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
I am elated to be with you this evening and to serve as the moderator for the Black Men leadership portion of this exciting event, along with the SUBAN Leadership Committee member Sam Faisal. This evening we'll be having a conversation with our impressive and distinguished panelists of the Suffolk alumni who are leaders in their professional fields.

It is now my pleasure to welcome our panelists. Let's start by having you each introduce yourselves, and I'll start with my co-moderator, Sam Faisal, who flew in from Texas to be here.

Thank you Jelani. My name is Sam Faisal. I graduated from Suffolk University Law School on May 2020. I was the former president of the Suffolk University's Black Law Students Association, and I'm a current member of the SUBAN Leadership Committee.

I am currently an associate at Berry, Appleman, and Leiden, where I practice business immigration.

If we can, you know, go down the line, and Anthony.

All right. Hey, good evening everyone. Great to be here, down here from New York City, so it's good to be back home in Boston and around Suffolk University.

Every time I come back, this place grows and changes even more.

So I'm Anthony Ross, 1997 business student, Sawyer Business School.

I was an accounting major.

Focused on being a CPA when I grow up, and that's what I did after my Suffolk experience. (laughs)

So today I've worked for State Street Bank, ironically, Boston based company, many years later, running their alternative investments, real estate and private equity platform out of New York.

That's what I do.

Anthony Richards, Tony Richards.

So I'm Tony Richards. Super excited to be here.

I had a long week, and glad to kind of culminate that week with this group.

Suffolk University grad.

I'm a 10 year graduate student.

I started, for the first year, I took two classes one semester and then one class the next semester and then got hired to be the executive director of a national nonprofit.

So it took me 10 years, not all at once, to get a master's degree, and I'm excited to also be a part of SUBAN, which is not only an amazing, rewarding experience, but an opportunity to continue to lead 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?
Oh, absolutely.

Let me dig into the memory bank.

It's still part of my daily life (laughs) to this day.

So after graduating Suffolk,

first I'll just digress a little bit

about the preparation, training that Suffolk afforded me
during the time I was here.

I joined Suffolk, never had been part of any organization
in terms of activities, sports, or anything.

Joined Suffolk and immediately was immersed
in a wonderful community of mentors and of individuals
who kind of took me under their wing,
and really just showed me what leadership looked like.

Got involved in the Black Student Union,
Student Government Association as treasurer.

Was part of Beta Alpha Psi
being an accounting geek that I am.

So, had a lot of opportunity to be in a diverse group
of situations and different experiences.

So, fast forward to graduating, I was fortunate enough
to secure an opportunity at the time in one of the,
I guess today it's called the big four,
working for Deloitte out of Suffolk.

So talking about being a fish out of water,
joining a large global CPA firm with scale,
the highest clientele on Earth.

And me coming from Roxbury, Mass, (laughs)
walking into this big office.

So to me that's the Suffolk story it felt like,
so I felt prepared.

But as far as challenges, I was the odd person out.
I didn't fit in.

Obviously being of nine Black people at a firm
of thousands and plus, that was a little shocking as well.

But just coming into that experience,
you always felt inadequate.
You always felt under-prepared or not fitting in.
And it was definitely challenging.

I think what allowed me to kind of persevere
through that experience was just me,
focus on the technical aspect of my craft
and accounting and finance.

You know, I can just think of many examples
where not only am I working for this prestigious firm,
but also, this prestigious firm has prestigious clients.
So not only am I trying to get acclimated
with working at the firm,
I'm shipped out to audit and work on various clients
all throughout the New England area,
from high end investment firms to Fidelity
to Mass financial services, you name it.
So here I am walking into not only my organization
but also the organizations of clients.
So I think I can candidly remember being the new person,
approaching one of the executives at one of the firm, and they immediately brush you off because they don't think you know anything. But in hindsight, you know, it was kind of a good experience 'cause it motivated me to wanna prove them wrong. (laughs) And part of that experience allowed me to fight through, I guess one of the challenging experiences, which I noticed some technical issues with some of the accounting and some of the things that they were doing at the firm. I tried to raise it up, nobody was listening to me, kind of got brushed off.

So I put in the time, I put in the work, I went home, stayed up late, researched the issue, presented my case, and it was well received by my manager as well as the client in the long run. So, you know, I would just, my advice to students and individuals, well just keep persevering. Stay focused on what it is, your strengths are, and continue to fight through.

So that challenge definitely allowed me to really learn a lot about myself. It helped me build a certain level of confidence. It didn't allow me to want to continue to struggle, if you will, or feel like odd man out, because that kind of showcased with my technical ability, and that put me, I felt on a level playing field with everyone on my team, as well as everyone at the client I was working with.

Thank you. All right. Thank you Anthony for sharing.

For our second question, oftentimes we are in school, starting out in our careers we are either unclear of what we want to do, or if we do have certain career aspirations, we are unsure of how to get there. Can you share an experience that has helped you shape your career trajectory? This question is for Sam.

