

00:00 - Good afternoon, my name is Stephanie Sweeney,
00:02 I'm Associate Director of International Admission
00:04 here at Suffolk University.
00:07 First, I want to congratulate you on your acceptance,
00:10 I work with all students
00:11 who apply from international territories,
00:15 mostly Asia, Central America, freshmen and transfers,
00:18 as well as any students who wanna start their freshman year
00:21 at our campus in Madrid.
00:22 So if you fall under that, I probably accepted you,
00:24 so you're welcome (chuckles).
00:27 But we will talk a little bit more
00:30 about all the opportunities
00:32 that you'll have here at Suffolk.
00:36 So we currently have two schools of study,
00:37 we have the College of Arts and Sciences
00:40 and the Sawyer Business School.
00:41 And some of you know exactly what you wanna study
00:43 but some of you also may not know,
00:46 and you might have a long list of ideas
00:48 and that's fine because we have over 70 majors
00:51 across both schools.
00:53 With majors across arts and humanities,
00:55 social sciences, math, natural sciences,
00:59 there's no limit to what you could learn
01:00 within the College of Arts and Sciences.
01:03 Joining us today is Professor Kulich,
01:05 she's an instructor
01:06 in the Political and Legal Studies departments,
01:09 and she's got a great class for you.
01:11 So professor Kulich, I'll let you take it away.
01:13 - Well, I'll try and live up to your buildup.
01:17 Okay, so first order of business is to press send
01:21 in the chat for those of you who have figured out a song
01:26 and an artist.
01:31 - And if you wanna repeat what the instructions are
01:33 just in case. - Yeah.
01:34 Just a song and an artist that describe
01:37 what you think about the current state of American politics.
01:41 So far only one of you is listening to music
01:45 and that is a Taylor Swift song,
01:49 Miss Americana and the Heartbreak Prince,
01:53 Childish Gambino, This is America,
01:55 you guys are keeping me young
01:56 like I know what you're listening to.
01:58 So I'm gonna start the class
02:00 and you can continue to maybe be inspired
02:05 by the rest of what's going on in the chat
02:09 and hopefully by what I have to tell you today.
02:13 So the topic today is about presidential transitions,
02:17 particularly the transition of an American president,
02:21 and the first 100 days

02:24 which is really the most critical time.
02:28 However, what a lot of people don't know
02:31 is that presidential administrative transitions
02:34 actually begin months and months
02:37 before we even have an election.
02:40 So this class has kinda three parts,
02:43 one is to tell you what transitions are,
02:46 one is to tell you why they matter
02:48 and the last is to tell you a little bit more
02:52 about this particular transition
02:55 and how it fits in the grand scheme of things.
02:58 So first of all, goals.
03:00 The primary goals of a presidential transition,
03:04 meaning transition of power
03:05 from one president to another one,
03:08 is a really complicated process.
03:11 The first thing that is challenging is staffing,
03:16 there is a people problem.
03:18 Yeah, I just saw Stephanie's chat,
03:20 so if you guys wanna interrupt me and ask a question
03:23 or if I've said something that's jargony
03:25 or that you don't understand or don't just don't agree with,
03:30 raise your hand or drop it in the chat
03:33 and I'm happy to answer
03:34 because I would much rather have a dialogue
03:37 than you listen to a soliloquy.
03:40 Back to staffing,
03:41 staffing is a people problem, right,
03:44 and it's a very big people problem
03:47 for incoming presidential administrations.
03:50 So this involves making more than 4,000 appointments,
03:55 like 4,000 different people to do 4,000 different jobs,
03:59 of which about 1,200 require...
04:07 I was just told you can't see my presentation,
04:12 can you see it now?
04:17 All right, here we go.
04:19 So 4,000 people have to be hired,
04:24 they have to be put in place and they have to be trained
04:26 which means they also have to be vetted.
04:29 Of those approximately 4,000 people
04:32 who do all the business of governance and administration
04:36 in the executive office,
04:38 1,200 of them require confirmation by the Senate.
04:43 Which means that the Senate,
04:45 which is probably the world's slowest moving organization,
04:50 has got to do hearings, understand backgrounds,
04:55 and speak with each of these candidates,
04:58 vote them out of committee
04:59 and then vote on them in the Senate floor,
05:03 so that can be a really really slow progress.
05:08 Another thing that transitions have to do
05:10 is a really big job,
05:11 which is getting up to speed on
05:14 the 100 plus federal agencies

