

00:02 Hello and welcome. Thank you so much for coming out.
00:04 (audience clapping)
00:08 So thank you for coming out and celebrating with us tonight.
00:11 This is our fifth annual Black Excellence Celebration.
00:16 (audience cheering)
00:20 My name is Tamela Bailey.
00:22 I am so excited to be here tonight.
00:25 I'm also excited to see so many familiar
00:27 and unfamiliar faces.
00:29 I'm even more excited to see all the students here tonight.
00:33 I was working those emails, and Karimal,
00:37 and Lindsay and Jelani,
00:39 and we were making sure to,
00:42 to make sure that the house was packed,
00:44 so thank you for being here.
00:46 So I am a 2004 graduate of the law school. I am the chair.
00:51 Thank you.
00:52 (laughs)
00:54 2004, that was a long time ago.
00:57 So I am the chair of the Suffolk University
01:00 Black Alumni Network, also called SUBAN,
01:03 So you're gonna hear me say SUBAN going forward.
01:05 And I'm the president of the Law Alumni Board.
01:09 I'm a member of the All Rise Committee
01:11 and all the other committees that Caitlyn
01:13 asked me to participate on.
01:16 I'm the chair of the committee
01:18 for this event tonight too as well, so,
01:20 we have an action packed program tonight.
01:25 It's gonna be quite a bit for your entertainment.
01:30 So, we wanna get started right away.
01:33 I'm gonna turn a program over to Jelani Burns,
01:36 who is a junior at the undergrad,
01:40 and also our SUBAN leader committee member.
01:44 Sam Faisal, who is a law school graduate.
01:47 And they are gonna kick off
01:49 the Black Men in Leadership alumni panel.
01:51 So, excuse me, welcome Jelani, welcome Sam,
01:55 and as well as the panelists,
01:57 you guys can come up to the stage and don't worry,
02:01 I will be back after the panel.
02:03 (audience laughing)
02:06 You guys good? Here you go.
02:09 (audience cheering and clapping)
02:15 <v ->All right. Good evening, good evening.</v
02:17 And thank you all for coming.
02:19 My name is Jelani Burns and I'm one of the moderators
02:21 for this evening.
02:22 I'm a junior at Suffolk University,
02:24 majoring in finance and minoring in data analytics.
02:27 I am the president of the Fundamental Brotherhood Society,
02:30 recipient of the SUBAN Scholarship

02:31 and member of numerous clubs.
02:34 I am elated to be with you this evening
02:36 and to serve as the moderator
02:37 for the Black Men leadership portion of this exciting event,
02:40 along with the SUBAN Leadership Committee member Sam Faisal.
02:44 This evening we'll be having a conversation
02:46 with our impressive and distinguished panelists
02:50 of the Suffolk alumni who are leaders
02:52 in their professional fields.
02:54 It is now my pleasure to welcome our panelists.
02:57 Let's start by having you each introduce yourselves,
02:59 and I'll start with my co-moderator, Sam Faisal,
03:02 who flew in from Texas to be here.
03:05 (audience cheering)
03:11 <v ->Thank you Jelani. My name is Sam Faisal.</v
03:13 I graduated from Suffolk University Law School on May 2020.
03:17 I was the former president of the Suffolk University's
03:21 Black Law Students Association, and I'm a current member
03:24 of the SUBAN Leadership Committee.
03:26 I am currently an associate at Berry, Appleman, and Leiden,
03:29 where I practice business immigration.
03:32 If we can, you know, go down the line, and Anthony.
03:36 <v ->All right. Hey, good evening everyone.</v
03:38 Great to be here, down here from New York City,
03:42 so it's good to be back home in Boston
03:44 and around Suffolk University.
03:46 Every time I come back,
03:47 this place grows and changes even more.
03:49 So I'm Anthony Ross,
03:50 1997 business student, Sawyer Business School.
03:54 I was an accounting major.
03:56 Focused on being a CPA when I grow up,
03:59 and that's what I did after my Suffolk experience. (laughs)
04:04 So today I've worked for State Street Bank,
04:07 ironically, Boston based company, many years later,
04:11 running their alternative investments,
04:14 real estate and private equity platform out of New York.
04:17 That's what I do.
04:19 <v ->Anthony Richards, Tony Richards.</v
04:21 <v ->So I'm Tony Richards. Super excited to be here.</v
04:24 I had a long week, and glad to kind of culminate that week
04:27 with this group.
04:29 Suffolk University grad.
04:32 I'm a 10 year graduate student.
04:35 I started, for the first year,
04:37 I took two classes one semester and then one class
04:40 the next semester and then got hired to be
04:42 the executive director of a national nonprofit.
04:44 So it took me 10 years, not all at once,
04:47 to get a master's degree,
04:49 and I'm excited to also be a part of SUBAN,
04:52 which is not only an amazing, rewarding experience,
04:55 but an opportunity to continue to lead
04:57 in a collaborative way.

04:59 And I'm the vice president of equitable business development
05:02 at Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency,
05:05 it's the state's affordable housing public bank.
05:08 And Leah, who is also a Suffolk alumni, is here today,
05:12 which I was excited to see her,
05:14 I don't know where she is 'cause the light's blinding me.
05:16 So I'm excited to be here.
05:18 And that's a long-winded way
05:19 of saying thank you for having me.
05:22 <v ->Neil Sicard.</v>
05:23 <v ->Good evening everybody.</v>
05:24 I'm excited to be here. My name is Neil Sicard.
05:27 I work for the Salem Police Department.
05:30 I'm a patrol officer and also work
05:31 in the community impact unit.
05:34 I'm so excited to be back here at Suffolk University.
05:36 I've always thought about giving back in some way.
05:40 When I applied to Suffolk a long time ago,
05:43 it was a commuter school, it was small,
05:47 right on Beacon Hill.
05:48 Can't go wrong.
05:49 Plus, I was excited to hear too
05:52 that there was a Black studies program.
05:54 And so I minored that, my major was in sociology.
05:59 What really got me into the path
06:00 of going into criminal justice and into specifically
06:03 law enforcement is when I was doing my internship
06:07 at Suffolk District Court in the juvenile probation office.
06:10 Fast forward now, I work in the community impact unit,
06:12 and the main thing that I focus on is co-response,
06:16 dealing with the community, working with the community,
06:18 with the homeless populations.
06:20 And I'm currently at the William James College
06:25 in a graduate level certification program
06:28 on co-response that's done by Dr. Abbott,
06:31 who has been doing co-response
06:32 with Framingham Police Department
06:33 for approximately 20 years.
06:35 Thank you for having me tonight.
06:38 <v ->Well thank you to our panelists.</v>
06:40 (audience clapping)
06:45 I think we can get right into it.
06:48 So I think a lot of us spend a lot of time
06:52 trying to be perfect and not making mistakes.
06:54 Just to be frequently met with hurdles to overcome
06:57 and struggles that we have to work through.
07:00 It is also easy to fall victim to imposter syndrome,
07:04 feeling like you do not belong.
07:06 Sometimes many of us get nervous
07:08 or lack the necessary confidence
07:10 when working in certain roles
07:12 or even interacting with others.
07:15 Anthony Ross, can you share an example of your experience
07:18 with this and how you're able to overcome it?

07:21 <v ->Oh, absolutely.</v
07:23 Let me dig into the memory bank.
07:25 It's still part of my daily life (laughs) to this day.
07:28 So after graduating Suffolk,
07:33 first I'll just digress a little bit
07:34 about the preparation, training that Suffolk afforded me
07:38 during the time I was here.
07:40 I joined Suffolk, never had been part of any organization
07:43 in terms of activities, sports, or anything.
07:46 Joined Suffolk and immediately was immersed
07:48 in a wonderful community of mentors and of individuals
07:53 who kind of took me under their wing,
07:54 and really just showed me what leadership looked like.
07:59 Got involved in the Black Student Union,
08:01 was involved in Student Government Association as treasurer.
08:05 Was part of Beta Alpha Psi
08:07 being an accounting geek that I am.
08:10 So, had a lot of opportunity to be in a diverse group
08:15 of situations and different experiences.
08:18 So, fast forward to graduating, I was fortunate enough
08:20 to secure an opportunity at the time in one of the,
08:24 I guess today it's called the big four,
08:26 working for Deloitte out of Suffolk.
08:28 So talking about being a fish out of water,
08:30 joining a large global CPA firm with scale,
08:34 the highest clientele on Earth.
08:37 And me coming from Roxbury, Mass, (laughs)
08:41 walking into this big office.
08:42 So to me that's the Suffolk story it felt like,
08:46 so I felt prepared.
08:47 But as far as challenges, I was the odd person out.
08:51 I didn't fit in.
08:52 Obviously being of nine Black people at a firm
08:56 of thousands and plus, that was a little shocking as well.
09:01 But just coming into that experience,
09:04 you always felt inadequate.
09:05 You always felt under-prepared or not fitting in.
09:08 And it was definitely challenging.
09:10 I think what allowed me to kind of persevere
09:14 through that experience was just me,
09:16 focus on the technical aspect of my craft
09:20 and accounting and finance.
09:21 You know, I can just think of many examples
09:24 where not only am I working for this prestigious firm,
09:27 but also, this prestigious firm has prestigious clients.
09:31 So not only am I trying to get acclimated
09:33 with working at the firm,
09:34 but I'm shipped out to audit and work on various clients
09:39 all throughout the New England area,
09:40 from high end investment firms to Fidelity
09:43 to Mass financial services, you name it.
09:45 So here I am walking into not only my organization
09:48 but also the organizations of clients.
09:50 So I think I can candidly remember being the new person,

09:54 approaching one of the executives at one of the firm,
09:57 and they immediately brush you off
09:58 because they don't think you know anything.
10:01 But in hindsight, you know, it was kind of a good experience
10:04 'cause it motivated me to wanna prove them wrong. (laughs)
10:07 And part of that experience allowed me to fight through,
10:11 I guess one of the challenging experiences,
10:12 which I noticed some technical issues
10:15 with some of the accounting and some of the things
10:16 that they were doing at the firm.
10:18 I tried to raise it up, nobody was listening to me,
10:21 kind of got brushed off.
10:23 So I put in the time, I put in the work, I went home,
10:26 I stayed up late, researched the issue, presented my case,
10:30 and it was well received by my manager
10:33 as well as the client in the long run.
10:35 So, you know, I would just, my advice to students
10:38 and individuals, well just keep persevering.
10:41 Stay focused on what it is, your strengths are,
10:45 and continue to fight through.
10:46 So that challenge definitely allowed me
10:48 to really learn a lot about myself.
10:50 It helped me build a certain level of confidence.
10:54 It didn't allow me to want to continue to struggle,
10:57 if you will, or feel like odd man out,
10:59 because that kind of showcased with my technical ability,
11:02 and that put me, I felt on a level playing field
11:04 with everyone on my team,
11:06 and as well as everyone at the client I was working with.
11:10 <v ->Thank you.</v
11:11 <v ->All right. Thank you Anthony for sharing.</v
11:14 For our second question, oftentimes we are in school,
11:17 and starting out in our careers we are either unclear
11:20 of what we want to do,
11:21 or if we do have certain career aspirations,
11:24 we are unsure of how to get there.
11:26 Can you share an experience that has helped you
11:28 shape your career trajectory?
11:30 This question is for Sam.
11:32 <v ->Yeah, so when I first started out at Suffolk Law,</v
11:36 I was convinced I wanted to be a prosecutor
11:39 or a defense attorney or something along those lines.
11:44 That's kind of what I always thought I was going to be,
11:49 because I fell in love with "Law and Order"
11:52 or any of those other, you know, TV shows that you see.
11:58 But it wasn't really until I took
12:01 some of the immigration law classes,
12:04 I participated in the immigration clinic at the university,
12:10 where we were able to make an impactful change
12:13 in someone's life, in two people's lives.
12:16 During the immigration clinic,
12:18 we were able to help apply for asylum
12:22 and get the asylum granted for a gay couple from Brazil
12:25 who feared that if they were to return to Brazil,