Yeah, so when I first started out at Suffolk Law, I was convinced I wanted to be a prosecutor or a defense attorney or something along those lines. That's kind of what I always thought I was going to be, because I fell in love with "Law and Order" or any of those other, you know, TV shows that you see. But it wasn't really until I took some of the immigration law classes, I participated in the immigration clinic at the university, where we were able to make an impactful change in someone's life, in two people's lives. During the immigration clinic, we were able to help apply for asylum and get the asylum granted for a gay couple from Brazil, who feared that if they were to return to Brazil,
that they would be persecuted for their sexual preferences.
That, you know, being able to help them through such a hard time in their lives and being able to really help guide them through a very complex and, you know, a process that if you're not doing it, you don't really know what's going on. That was really eye-opening for me, and being able to help them with that was something that really led me towards what I'm doing today. Although it's not entirely similar.
I think it's the constant affirmations that we get from our clients. You know, just a few weeks ago I had a client, a family of five where they've been waiting for their green cards for, you know, since 2008. And it was something where being able to help them through that process, you know, guiding them through all their questions that they have, and being able to get that phone call at the end of the day, you know, 15 years later, that they all received their green cards. There's no better feeling than that in my opinion. You know, just being able to help somebody through something that if they didn't have that help, things could have gone very wrong.
And I think those constant reaffirmations from our clients, whether it's in the clinic or whether it's at work, that you're actually making a difference in someone's life. And that's something where that's certainly helped shape my career and where I am and where I'm going, in terms of knowing that this is a system that needs a lot of work done, and being able to help guide all those non-immigrants become legal, permanent residents in the US is something that I find incredibly fulfilling and something that, you know, I was really unclear, but taking the classes and taking the time to actually speak with these people and speak with the people that are actually going through it is something that has helped me, really, has helped guide me to where I am today.
To kind of continue on that, well, to switch it up a little bit, I should say. I think, you know, to kind of get into our next question, I think most people would agree that a leader is a person who is capable of making decisions, and someone who is a role model for others. Who communicates well, has vision, leads by example, has humility, and able to deal with conflict and complex issues.
Neil, you have a very unique experience and perspective because you are a police officer, 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
to be an effective leader in your role,
15:29 and what advice do you have for Black professionals
to develop leadership skills?
15:36 Wow. All right.
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.
And I have a road sergeant, Sergeant Mannon, great guy. And he's the example of, again, leadership. I had to put out a bolo, be on the lookout, for an incident that occurred. And I did it wrong. I screwed up. Some other supervisors will say something over the radio to kind of embarrass you. Some guys will see you at the station and kind of yell at you or get frustrated. The sergeant just asked me to come meet him, on a cell phone, off the radio, to meet him at his cruiser. And I sat on his cruiser, and we had a chat. And I learned right then and there why he was a sergeant, why he was a great leader. He basically gave me confidence in my job. He gave me confidence in who I was to do my job better. So now when I was responding to calls, I knew my road sergeant wasn't there to put me down or get me in trouble. He was there to motivate me. And whenever I ran into some sort of issue or difficulty to make a final decision, he'd always gimme that nudge or an extra nugget to make me make that final decision. So to answer your question, when it comes to like, getting the skills about leadership, my recommendation, as you're going through your career, look back on all the supervisors that motivate you without even having to say anything. And at the same time, look at the supervisors who didn't motivate you, the ones you didn't like, and the reason why. Thank you.

(audience clapping)

Thank you for sharing, Neil. We appreciate you and your service. For a following question. I am a student here at Suffolk, and I am often advised of the importance of networking and mentorship, but more importantly, the importance of social capital. Please provide an example of the role mentors have played in supporting your professional growth. And in a few sentences, please provide any advice you would like to offer about importance of networking, mentorship, social capital, and the interplay between the three. And this question is for Tony and Anthony Ross. Yeah, I think, mentorship is so interesting because it's so compounded. I think networking, I have originally a sales background. So between how much I care about people, and I think I'm kind of like the X-Men character that touches you and then tries to just take what you have
in your brain trust and your content expertise
and then just like, walk away with it, right?
So I feed off of people, and I purposely put myself
in situations to be able to learn from people,
and then I also purposely put myself in situations
to be of service of people.
And I think that's, you know,
very important is to be intentional, right?
So every day, and this is like, not a hyperbole,
is I try to figure out how I can meet three new people
and help three new people every day, right?
And that comes from,
it could be like affirmation through a text.
It could be a call, it could be reaching out
and hiring somebody that, you know,
I'm just gonna roll the dice on that I think is,
you know, solid and a good person,
but it came from somebody else
and it means something to you.
And I think one thing that I noticed is,
especially with people of color
who are in leadership positions, is there are so many things
riding on the decisions that we make,
so we have less margin for error,
and then oftentimes can't be as risky, right?
So I try to just move around with, you know,
my high school basketball coach used to say,
organized chaos, right?
So I just call folks, I've made,
I've read 10 articles today, I've made, you know,
more than 10 phone calls today.
I've reached out to my mentors.
I've sent people texts today that they have left me on read.
Not because they didn't get back to me,
it's because folks are busy.
But the folks that I mentor and the folks that mentor me,
I just make sure that I'm intentional about reaching out
and listening and learning and being of service,
and trying to understand how I can create
a value proposition of not only just touching you
and taking out, which is kind of my, like strategy,
but also pouring back in and providing, you know,
service and leadership where I can.
That's excellent. Thanks, Anthony and Anthony show.
I mean, I can't speak enough about mentorship.
One of the things I've learned early on
is that there's a difference between mentor and sponsorship.
So as you go through, at least in corporate America,
it's just true for any job
and any environment that you're in.
There's the mentor where you're talking about day-to-day,
seeking out a sponsor within your organization, maybe internal, external.

So for me, I was fortunate enough to have someone who was, who played both roles and kinda one of the examples that, you know, was really critical in my career development. I was working in New York, working at Goldman Sachs, and I had this interest to continue to further pursue my education and receive an MBA, or I could continue to work at this great firm and kind of move forward.

So my mentor who worked for the firm in a senior position said to me, mentor, sponsor, you know, whichever it was, both, said to me, which I thought was strange at the time, is like, "You're operating at your A game here at work. Why don't you dial down your A game to your B or C game, and focus on your exit option of going to grad school?"