05:17 and organize and train leadership for each of them.
05:21 So imagine...
05:22 I mean, you guys are thinking about coming to college
05:25 and figuring out how to take four different classes, right?
05:30 What's it gonna be like?
05:32 What's the equipment?
05:33 What am I gonna do?
05:34 What's gonna be expected.
05:36 We're talking about a hugely complicated process
05:41 and all of those new people
05:43 are just like freshmen coming to college.
05:46 They know their jobs and their areas
05:48 but they may not necessarily have worked
05:49 in government before or in those particular positions.
05:54 A transition also has to build out a policy platform,
05:58 meaning the ideas that the president wants
06:00 to get accomplished.
06:02 And those are typically based on the promises
06:06 that candidates make during campaigns, right,
06:09 because that's in part how we judge
06:13 whether or not a president is doing a good job.
06:16 If President Biden said he's gonna build back better,
06:21 he's gotta figure out what that exactly means.
06:24 What does building back better mean?
06:27 Well, it means legislation,
06:29 it means something we'll talk about at the very end,
06:33 a plan and a lot of spending on infrastructure development
06:37 which means a lot of money
06:39 and a lot of working with Congress.
06:41 So that is part of what building out
06:43 a policy platform means,
06:44 and that is part of the transition,
06:47 what should take priority and what can not take priority.
06:55 It involves planning executive actions,
06:57 an executive action is essentially a directive
07:01 to workers within federal agencies
07:04 that doesn't require Congress
07:07 in order to change how we do things
07:10 or how policy is implemented.
07:13 So, for instance, when President Trump came into office,
07:17 one of the first things he did
07:19 was sign a whole bunch of executive orders
07:22 that reversed executive orders made by President Obama.
07:28 And one of the first things on day one
07:31 that President Biden did when he assumed office
07:35 was to sign a whole bunch
07:36 of executive orders undoing executive orders
07:40 that were made by The Trump administration.
07:44 The transition also needs to plan
07:46 for a really critical period of time
07:49 in the life of any presidential administration.
07:53 And it's kind of a number out of a hat
07:58 but it's this honeymoon period between 100 and 200 days
08:03 when there is a new administration

08:06 that hopefully has the goodwill of the American people
08:10 and a fresh start to get stuff done.
08:14 So lots of presidents want to hit the ground running
08:19 because they've got very little time,
08:24 in the length of their administration to get things done.
08:32 Government moves slowly
08:34 and presidents wanna move really fast,
08:36 presidents cannot legislate by themselves,
08:39 essentially they have to work with Congress
08:41 and ask pretty pretty please.
08:50 So they also have to develop a strategy
08:53 to communicate all of those things
08:55 to you guys and to the world,
08:58 here's who we are, here's what we wanna do,
09:01 here are our values, here's how we're gonna accomplish
09:04 what we said we're going to do.
09:07 So the primary primary goal is staffing
09:11 in order to execute on a policy platform.
09:17 So a transition begins well before inauguration day,
09:21 the first phase is actually pre-election
09:25 and it usually starts in earnest in spring of election year.
09:30 So around the time that we have super Tuesday
09:32 and all of those primaries,
09:34 the leading contenders begin
09:37 to develop an entirely separate organization
09:41 that is their transition staff.
09:43 They name a transition chair and they put together a team
09:48 that is going to begin essentially creating a roadmap
09:52 for what is to come
09:54 should their candidate actually win office.
09:58 That means resources, that means an overall plan,
10:03 that has to do with strategy and policy.
10:06 And, most importantly, beginning to build relationships
10:11 between who will be key members of the president's team
10:15 and key stakeholders across the board,
10:20 that includes most importantly with members of Congress,
10:23 the current administration,
10:25 and something we call GSA
10:29 or the General Services Administration.
10:31 So they need to know what they're doing,
10:33 they need to know what's going on,
10:34 and they need to start making those connections
10:38 so they know what they're doing when they get in office,
10:43 if they get in office.
10:44 The second phase of a transition
10:46 begins as soon as a winner is declared, right?
10:51 And the time between election and inauguration
10:57 is typically about 75 days,
11:00 so if you think of an early November election
11:03 and inauguration on January 20th,
11:06 that's less than three months
11:07 to get a whole bunch of stuff done.
11:11 And during that less than three month period,
11:14 about two and a half months,