12:29 that they would be persecuted for their sexual preferences.
12:35 That, you know, being able to help them
12:38 through such a hard time in their lives
12:40 and being able to really help guide them through
12:44 a very complex and, you know,
12:48 a process that if you're not doing it,
12:50 you don't really know what's going on.
12:53 That was really eye-opening for me,
12:55 and being able to help them with that was something
12:57 that really led me towards what I'm doing today.
13:01 Although it's not entirely similar.
13:05 I think it's the constant affirmations
13:08 that we get from our clients.
13:10 You know, just a few weeks ago I had a client,
13:13 a family of five where they've been waiting
13:16 for their green cards for, you know, since 2008.
13:19 And it was something where being able
13:22 to help them through that process, you know,
13:25 guiding them through all their questions that they have,
13:28 and being able to get that phone call at the end of the day,
13:32 you know, 15 years later,
13:34 that they all received their green cards.
13:36 There's no better feeling than that in my opinion.
13:39 You know, just being able to help somebody through something
13:42 that if they didn't have that help,
13:45 things could have gone very wrong.
13:47 And I think those constant reaffirmations from our clients,
13:53 whether it's in the clinic or whether it's at work,
13:57 that you're actually making a difference in someone's life.
14:00 And that's something where that's certainly helped
14:04 shape my career and where I am and where I'm going,
14:07 in terms of knowing that this is a system
14:10 that needs a lot of work done,
14:13 and being able to help guide
14:15 all those non-immigrants become legal, permanent residents
14:21 in the US is something that I find incredibly fulfilling
14:24 and something that, you know, I was really unclear,
14:27 but taking the classes and taking the time
14:30 to actually speak with these people
14:31 and speak with the people that are actually going through it
14:33 is something that has helped me, really,
14:36 has helped guide me to where I am today.
14:42 To kind of continue on that,
14:45 well, to switch it up a little bit, I should say.
14:48 I think, you know, to kind of get into our next question,
14:52 I think most people would agree that a leader
14:56 is a person who is capable of making decisions,
14:59 and someone who is a role model for others.
15:02 Who communicates well, has vision, leads by example,
15:07 has humility, and able to deal with conflict
15:10 and complex issues.
15:13 Neil, you have a very unique experience and perspective
15:16 because you are a police officer,
15:18 a leader out in the community leading from the front lines

15:21 as a first responder, and we thank you for that.
15:26 How did you develop the skills
15:27 to be an effective leader in your role,
15:29 and what advice do you have for Black professionals
15:32 to develop leadership skills?
15:36 <v ->Wow. All right.</v
15:37 I'm gonna try to keep it brief
15:39 so I don't go for a long time.
15:42 'Cause that's a lot of questions.
15:44 (panelists and audience laughing)
15:46 I wanna first start by saying is that I grew up
15:49 as a Haitian American in Revere,
15:52 and one of the things, I see it, a hundred 100%.
15:56 Only ones who come out like that.
15:57 And I'm proud of that, really proud of that.
16:01 And with that pride I had to learn to adapt
16:03 and I had to learn to get along with everybody,
16:05 'cause growing up in Revere,
16:06 majority of the folks there were Italian,
16:08 so I had to learn little Italian, you know.
16:10 And so I grew up in a diverse community.
16:13 And as I grew up, I ended up applying to the college,
16:18 Suffolk University, came here,
16:22 again, diverse community.
16:24 And then from then on I just,
16:25 I learned that you have to try to help people.
16:28 The main thing was I always wanted
16:31 to help look out for folks.
16:33 That's why I end up becoming the president
16:36 of the Haitian American Student Association at the time.
16:41 And then from there, I took all that experience
16:44 that I had growing up, going through college,
16:47 and then taken that into my professional life.
16:50 When I was in the workforce,
16:52 I always took up positions of leadership.
16:56 At one point I was working at Peabody Essex Museum,
16:58 and I was immediately hired as a security supervisor.
17:03 At one point I was also managing weddings,
17:06 functions, VIP events.
17:08 I got to see the president of the Peabody Essex Museum
17:15 talking with his clients and mingling
17:18 with all these other executives.
17:20 So it kind of opened my mind up to how wide the world is.
17:25 And then when I eventually got into the,
17:28 took all this experience and I applied
17:30 to become a police officer,
17:32 and I had to go through a police academy.
17:34 And one of the things is that the police academy,
17:38 it refines all that you have taken,
17:42 all the experience you've had in your life.
17:44 All these positions of leadership that I had
17:46 for all these jobs and refined it.
17:49 I got to learn how to have a command presence.
17:52 I got to understand how to be concise,

17:55 how to give out instructions,
17:58 how to basically be able to refine your skills
18:05 in communicating with people.
18:06 The most important thing to have
18:08 when you're working with a community that's so diverse,
18:12 from the homeless to a person who lives
18:15 in a multimillion dollar mansion,
18:17 to a person who is in a domestic situation.
18:20 Or if you interact with someone who's transgender or gay,
18:23 you have to be able to communicate with everybody equally.
18:27 And with that, indirectly,
18:30 you get to have that type of like, leadership skills.
18:33 It just comes within.
18:35 When I was at the academy, I learned the seven Ps.
18:38 And this is something that I think
18:39 everybody should think about, the seven Ps.
18:42 Prior proper planning prevents piss-poor performance.
18:46 (audience laughing)
18:48 <v Sam>Say that five times fast.</v
18:49 <v ->Yeah, say that five times fast.</v
18:51 Especially when you have a staff instructor yelling at you.
18:53 (Sam laughing)
18:55 But I watched how in all the jobs that I were in,
19:02 my supervisors that I remember, my favorite supervisors,
19:05 why they motivated me, how they motivated me,
19:08 without even saying anything.
19:10 And I took from each and every one of 'em
19:14 what their unique skills were,
19:17 and applied to how I do my job on the street.
19:22 So if you want to become or learn how to become a leader,
19:26 get the ideas from what helps you.
19:30 I look back, when I was working
19:32 at Northeastern University, the director who was there
19:37 from housing services, her name was Marina,
19:40 I nicknamed her the nuke, because she was very direct,
19:45 precise, but at the same time she was compassionate.
19:49 If she saw you were having a bad day,
19:51 she had no problem pulling you aside and talking with you.
19:54 I also had supervisors when I was working at National Grid.
19:59 Gentleman by Eddie Graham.
20:01 When he hired us, his goal was not to have us
20:04 just work in the security control room.
20:07 He wanted to see us to become executives.
20:09 He wanted to see us become leaders
20:12 in other parts at National Grid.
20:15 That was his goal. That's the reason why he hired us.
20:17 And that was motivational.
20:19 At the Salem Police Department.
20:21 You gotta understand, I am the first,
20:23 I'm actually the only active Black officer.
20:28 And these last couple years have been very difficult,
20:31 'cause I see both sides of the fence.
20:33 And it's a very personal thing for me.
20:37 And I had all that stress to deal with.

20:41 And I have a road sergeant, Sergeant Mannon, great guy.
20:45 And he's the example of, again, leadership.
20:49 I had to put out a bolo, be on the lookout,
20:52 for an incident that occurred.
20:54 And I did it wrong. I screwed up.
20:58 Some other supervisors will say something over the radio
21:01 to kind of embarrass you.
21:02 Some guys will see you at the station
21:04 and kind of yell at you or get frustrated.
21:07 The sergeant just asked me to come meet him,
21:09 on a cell phone, off the radio,
21:11 to meet him at his cruiser.
21:13 And I sat on his cruiser, and we had a chat.
21:16 And I learned right then and there why he was a sergeant,
21:19 why he was a great leader.
21:22 He basically gave me confidence in my job.
21:25 He gave me confidence in who I was to do my job better.
21:28 So now when I was responding to calls,
21:30 I knew my road sergeant wasn't there to put me down
21:33 or get me in trouble.
21:34 He was there to motivate me.
21:36 And whenever I ran into some sort of issue
21:38 or difficulty to make a final decision,
21:41 he'd always gimme that nudge or an extra nugget
21:43 to make me make that final decision.
21:45 So to answer your question, when it comes to like,
21:48 getting the skills about leadership, my recommendation,
21:53 as you're going through your career,
21:55 look back on all the supervisors that motivate you
21:58 without even having to say anything.
21:59 And at the same time, look at the supervisors
22:02 who didn't motivate you, the ones you didn't like,
22:04 and the reason why.
22:06 Thank you.
22:07 (audience clapping)
22:13 <v ->Thank you for sharing, Neil.</v>
22:14 We appreciate you and your service.
22:16 For a following question.
22:18 I am a student here at Suffolk, and I am often advised
22:21 of the importance of networking and mentorship,
22:24 but more importantly, the importance of social capital.
22:27 Please provide an example of the role mentors have played
22:30 in supporting your professional growth.
22:32 And in a few sentences, please provide any advice
22:35 you would like to offer about importance of networking,
22:38 mentorship, social capital,
22:40 and the interplay between the three.
22:43 And this question is for Tony and Anthony Ross.
22:46 <v ->Yeah, I think, mentorship is so interesting</v>
22:51 because it's so compounded.
22:53 I think networking, I have originally a sales background.
22:57 So between how much I care about people,
23:01 and I think I'm kind of like the X-Men character
23:04 that touches you and then tries to just take what you have

23:08 in your brain trust and your content expertise
23:12 and then just like, walk away with it, right?
23:14 So I feed off of people, and I purposely put myself
23:17 in situations to be able to learn from people,
23:20 and then I also purposely put myself in situations
23:22 to be of service of people.
23:24 And I think that's, you know,
23:25 very important is to be intentional, right?
23:28 So every day, and this is like, not a hyperbole,
23:31 is I try to figure out how I can meet three new people
23:36 and help three new people every day, right?
23:38 And that comes from,
23:39 it could be like affirmation through a text.
23:42 It could be a call, it could be reaching out
23:44 and hiring somebody that, you know,
23:46 I'm just gonna roll the dice on that I think is,
23:48 you know, solid and a good person,
23:50 but it came from somebody else
23:52 and it means something to you.
23:54 And I think one thing that I noticed is,
23:57 especially with people of color
23:59 who are in leadership positions, is there are so many things
24:03 riding on the decisions that we make,
24:05 so we have less margin for error,
24:08 and then oftentimes can't be as risky, right?
24:11 So I try to just move around with, you know,
24:14 my high school basketball coach used to say,
24:16 is organized chaos, right?
24:18 So I just call folks, I've made,
24:20 I've read 10 articles today, I've made, you know,
24:23 more than 10 phone calls today.
24:25 I've reached out to my mentors.
24:28 I've sent people texts today that they have left me on read.
24:31 Not because they didn't get back to me,
24:33 it's because folks are busy.
24:34 But the folks that I mentor and the folks that mentor me,
24:38 I just make sure that I'm intentional about reaching out
24:41 and listening and learning and being of service,
24:44 and trying to understand how I can create
24:46 a value proposition of not only just touching you
24:50 and taking out, which is kind of my, like strategy,
24:55 but also pouring back in and providing, you know,
24:58 service and leadership where I can.
25:01 (audience clapping)
25:05 <v ->That's excellent. Thanks, Anthony and Anthony show.</v
25:08 (panelists laughing)
25:10 I mean, I can't speak enough about mentorship.
25:14 One of the things I've learned early on
25:15 is that there's a difference between mentor and sponsorship.
25:19 So as you go through, at least in corporate America,
25:22 it's just true for any job
25:23 and any environment that you're in.
25:25 There's the mentor where you're talking about day-to-day,
25:28 blocking and tackling and getting advice,

25:30 and then there's seeking out a sponsor
25:33 within your organization, maybe internal, external
25:37 of more of a life coach that can kind of guide you
25:40 more broadly in terms of where you want to go directionally.
25:44 So for me, I was fortunate enough to have someone who was,
25:46 who played both roles and kinda one of the examples that,
25:52 you know, was really critical in my career development.
25:55 I was working in New York, working at Goldman-Sachs,
25:59 and I had this interest to continue to further pursue
26:02 my education and receive an MBA,
26:05 or I could continue to work at this great firm
26:08 and kind of move forward.
26:09 So my mentor who worked for the firm in a senior position
26:13 said to me, mentor, sponsor, you know,
26:16 whichever it was, both, said to me,
26:19 which I thought was strange at the time, is like,
26:21 "You're operating at your A game here at work.
26:25 Why don't you dial down your A game to your B or C game,
26:28 and focus on your exit option of going to grad school?"
26:31 And focus on your studies, GMS,
26:33 I was just surprised to hear that from somebody
26:35 working at a company, I was young,
26:37 I thought everyone was gung-ho and you had to be,
26:39 rah rah, the company.
26:40 He said, "No, you can dial it down a notch
26:43 and then focus some of your time on some of these
26:46 other things to help you more long-term in your goals."
26:49 So to me that really sparked the fire in me
26:51 and studied and kind of moved and was able to go back
26:54 to grad school full-time and moved on from there.
26:57 So to me, when I think about mentor and sponsorship
27:01 and try to navigate and strategize,
27:04 I think it's critical to kind of seek out those people.
27:06 The challenge has always been for folks of color,
27:10 we don't know where to start, right?
27:11 Or what do we do?
27:13 'Cause when you go to organizations,
27:14 you think you need to connect with somebody
27:15 that looks like you or operates like you or sounds like you,
27:19 but that's not necessarily always available to you,
27:22 and you have to think more broadly
27:24 in terms of who's in your court
27:25 and build what I call is a board of directors.
27:28 Most companies have a board of directors,
27:30 they have individuals on that board
27:32 with different skill sets.
27:34 So I always encourage people to build
27:35 their personal board of directors.
27:38 You know, someone who's good at, you know,
27:39 math and someone who's good at HR
27:42 and strategy and other things.
27:44 And really surround yourself with a team of people
27:47 that can support you at the different phases
27:49 as you evolve your career.