And focus on your studies, GMS, I was just surprised to hear that from somebody working at a company, I was young, I thought everyone was gung-ho and you had to be, rah rah, the company.

He said, "No, you can dial it down a notch and then focus some of your time on some of these other things to help you more long-term in your goals."

So to me that really sparked the fire in me and studied and kind of moved and was able to go back to grad school full-time and moved on from there.

So to me, when I think about mentor and sponsorship and try to navigate and strategize, I think it's critical to kind of seek out those people. The challenge has always been for folks of color, we don't know where to start, right? Or what do we do? 'Cause when you go to organizations, you think you need to connect with somebody that looks like you or operates like you or sounds like you, but that's not necessarily always available to you, and you have to think more broadly in terms of who's in your court and build what I call is a board of directors. Most companies have a board of directors, they have individuals on that board with different skill sets.

So I always encourage people to build their personal board of directors. You know, someone who's good at, you know, math and someone who's good at HR and strategy and other things. And really surround yourself with a team of people that can support you at the different phases as you evolve your career.
And I think that has worked well for me and has helped me to build some pretty great relationships, long-term relationships, which, whatever situation you may face at that point in your life, it's good to have that sounding board, and those individuals with the different skillsets that you can draw upon. 'Cause my best friend, he knows one thing, but he's horrible at interpersonal skills. So I couldn't talk to him about, you know, any kind of issues and strategy. He'll just say, "Just walk out and leave." So you gotta just be conscious of who you keep around you, the team you're building and that support network of individuals, and make sure you understand what their strengths are as well to help you build your strengths and pull from, because there's no one person. So I like the team approach. So I'll end it at that.

The importance of networking is something that certainly can't be underlooked. It is 2023 now, and we're still dealing with systemic racism and DEI issues all across the workplace. We have seen many organizations publicly admit that there's still plenty of work to do to dismantle the barriers of racism. Tony, you have been recently identified as a Black leader in Boston. You were recently appointed as chair, as co-chair of Governor Healey's Advisory Council on Black Empowerment. Congratulations.

Can you provide one or two critical things that organizations must do in order to cultivate a culture that empowers its members who are Black and people of color, whether employees, students, or otherwise? Yeah, I think, there's a saying which says, "What's not measured isn't managed." And I think right now, so I had a competitive advantage of having in, you know, 2017, 18 and 19, I was special advisor at Governor Baker's office. And my role, I led the Office of Access and Opportunities, which was diversity, equity, and inclusion for the entire Commonwealth, right? Like, I was drinking out of a fire hose for three and a half years, and just so much around government that I didn't know existed. And then 2020 happened, which was like, you know, just lightning in the bottle related.
to the resurgence of a social justice movement as well as,
you know, many marginalized communities
being disproportionately affected by COVID.
And, you know, you kind of see the emergence
of the diversity, equity and inclusion, the DEI director,
and so many positions and different firms
making financial commitments and, you know, institutions,
higher ed, healthcare all throughout the spectrum
of just double down and making commitments, right?
And, you know, just in my current role
and in my previous role around just managing
some of those strategies, I think that the first thing
is to identify data and key indicators
which show baseline in success.
So that's obviously the first thing
that I tether the work to.
And then number two is to figure out how far it is
from the DEI initiative that lead to the key indicators
that grow revenue for that company or that agency
or that educational institution or so on and so forth.
Because no matter what, right?
I think if you can tether it to the bottom line
and the opportunity to create growth,
it will just be advantageous, and it'll just be baked in.
So I always say kind of just, you know,
DE&I is not like a good side dish, right?
It's the seasoning that you use to cook all of the food.
So it should be baked in and ingrained
into everything that's on your plate, right?
So I think, you know, a lot of times
just on the workforce side of things, right,
like, you know, it's kind of easy to quantify, right?
Like, you know, a lot of companies and institutions
are struggling with, you know, supplier diversity,
around procurement, you know, goods and services,
construction, property management,
you know, as well as real estate and assets,
and so many other services.
So if you can tether, you know,
quality opportunities related to growth,
and kind of just weave in, you know,
just strong positions of diverse talent within that,
then it all grows together.
But I think if you try to create DE&I
as being a good side dish,
you're just never gonna get everybody to agree
on what type of sides you like, right?
So I think that's one of the things to consider.
This was great.
Thanks so much to the panelists
for enlightening us this evening.
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.
Hey, who's Irish? Move them aside.
Hey, who's Italian? Move them aside.
And it trickles down.
I'm none of them. Neither was Skaggs.
But it wasn't direct, it was just like, just natural.
Just a normal conversation.
And so you feel that elimination process going on,
which is a lot of stress,
already you know that you're behind the eight ball
because you're going into a profession
and there are not many who walk and talk like you.
And so when we did, myself and Skaggs,
saw officers that looked like us, staff instructors,
they weren't that supportive.
And I remember that.
And I always said I would never do that.
And they made every effort to make myself
and Skaggs out that door.
Skaggs was the first one to go after like six weeks.
Week eight, I was out the door.
We withdrew.
'Cause we didn't find that support everybody else had.
I'll use this for example.
When I was going in,
I was accompanied by another officer who was Dominican.
And one of the staff instructors, she was Hispanic.
We were standing next to each other.
And part of the whole process, they line you up,
look at your uniform, make sure everything's squared away.
If something's missing, they make you write this to from.
Officer stand next to me.
I can hear her whisper to 'em.
"You need to fix this, you need to fix that.
Okay, you're good."
I was like, all right, cool.
You know, she fixed 'em up. whatever.
She came up to me.
I wrote two to-froms.
And I had nothing different than what he had next to me.
So all that pressure built, and withdrew.
My biggest regret when I withdrew was withdrawing.
It ate at me for a very long time,
and I said I would never do that again.
If I get another opportunity,
I'm gonna eat this up.
Pound and ground.
So I got a second chance.
Years later, so almost six, eight years later.
Salem police came around.
Hey congratulations, we're sending to an academy.
I'm like, oh God, please don't send me back to Lowell.
(audience laughing)
No, we're sending you to Methuen.
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.
39:07 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.
The second part, I know that was kind of weird,
but I just wanted to make my point.