11:15 the transition team has to handle
11:18 a massive influx of campaign staffers,
11:22 who are no longer campaigning to win an election,
11:26 but who have turned their attention to two things,
11:29 planning the inaugural party and staffing up government,
11:35 they have to make an organization work.
11:38 And, again, the most important part
11:40 is staffing The White House and all of the federal agencies.
11:45 They also typically do something which is to create things
11:49 they call landing or beach head teams,
11:53 that will visit each of the agencies
11:56 to figure out what's been going on.
11:59 What's the staffing like?
12:00 What are the priorities?
12:02 What are the problems?
12:03 What will the new Labor Secretary
12:05 or the new Secretary of Transportation have to face?
12:09 So there's almost a...
12:11 It's like passing a baton in a relay race.
12:15 These landing teams are investigatory
12:18 and the outgoing administration
12:20 is supposed to be cooperative
12:23 with the incoming administration.
12:26 They're also supposed to build up
12:28 the president-elect's policy and management agendas,
12:33 his schedules, how's he gonna get stuff done.
12:36 And at the same time,
12:37 they're continuing to identify talented individuals
12:42 to fill all of those 4,000 plus agencies
12:46 that are going to be necessary
12:48 and that are going to have to be in place
12:51 in order to get done what the president has promised
12:55 that he or she is going to get done.
12:58 So, right now we are in phase three
13:01 of the presidential transition,
13:04 which means that we have inaugurated President Biden.
13:09 We're on day 70-ish since he joined office,
13:13 so we're still within that 100 days,
13:18 that narrow window of time in which a president
13:21 is supposed to be doing a lot of stuff
13:25 and getting a lot of stuff done.
13:28 So they primarily, and first and foremost,
13:33 need to get their team in place.
13:35 They need cabinet secretaries to have been vetted,
13:39 they need the Senate to confirm them
13:41 and they need to put their whole team
13:43 in place to begin to work.
13:46 Now, this transition was a little different,
13:50 there is a 2010 piece of legislation
13:55 which outlines the process for a transition
14:00 between one presidential administration and another.
14:04 And it's kind of wonky and boring
14:06 but this year it turned into the biggest game in town
14:10 that we all watched, right.

14:12 And what it involves is a determination
14:16 by the leader of a relatively obscure
14:21 and boring sounding federal agency called the GSA,
14:25 or the General Services Administration,
14:28 to declare that the transition has actually happened.
14:37 And as soon as the head of the GSA makes a determination,
14:43 what this does is it opens up all of the agencies
14:47 to those landing teams.
14:49 It releases funds and it makes the transition
14:54 from one team to the other possible.
14:57 This time around that became a problem,
15:02 and the determination by an administrator took
15:07 a really, really long time.
15:14 So the question here,
15:22 is whether or not this has been a normal transition, right?
15:25 I outlined what sort of should happen
15:29 but we all know that this was a very unusual period
15:33 from election day or even before,
15:36 because we as Americans were voting early
15:41 for months before the actual day of election.
15:45 So this transition if we compare it to other transitions
15:50 has been absolutely abnormal
15:53 for a bunch of different reasons.
15:55 Number one, the GSA administrator
15:59 did not certify Joe Biden as president-elect,
16:04 so the transition activities that are unlocked
16:07 by that certification were delayed.
16:12 Now, does anyone wanna write in the chat,
16:14 why she didn't certify?
16:20 This is where the jeopardy music is playing,
16:23 and if I could see you in a room
16:25 I would be asking you more directly.
16:29 Does anyone know?
16:34 All right, I guess I'll have to tell you.
16:37 Donald Trump refused to accept the results of the election
16:43 and mounted legal challenges in lots of states
16:49 and continued to say that he had won the election.
16:53 Now, it is not unusual for races at any level,
16:57 from presidential or beyond, to be challenged.
17:01 As a matter of fact, many many states and localities,
17:05 have certain rules in place
17:07 that automatically trigger things like recounts
17:13 if a race is really close,
17:17 this presidential race was not close.
17:20 And it took a very, very long time,
17:25 for the transition to happen
17:28 because President Trump instructed
17:32 the head of the GSA to not certify.
17:37 Eventually she did,
17:40 but the implications of this are fairly massive.
17:44 Number one, lots of costs, lots of angst,
17:50 lots of loss of trust in institutions,
17:53 whether they be local boards of election
17:56 or Secretaries of States