27:51 And I think that has worked well for me
27:53 and has helped me to build some pretty great relationships,
27:56 long-term relationships, which,
27:58 whatever situation you may face at that point in your life,
28:01 it's good to have that sounding board,
28:03 and those individuals with the different skillsets
28:05 that you can draw upon.
28:07 'Cause my best friend, he knows one thing,
28:09 but he's horrible at interpersonal skills.
28:11 So I couldn't talk to him about, you know,
28:13 any kind of issues and strategy.
28:16 He'll just say, "Just walk out and leave."
28:18 So you gotta just be conscious of who you keep around you,
28:21 the team you're building and that support network
28:25 of individuals, and make sure you understand
28:27 what their strengths are as well to help you
28:30 build your strengths and pull from,
28:32 because there's no one person.
28:35 So I like the team approach. So I'll end it at that.
28:39 (audience clapping)
28:43 <v ->Thank you both Tony and Anthony.</v
28:45 The importance of networking is something
28:47 that certainly can't be overlooked.
28:55 It is 2023 now, and we're still dealing with systemic racism
29:00 and DEI issues all across the workplace.
29:03 We have seen many organizations publicly admit
29:06 that there's still plenty of work to do
29:07 to dismantle the barriers of racism.
29:10 Tony, you have been recently identified
29:13 as a Black leader in Boston.
29:15 You were recently appointed as chair,
29:17 as co-chair of Governor Healey's Advisory Council
29:20 on Black Empowerment.
29:21 Congratulations.
29:23 (audience clapping)
29:29 Can you provide one or two critical things
29:31 that organizations must do in order to cultivate a culture
29:35 that empowers its members who are Black and people of color,
29:39 whether employees, students, or otherwise?
29:42 <v ->Yeah, I think, there's a saying which ,</v
29:46 I realize that I live by, you know, post-2020 that says,
29:52 "What's not measured isn't managed."
29:54 And I think right now, so I had a competitive advantage
29:58 of having in, you know, 2017, 18 and 19,
30:03 I was special advisor at Governor Baker's office.
30:06 And my role, I led the Office of Access and Opportunities,
30:10 which was diversity, equity, and inclusion
30:12 for the entire Commonwealth, right?
30:14 Like, I was drinking out of a fire hose
30:15 for three and a half years,
30:17 and just so much around government
30:19 that I didn't know existed.
30:21 And then 2020 happened, which was like, you know,
30:24 just lightning in the bottle related

30:26 to the resurgence of a social justice movement as well as,
30:31 you know, many marginalized communities
30:33 being disproportionately affected by COVID.
30:36 And, you know, you kind of see the emergence
30:39 of the diversity, equity and inclusion, the DEI director,
30:43 and so many positions and different firms
30:45 making financial commitments and, you know, institutions,
30:48 higher ed, healthcare all throughout the spectrum
30:51 of just double down and making commitments, right?
30:55 And, you know, just in my current role
30:58 and in my previous role around just managing
31:00 some of those strategies, I think that the first thing
31:04 is to identify data and key indicators
31:07 which show baseline in success.
31:10 So that's obviously the first thing
31:12 that I tether the work to.
31:14 And then number two is to figure out how far it is
31:19 from the DEI initiative that lead to the key indicators
31:23 that grow revenue for that company or that agency
31:26 or that educational institution or so on and so forth.
31:29 Because no matter what, right?
31:32 I think if you can tether it to the bottom line
31:35 and the opportunity to create growth,
31:37 it will just be advantageous, and it'll just be baked in.
31:40 So I always say kind of just, you know,
31:44 DE&I is not like a good side dish, right?
31:48 It's the seasoning that you use to cook all of the food.
31:51 So it should be baked in and ingrained
31:54 into everything that's on your plate, right?
31:57 (audience clapping)
32:02 So I think, you know, a lot of times
32:05 just on the workforce side of things, right,
32:08 like, you know, it's kind of easy to quantify, right?
32:11 Like, you know, a lot of companies and institutions
32:14 are struggling with, you know, supplier diversity,
32:16 around procurement, you know, goods and services,
32:18 construction, property management,
32:21 you know, as well as real estate and assets,
32:22 and so many other services.
32:24 So if you can tether, you know,
32:26 quality opportunities related to growth,
32:29 and kind of just weave in, you know,
32:33 just strong positions of diverse talent within that,
32:39 then it all grows together.
32:40 But I think if you try to create DE&I
32:44 as being a good side dish,
32:45 you're just never gonna get everybody to agree
32:48 on what type of sides you like, right?
32:50 So I think that's one of the things to consider.
32:54 (audience clapping)
33:00 <v ->This was great.</v>
33:01 Thanks so much to the panelists
33:02 for enlightening us this evening.
33:04 I know I'll reflect back to this conversation.

33:07 And I believe reflection is a good practice.
33:10 I often reflect back and think about things I did well
33:12 and what I could have done better.
33:15 As I grow and develop personally and professionally,
33:17 I wish I could tell my younger self to do things differently
33:20 for a better outcome.
33:22 <v ->Jelani, I definitely agree with you.</v
33:24 Clearly you are all doing things
33:26 extremely well in your careers.
33:28 You all went to this great institution, you know,
33:31 Suffolk University, you can't beat it.
33:33 Which has contributed to who you are today.
33:37 In just a few sentences,
33:39 because unfortunately we don't have much time.
33:41 Can each of you please share two things?
33:44 One, your absolute best piece of advice
33:47 for all the outstanding students and alumni here,
33:51 and the single most important thing that you gained
33:54 out of your experience at Suffolk University
33:56 that has helped shape who you are today?
33:59 If we could start with Neil?
34:02 <v ->All right, I'll try and make it as quick as possible.</v
34:08 Come with the success, you will have failure.
34:13 Keep going.
34:16 I talk firsthand from experience
34:17 because when I was first getting into law enforcement,
34:22 I applied at a local university
34:25 to get on the police department.
34:26 Congratulations, you're going to this academy.
34:29 I was sent to one of the toughest academies in the state.
34:33 In Massachusetts, there's the state police, Transit,
34:36 Lowell, and eventually became Methuen police academies.
34:40 Those are the hardest ones.
34:42 At the end of Lowell, which eventually became Methuen,
34:45 you had to run 10 miles to graduate.
34:49 Just like what Anthony was talking about,
34:51 Mr. Ross here was talking about,
34:53 you're looking for someone who looks like you,
34:54 that way you feel that you're included.
34:57 When I first got into the academy
34:59 that was originally Lowell,
35:01 when I was hired by this university,
35:03 I didn't see anyone who looked like me.
35:05 And myself and another officer, later on,
35:08 this gentleman named Skaggs, he now works down in Florida
35:11 as a police officer.
35:13 We felt it.
35:14 You can already see from the beginning of the academy,
35:16 from day one, day two,
35:18 they were filtering out who they wanted
35:20 and who they were gonna push out the door.
35:22 Be honest with you.
35:24 Day one, it's like, hey, who are the veterans?
35:27 Move them aside.

35:28 Hey, who's Irish? Move them aside.
35:30 Hey, who's Italian? Move them aside.
35:32 And it trickles down.
35:36 I'm none of them. Neither was Skaggs.
35:40 But it wasn't direct, it was just like, just natural.
35:42 Just a normal conversation.
35:44 And so you feel that elimination process going on,
35:47 which is a lot of stress,
35:49 already you know that you're behind the eight ball
35:50 because you're going into a profession
35:52 and there are not many who walk and talk like you.
35:55 And so when we did, myself and Skaggs,
35:58 saw officers that looked like us, staff instructors,
36:02 they weren't that supportive.
36:04 And I remember that.
36:07 And I always said I would never do that.
36:09 And they made every effort to make myself
36:12 and Skaggs out that door.
36:16 Skaggs was the first one to go after like six weeks.
36:19 Week eight, I was out the door.
36:21 We withdrew.
36:23 'Cause we didn't find that support everybody else had.
36:26 I'll use this for example.
36:28 When I was going in,
36:29 I was accompanied by another officer who was Dominican.
36:33 And one of the staff instructors, she was Hispanic.
36:36 We were standing next to each other.
36:38 And part of the whole process, they line you up,
36:40 look at your uniform, make sure everything's squared away.
36:43 If something's missing, they make you write this to from.
36:47 Officer stand next to me.
36:48 I can hear her whisper to 'em.
36:49 "You need to fix this, you need to fix that.
36:51 Okay, you're good."
36:52 I was like, all right, cool.
36:54 You know, she fixed 'em up. whatever.
36:57 She came up to me.
36:59 I wrote two to-foms.
37:03 And I had nothing different than what he had next to me.
37:06 So all that pressure built, and withdrew.
37:09 My biggest regret when I withdrew was withdrawing.
37:14 It ate at me for a very long time,
37:16 and I said I would never do that again.
37:17 If I get another opportunity,
37:19 I'm gonna eat this up.
37:20 Pound and ground.
37:22 So I got a second chance.
37:25 Years later, so almost six, eight years later.
37:28 Salem police came around.
37:29 Hey congratulations, we're sending to an academy.
37:31 I'm like, oh God, please don't send me back to Lowell.
37:33 (audience laughing)
37:35 No, we're sending you to Methuen.
37:36 I was like, mm.

37:38 Change of name. Nothing different.
37:41 By the end of the graduation you have to run 10 miles.
37:46 And I said to myself,
37:48 I'm not letting this opportunity pass by me.
37:51 I needed something to motivate me. Get me going again.
37:54 Because to be honest with you,
37:56 I was broken from the last incident that I had.
37:59 Someone who looked like me didn't help me and I withdrew,
38:02 and that's gonna be a mark on me.
38:04 So when I go back into the academy,
38:06 they're going to use that against you,
38:07 because it's all a head game.
38:10 So I was going into that YouTube rabbit hole,
38:15 and I found Eric Thomas, the hip hop motivator.
38:20 And that guy just inspired me.
38:22 And he said, "Want it as much as you wanna breathe."
38:27 And I was game on. I said, "Absolutely."
38:31 Every time I ran I would play some of his motivation,
38:35 along with music.
38:38 And that got me through.
38:39 When I left my house, I would run around the soccer field.
38:43 The shape you see here is not what you saw years back, okay?
38:47 (audience laughing)
38:48 I started off with one mile,
38:51 few laps around the soccer field,
38:52 almost passed out and died.
38:54 Eventually the one mile became three miles.
38:58 Hot, humid weather. Rain, dust.
39:04 Keep going. Keep running.
39:07 I end up reaching my 10 mile mark and I said,
39:09 okay, I'm done, I made my 10 miles.
39:11 Now when I get to the academy, I'm ready for this.
39:14 I was laser focused when I went in the academy.
39:16 And when I got there, I did not break, I did not stop.
39:24 Even by the end, week 23, 'cause you have to realize
39:27 these academies go up to 26 weeks.
39:29 And they don't let off the gas pedal.
39:33 They like to play games with you.
39:34 They'll let off the gas pedal by week 16, 17,
39:37 to see who gets comfortable.
39:38 And that's the people who get in trouble.
39:40 You hear guys in the academy who go at a bar
39:42 and flash their badges, hey, I'm a reserve officer.
39:45 You're outta here.
39:46 You hear officers who get in trouble.
39:49 They find a reason to kick you right outta the academy.
39:52 I never let go of that gas pedal.
39:54 Up to week 26, I ran that 10 miles.
39:59 And even still after that 10 miles,
40:01 we had five more weeks to go in the academy.
40:02 I didn't stop. I kept going.
40:04 So what I'm saying is that you will fail. Get back up.
40:10 Just like Eric Thomas says,
40:12 want it as much as you want to breathe.

40:16 The second part, I know that was kind of weird,
40:18 but I just wanted to make my point.
40:20 The second one was for the school?
40:23 <v Sam>The single most important thing</v
40:24 you gained out of your experience at Suffolk
40:26 that has helped shape who you are today.
40:31 <v ->I was recommended by Suffolk University,</v
40:34 by my cousin who told me that there was a large population
40:38 of Haitians at Suffolk University.
40:41 That motivated me to come to Suffolk.
40:44 When I came to Suffolk,
40:46 and I found out Professor Bellinger in Black studies,
40:50 that's when I really wanted to be in Suffolk.
40:55 And so thanks to the Black Studies program,
40:59 it gave me the confidence of the person that I am.
41:02 And it also made me realize who I am
41:04 in the community and the society.
41:06 And that has not stopped, even though I put on the badge.
41:09 That has not changed.
41:10 Quickly, though, I just, real quick.
41:16 Real quick, I'm sorry.
41:17 (audience laughing)
41:19 I am right now dealing with a person
41:21 who is a Black male who has mental health issues,
41:23 who I am trying to keep out of the criminal justice system,
41:26 and it's really, really difficult.
41:28 So all the stuff that I've learned from my past,
41:30 my experience watching those gentlemen
41:32 who are African-American who didn't help me
41:34 and Skaggs in the academy.
41:35 And also from what I learned from Black studies,
41:38 I didn't forget, and I continue to help out brothers
41:40 who were out there who were in the system.
41:42 Thank you.
41:44 (audience clapping)
41:49 <v ->Tony, if you could share your absolute</v
41:52 best piece of advice to the audience as well as-
41:55 <v ->Yeah. I think consistency is key, right?</v
41:58 Like I just find myself, when all things fail,
42:03 I know that I will be the most prepared, right?
42:07 Like I'll take care of the little things,
42:08 I'll make sure that I look the part,
42:10 I'll make sure that I'm on time,
42:13 and then I make sure that I'm intentional
42:15 about building and growing relationships,
42:17 because whether there's a value proposition
42:20 of anything that's in return of me, it means a lot to me
42:23 to meet people and be helpful and supportive to people.
42:26 So that's kind of, you know, my thing.
42:29 So, generally just with attrition,
42:31 the more people you meet and the more authentic you are,
42:35 you know, relationships will take you way farther
42:37 than money can ever take you.
42:39 So I think that that's one thing.