The second one was for the school?

<v Sam>The single most important thing</v you gained out of your experience at Suffolk
that has helped shape who you are today.

<v ->I was recommended by Suffolk University,</v by my cousin who told me that there was a large population
of Haitians at Suffolk University.

That motivated me to come to Suffolk.

When I came to Suffolk,
and I found out Professor Bellinger in Black studies,
that's when I really wanted to be in Suffolk.

And so thanks to the Black Studies program,
it gave me the confidence of the person that I am.

And it also made me realize who I am
in the community and the society.

And that has not stopped, even though I put on the badge.

That has not changed.

Quickly, though, I just, real quick.

I am right now dealing with a person
who is a Black male who has mental health issues,
who I am trying to keep out of the criminal justice system,
it's really, really difficult.

So all the stuff that I've learned from my past,
my experience watching those gentlemen
who are African-American who didn't help me
and Skaggs in the academy.

And also from what I learned from Black studies,
I didn't forget, and I continue to help out brothers
who were out there who were in the system.

Thank you.

<v ->Tony, if you could share your absolute</v best piece of advice to the audience as well as-
Yeah. I think consistency is key, right?

Like I just find myself, when all things fail,
I know that I will be the most prepared, right?

Like I'll take care of the little things,
I'll make sure that I look the part,
I'll make sure that I'm on time,
and then I make sure that I'm intentional
about building and growing relationships,
because whether there's a value proposition
of anything that's in return of me, it means a lot to me
to meet people and be helpful and supportive to people.

So that's kind of, you know, my thing.
So, generally just with attrition,
the more people you meet and the more authentic you are,
you know, relationships will take you way farther
than money can ever take you.

So I think that that's one thing.
And then also around my Suffolk experience, I think, you know, we're all family and this is, you know, almost eight o'clock on a Friday. My Suffolk experience was very interesting coming in. I went to, I mean I'm originally from Boston, born and raised. I grew up going to, I was blessed to go to affluent schools that were, you know, majority white. For undergrad I went to HBCU, which, you know, was, just an amazing experience to be around everybody who was Black and just really understanding that if there, I remember our first day of school in the first class the teacher wrote on the whiteboard that if you suck, it's not because you're Black. And it was kind of like a joke, but it was kind of serious as well, right? There's no boogeyman here, there's no like, structural racism here. There isn't somebody who is treating you different based off of the color of your skin, it is you. It is nothing else. (audience laughing) So with that, so I went to Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. And I think, you know, so by the time, I originally kind of joked that it took me 10 years to get my master's degree 'cause I originally started, and I had the opportunity to become an executive director, like, you know, second semester, and I just couldn't do both. So I had like two stints being an executive director, and then I kind of just stumbled into an amazing opportunity in a senior level role with the Baker administration, which was, you know, an opportunity of a lifetime. And I knew that just the proximity of me walking past Suffolk every day, I was like, yo, there's just no way I can't finish, right? So I only, at that moment when I used to walk past here, when I used to go get lunch, I only wanted the piece of paper. I didn't really care about anything other than that, right? I wasn't really looking for like, a Black experience. I wasn't really looking for a cohort of Black students and professionals. I just really wasn't looking for any of that. And I pleasantly found all of that, right? Just a supportive network and coalition of folks that are like-minded like myself and also look like me. You know, different leaders who are just wide-ranging from a vast background of professions. And then also Suffolk, the last thing I'll say is, you know, when I used to come to class, you know, it was in person right before, you know, kind of things kind of got crazy. And when I was in my role, just,
it was so interesting because I had a special advisor role, so at the time, you know, you're just dealing with big, large opportunities related to change, right? So then I would come to class and I would be like, "Yo, this is like, what is going on?" So after I kind of, it took maybe like a semester or two to just really buy in. And I think, you know, from the moment that I bought in, just being able to provide measures around the process flow in order to, you know, do things most efficiently, right? Like mitigate risk, right? Do them more timely, that whole process, I was able to start taking some of that thinking from a class on Thursday and actually implement it into real time, into real big decisions on a Monday. And I think that was so helpful, And then I started to see things, I started to see the room responding in a different way, from things that I was able to pick up from class the week before. So then I started to buy in, and you know, it was just, you know, just very successful in my development as well, so I'm just forever grateful of that. (audience clapping) And Anthony Ross?

Sure.

No, we're running out time, so I will just say, the key theme I would recommend to students, just perseverance is a word that comes to mind as I reflect back on my Suffolk experience. I did a lot (laughs) while I was here. And when I thought about, why did I end up doing so many things? I realized that nobody handed anything to me when I came to Suffolk, it was, you make your choice in what experience you want to have when you're at this university. I was a commuter student. I worked at Pizza Hut. And that was my life. You know, getting introduced to, being asked to do leadership opportunities or volunteering, I was really pulled in. So, you know, I'm thankful for all those individuals that went to school with that were around me, that were encouraging in the community here, and the support really afforded me the opportunity to give something a try, fail at it and keep pushing to keep trying it again. So I think Suffolk was a really good training ground because like many students, you worked full-time, you went to school full-time, but then you also were part of a community that really cared about the success of each other. So being part of that community really was the catalyst 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?
Where are the Black male faculty? And we've been working hard, right, the SUBAN leadership committee members to find mentors for students who've been asking for Black male, Black male alumni and leaders in the community. And so that's what this panel was all about.