18:00 where the Trump campaign contested election results.
18:06 And also from the standpoint of a transition,
18:09 it simply delayed it in ways that we have not seen before.
18:14 So it created a whole bunch of administrative headaches,
18:18 delays, inefficiencies,
18:21 and those things impact all of us
18:24 because the period of a presidential transition,
18:28 not only is about staffing up,
18:31 it's a point where the United States is really vulnerable,
18:36 it is a huge national security risk, right.
18:40 And it's a point at which foreign actors or domestic actors
18:45 may see as an opportunity and a vulnerability
18:49 in order to attack, in order to get something,
18:53 from the US because they are preoccupied in transition.
18:59 The folks who are supposed to be doing their jobs
19:03 are not doing their jobs
19:06 because they're engaged in this transition.
19:09 And the new team is not up to date,
19:12 they haven't been briefed,
19:14 they haven't been able to start,
19:16 so that was really really problematic.
19:21 In addition to the delay in certification of the results
19:25 and the refusal actually to accept the results,
19:30 President Trump never conceded.
19:34 It's not necessary that any president concede, by the way,
19:41 this is something that is mandated by the constitution
19:44 whether or not President Trump accepted
19:48 or his followers, or his supporters,
19:51 accepted the results of the election
19:54 the constitution says his term in office
19:57 is over on the day of inauguration,
20:00 which is now set at January 20th.
20:07 But another thing happened on the way to inauguration
20:12 that also inhibited what was going on
20:16 or what would have gone on
20:17 in a more boring, normal transition.
20:21 And those are the events of the storming of the Capitol
20:24 on January 6th, right.
20:27 January 6th was the day that Congress
20:29 was going to certify the results
20:33 of the Electoral College vote.
20:35 So, at this point all votes were in,
20:40 counted, recounted, recounted again in several states,
20:46 many lawsuits had played out and had been dismissed,
20:51 but the Electoral College had already met
20:54 in December, on the 14th,
20:57 and certified the results from all of the States
21:01 and said indeed Joseph R Biden Jr.
21:05 is now going to be president-elect.
21:09 And the last step in that progress
21:11 is for the Electoral College certification
21:16 to go to Congress.
21:18 And Congress looks to see if these papers are in order,
21:21 and typically this is something we don't even hear about,

21:24 but officially a president-elect
21:27 doesn't become a president-elect until Congress certifies
21:32 what the electors of the Electoral College have said.
21:40 And typically this is procedural,
21:42 it happens in both the House and the Senate,
21:46 it's ceremonial,
21:48 there's some pomp in circumstances
21:51 but usually there are no objections.
21:54 But not only were there objections to certifying the counts
21:58 that had already been vetted by lots of different eyes
22:03 and certified by the Electoral College,
22:05 there were challenges to those results in Congress
22:10 which resulted in delays.
22:12 So for every challenge of any state results,
22:16 what happens is that a joint meeting
22:19 where members of the House and members of the Senate
22:24 are together in the same room,
22:26 an objection requires that the Houses go back
22:31 to their separate chambers, debate, vote and come back.
22:37 So they were delaying tactics
22:39 but while this was happening,
22:41 you probably all were paying attention,
22:44 outside of Congress on the mall was a mob.
22:49 And that mob breached the halls of Congress
22:54 in a way that we have never seen before,
22:56 not since The War of 1812 has Congress been invaded.
23:02 It was a sad day,
23:06 and it was meant to disrupt the last official act
23:11 that would have made president-elect Biden
23:15 President-elect Biden, meaning congressional certification.
23:21 Members of Congress were whisked away to safety,
23:26 rioters killed several Capitol police officers,
23:30 one rioter was killed.
23:33 The Senate Parliamentarian had the presence of mind
23:37 to take the boxes which contained the results
23:41 of The Electoral College certification
23:46 with her into hiding,
23:49 and hours and hours later Congress came back
23:54 and in the early hours of the next morning
23:59 finally certified the Electoral College results.
24:04 Those events were traumatizing for a lot of people
24:09 but from the perspective of transition
24:12 it also served as another delay.
24:17 Because typically what's happening in this period
24:19 is that the Senate is not concerned
24:22 with having had it's security breached,
24:27 The Senate is holding hearings on confirmations
24:31 on candidates that have already been selected
24:33 for the incoming administration.
24:36 So not only did that impact things,
24:42 Congress voted to impeach President Trump based on his role
24:49 in the events of January 6th.
24:53 Congress, The House of Representatives,
24:56 passed one article of impeachment