42:41 And then also around my Suffolk experience, I think,
42:43 you know, we're all family and this is, you know,
42:45 almost eight o'clock on a Friday.
42:47 My Suffolk experience was very interesting coming in.
42:51 I went to, I mean I'm originally from Boston,
42:53 born and raised.
42:54 I grew up going to, I was blessed to go to affluent schools
42:57 that were, you know, majority white.
42:59 For undergrad I went to HBCU, which, you know, was,
43:04 just an amazing experience to be around everybody
43:07 who was Black and just really understanding that if there,
43:12 I remember our first day of school in the first class
43:16 the teacher wrote on the whiteboard that if you suck,
43:19 it's not because you're Black.
43:20 And it was kind of like a joke,
43:22 but it was kind of serious as well, right?
43:24 There's no boogeyman here,
43:25 there's no like, structural racism here.
43:27 There isn't somebody who is treating you different
43:29 based off of the color of your skin, it is you.
43:33 It is nothing else. (audience laughing)
43:36 So with that, so I went to Clark Atlanta University
43:40 in Atlanta, Georgia.
43:42 And I think, you know, so by the time,
43:45 I originally kind of joked that it took me 10 years
43:47 to get my master's degree 'cause I originally started,
43:51 and I had the opportunity to become an executive director,
43:55 like, you know, second semester,
43:56 and I just couldn't do both.
43:58 So I had like two stints being an executive director,
44:02 and then I kind of just stumbled into an amazing opportunity
44:06 in a senior level role with the Baker administration,
44:09 which was, you know, an opportunity of a lifetime.
44:12 And I knew that just the proximity
44:14 of me walking past Suffolk every day, I was like,
44:17 yo, there's just no way I can't finish, right?
44:20 So I only, at that moment when I used to walk past here,
44:23 when I used to go get lunch,
44:24 I only wanted the piece of paper.
44:26 I didn't really care about anything other than that, right?
44:30 I wasn't really looking for like, a Black experience.
44:35 I wasn't really looking for a cohort
44:37 of Black students and professionals.
44:40 I just really wasn't looking for any of that.
44:42 And I pleasantly found all of that, right?
44:45 Just a supportive network and coalition of folks
44:48 that are like-minded like myself and also look like me.
44:52 You know, different leaders who are just wide-ranging
44:54 from a vast background of professions.
44:58 And then also Suffolk, the last thing I'll say is,
45:03 you know, when I used to come to class, you know,
45:06 it was in person right before, you know,
45:09 kind of things kind of got crazy.
45:11 And when I was in my role, just,

45:15 it was so interesting because I had a special advisor role,
45:18 so at the time, you know, you're just dealing with big,
45:21 large opportunities related to change, right?
45:26 So then I would come to class and I would be like,
45:28 "Yo, this is like, what is going on?"
45:31 So after I kind of, it took maybe like a semester or two
45:35 to just really buy in.
45:37 And I think, you know, from the moment that I bought in,
45:40 just being able to provide measures around the process flow
45:45 in order to, you know, do things most efficiently, right?
45:48 Like mitigate risk, right?
45:50 Do them more timely, that whole process,
45:53 I was able to start taking some of that thinking
45:57 from a class on Thursday and actually implement it
46:00 into real time, into real big decisions on a Monday.
46:04 And I think that was so helpful,
46:05 And then I started to see things,
46:07 I started to see the room responding in a different way,
46:11 from things that I was able to pick up from class
46:13 the week before.
46:15 So then I started to buy in, and you know, it was just,
46:18 you know, just very successful in my development as well,
46:21 so I'm just forever grateful of that.
46:24 (audience clapping)
46:28 <v ->And Anthony Ross?</v
46:29 <v ->Sure.</v
46:31 No, we're running out time, so I will just say,
46:36 the key theme I would recommend to students,
46:38 just perseverance is a word that comes to mind
46:41 as I reflect back on my Suffolk experience.
46:47 I did a lot (laughs) while I was here.
46:51 And when I thought about,
46:52 why did I end up doing so many things?
46:55 I realized that nobody handed anything to me
46:58 when I came to Suffolk, it was,
47:00 you make your choice in what experience you want to have
47:05 when you're at this university.
47:07 I was a commuter student. I worked at Pizza Hut.
47:10 And that was my life.
47:13 You know, getting introduced to,
47:15 being asked to do leadership opportunities or volunteering,
47:18 I was really pulled in.
47:20 So, you know, I'm thankful for all those individuals
47:23 that I went to school with that were around me,
47:26 that were encouraging in the community here, and the support
47:31 really afforded me the opportunity to give something a try,
47:34 fail at it and keep pushing to keep trying it again.
47:38 So I think Suffolk was a really good training ground
47:40 because like many students, you worked full-time,
47:42 you went to school full-time,
47:44 but then you also were part of a community
47:47 that really cared about the success of each other.
47:50 So being part of that community really was the catalyst
47:54 I felt that wanted me to do more and ask more.

47:57 So when student government came along,
47:59 I jumped at the chance.
48:01 When being a trustee opportunity came about,
48:04 I jumped at that to do that as well.
48:06 Trustee ambassador for the school.
48:08 So just all these opportunities kept coming my way,
48:11 didn't know what they were about, or if I'd be good at them,
48:14 but just given that opportunity,
48:16 it was an open playing field I thought
48:19 to really shape who I am today.
48:21 So I think for those students
48:23 who are trying to navigate this crazy world,
48:27 those fundamental skills of perseverance,
48:29 and you know, working full-time, going to school full-time,
48:33 staying up till three in the morning doing homework
48:36 just to get to class the next day,
48:38 those types of things shaped me as a person,
48:40 and I think Suffolk afforded me those experiences,
48:43 so I would definitely encourage that word of perseverance,
48:48 which has definitely carried me
48:50 throughout my professional career
48:51 'cause it gets 10 times worse.
48:53 I thought it was bad when I was an undergrad. (laughs)
48:56 When you get out of when, you're working professional
48:58 and then you're juggling family. (laughs)
49:02 It gets more challenging.
49:04 So that training ground was very helpful here. Thanks.
49:07 (laughs)
49:08 (audience clapping)
49:14 <v ->Thank you very much to Jelani and my fellow panelists</v
49:17 for taking the time to join us this evening.
49:19 We know you all lead a very busy life,
49:21 and we appreciate you taking the time
49:23 to speak with us today.
49:25 Unfortunately, we won't be able to take take questions
49:27 from the audience at this point
49:29 because we've got a jam packed event,
49:32 but the panelists will be available to speak
49:34 during the dinner and the networking portion
49:36 of the program tonight.
49:38 So I would now like to take the time
49:39 to welcome Tamela Bailey back onto the stage.
49:43 (audience clapping)
49:54 <v ->I will say this.</v
49:58 That was an amazing panel.
50:00 I wanna thank all the panelists, Neil, and Tony,
50:06 Sam, Anthony, Jelani, thanks so much.
50:11 That was wonderful.
50:11 I think we had an array of experiences,
50:15 and that's what we wanted to bring to the audience tonight.
50:19 I do wanna say that for a while we've had,
50:26 I mentioned earlier that I'm the chair of SUBAN,
50:30 and we've had students ask us, where are the Black leaders,
50:35 where are the Black male alumni?

50:37 Where are the Black male faculty?
50:41 And we've been working hard, right,
50:42 the SUBAN leadership committee members to find mentors
50:46 for students who've been asking for Black male,
50:51 Black male alumni and leaders in the community.
50:55 And so that's what this panel was all about.
50:58 So...
50:59 (audience clapping)
51:02 You gonna say it?
51:07 Just give me one second.
51:17 <v ->So let me just mention that</v
51:22 what I heard the panelists talk about,
51:25 and I know I do this every time I speak,
51:27 and it's not that much time, but I'm gonna do it anyways.
51:31 Never know where a relationship
51:34 or experience can take you, right?
51:36 We heard that mentor versus sponsor,
51:40 don't be afraid to fail.
51:43 I think a lot of us are running away from failure,
51:46 running away from climbing up that mountain,
51:48 but you have to do it.
51:49 You have to be uncomfortable to stretch and grow.
51:52 And that's why I'm on this stage here tonight,
51:54 so I can be a better speaker.
51:57 Put yourself around, Tony said very eloquently.
52:03 Put yourself around people and in spaces
52:06 where you can learn.
52:07 And Neil talked about his experience in the police academy
52:11 where not many looked like him.
52:12 And, you know, he decided he was gonna just stick with it,
52:17 and of course he's where he is today.
52:19 And we thank you Neil for your service.
52:22 We know it's very difficult, so don't give up.
52:27 Neil talked about the Black Studies program, right Jenny?
52:32 We're talking about that. We need to keep that going.
52:37 Hi, Dean Sparks.
52:40 We've been conversing about that.
52:43 Value proposition. What are you bringing to the table?
52:45 I'm trying to build SUBAN's value proposition,
52:47 that's what one of my main goals are.
52:51 One of my main goals is.
52:53 And relationships, they're very important.
52:55 We should always be connecting and following up,
52:58 and I think Tony said something about,
53:02 if someone's not responding, that doesn't mean
53:04 they don't wanna talk to you, right?
53:05 You just have to try again.
53:07 We know Tony talked a lot about measurement and metrics,
53:10 so we know where he's measuring us to see
53:13 what we're doing and how well we're doing it,
53:16 and your experience is what you make it.
53:20 And I will pick back up on that in a little bit.
53:26 So I wanna thank everyone again.
53:28 I now wanna take the opportunity to recognize members

53:31 of the Suffolk community here tonight,
53:32 we have President Marisa Kelly
53:35 and her spouse, Margie Arnold.
53:38 We have Provost Julie Sandell.
53:41 Is Julie in the front?
53:42 Hi Julie, I haven't met you yet, but we'll talk soon.
53:45 The dean of College and Arts and Sciences, Edie Sparks.
53:50 The dean of the law school, Andrew Perlman.
53:53 Vice chair of Suffolk University Board of Trustees,
53:56 Judge Amy Nechtem, always looking so fabulous.
54:01 Trustee Ernst Guerrier, my brotha from anotha motha.
54:06 Bevilton Morris, Nancy Stack and Hind Habbach,
54:09 I didn't see Hind, where is she?
54:13 Hind in the house.
54:17 President of the Suffolk University, excuse me,
54:20 student government, Angela El-Jazzar
54:23 is here somewhere, I hope.
54:25 If not, she's...
54:28 Oh, there's Angela.
54:29 Angela is very helpful to me in getting in touch
54:32 with these students that they be trying not to respond.
54:36 But Angela, she gets them on speed dial.
54:41 So I wanna say that this evening would not be possible,
54:45 I'm sorry if this microphone is...
54:47 This evening would not be possible without the great work
54:51 of the Celebration of Black Excellence Planning Committee
54:54 made up of alumni, students, faculty and staff
54:57 from the three Suffolk schools.
54:59 We have met over the past several months,
55:01 and we've worked closely with the Office of Advancement
55:05 to ensure a fantastic evening tonight.
55:08 Will the members of the Black Excellence Planning Committee
55:13 as well as Caitlin, the Office of Advancement,
55:16 Caitlin, Annamaria, Alex, stand up and be recognized.
55:19 (audience clapping)
55:31 Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate all of you.
55:34 So the Black Excellence Celebration
55:36 is actually one of SUBAN's largest sponsored events.
55:40 As chair, I'd like to provide
55:43 a quick background about SUBAN.
55:46 For those of you who don't know,
55:48 it was started in 2018 by Trustee Ernst Guerrier,
55:53 Jenny Joseph Hale, and Joyce Miller, and several others.
55:58 They're all in the room tonight, so thank you to them,
56:01 for this great organization.
56:02 SUBAN's mission is to celebrate and serve
56:04 current and future Black alumni through mentoring,
56:08 philanthropy, volunteerism, and events.
56:11 We support the recruitment, retention, academic achievement,
56:15 and successful graduation of Black students.
56:18 SUBAN also supports the career development
56:21 and professional opportunity.
56:24 (laughs)
56:25 Opportunity with Black students and alumni.