So... (audience clapping)

You gonna say it? Just give me one second.

So let me just mention that what I heard the panelists talk about, and I know I do this every time I speak, and it's not that much time, but I'm gonna do it anyways.

Never know where a relationship or experience can take you, right? We heard that mentor versus sponsor, don't be afraid to fail. running away from climbing up that mountain, but you have to do it. You have to be uncomfortable to stretch and grow. And that's why I'm on this stage here tonight, so I can be a better speaker. Put yourself around, Tony said very eloquently. Put yourself around people and in spaces where you can learn.

And Neil talked about his experience in the police academy where not many looked like him. And, you know, he decided he was gonna just stick with it, and of course he's where he is today. And we thank you Neil for your service. We know it's very difficult, so don't give up. Neil talked about the Black Studies program, right Jenny?

Hi, Dean Sparks. We've been conversing about that. We need to keep that going.

Value proposition. What are you bringing to the table? I'm trying to build SUBAN's value proposition, that's what one of my main goals are. One of my main goals is. And relationships, they're very important. We should always be connecting and following up, and I think Tony said something about, if someone's not responding, that doesn't mean they don't wanna talk to you, right? You just have to try again.

We know Tony talked a lot about measurement and metrics, so we know where he's measuring us to see what we're doing and how well we're doing it, and your experience is what you make it. And I will pick back up on that in a little bit. So I wanna thank everyone again.

I now wanna take the opportunity to recognize members...
of the Suffolk community here tonight, we have President Marisa Kelly and her spouse, Margie Arnold. We have Provost Julie Sandell. Is Julie in the front? Hi Julie, I haven't met you yet, but we'll talk soon. The dean of College and Arts and Sciences, Edie Sparks. The dean of the law school, Andrew Perlman. Vice chair of Suffolk University Board of Trustees, Judge Amy Nechtem, always looking so fabulous. Trustee Ernst Guerrier, my brother from another mother. Bevilton Morris, Nancy Stack and Hind Habbach, I didn't see Hind, where is she? Hind in the house. President of the Suffolk University, excuse me, student government, Angela El-Jazzar is here somewhere, I hope. If not, she's... Oh, there's Angela. Angela is very helpful to me in getting in touch with these students that they be trying not to respond. But Angela, she gets them on speed dial. So I wanna say that this evening would not be possible, I'm sorry if this microphone is... This evening would not be possible without the great work of the Celebration of Black Excellence Planning Committee made up of alumni, students, faculty and staff from the three Suffolk schools. We have met over the past several months, and we've worked closely with the Office of Advancement to ensure a fantastic evening tonight. Will the members of the Black Excellence Planning Committee as well as Caitlin, the Office of Advancement, Caitlin, Annamaria, Alex, stand up and be recognized. (audience clapping) Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate all of you. So the Black Excellence Celebration is actually one of SUBAN's largest sponsored events. As chair, I'd like to provide a quick background about SUBAN. For those of you who don't know, it was started in 2018 by Trustee Ernst Guerrier, Jenny Joseph Hale, and Joyce Miller, and several others. They're all in the room tonight, so thank you to them, for this great organization. SUBAN's mission is to celebrate and serve current and future Black alumni through mentoring, philanthropy, volunteerism, and events. We support the recruitment, retention, academic achievement, and successful graduation of Black students. SUBAN also supports the career development and professional opportunity. Opportunity with Black students and alumni.
All Suffolk graduates are invited to join SUBAN.
If you have any interest in getting involved with SUBAN, please make sure to sign our sign in sheet. I hope we have that tonight. Or find me or find one of the SUBAN leaders. We're happy to have you. Please join us and become a member on LinkedIn.
That's another way to join. We're also currently looking for a Black alumni to mentor for SUBAN mentoring program. You can actually see Yolanda Burrell, who's heading up that initiative. We have a great program underway.
So I also wanna recognize the members of the SUBAN Leadership Committee who serve as ambassadors of the university and work closely with the Office of Advancement.
If you can stand up so we can recognize the SUBAN Leadership Committee members.
(audience clapping and cheering)
Thank you all. I appreciate you.
So, and speaking of SUBAN, I do wanna say thank you. I wanna talk about the scholarship and give a big thank you to those who have contributed to our scholarship. And for those who have not, it is not too late. All you need is the link. Takes two minutes. And we hope you're in a giving spirit tonight and make a donation this evening.
We have a fundraiser happening, you can buy t-shirts. Some of the proceeds will go to our scholarship fund, so that's another way to donate.
And now without further ado, I am going to introduce with tremendous pleasure, the Suffolk University's 11th president, Dr. Marisa Kelly. President Kelly is deeply committed to Suffolk, and she brings to the presidency a strong leadership and clear vision for the university's future.
Please join me in welcoming President Kelly.
(audience clapping)
Thank you, Tamela.
And wow, the lights really are bright up here. You're right, Tamela.
It is really wonderful to be here with you tonight. Such an exciting evening. This really is about celebrating Black excellence.
Celebrating Black excellence, celebrating inclusion, celebrating the opportunity to hear from our distinguished panelists and to learn from them and to reflect on their, on their wisdom.
A wonderful opportunity to come together as a community, to celebrate all of those things. And so I'm really excited to be here. And because this night is absolutely not about me, 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
Celebration of Black Excellence Transcript.txt[9/28/23, 10:27:26 AM]