25:01 which then is required to go to the Senate for debate.
25:06 So the House impeaches, it's like an indictment,
25:11 and the Senate convicts or impeaches.
25:18 So those hearings, that trial,
25:22 had to happen during the time
25:24 that typically would have been reserved, almost exclusively,
25:31 for confirming members of Biden's new cabinet.
25:38 You probably all know the results so I'll skip to the end,
25:42 President Trump was not convicted
25:46 which means a couple of different things.
25:49 Number one, he is the only American president
25:51 to have ever been impeached twice in a term,
25:56 he was not convicted or found guilty
26:01 which means he remained in office,
26:04 and for the first time ever in an impeachment proceeding
26:09 a member of the president's own party voted to impeach.
26:15 It didn't have an impact on the ultimate vote,
26:20 Donald Trump was not found guilty,
26:23 but the process took a lot of time.
26:28 So, was this a normal transition?
26:30 Absolutely not.
26:32 What has been the result?
26:34 At this point with the confirmation
26:37 of our former mayor of Boston, Marty Walsh, on March 22nd,
26:43 President Biden now has all 15 cabinet secretaries in place
26:49 plus 13 high level administration officials.
26:53 But remember the number that I told you earlier,
26:55 there are 1200 Senate confirmed positions
27:00 so the Senate has its work cut out for it.
27:04 And at this point the Biden administration
27:07 has far fewer Senate confirmations for his team
27:13 than any other recent predecessor.
27:16 However, one of the things
27:19 that has gone, I think, relatively unnoticed
27:23 in all of the drama of the storming of the Capitol
27:27 and the talk of partisan anchor,
27:31 and I haven't mentioned the COVID crisis once yet
27:35 but that's why we're doing a virtual mock class
27:38 rather than having you visit campus,
27:41 is that we're in the midst
27:42 of an unprecedented global pandemic.
27:46 And so President Biden's job number one
27:50 is to get COVID under control
27:53 and to get the economy reopened.
27:56 So to some extent anything that he campaigned on
28:04 is trumped and that was upon
28:09 by the need of the emergency ahead of us.
28:13 And that's an awful lot,
28:15 like the situation was when he came into office
28:19 in the midst of financial crisis
28:21 as Vice-President to then President-elect Obama.
28:25 Sometimes, no matter what administrations would like to do,
28:30 events force their hand in terms of shaping their agenda.
28:36 So President Biden's number one job is COVID,

28:42 COVID has got to get under control,
28:45 the vaccination rollout has to increase,
28:48 we've gotta get to herd immunity,
28:50 we've gotta reopen schools,
28:51 and we've gotta reopen the economy.
28:54 So one thing that he has managed to do
28:58 with absolute partisan only support,
29:04 is to pass another giant COVID relief package.
29:09 Now, that happened only exclusively with Democratic votes
29:14 through kind of a parliamentary trick called reconciliation,
29:20 which means that rather than meeting 60 votes in the Senate
29:23 you only need a majority.
29:26 So the Senate is narrowly controlled by the Democrats,
29:32 meaning that there are 50 Republican senators
29:34 and 50 democratic senators,
29:37 but in the case of a tie, meaning a strict party line vote,
29:44 Vice President Kamala Harris, who is a Democrat,
29:48 gets to be the tie-breaking vote.
29:51 So what is key to moving
29:54 the Biden administration's agenda forward,
29:57 is not only this problem of a lag
30:01 in putting important people into places
30:04 where they're doing important jobs,
30:06 it's the political composition of Congress
30:11 which is extremely divided
30:14 and only very very narrowly controlled by Democrats.
30:17 So the Democratic Party has what we call a trifecta,
30:22 they control the executive branch
30:24 and both chambers of the legislative branch
30:27 but just by the barest of margins.
30:31 So this means two things,
30:34 we can either continue to see partisan warfare,
30:38 where the minority party forts
30:43 what the majority party would like to do,
30:46 or for those of you who are optimists
30:50 and glass half full people,
30:52 it could be a situation
30:54 that forces more compromise and bi-partisanship.
31:00 The latest \$1.9 trillion COVID relief package
31:06 was very definitely passed only along partisan lines.
31:11 However, if you look at the Senate confirmation hearings
31:17 of president Biden's cabinet picks,
31:20 it was only one nominee, Neera Tanden,
31:25 for the Office of Management and Budget
31:28 who did not win confirmation.
31:32 And there has been a great deal of bipartisan support,
31:37 meaning bipartisan votes on both the relevant committees
31:42 and on the Senate floor,
31:44 in order to confirm President Biden's picks.
31:49 So we have this strange kind of duels story going on
31:53 where at the top level we say there's gridlock
31:58 and Republicans can't get along with Democrats
32:01 and Democrats can't get along with Republicans,
32:04 and nobody wants to play together nicely in the sandbox.