56:28 All Suffolk graduates are invited to join SUBAN.
56:32 If you have any interest in getting involved with SUBAN,
56:34 please make sure to sign our sign in sheet.
56:38 I hope we have that tonight.
56:40 Or find me or find one of the SUBAN leaders.
56:45 We're happy to have you.
56:46 Please join us and become a member on LinkedIn.
56:48 That's another way to join.
56:51 We're also currently looking for a Black alumni
56:53 to mentor for SUBAN mentoring program.
56:56 You can actually see Yolanda Burrell,
56:58 who's heading up that initiative.
57:01 We have a great program underway.
57:04 So I also wanna recognize the members
57:06 of the SUBAN Leadership Committee who serve as ambassadors
57:10 of the university and work closely
57:12 with the Office of Advancement.
57:14 If you can stand up so we can recognize
57:18 the SUBAN Leadership Committee members.
57:22 (audience clapping and cheering)
57:32 <v ->Thank you all. I appreciate you.</v
57:38 So, and speaking of SUBAN, I do wanna say thank you.
57:43 I wanna talk about the scholarship and give a big thank you
57:45 to those who have contributed to our scholarship.
57:48 And for those who have not, it is not too late.
57:51 All you need is the link. Takes two minutes.
57:55 And we hope you're in a giving spirit tonight
57:57 and make a donation this evening.
58:00 We have a fundraiser happening, you can buy t-shirts.
58:03 Some of the proceeds will go to our scholarship fund,
58:06 so that's another way to donate.
58:08 And now without further ado,
58:11 I am going to introduce with tremendous pleasure,
58:14 the Suffolk University's 11th president, Dr. Marisa Kelly.
58:20 President Kelly is deeply committed to Suffolk,
58:22 and she brings to the presidency a strong leadership
58:24 and clear vision for the university's future.
58:28 Please join me in welcoming President Kelly.
58:32 (audience clapping)
58:44 <v ->Thank you, Tamela.</v
58:45 And wow, the lights really are bright up here.
58:47 You're right, Tamela.
58:49 It is really wonderful to be here with you tonight.
58:52 Such an exciting evening.
58:54 This really is about celebrating Black excellence.
58:58 Celebrating Black excellence, celebrating inclusion,
59:03 celebrating the opportunity to hear
59:07 from our distinguished panelists and to learn from them
59:10 and to reflect on their, on their wisdom.
59:13 A wonderful opportunity to come together as a community,
59:17 to celebrate all of those things.
59:18 And so I'm really excited to be here.
59:21 And because this night is absolutely not about me,
59:25 I am in fact going to be very brief, because tonight is also

59:32 an incredible celebration of our honorees.
59:34 And so we wanna get to the celebratory part
59:38 of tonight's program.
59:40 So I just wanna say really one thing.
59:45 I am really proud to be a part of this community,
59:49 and I'm proud to be a part of this community
59:51 because we are truly committed to diversity and inclusion.
59:56 Truly committed to doing, if I can use Tony's analogy,
01:00:01 to doing our best to be sure that we are using spice
01:00:05 on all of our food all the time.
01:00:07 I absolutely love that comparison.
01:00:10 And I love spicy food, by the way.
01:00:13 So it's really great.
01:00:17 It's in our DNA, it has been since we were founded.
01:00:20 And at the same time, we also know
01:00:24 that we don't always get enough spice on our food,
01:00:29 I can just continue with that comparison.
01:00:33 We know that we don't always live up to our expectations
01:00:38 of ourselves when it comes to diversity and inclusion.
01:00:40 We know that we have to always continue to work,
01:00:45 to learn, to grow, to challenge,
01:00:49 to make progress so that we are always moving
01:00:52 towards our aspirations for ourselves.
01:00:56 And I am excited to be and proud
01:00:58 to be part of this community because I know
01:00:59 even though we get it wrong sometimes,
01:01:03 we are all committed to getting it right.
01:01:06 And that is a huge, huge step.
01:01:09 I mean, just look around this room.
01:01:12 This is an incredible tradition for Suffolk University.
01:01:16 This event, a Celebration of Black Excellence.
01:01:18 We are in our fifth year.
01:01:22 And yet I know that this is an event
01:01:24 that people look forward to.
01:01:25 I look forward to it.
01:01:27 I know that people across campus look forward to it.
01:01:30 Students, those who are looking at their email
01:01:32 and paying attention and responding to Tamela,
01:01:34 they're looking forward to it every year.
01:01:37 This has become a wonderful tradition for us.
01:01:40 And that is, I think, a real sign of our commitment,
01:01:43 our real commitment as a community
01:01:45 to diversity and inclusion.
01:01:46 And of course specifically tonight
01:01:49 to celebrating Black excellence.
01:01:51 So very, very proud to be here and to be with all of you,
01:01:55 celebrating, again our panelists and our honorees.
01:02:00 And tonight is a celebration.
01:02:02 And so one really fabulous way to be sure
01:02:06 that we are celebrating is to bring music into this space.
01:02:10 So I am very happy to be able
01:02:13 to introduce another relatively new tradition,
01:02:16 new performing arts group at Suffolk
01:02:18 in that they've been around just for about

01:02:21 six or seven years, I think just predates
01:02:24 the Celebration of Black Excellence event by a year or two.
01:02:28 But student performing group here that have really taken
01:02:33 the campus by storm in the last six years
01:02:35 and do a fabulous job all the time.
01:02:38 Very proud to ask you all to help me
01:02:41 welcome Soulfully Versed to the stage.
01:02:44 (audience clapping)
01:03:11 (choir singing a capella)
01:03:30 â™ª I bust the windows out your car â™ª
01:03:34 â™ª And no it didn't mend my broken heart â™ª
01:03:38 â™ª I'll probably always have these ugly scars â™ª
01:03:42 â™ª But right now I don't care about that part â™ª
01:03:47 â™ª I bust the windows out your car â™ª
01:03:51 â™ª After I saw you layin' next to her â™ª
01:03:55 â™ª I didn't wanna but I took my turn â™ª
01:03:59 â™ª I'm glad I did it 'cause you had to learn â™ª
01:04:05 â™ª I must admit it helped a little bit â™ª
01:04:10 â™ª To think of how you'd feel when you saw it â™ª
01:04:14 â™ª I didn't know that I had that much strength â™ª
01:04:18 â™ª But I'm glad you'll see what happens when â™ª
01:04:22 â™ª You see you can't just play with people's feelings â™ª
01:04:26 â™ª Tell them you love them and don't mean it â™ª
01:04:31 â™ª You'll probably say that it was juvenile â™ª
01:04:35 â™ª But I think that I deserve to smile â™ª
01:04:39 <v ->Ha.</v <v ->Ha.</v
01:04:40 <v ->Ha.</v <v ->Ha.</v
01:04:41 â™ª I bust the windows out your car â™ª
01:04:45 â™ª You know I did it 'cause I left my mark â™ª
01:04:49 â™ª Wrote my initials with a crowbar â™ª
01:04:54 â™ª And then I drove off into the dark â™ª
01:04:58 â™ª I bust the windows out your car â™ª
01:05:02 â™ª You should feel lucky that that's all I did â™ª
01:05:06 â™ª After five whole years of this bull â™ª
01:05:10 â™ª Gave you all of me and you played with it, oh â™ª
01:05:16 â™ª I must admit it helped a little bit â™ª
01:05:20 â™ª To think of how you'd feel when you saw it â™ª
01:05:24 â™ª I didn't know I had that much strength â™ª
01:05:28 â™ª But I'm glad you'll see what happens when â™ª
01:05:32 â™ª You see you can't just play with people's feelings â™ª
01:05:37 â™ª Tell them you love them and don't mean it â™ª
01:05:41 â™ª You'll probably say that it was juvenile â™ª
01:05:45 â™ª But I think that I deserve to smile â™ª
01:05:49 â™ª I bust the windows out your car â™ª
01:05:51 â™ª But it don't compare to my broken heart â™ª
01:05:55 â™ª You could never feel how I felt that day â™ª
01:05:59 â™ª Until that happens, baby, you don't know pain â™ª
01:06:04 â™ª Ooh, yeah, I did it, you should know it â™ª
01:06:09 â™ª I ain't sorry, you deserved it â™ª
01:06:13 â™ª After what you did to me you deserved it â™ª
01:06:17 â™ª I ain't sorry, no, no â™ª
01:06:22 â™ª You broke my heart, so I broke your car â™ª
01:06:26 â™ª You caused me pain, so I did the same â™ª
01:06:30 â™ª Even though what you did to me was much worse â™ª

01:06:34 â™ª I had to something to make you hurt, yeah â™ª
01:06:38 â™ª Oh, but why am I still crying â™ª
01:06:42 â™ª Why am I the one who's still crying â™ª
01:06:46 â™ª Oh, oh, you really hurt me, baby â™ª
01:06:51 â™ª You really, you really hurt me, babe â™ª
01:06:56 â™ª I bust the windows out your car â™ª
01:07:00 (audience cheering)
01:07:18 <v Moderator>Please welcome to the stage</v
01:07:20 the founder of the Suffolk University Black Alumni Network,
01:07:24 trustee Ernst Guerrier.
01:07:27 (audience clapping)
01:07:36 <v ->Good evening. Yes, it is bright.</v
01:07:40 Madam chair, my little sister, Tamela,
01:07:43 I am so very proud of you. Much love.
01:07:47 (audience clapping)
01:07:51 I'm practically blind up here, but,
01:07:55 if I can just have one minute, (audience laughing)
01:07:58 I get to work with some of the best people that I know.
01:08:02 If I can just take a minute just to recognize them.
01:08:05 My fellow trustees, would you just simply get up
01:08:08 and stand up and be recognized?
01:08:11 I know Bevilton is here.
01:08:14 (audience clapping)
01:08:20 Members of the leadership team.
01:08:22 I know, my friend Marisa.
01:08:27 The dean, Dean Perlman.
01:08:31 Please stand up, and I'll tell you why.
01:08:35 Julie, please get up and be recognized.
01:08:38 (audience clapping)
01:08:45 Thank you.
01:08:46 It would be impossible for Tamela to accomplish this,
01:08:50 this wonderful night without the support of leadership.
01:08:53 I thank you. I appreciate you.
01:08:57 Tamela, please know my vision certainly wasn't this.
01:09:01 You did it.
01:09:02 So the credit is to you and this particular group.
01:09:06 Thank you for allowing me to continue to be part of this.
01:09:10 I'm told I can just turn,
01:09:12 and I'll find what I'm about to say.
01:09:14 So it is my pleasure to begin
01:09:18 the award portion of the evening.
01:09:21 The planning committee received the credentials
01:09:25 of numerous Suffolk alum, faculty, staff,
01:09:29 students who were nominated by all of you.
01:09:33 Selecting just a few to honor this evening was no easy task.
01:09:39 This year, the committee introduced the Black Excellence
01:09:43 Outstanding Student Award category.
01:09:46 And we are pleased to present two
01:09:50 with an award this evening.
01:09:52 I have the honor of presenting the very first
01:09:56 Outstanding Student Award to my friend Sharifa Garvey,
01:10:01 where are you?
01:10:03 (audience cheering)
01:10:05 She is the superstar in the room.

01:10:08 You gotta get up and be recognized.
01:10:14 Sharifa will graduate from this law school in 2024.
01:10:19 She has been active in a wide range
01:10:22 of law school initiatives.
01:10:24 And as the law school diversity fellow,
01:10:27 she has demonstrated leadership and fostered
01:10:31 an inclusive community advocating for our Black students
01:10:35 on campus as well as in the general community.
01:10:38 She works to unite communities of color,
01:10:42 as well as affinity groups to reach their maximum potential
01:10:47 professionally, academically, and personally.
01:10:53 She's also the social media chair
01:10:56 for the Black Law Student Association, BLSA.
01:10:59 Working to keep the Black law community informed
01:11:02 about professional development and personal wellbeing.
01:11:07 She recognizes the experience of all students
01:11:11 by educating others on racial disparities,
01:11:14 and she strives to make the Suffolk Law School experience
01:11:18 better for Black students as well as the entire community.
01:11:22 She's got a long resume, just so you know.
01:11:26 Sharifa inspires her fellow law students
01:11:29 to improve their networking skills.
01:11:31 Trust me, she's got skills.
01:11:34 And motivates them to attend social events.
01:11:38 She cares for her classmates, and her grit and passion
01:11:43 to make others aware of racial disparities
01:11:46 is an inspiration to all of us, including me.
01:11:49 Thank you.
01:11:51 Prior to her career here at the law school,
01:11:55 she advocated for Black and brown juvenile in Massachusetts,
01:12:00 researching policies and social factors
01:12:03 that impact young people who were disproportionately
01:12:08 impacted by the juvenile justice system.
01:12:11 She continued this advocacy
01:12:13 during her first year of law school,
01:12:15 and she has continued to serve
01:12:18 as the diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant.
01:12:23 She has also co-authored, not busy enough as a law student,
01:12:27 she has co-authored an article in the Boston Bar Journal
01:12:31 on racial trauma in juvenile justice reform,
01:12:36 advocating for Black and brown youth to be viewed
01:12:39 in their totality when they are in front
01:12:43 of Massachusetts judges.
01:12:45 In all of her activities and engagement
01:12:48 with the Suffolk community,
01:12:50 Sharifa's fierce and dedicated advocacy
01:12:53 shines through and through.
01:12:55 In recognition of this dedicated service and in anticipation
01:13:01 of her continued positive impact on Suffolk
01:13:05 and its justice, equity and diversity and inclusion goals,
01:13:09 we, and I am certainly honored to present
01:13:13 the Suffolk University Black Excellent Student Award
01:13:17 to my friend Sharifa Garvey,
01:13:20 Suffolk University class of '24.