1:02:21 six or seven years, I think just predates
1:02:24 the Celebration of Black Excellence event by a year or two.
1:02:28 But student performing group here that have really taken
1:02:33 the campus by storm in the last six years
1:02:35 and do a fabulous job all the time.
1:02:38 Very proud to ask you all to help me
1:02:41 welcome Soulfully Versed to the stage.
1:02:44 (audience clapping)
1:03:11 (choir singing a capella)

♫ I bust the windows out your car ♫
♫ And no it didn't mend my broken heart ♫
♫ I'll probably always have these ugly scars ♫
♫ But right now I don't care about that part ♫
♫ I bust the windows out your car ♫
♫ After I saw you layin' next to her ♫
♫ I didn't wanna but I took my turn ♫
♫ I'm glad I did it 'cause you had to learn ♫
♫ To think of how you'd feel when you saw it ♫
♫ I didn't know that I had that much strength ♫
♫ But I'm glad you'll see what happens when ♫
♫ You see you can't just play with people's feelings ♫
♫ Tell them you love them and don't mean it ♫
♫ You'll probably say that it was juvenile ♫
♫ But I think that I deserve to smile ♫
♫ I bust the windows out your car ♫
♫ You know I did it 'cause you had to learn ♫
♫ Wrote my initials with a crowbar ♫
♫ And then I drove off into the dark ♫
♫ You should feel lucky that that's all I did ♫
♫ After five whole years of this bull ♫
♫ Gave you all of me and you played with it, oh ♫
♫ I must admit it helped a little bit ♫
♫ I didn't know I had that much strength ♫
♫ But I'm glad you'll see what happens when ♫
♫ You see you can't just play with people's feelings ♫
♫ Tell them you love them and don't mean it ♫
♫ You'll probably say that it was juvenile ♫
♫ But I think that I deserve to smile ♫
♫ I bust the windows out your car ♫
♫ You could never feel how I felt that day ♫
♫ Until that happens, baby, you don't know pain ♫
♫ Ooh, yeah, I did it, you should know it ♫
♫ Ain't sorry, no, no ♫
♫ You broke my heart, so I broke your car ♫
♫ You caused me pain, so I did the same ♫
♫ Even though what you did to me was much worse ♫

Celebration of Black Excellence Transcript.txt[9/28/23, 10:27:26 AM]
01:06:34 ♪ I had to something to make you hurt, yeah ♪
01:06:38 ♪ Oh, but why am I still crying ♪
01:06:42 ♪ Why am I the one who's still crying ♪
01:06:46 ♪ Oh, you really hurt me, baby ♪
01:06:51 ♪ You really, you really hurt me, babe ♪
01:06:56 ♪ I bust the windows out your car ♪
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 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.
Good evening. My name is Yolanda Burrell. I received my MBA from Suffolk in 2018. I'm a member of the SUBAN Leadership Committee and the SBS Alumni Association Board. It is my pleasure to present Ahria Ilyas with the Black Excellent Outstanding Student Award for 2023. Ahria is a senior at Suffolk who will graduate from the College of Arts and Science in May. She is a very engaged student whose leadership skills and sense of purpose is exemplary. She holds the position of diversity peer educator, scholar, at the Center of Diversity and Inclusion where she demonstrates her commitment to social justice every day, working with students to educate them, advocate for them, and help them grow and develop their leadership skills. Ahria also serves as the vice president of Suffolk's Black Student Union. She is an orientation leader. She is on the retention committee. And she's always stepping up to assist with a variety of initiatives and special projects. She serves as a motivational leader for her fellow students, amplifying the voice of Black students across the campus, instructing them by example. While involved in so many activities at Suffolk, she also manages to take time to develop and volunteer in the community, currently working as a City of Boston community organizer and youth works coordinator, where she has worked alongside Mayor Wu. Ahria also serves for several years on the Boston Student Advisory Council as a youth organizer and alumni staff coordinator. A dean's list student in the honors program, Ahria has unlimited choices for the next steps in her education and career path when she graduates. We look forward to hearing about her decision. She is extremely talented, determined to make positive difference in the world around her, and always mindful of the need to fight systemic and racial injustice. She is described by her recommenders as a great friend, compassionate, caring, hardworking and selfless as an excellent role model for her peers. In recognition of many positive contributions to Suffolk community as a student, embodying the qualities of Black excellence, and in anticipation of her continued impact on Suffolk, we are honored to present Ahria Ilyas as a distinguished alum committed to the justice, equity and diversity and inclusion.
Celebration of Black Excellence Youth Award

To Ahria Ilyas.

(audience cheering)

(laughs)

<It is bright up here. Hello everyone. (laughs)<

Wow. Okay. I'm a little nervous.

All righty.

Thank you so much to everyone that was involved in planning this event, and also even nominating me in the first place is an honor so I'm very humbled to be up here today.

When receiving this award, I wanna initially acknowledge that this is a recognition that this is not a reflection of solely me as an individual, but rather a collection of people, experiences, perspectives and opportunities that have contributed to me being up here today.

And that starts with my parents.

Although I'm sure it's a difficult conversation, yes.

(audience clapping)

I'm not getting emotional here.

Although it's a difficult conversation to explain why the color of your skin as a young Black girl,

you both have balanced the reality with the celebration of my culture, identity and skin.

My mother always calling me a beautiful combination of both of my parents is one amazing example of that.

You both ensure that regardless of certain people with bias attempting to limit my opportunities and potential,

you both made sacrifices in order to guarantee my success, all while loving me entirely.

I'm forever grateful for that and will continue to be grateful.

And one example of that starts with Kumon,

even though I never wanted to do the homework,

you've all kept me in it, so thanks.