32:09 But on some levels there is bipartisan agreement,
32:13 and this is in part
32:15 because despite what we see on the surface,
32:18 those senators know that the United States
32:22 and the success of this administration
32:25 is dependent upon staffing up the Federal Government.
32:30 And President Biden's team, his transition team,
32:35 as both candidate and president-elect
32:38 was one of the most well-organized transition teams
32:45 that the United States has ever seen, right,
32:48 they had their act together.
32:50 So despite the delays they are catching up.
32:56 So as of today, or as of March 22nd
33:00 when Marty Walsh was confirmed as Secretary of Labor,
33:07 President Biden now has a full cabinet.
33:10 And I wanna talk just about one example
33:15 of what and why this is important.
33:18 So the example I chose, although there are many,
33:22 is the Department of Transportation.
33:25 The Department of Transportation
33:27 is headed by Pete Buttigieg, a name you may remember,
33:33 who was at one time a candidate for president.
33:37 He's the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana,
33:41 he has very little federal experience,
33:44 he's got a deep resume for a really young guy
33:48 but he is used to getting stuff done.
33:53 And the Department of Transportation
33:56 doesn't sound very sexy,
33:57 it's in charge of things like highway planning,
34:00 construction of car, truck, air, railroad safety,
34:05 the safety of waterways, ports, highways,
34:09 oil and gas pipelines,
34:12 but he will be key in implementing, selling,
34:19 and making known President Biden's major campaign promise
34:28 after taking care of COVID, right,
34:31 and that is to build back better.
34:34 So, right now the President in coordination with Congress
34:41 is putting together another huge spending bill,
34:45 this time on infrastructure.
34:49 And it will have some kind of sexy name
34:52 but most of that is going to be under the jurisdiction
34:57 of secretary Buttigieg's Department of Transportation.
35:03 And when we think of infrastructure
35:07 we're not just talking about roads and bridges,
35:10 we're also talking about our internet, right.
35:16 We're talking about the ability of Americans
35:21 to connect to high speed internet,
35:25 and if nothing else,
35:28 this pandemic has shown us the absolute importance
35:34 of getting that piece right.
35:36 Another part of building back better
35:40 is working in what we think of as equity,
35:46 making sure that communities that have been most impacted
35:52 by lots of different things,

35:54 whether it's the loss of industry in the Rust Belt
35:59 or the impact of climate change,
36:03 or the loss of jobs due to the impact
36:06 of COVID on the economy,
36:10 are given the opportunity to have jobs
36:15 and to have a better future.
36:17 So within this idea of building back better
36:22 is kind of a hidden version of something that was introduced
36:33 and became kind of controversial.
36:35 And some of you may know
36:37 that I'm referring to the Green New Deal, right.
36:43 President Biden's Build Back Better plan
36:47 involves elements of all of those things.
36:51 It is not only looking at building,
36:57 fixing bridges that are crumbling or potholes,
37:01 but bringing the ability to underserved communities
37:06 to join the 21st century economy.
37:09 It's thinking about building resilience,
37:12 about making sure that we are doing things
37:15 in a way that is much more sensitive
37:18 to climate and environment, right.
37:22 So it is a huge, huge priority,
37:28 and very likely the next thing
37:33 that President Biden will attempt to do
37:35 within that honeymoon period.
37:38 So he's kind of going at this with all cylinders firing,
37:41 he has decided that he is gonna go big or go home.
37:47 And so far he's managed to get one priority win through
37:53 in terms of the COVID relief package,
37:55 next up will be infrastructure
37:58 and then we'll see what he does about other things,
38:01 the environment, gun control, civil rights,
38:06 voting rights, international security, right.
38:11 There are lots and lots of things on his agenda,
38:14 the question is, how is he going to prioritize them?
38:18 How is his team going to help him do that?
38:22 And how is he going to gain support of members of Congress
38:26 to get this stuff through Congress?
38:30 And how is he going to gain the support
38:33 of the American people to be behind what he's doing?
38:38 Those are all big problems
38:40 and these staff members,
38:46 especially the ones in the most highest places
38:50 in these agencies,
38:52 are absolutely critical for any president to get stuff done
38:58 which is what they wanna do.
39:00 So, we're almost out of time but I wanted to let you know
39:05 that the Department of Political Science and Legal Studies
39:10 has been doing a webinar series with GBH here in Boston
39:16 that is based on President Biden's first 100 days
39:20 and his policy priorities.
39:22 And I would like to invite all of you who are interested
39:26 to tune in this Wednesday,
39:29 when we will be discussing his foreign policy agenda.