01:13:22 Thank you.
01:13:23 (audience clapping)
01:13:30 <v ->Thank you guys so much for this honor.</v
01:13:34 Honestly, I just really followed my passion,
01:13:38 and followed what inspired me and motivates me.
01:13:44 So, they said I have three minutes.
01:13:46 This week has been crazy.
01:13:48 So for all of my students that are here from Suffolk Law,
01:13:50 we had diversity week and so my face was like,
01:13:53 fully dived in into diversity week
01:13:55 and we wrapped that up yesterday and it was so great
01:13:57 to celebrate with this event.
01:14:01 So I came to, before coming to Boston,
01:14:06 I was in information systems management.
01:14:09 And my mentor, who is here, Christian Bijou.
01:14:15 (audience clapping)
01:14:17 I met him when I was in high school,
01:14:19 and he told me about JDAI, which is where I started to work,
01:14:23 Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative.
01:14:26 I had no experience in that at all.
01:14:29 And I also made the decision
01:14:31 that I wanted to go to law school.
01:14:33 So I sought out, what law school in Boston
01:14:36 do I wanna attend?
01:14:38 and that brought me to Suffolk.
01:14:39 And when I was on the Suffolk website,
01:14:41 I saw a fabulous woman, and I decided to stalk her.
01:14:47 She did not know this.
01:14:49 And I attended every event she was at,
01:14:52 and I just introduced myself little by little,
01:14:55 and she became my mentor as well, Chief Nechtem.
01:14:59 (audience clapping)
01:15:04 And it's, you know, it's so important
01:15:06 that we're talking about networking at the panel today
01:15:09 because networking goes a very long way.
01:15:12 I did not know what I wanted to do,
01:15:15 but it was through my mentors and them talking to me
01:15:18 about what I'm passionate about and I'm interested in
01:15:20 that I ended up here.
01:15:22 And to be honest, I plan to come to Suffolk
01:15:24 and just have my head in the books,
01:15:26 but I can't stray away from DEI work.
01:15:28 And so I've just continued to do that,
01:15:31 continued to join council, recently joined the Justice,
01:15:34 Equity and Diversity and Inclusion council here as well.
01:15:38 And so I'm just really excited to continue
01:15:40 to build on this school and honestly, it's a home to me.
01:15:43 I wanna thank those who came to support
01:15:46 that are probably new mentors.
01:15:50 Robert Pasarella and Ivana Temple,
01:15:52 who I've also started stalking this year as well.
01:15:56 (laughs)
01:15:58 And so I'm so grateful and thankful for this award.
01:16:01 Thank you.

01:16:03 (audience clapping)
01:16:17 <v ->Good evening. My name is Yolanda Burrell.</v>
01:16:21 I received my MBA from Suffolk in 2018.
01:16:26 I'm a member of the SUBAN Leadership Committee
01:16:28 and the SBS Alumni Association Board.
01:16:33 It is my pleasure to present Ahria Ilyas
01:16:37 with the Black Excellent Outstanding Student Award for 2023.
01:16:43 Ahria is a senior at Suffolk who will graduate
01:16:47 from the College of Arts and Science in May.
01:16:51 She is a very engaged student whose leadership skills
01:16:55 and sense of purpose is exemplary.
01:16:59 She holds the position of diversity peer educator, scholar,
01:17:04 at the Center of Diversity and Inclusion
01:17:07 where she demonstrates her commitment
01:17:09 to social justice every day, working with students
01:17:13 to educate them, advocate for them,
01:17:15 and help them grow and develop their leadership skills.
01:17:20 Ahria also serves as the vice president
01:17:23 of Suffolk's Black Student Union.
01:17:25 She is an orientation leader.
01:17:28 She is on the retention committee.
01:17:31 And she's always stepping up to assist
01:17:34 with a variety of initiatives and special projects.
01:17:38 She serves as a motivational leader for her fellow students,
01:17:43 amplifying the voice of Black students across the campus,
01:17:47 instructing them by example.
01:17:51 While involved in so many activities at Suffolk,
01:17:55 she also manages to take time to develop
01:17:59 and volunteer in the community,
01:18:02 currently working as a City of Boston community organizer
01:18:07 and youth works coordinator,
01:18:09 where she has worked alongside Mayor Wu.
01:18:13 Ahria also serves for several years
01:18:17 on the Boston Student Advisory Council
01:18:20 as a youth organizer and alumni staff coordinator.
01:18:25 A dean's list student in the honors program,
01:18:28 Ahria has unlimited choices for the next steps
01:18:34 in her education and career path when she graduates.
01:18:38 We look forward to hearing about her decision.
01:18:41 She is extremely talented,
01:18:43 determined to make positive difference
01:18:46 in the world around her,
01:18:48 and always mindful of the need to fight
01:18:52 systemic and racial injustice.
01:18:55 She is described by her recommenders
01:18:57 as a great friend, compassionate, caring, hardworking
01:19:03 and selfless as an excellent role model for her peers.
01:19:07 In recognition of many positive contributions
01:19:10 to Suffolk community as a student,
01:19:13 embodying the qualities of Black excellence,
01:19:17 and in anticipation of her continued impact on Suffolk
01:19:23 as a distinguished alum committed to the justice,
01:19:27 equity and diversity and inclusion,
01:19:29 we are honored to present

01:19:32 the Suffolk University Black Excellence Student Award
01:19:36 to Ahria Ilyas.
01:19:39 (audience cheering)
01:19:56 (laughs)
01:19:58 <v ->It is bright up here. Hello everyone. (laughs)</v
01:20:03 Wow. Okay. I'm a little nervous.
01:20:06 All righty.
01:20:07 Thank you so much to everyone that was involved
01:20:09 in planning this event,
01:20:12 and also even nominating me in the first place is an honor,
01:20:15 so I'm very humbled to be up here today.
01:20:18 When receiving this award,
01:20:20 I wanna initially acknowledge that this is a recognition
01:20:22 that this is a reflection of solely,
01:20:25 this is not a reflection of solely me as an individual,
01:20:28 but rather a collection of people, experiences,
01:20:31 perspectives and opportunities that have contributed
01:20:33 to me being up here today.
01:20:36 And that starts with my parents.
01:20:39 Although I'm sure it's a difficult conversation, yes.
01:20:42 (audience clapping)
01:20:48 I'm not getting emotional here.
01:20:52 Although it's a difficult conversation to explain
01:20:54 why the color of your skin as a young Black girl
01:20:58 is going to give you certain treatment
01:20:59 within varying environments,
01:21:01 you both have balanced the reality
01:21:03 with the celebration of my culture, identity and skin.
01:21:07 My mother always calling me a beautiful combination
01:21:09 of both of my parents is one amazing example of that.
01:21:13 You both ensure that regardless of certain people with bias
01:21:15 attempting to limit my opportunities and potential,
01:21:19 you both made sacrifices in order to guarantee my success,
01:21:23 all while loving me entirely.
01:21:25 I'm forever grateful for that
01:21:27 and will continue to be grateful.
01:21:28 And one example of that starts with Kumon,
01:21:31 even though I never wanted to do the homework,
01:21:32 you've all kept me in it, so thanks.
01:21:34 (Ahria and audience laughing)
01:21:36 I also wanna thank the entirety of the Suffolk community,
01:21:38 but more specifically the Black Student Union
01:21:40 and the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, my OGs.
01:21:45 I entered Suffolk with the idea that I needed to keep
01:21:47 my community organizing in Boston
01:21:49 and my academic environment completely separate.
01:21:52 However, without the relationships that I've built here
01:21:55 and the individuals that have allowed for me
01:21:57 to feel a sense of belonging on campus,
01:22:00 I had the ability to learn so much from everyone,
01:22:02 and will continue to do so when I graduate in May.
01:22:06 Lastly, I do wanna acknowledge that the work
01:22:08 that I will participate in moving forward
01:22:10 will not stop at graduation.

01:22:14 I will always make sure that the work
01:22:16 that I do around social justice is intersectional,
01:22:19 acknowledging both my privileges and also my disadvantages
01:22:22 when being the best advocate that I can possibly be,
01:22:25 and that includes acknowledging the people before me,
01:22:28 including the LGBTQ+ leaders that stood with bravery
01:22:31 and strength within the past and currently.
01:22:33 BIPOC communities that have sacrificed so much
01:22:36 for me to even stand up here today
01:22:37 and be in an educational environment like this.
01:22:42 Emotional, social and mental folk,
01:22:45 individuals with mental health issues,
01:22:48 intergenerational age ranges,
01:22:49 regardless of immigration status, and overall,
01:22:52 any individual that has experienced marginalization.
01:22:55 These communities of people presently and historically
01:22:58 have made it so that I can be up here in this space today.
01:23:01 And there are people in this space
01:23:02 that also identify that way,
01:23:03 and you all I will cherish forever.
01:23:07 I also wanna say one last thing.
01:23:09 My Blackness is not a metaphor to solely violence.
01:23:13 It's not an opportunity for tokenism,
01:23:15 nor is my Blackness conditional for benefits.
01:23:18 It is a symbol for education, liberation,
01:23:21 quality representation, and a completely valid experience,
01:23:24 and I hope the work I do
01:23:25 reflects that sentiment within everything I do.
01:23:27 Thank you.
01:23:28 (audience cheering)
01:23:43 <v ->Thanks. Hi everyone.</v
01:23:47 My name is Arantxa Melendez.
01:23:49 I am a junior here at Suffolk,
01:23:51 the president of the Caribbean Student Network,
01:23:54 and a member of the Celebration
01:23:55 of the Black Excellence Committee.
01:23:57 I am pleased to present the Black Excellence
01:24:00 Outstanding Alumni Award to Dr. Jeffrey Lopes,
01:24:03 a remarkable Suffolk graduate who is making
01:24:05 a positive difference in his community and mine every day.
01:24:09 Jeffrey Lopes is a first generation Suffolk student
01:24:12 who earned his bachelor's degree in 2012
01:24:14 and his master's in public administration in 2014.
01:24:16 His brother Adelson is also a double Ram.
01:24:20 Jeffrey Lopez was very involved in his Suffolk community,
01:24:23 and the Cape Verdean Student Association,
01:24:27 the Black Student Union,
01:24:28 and served as a diversity peer educator
01:24:30 and diversity chair of SGA.
01:24:34 In 2020 here in his doctorate degree in law
01:24:36 and policy from Northeastern,
01:24:38 and now serves on the faculties of UMass Boston
01:24:41 and Emmanuel College.
01:24:44 Wow, I'm getting nervy, guys.

01:24:46 (audience laughing)
01:24:48 Dr. Lopes is a detective with the Boston Police Department
01:24:51 and current president of the Massachusetts Association
01:24:53 of Minority Law Enforcement Officers.
01:24:56 Working with civil rights organizations
01:24:58 to provide justice to Black and brown officers,
01:25:01 he also serves on the diversity, equity and inclusion
01:25:04 committee of the Massachusetts Special Legislative
01:25:08 Commission to study and examine the civil service law.
01:25:12 At the Boston Police Department, Dr. Lopes is assigned
01:25:15 to the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit
01:25:17 and serves as the FBI Child Exploitation
01:25:21 Human Trafficking Task Force.
01:25:24 While a community initiative liaison
01:25:26 for the Bureau of Community Engagement,
01:25:28 he was instrumental in strengthening relationships
01:25:31 and trust with the communities of Boston
01:25:33 and community partners.
01:25:35 And as he always has taken keen interest in improving
01:25:38 the lives in educational opportunities and Boston youths,
01:25:42 Dr. Lopes works tirelessly to advocate for justice, equity,
01:25:46 diversity, inclusion, and criminal justice system
01:25:48 in the neighborhoods of the greater Boston.
01:25:51 He founded We Belong, a youth leadership program that works
01:25:54 with young people to improve their lives and empower them
01:25:57 to be leaders in their communities.
01:25:59 And he is the on the board of DotHouse Health,
01:26:02 a Dorchester based health center community
01:26:05 serving families in need,
01:26:06 and Dorchester's Cape Verdean Community Association.
01:26:10 In recognition of his dedicated service
01:26:11 and many outstanding accomplishments and anticipation
01:26:14 of his continued positive impact
01:26:16 on the greater Boston community and far beyond,
01:26:18 we are honored to present the Suffolk University
01:26:20 Black Excellence Outstanding Alumni Award to Jeffrey Lopes.
01:26:23 (audience cheering)
01:26:29 Oh my gosh.
01:26:30 Yeah, of course.
01:26:33 <v ->Okay, I'm gonna keep my remarks pretty short,</v
01:26:36 but great job.
01:26:37 I don't know where you learned all those great things
01:26:39 about me, but thank you so much.
01:26:41 I'd like to begin by, you know,
01:26:43 really thanking the Suffolk Community, President Kelly,
01:26:47 the Suffolk Black Alumni Network, the Black Student Union,
01:26:52 the Black Law Student Association,
01:26:54 and the entire Suffolk community for hosting an event
01:26:56 like this and really celebrating Black excellence.
01:26:59 When I think of Black excellence and this honor,
01:27:01 I think of my experience here at Suffolk,
01:27:04 and how all of the diverse communities came together
01:27:06 to really support one another.
01:27:08 And I think about how as a lifelong Bostonian,

