills
21:49 and helps you connect better
21:51 with the people that you're volunteering with
21:53 and you can kind of cater it to volunteer
21:55 with specific populations that speak your native language
21:58 and then it'll be an asset
21:59 and not something that hinders you.
22:04 - I would agree.
22:05 We actually have a participant
22:06 in our program this semester who is in Thailand right now
22:10 his native language is Thai and he has no problems.
22:14 He is a great participant
22:16 even since we're remote right now, even if, since he's
22:19 in Thailand, like no problems and it shows his commitment.
22:22 So I think if you're, if you're really willing
22:24 to work for it, your language doesn't matter.
22:26 As long as you're willing to put
22:29 in the work and try your best,
22:30 I think that's all that matters.
22:38 - Awesome, awesome.
22:40 Are there other questions from students?
22:52 - I actually have one question for you guys.
22:56 There's been a little bit of talk
22:58 about sort of the alumni connection
23:01 and sort of once you graduate
23:05 the alumni can still remain an extended part
23:08 of the Suffolk community.
23:09 So does your office work closely with alumni?
23:12 Is there alumni engagement at all in that sense?
23:17 - Yeah.
23:18 I might have Elizabeth to answer this, to start us off.
23:21 I think she was just smiling because she, I think we're
23:23 on the same page here, so I'll hand it over to you.
23:26 - Yeah.
23:27 So I mentioned previously
23:28 that we're working on this whole series
23:30 of a civic education workshop where we're really
23:34 each workshop is a different set of tools and skills
23:39 and kind of just like information students can have
23:41 so they can go out
23:42 in their communities and advocate for the issues
23:46 they think that are important.
23:48 And what's really great about that is the majority
23:50 of our speakers have been Suffolk alum
23:53 that we've reached out to.
23:55 So it's really cool to be a student and being like
23:59 what am I gonna do with my future?
24:00 Like where will this take me?
24:02 Like, I'm interested in community engagement
24:04 I'm interested in voting and community organizing
24:07 but how can I make this a career?
24:09 So having people come back who have been
24:12 in your same shoes and now have a whole career and learn
24:16 from them has been such a great learning opportunity.
24:19 And it is very hopeful to be like
24:22 I can have a career in this and I can dedicate my time
24:25 to this organization or this issue and have a job
24:29 and do what I wanna do and to see people.
And they're so willing to give advice and any help you need. They all reach out of like always having that contact. So it's really great to have that relationship with the Suffolk alums. I was gonna say something and realized I forgot to unmute myself. And when you mentioned alumni, I actually got really excited because what I'm doing right now we just confirmed a panelist for an upcoming panel, that was just a Suffolk alum. He works at on the rise in Cambridge. So it's just kind of being able to, at least through my work meet or hear from Suffolk alum kind of out in the wild after they've graduated and be able to connect with them and bring them in is really neat to do and it's led to me actually getting an internship from another panelist we had who was also a Suffolk alum as well at ABCD. So it's been it's that network of students that wants their part of the CCE either kind of always a part of the CCE and you get to connect with them after that. - Awesome.

And then I did see another question on the Q and A. What is diversity like at Suffolk? Do the students wanna answer that question? You can fact check me on this but I'm pretty sure Suffolk it's number three in the country for percentage of international students. So I think that's really amazing. And I would say diversity at Suffolk is it's really diverse. I think there's so many international students, there's so many people from so many different places. There's so many professors from so many different places. I would say it's a really broad spectrum of types of people. And that's actually why I chose Suffolk. I liked how many international students were here. I liked that it was really a campus in the middle of the city, which in itself is has so many different types of people. So I really, I really liked the amount of diversity that is at Suffolk. One thing that I've really enjoyed is when we develop our programming it's usually with other students, other student groups. So it's been really great to have other people's voices come and contribute. And so it's really a coalition of like different student groups like we did earlier this year, an event we had the black student union we have the Suffolk ACLU, the Suffolk historical society. And we just had an event about voting rights.
27:10 and it was really awesome to just have like the platform
27:14 so that every student can kind of share their experiences
27:19 and why they're getting involved.
27:21 So I think like at the CCE we really like encourage
27:26 and really like support having so many different people come
27:30 in and share their stories
27:31 and that's kinda what it makes it so special.
27:36 - I would also add to that.
27:38 I feel like diversity and inclusion is
27:40 on everybody's minds here at Suffolk,
27:43 especially when we're holding events,
27:45 even events that aren't part
27:46 of the Center for Community Engagement.
27:48 Like for example, I'm holding a woman's day forum today
27:53 through the career center.
27:54 And while I was developing the presentation for it
27:56 my boss who works in the career center
27:59 kept telling me to make sure
28:01 that I was including statistics that were intersectional
28:04 and that I was reaching women's issues that included women
28:07 of color and trans women and things like that.
28:10 And I've always said my pronouns beginning
28:12 of every presentation.
28:13 So I just feel
28:14 like it kind of transcends into every department.
28:21 - I know we only have one minute left or so
28:25 but I just wanna make sure we got to this last question.
28:28 What is student government like at Suffolk?
28:31 And I know we've done some work
28:33 with the student governments, but I don't know
28:36 if any of the students would like to answer that.
28:43 - I would say student government
28:44 is really involved on campus
28:47 and I would say it's also really intense.
28:49 I think the student government, senators
28:53 and leaders really take their job seriously
28:55 and they do really try to do what's best
28:59 for the Suffolk community.
29:00 There's polls all the time.
29:02 Our current vice president Lukas Phipps really
29:07 just goes all out and really make sure that everything is
29:11 in order and every student is being heard.
29:14 So I think, really get to know your class senators
29:16 once you're actually a freshmen and really get to
29:19 know your vice president and your president
29:21 because that's how your voice really gets heard
29:24 and they then talk to the president and the deans and stuff.
29:29 So I would say it's pretty great.
29:40 - Well, I just wanted to remind everybody again in the chat
29:44 I think Dennis put in the Center for Community Engagements
29:49 handles that social media, so our Twitter,
29:52 Facebook, Instagram, et cetera.
29:55 So we would love to have you all follow us.
29:58 We're really looking forward
29:59 to you joining the Suffolk community in the fall.
30:02 And in the meantime, if you have any questions
30:05 feel free to reach out to us on Instagram
30:08 or I'm not sure if the community engagement email
30:13 is in the chat as well
30:16 but I'll go ahead and throw that in here.
30:18 Just communityengagement@suffolk.edu.
30:21 Feel free to reach out to us that way as well.
30:24 We really look forward
30:26 to you all joining the Suffolk community.
30:29 As I hope you heard from these students,
30:31 Suffolk is a is a great place to grow, to develop,
30:34 to build friends and community.
30:37 And we wanna do everything we can to help you do that
30:39 while you're here so, please don't be strangers
30:42 and reach out to us.
30:45 - That was great.
30:46 Thank you all to our presenters so much
30:47 for such a wonderful session.
30:49 That was, I feel like I learned a lot
30:50 and I feel like I should also already know a lot
30:54 as an admission counselor but you as the students
30:57 have such an incredible perspective
30:58 and that was really, really informative, so thank you.
31:00 And thank you to our attendees for joining us.
31:03 As Adam said in the chat, you'll find contact information
31:06 social media handles as well as the link to
31:08 join our admitted student community on Facebook
31:10 which is really great way to meet other admitted students
31:13 and sort of talk through the process and everything.
31:15 So with that said, we'll let everyone go
31:17 but thank you again everyone for your time
31:19 and we wish all of our attendees
31:20 the best of luck in the college decision process.