(Ahria and audience laughing)

I also wanna thank the entirety of the Suffolk community, but more specifically the Black Student Union and the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, my OGs.

I entered Suffolk with the idea that I needed to keep my community organizing in Boston

my community organizing in Boston

and my academic environment completely separate.

However, without the relationships that I've built here and the individuals that have allowed for me to feel a sense of belonging on campus,

I had the ability to learn so much from everyone,

and will continue to do so when I graduate in May.

Lastly, I do wanna acknowledge that the work I will participate in moving forward will not stop at graduation.
I will always make sure that the work that I do around social justice is intersectional, acknowledging both my privileges and also my disadvantages when being the best advocate that I can possibly be, and that includes acknowledging the people before me, including the LGBTQ+ leaders that stood with bravery and strength within the past and currently. BIPOC communities that have sacrificed so much for me to even stand up here today and be in an educational environment like this. Emotional, social and mental folk, individuals with mental health issues, intergenerational age ranges, regardless of immigration status, and overall, any individual that has experienced marginalization. These communities of people presently and historically have made it so that I can be up here in this space today. And there are people in this space that also identify that way, and you all I will cherish forever. I also wanna say one last thing. My Blackness is not a metaphor to solely violence. It's not an opportunity for tokenism, nor is my Blackness conditional for benefits. It is a symbol for education, liberation, quality representation, and a completely valid experience, and I hope the work I do reflects that sentiment within everything I do. Thank you.

My name is Arantxa Melendez. I am a junior here at Suffolk, the president of the Caribbean Student Network, and a member of the Celebration of the Black Excellence Committee. I am pleased to present the Black Excellence Outstanding Alumni Award to Dr. Jeffrey Lopes, a remarkable Suffolk graduate who is making a positive difference in his community and mine every day. Jeffrey Lopes is a first generation Suffolk student who earned his bachelor's degree in 2012 and his master's in public administration in 2014. His brother Adelson is also a double Ram. Jeffrey Lopez was very involved in his Suffolk community, and the Cape Verdean Student Association, the Black Student Union, and served as a diversity peer educator and diversity chair of SGA. In 2020 here in his doctorate degree in law and policy from Northeastern, and now serves on the faculties of UMass Boston and Emmanuel College. Wow, I'm getting nervy, guys.
Celebration of Black Excellence Transcript.txt[9/28/23, 10:27:26 AM]

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 Verdenian 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,
Suffolk really made me feel special.

And that black excellence was really celebrated as us really uniting together and coming together. So when we talk about the work that we did as diversity peer educators, as student government, and really champion diversity, I was the diversity chair on student government, and it was one of the best things I did, because I was able to elevate a lot of issues that a lot of people didn't wanna talk about.

You know, the greatest social justice issue on the planet is creating more equitable portals of accessibility. That is rooted in education. Education allows people to find pathways of social and emotional wellness while achieving and learning new pathways to true excellence.

I am here receiving this award because I found that pathway, and I found the on-ramps to those pathways and the exit ramps that have allowed me to take those skills and skill sets to directly impact the Boston community, especially the young people in Boston.

There were bumps and turns and detours along the way, which only helped me further my passion to continue to excel forward and to help others. I learned many valuable assets from great thought partners and community change agents, but none more important than the grounding frameworks to pay it forward to others in our communities.

Who if they had the same access, could excel the same way. I'm a person who has devoted my life not to self-service that is too often apparent in this world of social media and talking about ourselves, but to the public service I give to others by counting the blessings that I have had through my education here at Suffolk.

Suffolk gave me the grounding, the space, the opportunity, the wraparound services, the trauma supports, and the love that I needed to become who I am today.

The person I am today is someone that understands those lessons, embraces the lessons, and understands that by reflection and growth I can empower others to be able to embrace them as well. Giving is never enough. You have to continue to show up. And I try to show up every single day in every single community that I serve in or work in.

I have found that portals of equity have to be consistent, intentional, and sustainable. And every single day I'm trying to find a way to be a good thought partner in those spaces. I just wanna close by thanking Suffolk for a remarkable experience.

Two awards in a year, just got one last year. 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 Suriel 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
and greatly improving the Suffolk Board's outdated bylaws.
He also played a major role in advocating for Suffolk athletics and securing the current long-term lease for the Suffolk Rams at the East Boston Fields.
Trustee Russell remains active at the university, and Suffolk Law is proud to count him as an alumnus. In recognition of his many outstanding accomplishments, and an anticipation of his continued success and positive impact at Suffolk, locally and nationally, we are honored to present the Suffolk University Law School Black Excellence Outstanding Alumni Award to E. Macey Russell.

All right, I'll put this over here.

So, of course I was given time limits, so you know how I am with that, but, I will make my remarks some somewhat brief. Wanna I begin by thanking Bob Ward for coming out. Bob Ward was a professor at the law school, but he worked in the DA's office in Suffolk when I came to Suffolk Law School as a 1L. When I came to Suffolk Law School as a 1L.

And he helped me get my first job in the DA's office, so Bob kind of gently put me on my way. I wanna thank the university for this award. I really appreciate it. It means a lot to me. It's sort of an acknowledgement that I managed to overcome obstacles and systemic barriers that are real, and can impact both your physical and emotional wellbeing. You know, we all talk about doing things, but we never talk about the impact it takes to be successful. As a person of African descent, I face barriers that my white colleagues never had to encounter. That's a reality of being Black in America. I understood that, but never gave into that notion that I was never good enough. So when I was thinking about my remarks, I'm like, well, I would've had a set of remarks before George Floyd, and then a set of remarks after George Floyd.