01:27:13 Suffolk really made me feel special.
01:27:16 And that black excellence was really celebrated
01:27:19 as us really uniting together and coming together.
01:27:21 So when we talk about the work that we did
01:27:24 as diversity peer educators, as student government,
01:27:28 and really champion diversity,
01:27:30 I was the diversity chair on student government,
01:27:32 and it was one of the best things I did,
01:27:33 because I was able to elevate a lot of issues
01:27:36 that a lot of people didn't wanna talk about.
01:27:39 You know, the greatest social justice issue on the planet
01:27:42 is creating more equitable portals of accessibility.
01:27:46 That is rooted in education.
01:27:48 Education allows people to find pathways
01:27:50 of social and emotional wellness while achieving
01:27:53 and learning new pathways to true excellence.
01:27:56 I am here receiving this award because I found that pathway,
01:27:59 and I found the on-ramps to those pathways
01:28:02 and the exit ramps that have allowed me to take those skills
01:28:06 and skill sets to directly impact the Boston community,
01:28:09 especially the young people in Boston.
01:28:11 There were bumps and turns and detours along the way,
01:28:14 which only helped me further my passion
01:28:16 to continue to excel forward and to help others.
01:28:18 I learned many valuable assets from great thought partners
01:28:21 and community change agents,
01:28:23 but none more important than the grounding frameworks
01:28:25 to pay it forward to others in our communities.
01:28:29 Who if they had the same access, could excel the same way.
01:28:33 I'm a person who has devoted my life
01:28:35 not to self-service that is too often apparent
01:28:39 in this world of social media and talking about ourselves,
01:28:42 but to the public service I give to others
01:28:45 by counting the blessings that I have had
01:28:47 through my education here at Suffolk.
01:28:49 Suffolk gave me the grounding, the space,
01:28:51 the opportunity, the wraparound services,
01:28:53 the trauma supports, and the love that I needed
01:28:56 to become who I am today.
01:28:58 The person I am today is someone that understands
01:29:01 those lessons, embraces the lessons,
01:29:02 and understands that by reflection and growth
01:29:05 I can empower others to be able to embrace them as well.
01:29:08 Giving is never enough. You have to continue to show up.
01:29:12 And I try to show up every single day
01:29:13 in every single community that I serve in or work in.
01:29:17 I have found that portals of equity
01:29:19 have to be consistent, intentional, and sustainable.
01:29:22 And every single day I'm trying to find a way
01:29:24 to be a good thought partner in those spaces.
01:29:26 I just wanna close by thanking Suffolk
01:29:29 for a remarkable experience.
01:29:30 Two awards in a year, just got one last year.
01:29:33 But just really saying that Suffolk is a beautiful place.

01:29:37 And when we think of Black excellence
01:29:39 and we think of championing one another,
01:29:42 and really having events like this,
01:29:43 it's really what matters to me.
01:29:45 And my work around social justice is what matters,
01:29:47 so thank you all.
01:29:48 (audience clapping)
01:29:58 <v ->Hello everyone.</v>
01:30:00 My name is Kerimal Surriel Guerrero
01:30:02 and I am a 3L here at Suffolk Law School.
01:30:05 I'm also the president of the Black Law Students Association
01:30:08 and a member, yes, yes, BLSA.
01:30:11 And a member of the Celebration
01:30:13 of Black Excellence Committee.
01:30:15 It is my honor to present the next outstanding alumni award
01:30:18 to Macey Russell, JD '83 for his extraordinary service
01:30:23 to Suffolk University and Suffolk Law School.
01:30:26 His distinguished career as an attorney
01:30:28 and his passionate and far reaching advocacy
01:30:31 for justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.
01:30:35 He is a recognized authority and lecturer
01:30:38 on diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.
01:30:42 A partner at the prestigious law firm of Schott,
01:30:45 he has received numerous awards
01:30:47 and recognition as an outstanding and top ranked attorney,
01:30:51 both locally and nationally, a thought leader,
01:30:54 and an expert in the profession.
01:30:57 The Chamber of Commerce named him one of Boston's
01:30:59 top 100 most influential people of color.
01:31:03 He is at the forefront of raising issues
01:31:06 and suggesting solutions to diversity,
01:31:09 equity, and inclusion challenges.
01:31:11 And awards for his work include Franklin Roosevelt
01:31:16 Humanitarian Award for his work informing
01:31:19 the Augustus A. White III Institution for Healthcare Equity.
01:31:25 Macey Russell advocates for bringing Black history
01:31:28 into the mainstream of American education,
01:31:31 and has sought federal legislation,
01:31:33 entitled the George Floyd Education Act,
01:31:35 to establish a commission to develop a national curriculum.
01:31:39 In 2022, when the US Open was held here in Brookline,
01:31:44 Macey Russell shared the diversity, equity
01:31:46 and inclusion committee ensuring that Black history
01:31:49 was highlighted and that students of color
01:31:51 were included as interns at the tournament
01:31:54 and supported with scholarship funds to historically Black
01:31:57 colleges and universities,
01:31:59 which as a proud Howard University alum,
01:32:01 I thoroughly appreciate.
01:32:03 Macey Russell's commitment to Suffolk University
01:32:06 has been exemplary,
01:32:08 and he served with great distinction as a charter trustee
01:32:11 for 10 years, before stepping down in 2021.
01:32:16 As a trustee, he was instrumental in rewriting

01:32:19 and greatly improving the Suffolk Board's outdated bylaws.
01:32:23 He also played a major role in advocating
01:32:26 for Suffolk athletics and securing the current
01:32:28 long-term lease for the Suffolk Rams
01:32:30 at the East Boston Fields.
01:32:32 Trustee Russell remains active at the university,
01:32:35 and Suffolk Law is proud to count him as an alumnus.
01:32:39 In recognition of his many outstanding accomplishments,
01:32:42 and an anticipation of his continued success
01:32:46 and positive impact at Suffolk, locally and nationally,
01:32:50 we are honored to present the Suffolk University Law School
01:32:53 Black Excellence Outstanding Alumni Award
01:32:56 to E. Macey Russell.
01:32:58 (audience clapping)
01:33:12 <v ->All right, I'll put this over here.</v
01:33:16 So, of course I was given time limits,
01:33:17 so you know how I am with that, but,
01:33:21 I will make my remarks some somewhat brief.
01:33:26 Wanna I begin by thanking Bob Ward for coming out.
01:33:30 Bob Ward was a professor at the law school,
01:33:33 but he worked in the DA's office in Suffolk
01:33:36 when I came to Suffolk Law School as a 1L.
01:33:40 And he helped me get my first job in the DA's office,
01:33:43 so Bob kind of gently put me on my way.
01:33:48 I wanna thank the university for this award.
01:33:50 I really appreciate it. It means a lot to me.
01:33:55 It's sort of an acknowledgement that I managed to overcome
01:33:59 obstacles and systemic barriers that are real,
01:34:04 and can impact both your physical and emotional wellbeing.
01:34:09 You know, we all talk about doing things,
01:34:12 but we never talk about the impact
01:34:13 it takes to be successful.
01:34:17 So as a person of African descent,
01:34:20 I face barriers that my white colleagues
01:34:22 never had to encounter.
01:34:24 That's a reality of being Black in America.
01:34:28 I understood that, but never gave into that notion
01:34:32 that I was never good enough.
01:34:34 So when I was thinking about my remarks, I'm like, well,
01:34:36 I would've had a set of remarks before George Floyd,
01:34:39 and then a set of remarks after George Floyd.
01:34:43 So this is my after George Floyd remarks.
01:34:46 So I wanna begin, my relationship with Suffolk University
01:34:49 began over 40 years ago when I was a college student.
01:34:52 So in those days, if you apply to a school,
01:34:55 the law schools used to go down to your college,
01:34:58 and they would interview you while you were there.
01:35:00 And I was interviewed,
01:35:01 and I was luckily accepted from law school,
01:35:04 and I didn't really understand Suffolk's commitment
01:35:09 to people from underrepresented groups
01:35:12 until much later.
01:35:13 It was even after I graduated from law school.
01:35:15 I appreciated and learned to appreciate

01:35:18 that they took a chance on me.
01:35:22 And I'll never forget that.
01:35:29 Fast forward.
01:35:32 When I think about the name of the award, Black Excellence,
01:35:35 it really caused me to pause and to reflect
01:35:38 on what that means to me.
01:35:40 I'd like to think that it came from a family, excuse me,
01:35:43 where Black excellence was always on display,
01:35:48 but the times were different
01:35:50 and difficult for Black Americans.
01:35:54 And this was really the post George Floyd comments
01:35:57 that I want to raise.
01:36:00 My great-great grandmother and great-great grandfather
01:36:05 on my father's side were both bred and born into slavery
01:36:11 in the early 1800s.
01:36:14 And the 1870s US census reports identify both of them
01:36:19 as mulatto, half Black, half white.
01:36:25 If you were a mulatto,
01:36:26 that meant that your mother was Black,
01:36:30 and that your father was white.
01:36:33 And so they were owned by a white family.
01:36:39 They were forced to work from sunup to sundown for free,
01:36:44 under the threat of torture and death if they didn't comply.
01:36:49 They were resilient, an example of Black excellence.
01:36:55 This is a much different family history
01:36:58 from that of my law partners that I've had over the years.
01:37:03 Some were proud descendants
01:37:05 that came over on the Mayflower from England.
01:37:08 They accumulated wealth, substantial wealth over the years,
01:37:11 with a likelihood that either they benefited
01:37:14 or profited from free slave labor.
01:37:19 Somehow my great-great grandfather who died in 1870
01:37:24 had a will and owned land.
01:37:28 Again, resiliency,
01:37:31 an example of Black excellence at that time.
01:37:35 My grandparents and parents had to survive
01:37:38 legalized segregation and discrimination against them
01:37:42 in education, employment, and housing.
01:37:48 They lived some or most of their life
01:37:50 without having civil rights and in fear for their family.
01:37:55 I can remember traveling south with my grandmother,
01:37:59 who was born in 1896,
01:38:03 who immediately went to the back of the train,
01:38:05 and told me that's where we're supposed to sit.
01:38:10 In about 1964, I was about six years old.
01:38:14 And I was down in Henderson, North Carolina,
01:38:16 my father's family's from, and my aunt Maggie scolded me
01:38:20 for looking at a white woman in a supermarket.
01:38:23 She told me not to look at them,
01:38:26 or they will come get you in the night.
01:38:29 Well, my aunt knew about the story of Emmett Till,
01:38:32 who was murdered in 1955.
01:38:35 Again, a different kind of resiliency,
01:38:39 but that was Black excellence during that time.

01:38:43 Black excellence is always accompanied by
01:38:46 and seen in the context of overcoming adversity
01:38:50 and learning to get around systemic barriers of injustice.
01:38:56 I see Black excellence
01:38:57 in the resiliency of my family history.
01:39:01 This resiliency has been passed down
01:39:03 from one generation to the next,
01:39:06 from my great-great grandparents to me.
01:39:10 Many of you, and I think some of the panelists
01:39:12 talked about it today, you will be faced with some form
01:39:16 of bias or discrimination at some point during your life,
01:39:21 perhaps several times.
01:39:25 You should know this, that others who came before you
01:39:30 had faced the same type of bias and discrimination,
01:39:34 and they managed to overcome it and be successful.
01:39:38 The barriers are not insurmountable.
01:39:42 I am proud to accept this award with my descendants in mind.
01:39:46 Thank you.
01:39:47 (audience clapping)
01:40:02 <v ->I'm back.</v
01:40:06 All right.
01:40:15 Congratulations to all of the award recipients tonight.
01:40:18 We have one more award recipient.
01:40:21 And at this time I'd like to invite
01:40:23 my fellow SUBAN Leadership Committee members
01:40:27 to the stage for this one.
01:40:30 If you don't mind.
01:40:35 I know you all are all camera ready.
01:40:42 Who else?
01:40:46 Anna.
01:40:55 I now have the pleasure of presenting
01:40:57 the Black Excellence Outstanding Faculty Staff Award
01:41:01 to a dedicated Suffolk graduate who makes a positive impact
01:41:06 at Suffolk University every single day.
01:41:09 Jenny Joseph-Hayle, MPA '13,
01:41:12 serves as associate director of alumni career engagement
01:41:18 in the Center for Career Equity, Development and Success.
01:41:21 She is an adjunct faculty member,
01:41:24 and an employee resource group leader.
01:41:27 Jenny is also an active and longstanding member of SUBAN,
01:41:33 and has previously served as chair, my predecessor.
01:41:38 She's my advisor as well.
01:41:40 Her vigilant leadership has guided
01:41:42 many of our SUBAN initiatives and has helped us support
01:41:46 the university's justice, equity, diversity,
01:41:49 and inclusion goals and expand our outreach.
01:41:53 She is also a member
01:41:54 of the Sawyer Business School Alumni Board.
01:41:58 Jenny's unwavering support of and zealous advocacy
01:42:01 for the Black community at Suffolk is commendable.
01:42:05 Her passion and commitment to creating
01:42:08 and supporting an environment that fosters inclusion,
01:42:11 awareness and belonging for Black students, faculty, staff,
01:42:16 alumni, exemplified the the mission and purpose