39:34 The title of the event
39:36 is Fixing What's Broken : America's Place in The World,
39:40 and some of the panelists are...
39:42 Actually, the whole panelists are fabulous,
39:44 but our headliner is Dr. Fiona Hill
39:48 who is a senior fellow at Brookings Institution,
39:51 and who some of you may remember
39:54 from President Trump's first impeachment trial.
40:00 So with that, I will ask if there are any questions,
40:05 I'm happy to answer them,
40:07 and I hope that I will see some, if not all of you,
40:11 on campus and in my classes in the fall.
40:16 So thank you for your time
40:18 and good luck with your decision-making.
40:23 - It looks like we do have two questions already.
40:26 I think one of them you kind of already answered,
40:29 but maybe the first one you could address.
40:32 - Oh, okay.
40:38 Actually I can't find the questions,
40:41 can you read to me, Stephanie?
40:44 - So the first question is,
40:45 with the persistent use of executive orders,
40:49 is there ever push back on what is considered essential
40:52 to what an executive order covers?
40:55 - Okay, and actually I did find the Q and A box,
40:59 it was just hidden.
41:00 So, yes, the problem with executive orders
41:06 is that they can be undone,
41:07 just like I talked about before.
41:09 And executive orders have been increasingly used
41:15 by contemporary presidents.
41:17 So every president in the contemporary era
41:22 has used more executive orders than their predecessor.
41:26 So Bush used more than his predecessor,
41:32 Obama used more than Bush,
41:34 Trump used more than Obama,
41:36 and we'll see what Biden looks like.
41:39 Right now he's not on track to winning any of those battles
41:48 for most executive orders,
41:51 but what is more preferential and what's better
41:57 than an executive order to get something done,
41:59 because it can be reversed,
42:01 is to do something legislatively.
42:04 And that's really, really hard if we have a Congress
42:09 who is at loggerheads or so deeply divided
42:13 and there isn't a clear majority.
42:18 So, President Biden has promised
42:21 to try and get bi-partisan deals, right.
42:27 Legislative solutions are always, always, always,
42:31 superior to executive orders
42:33 but they're harder to get, they take longer.
42:38 And the scope of what an executive order can do is limited,
42:42 it can only do what Congress has already apportioned
42:47 in terms of money,

42:49 and it really has to do with interpretation of legislation.
42:57 The second question is,
42:59 has there ever been a reluctant transition on one end,
43:02 similar to what happened
43:04 with President Trump and President Biden?
43:07 And the answer is no.
43:12 There have been contentious transitions,
43:15 there have been two inaugurations
43:23 where the preceding president did not attend,
43:29 and those were both unhappy, losing presidents,
43:37 or departing presidents, had the last name of Adams,
43:40 so it's been a really really long time
43:42 since that's happened.
43:44 There have been contentious transitions
43:48 with a great deal of dislike
43:50 between the incoming and outgoing president,
43:52 so, for instance, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt came
43:58 into power his predecessor...
44:01 The two of them despised one another,
44:05 yet they did what they thought was necessary
44:13 in terms of making a show of a peaceful transition of power.
44:20 And lastly I would say, as an example,
44:24 there was a really contentious election
44:27 between Al Gore and George Bush, right.
44:35 If any of you know American politics,
44:38 the result of that election came down
44:41 to a recount of votes in Florida.
44:45 And the results of the recount...
44:48 The recount was stopped by a judge's order,
44:53 that judge's order was challenged
44:55 and this case went all the way up to The Supreme Court.
44:59 And The Supreme court decided
45:01 that President Bush was going to win
45:06 and candidate Gore would not win.
45:11 That was another point at which transition was delayed
45:16 because there was uncertainty in the results,
45:19 and there is a lot of anecdotal evidence
45:23 that there was a lot of animosity
45:26 between the outgoing Clinton administration
45:33 and the incoming Bush administration,
45:35 to the extent that nasty letters
45:38 were left in The White House drawers,
45:40 that information wasn't shared, right,
45:44 so deliberate acts of kind of revenge.
45:49 So what President Bush experienced on his way in to office
45:57 actually really shaped the transition
46:00 that he left office in.
46:02 So, as you know, President Bush was president,
46:06 not very popular,
46:08 until the events of 9/11.
46:11 After 9/11 he became a really popular president,
46:15 there was this rallying around the flag effect.
46:18 However, 9/11 was significant,
46:20 and a lot of security analysts blame a botched