01:42:19 of the SUBAN in this award.
01:42:22 In her position in the Center
01:42:23 for Career Equity, Development and Success,
01:42:26 Jenny works tirelessly guiding and mentoring students,
01:42:30 especially students of color.
01:42:34 And every day, she demonstrates that she is strong,
01:42:37 action oriented, and a student advocate.
01:42:42 She has a grassroots approach to her leadership.
01:42:48 She eagerly takes on extra responsibilities,
01:42:51 including serving as the first advisors
01:42:54 to the black MBA students
01:42:56 in attending countless events across the university.
01:43:00 Her recommenders emphasize
01:43:02 that she is dependable and selfless.
01:43:05 Giving so much of her time and herself to others,
01:43:09 clearly, she is a role model and an inspiration for us all.
01:43:14 Jenny's dual roles as inspiring staff member
01:43:18 and engaged volunteer make her an especially fitting
01:43:21 recipient for this award.
01:43:24 In recognition of her outstanding service and dedication
01:43:27 to Suffolk's students, and the university's diversity,
01:43:31 equity, and inclusion goals,
01:43:33 we are honored to present the Suffolk University
01:43:36 Black Excellence Faculty Staff Award to Jenny Joseph-Hayle.
01:43:42 â™ª Don't be fooled by the rocks that I got â™ª
01:43:44 â™ª I'm still, I'm still Jenny from the block â™ª
01:43:46 â™ª Used to have a little, now I have a lot â™ª
01:43:48 â™ª No matter where I go, I know where I came from â™ª
01:43:51 â™ª Don't be fooled by the rocks that I got â™ª
01:43:53 â™ª I'm still, I'm still Jenny from the block â™ª
01:43:56 â™ª Used to have a little, now I have a lot â™ª
01:43:58 â™ª No matter where I go I know where I came from â™ª
01:44:01 (hip hop music)
01:44:06 <v ->Oh my god, so many people.</v
01:44:09 â™ª I just find myself still loving you â™ª
01:44:12 â™ª After all that we've been through â™ª
01:44:14 â™ª Find myself still loving you â™ª
01:44:17 Thank you so much. Thank you.
01:44:19 It's really important for me to say
01:44:21 that this award is important, especially because
01:44:25 it's from my colleagues and from students.
01:44:29 I really appreciated that.
01:44:31 I came to Suffolk in 2011 as a grad student, MPA, represent.
01:44:37 We all over, right?
01:44:40 To complete my graduate degree and hopefully make 100k.
01:44:46 I got there.
01:44:48 I, you know, in 2013,
01:44:50 I went on to work for the Commonwealth,
01:44:54 I worked for Governor Patrick,
01:44:56 I worked on our healthcare budget.
01:44:58 I did a lot of great things within the Commonwealth,
01:45:01 and that was because of the opportunities
01:45:04 that Suffolk gave me as a grad student, as a fellow.
01:45:10 I was here and I took it all.

01:45:13 And that's really the emphasis of,
01:45:16 you know, being here tonight.
01:45:17 Take advantage, to my students,
01:45:20 take advantage of everything that's out there.
01:45:23 Really get to know people.
01:45:26 You know, when I came back to teach career development
01:45:29 to students as an adjunct,
01:45:30 I remembered my experience and how many people and mentors
01:45:35 guided me and helped me achieve my professional goals.
01:45:38 So the common theme is networking.
01:45:43 Finally, my mom, my mom, who's not here tonight,
01:45:47 because she's like, "This is way too many people.
01:45:51 COVID is not over." (laughs)
01:45:56 She always said to be the example you want to be,
01:45:59 you want others to be.
01:46:01 And I hope that I am.
01:46:03 I've served that for my students, for the community.
01:46:08 Obviously there's more work to be done,
01:46:11 but I'm happy that, you know, even my current,
01:46:16 in my current role at the Career Center,
01:46:17 that I'm given the opportunity to help
01:46:20 and bring out more of you to events, to programming.
01:46:27 You know, I appreciate that. I'm very grateful.
01:46:30 So, while we know students don't necessarily listen,
01:46:35 you know, listen to adults, listen to their professors,
01:46:39 including my own 26 year old, doesn't listen to me.
01:46:43 We need to remember that all the social capital
01:46:48 is right here in this room.
01:46:50 All of you are valuable members in our community.
01:46:53 And especially to my alumni, whether it's about money,
01:46:57 whether it's your time, you're extremely of value to,
01:47:01 you're extremely invaluable to our community.
01:47:03 So come back, share your resources,
01:47:06 share them with the community, share them with the students,
01:47:10 share them with, shameless plug, the Career Center.
01:47:15 And continue to be that person.
01:47:20 I appreciate you all coming out on a Friday night.
01:47:22 We're here to celebrate, you know, I got my glitter on,
01:47:24 you know, let's do it, let's party.
01:47:27 I appreciate all of you, thank you and have a great evening.
01:47:30 (audience clapping)
01:47:33 Thanks, guys!
01:47:41 <v ->Don't leave without your award.</v
01:47:43 I'll keep it if you want me to have it.
01:47:49 So I will say that, let me back up.
01:47:54 Ernst, my brother from another mother, thank you so much.
01:47:59 You always, always encourage me.
01:48:02 I am doing everything I can to actualize your vision.
01:48:08 Jenny's vision, Joyce's vision,
01:48:10 and all the pioneers that started SUBAN.
01:48:13 So I appreciate all the...
01:48:17 You know, I appreciate all the praise,
01:48:20 but obviously I don't do this by myself.
01:48:24 And Ernst is still very involved. I meet with him often.

01:48:28 I bother him a lot on texts, he tries to ignore me,
01:48:30 but I have his wife on text as well, so...
01:48:37 I wanna say that Jenny, while she's, you know,
01:48:40 she was my predecessor as chair,
01:48:41 she's still a very close advisor to me.
01:48:46 A lot of times, most of the time, I'm on the phone with her
01:48:50 and texting her and trying to,
01:48:54 she's helping me to crystallize ideas
01:48:56 and actually giving me directions,
01:48:58 so she's the person behind the scenes,
01:49:02 helping to drive this ship.
01:49:04 Just so folks know.
01:49:07 So, you know, I know you're hungry.
01:49:09 We're getting close to the end.
01:49:12 Just one little bit.
01:49:15 I wanna say that this was an amazing night,
01:49:17 and I wanna say congratulations
01:49:18 to all the award recipients again.
01:49:21 Thank you President Kelly and the Black Men in Leadership
01:49:23 panel again and Soulfully Versed, oh my goodness.
01:49:27 How many people busted the windows outta somebody's car
01:49:31 when you were younger?
01:49:33 Don't even lie. Raise your hand. Who?
01:49:37 Look, everybody's whispering.
01:49:40 Well, I didn't know that was the song. (laughs)
01:49:44 They sung it well. (laughs)
01:49:48 They did a good job.
01:49:49 But thank you and thank you
01:49:50 for participating in tonight's program.
01:49:53 I definitely wanna thank our sponsors,
01:49:56 and I wanna thank Nancy Gavalondo, I don't wanna forget.
01:50:01 Nancy has been so instrumental in helping us
01:50:04 to secure sponsors and we have a gold sponsor,
01:50:09 McClane Middleton, three silver sponsors,
01:50:12 Choate, Kirkland and Ellis, National Grid,
01:50:15 that's where I work.
01:50:18 We have three bronze sponsors, Conn Kavanaugh,
01:50:22 professor emeritus Karen Blum,
01:50:28 Lando and Anastasi.
01:50:30 And then we have our annual SUBAN scholarship
01:50:33 corporate sponsors, the Toll Brothers and Health Peak.
01:50:37 And I just wanna say thank you.
01:50:39 This is probably the most sponsorship
01:50:41 we've had in a long time.
01:50:43 We want to continue to fund our scholarship.
01:50:47 We're trying to do, you know, the good work,
01:50:49 help the students.
01:50:50 We need not just your time and your talents,
01:50:54 we need your treasure.
01:50:55 Students need money. That's just what it is.
01:50:59 And I know sometimes it's like,
01:51:00 oh, they always asking for money.
01:51:03 Yes we are.
01:51:04 (audience laughing)

01:51:06 So, please donate.
01:51:09 I do put a lot of time into it. Fundraising is not easy.
01:51:14 It's an experience, and I'm dedicated to it,
01:51:17 and I appreciate everyone who has given.
01:51:21 Jenny mentioned a concept that I think has been
01:51:24 a general theme over the course of the night,
01:51:27 even though there's been, you know, synonyms used
01:51:34 for networking, relationships, you know,
01:51:38 social capital is something that we all have to have
01:51:42 in this world.
01:51:43 And Jenny
01:51:48 wants us, wants SUBAN, but everyone in this room
01:51:52 to impress upon each other, but most importantly
01:51:54 the students to understand what social capital is,
01:51:57 so I'm just gonna touch on it really quickly.
01:52:00 It's a byproduct of one's social networks
01:52:02 and interpersonal relationships, right?
01:52:04 So it refers to the benefits and resources one can obtain
01:52:08 through their social networks and interpersonal connections,
01:52:12 information opportunities, resources that flow
01:52:15 through one's social networks are greatly enhanced
01:52:18 as that network becomes larger and more heterogeneous,
01:52:23 as different people occupying different spaces and groups
01:52:26 can offer different information and insights.
01:52:30 So the well-known saying, it is not what you know,
01:52:34 it is who you know, is paradigmatic,
01:52:39 is a paradigmatic expression of social capital.
01:52:42 So my message to the students is this,
01:52:44 and I say it all the time, I'm texting folks, you know,
01:52:47 I got some of y'all cell phone, you know,
01:52:50 you should have never gave me that, I'm always saying,
01:52:52 come to these events.
01:52:54 You can study, you can get good grades.
01:52:57 Build your academic portfolio, and I think Sharifa said,
01:53:01 her plan was to come here
01:53:02 and just keep her head down and study.
01:53:05 That is not going to get you the opportunities.
01:53:08 It's connection. It's who you know that's going to do that.
01:53:12 So you have to, you have to absolutely build
01:53:16 your social capital and then leverage
01:53:18 those relationships, right?
01:53:20 You wanna meet people.
01:53:23 Do you all even know who's in this room tonight?
01:53:26 You have judges, you have CEOs, you have vice presidents.
01:53:30 I mean, look at our panel.
01:53:32 Like, you need to be at these events.
01:53:36 We wanna help you now.
01:53:38 When you graduate and Tony Richards has said this so well,
01:53:43 we're here to help you now, when you graduate,
01:53:45 you're gonna be trying to come back like,
01:53:47 Tamela, remember me? Right?
01:53:50 And not that I won't help you.
01:53:51 But you have us at your disposal now, so this is the time.
01:53:57 You have to make time in your schedule to attend events

01:54:00 where you can make connections,
01:54:02 'cause when you get outta school,
01:54:05 it's not your grades that get you the job.
01:54:07 Someone helps you, gets you a job, an opportunity,
01:54:11 an internship, a connection, information, whatever it is,
01:54:15 it's someone helping you.
01:54:17 It's not like, you're not like, here's my GPA.
01:54:22 So I don't know,
01:54:24 I just thought I would be candid about that, so...
01:54:28 (laughs)
01:54:30 There is much more taking place tonight.
01:54:32 There are dinner stations and drinks out in the lobby.
01:54:35 Don't forget the second floor,
01:54:36 we have dinner and drinks up there too.
01:54:39 The Suffolk Jazz Band is playing for us tonight.
01:54:42 In this room there'll be dancing.
01:54:46 I went through the music list,
01:54:48 I swear I tried to take out all the songs
01:54:52 that had inappropriate, 'cause I'm older now,
01:54:55 I don't listen to certain things.
01:54:57 So whoever tried to add some stuff, I took it off.
01:55:01 (audience laughing)
01:55:03 Please stick around.
01:55:04 Lastly, I ask you all to join me in giving back to Suffolk.
01:55:09 I know I said it this, I'm gonna say it again,
01:55:10 I'm sorry, whatever.
01:55:11 You can tell me out in the lobby to stop asking for stuff.
01:55:15 Give back your time and talents, serve as a mentor,
01:55:18 hire, internships, jobs, support students financially,
01:55:23 making a contribution to the SUBAN fund,
01:55:25 but obviously there's other ways that you can contribute.
01:55:27 I wanna thank you all for being here.
01:55:29 Thank you to the planning committee,
01:55:31 the SUBAN leadership committee, our panel,
01:55:33 Caitlyn, Alex, Annamaria, the Office of Advancement,
01:55:36 and again, is Nancy in the room?
01:55:38 Nancy Gavalondo, thank you so much.
01:55:42 (audience clapping)
01:55:43 I appreciate you.
01:55:46 Thanks everyone.