46:26 and delayed transition
46:30 for intelligence failures that led to the events of 9/11.
46:36 So, President Bush served as a two term president
46:42 and he instructed his staff
46:45 as he was getting ready to leave The White House,
46:47 months and months in advance,
46:49 that he did not want the incoming president,
46:53 whoever it was going to be,
46:55 to have to deal with what he dealt with on the way in.
46:59 So that handoff of the baton
47:02 between the outgoing Bush administration
47:05 and the incoming Obama administration,
47:08 even in the midst of financial crisis was flawless.
47:14 He directed his staff to be gracious,
47:17 to be open and to provide everything that was necessary
47:21 to ensure the success of his predecessor
47:26 despite them being in different parties.
47:30 President Obama, as an outgoing two term president,
47:36 publicly commented that he had such appreciation
47:41 for the graciousness and helpfulness of that transition,
47:45 that despite Democrats deep he surprise and dismay
47:53 that Donald Trump rather than Hillary Clinton won
47:56 the election in 2016,
47:59 he instructed his staff the same thing.
48:03 That they should do everything humanly possible
48:05 to make the transition to the Trump presidency
48:09 as smooth as possible.
48:12 And his thinking was not only did he want
48:15 to do what George Bush did for him,
48:19 but he knew that the Trump team
48:21 didn't have a very organized transition team leading up
48:26 into the election,
48:27 so they wanted to give them extra help.
48:32 So I hope that answers your questions,
48:37 and if you've got more questions
48:39 we can put my email in the chat
48:42 and I'm happy to talk with anyone offline.
48:46 But it seems like we are at the end of class,
48:52 so everybody get up, stretch,
48:54 I'm gonna check out your songs
48:56 'cause some of them I may use in other classes
48:59 so thank you for the information.
49:02 And I'm gonna turn this over to Stephanie.
49:05 - Yeah, thank you so much Professor Kulich.
49:07 So I put her email in the chat,
49:10 I also linked our admitted site
49:13 so that you can check out some of the other events.
49:15 You also have the additional event
49:16 that Professor Kulich mentioned for Wednesday night,
49:19 so that would definitely be great for you all to join.
49:22 And then just a reminder
49:23 that our deposit deadline is May 1st.
49:26 So we hope that you enjoyed the class,
49:28 we hope that we'll see you on campus in the fall

49:31 and hope you enjoy the rest of your day.
49:35 - Bye everyone.
49:37 - Thank you.
49:52 - All right, we're all done?
49:56 - Yeah, looks someone wrote a very long, nice comment
50:04 about their songs, so that's good.
50:09 - All right, I'm gonna save the chat.
50:14 - Yeah, it should...
50:15 When I log off the chat should be safe, so I'll do that.
50:22 - That is a very long explanation.
50:27 Well, I hope I have that student in my class.
50:32 - Yeah, for sure.
50:34 - All right. - All right,
50:35 well, admissions really appreciates you helping us out
50:38 with these events and... - Sure.
50:40 I hope they are effective.
50:43 - Yes, that's our hope as well.
50:45 We had nine students login.
50:49 - Okay, and how many did you run?
50:52 Classes that is.
50:54 - I think we're close to 15 or 16,
50:58 so there are quite a few.
51:00 - Yeah, that's great. - Yeah.
51:03 - COVID adaptations.
51:05 - Yes (chuckles).
51:07 All right - All right Stephanie,
51:08 nice to see you.
51:10 Just in time, the sun is about to...
51:12 - Create a whole new lighting for you (chuckles).
51:15 - That's exactly, all right take care.