So this is my after George Floyd remarks. I wanna begin, my relationship with Suffolk University began over 40 years ago when I was a college student. In those days, if you apply to a school, the law schools used to go down to your college, and they would interview you while you were there. And I was interviewed, and I was luckily accepted from law school, and I didn't really understand Suffolk's commitment to people from underrepresented groups until much later. It was even after I graduated from law school.

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.
Black excellence is always accompanied by and seen in the context of overcoming adversity and learning to get around systemic barriers of injustice. I see Black excellence in the resiliency of my family history. This resiliency has been passed down from one generation to the next, from my great-great grandparents to me. Many of you, and I think some of the panelists talked about it today, you will be faced with some form of bias or discrimination at some point during your life, perhaps several times. You should know this, that others who came before you had faced the same type of bias and discrimination, and they managed to overcome it and be successful. The barriers are not insurmountable. I am proud to accept this award with my descendants in mind. Thank you.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients tonight. We have one more award recipient. At this time I'd like to invite my fellow SUBAN Leadership Committee members to the stage for this one. If you don't mind. I know you all are all camera ready. Anna. I now have the pleasure of presenting the Black Excellence Outstanding Faculty Staff Award to a dedicated Suffolk graduate who makes a positive impact at Suffolk University every single day. Jenny Joseph-Hayle, MPA '13, serves as associate director of alumni career engagement in the Center for Career Equity, Development and Success. She is an adjunct faculty member, and an employee resource group leader. Jenny is also an active and longstanding member of SUBAN, and has previously served as chair, my predecessor. Her vigilant leadership has guided many of our SUBAN initiatives and has helped us support the university's justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion goals and expand our outreach. She's my advisor as well. Her passion and commitment to creating an environment that fosters inclusion, awareness and belonging for Black students, faculty, staff, alumni, exemplified the mission and purpose...
Celebration of Black Excellence Transcript.txt

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™œ Don't be fooled by the rocks that I got â™œ
01:43:44 â™œ I'm still, I'm still Jenny from the block â™œ
01:43:46 â™œ Used to have a little, now I have a lot â™œ
01:43:48 â™œ No matter where I go, I know where I came from â™œ
01:43:51 â™œ Don't be fooled by the rocks that I got â™œ
01:43:53 â™œ I'm still, I'm still Jenny from the block â™œ
01:43:56 â™œ Used to have a little, now I have a lot â™œ
01:43:58 â™œ No matter where I go I know where I came from â™œ
01:44:01 (hip hop music)
01:44:06 <\v-/>Oh my god, so many people.</v
01:44:09 â™œ I just find myself still loving you â™œ
01:44:12 â™œ After all that we've been through â™œ
01:44:14 â™œ Find myself still loving you â™œ
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.
And that's really the emphasis of, you know, being here tonight. Take advantage, to my students, take advantage of everything that's out there. Really get to know people.

When I came back to teach career development to students as an adjunct, I remembered my experience and how many people and mentors guided me and helped me achieve my professional goals. So the common theme is networking.

Finally, my mom, my mom, who's not here tonight, because she's like, "This is way too many people. COVID is not over." (laughs)

She always said to be the example you want to be, you want others to be. And I hope that I am. I've served that for my students, for the community. Obviously there's more work to be done, but I'm happy that, you know, even my current, in my current role at the Career Center, that I'm given the opportunity to help and bring out more of you to events, to programming.

You know, I appreciate that. I'm very grateful. So, while we know students don't necessarily listen, you know, listen to adults, listen to their professors, including my own 26 year old, doesn't listen to me. We need to remember that all the social capital is right here in this room. All of you are valuable members in our community. Especially to my alumni, whether it's about money, whether it's your time, you're extremely valuable to our community. So come back, share your resources, share them with the community, share them with the students, share them with the community, share them with the students, with the Career Center. And continue to be that person.

We're here to celebrate, you know, I got my glitter on, you know, let's do it, let's party. I appreciate all of you, thank you and have a great evening. (audience clapping)

Thanks, guys!

Don't leave without your award. I'll keep it if you want me to have it. So I will say that, let me back up. Ernst, my brother from another mother, thank you so much. You always, always encourage me. I am doing everything I can to actualize your vision. Jenny's vision, Joyce's vision, and all the pioneers that started SUBAN.

So I appreciate all the... You know, I appreciate all the praise, but obviously I don't do this by myself. And Ernst is still very involved. I meet with him often.
I bother him a lot on texts, he tries to ignore me, but I have his wife on text as well, so...
I wanna say that Jenny, while she's, you know, she was my predecessor as chair, she's still a very close advisor to me. A lot of times, most of the time, I'm on the phone with her and texting her and trying to, she's helping me to crystallize ideas and actually giving me directions, so she's the person behind the scenes, helping to drive this ship.

I wanna say that this was an amazing night, and I wanna say congratulations to all the award recipients again. Thank you President Kelly and the Black Men in Leadership panel again and Soulfully Versed, oh my goodness. How many people busted the windows outta somebody's car when you were younger?

Don't even lie. Raise your hand. Who? Look, everybody's whispering. Well, I didn't know that was the song. (laughs) They sung it well. (laughs)

They did a good job. But thank you and thank you for participating in tonight's program. I definitely wanna thank our sponsors, and I wanna thank Nancy Gavalondo, I don't wanna forget. Nancy has been so instrumental in helping us to secure sponsors and we have a gold sponsor, McClane Middleton, three silver sponsors, Choate, Kirkland and Ellis, National Grid, that's where I work. We have three bronze sponsors, Conn Kavanaugh, professor emeritus Karen Blum, Lando and Anastasi.

And then we have our annual SUBAN scholarship corporate sponsors, the Toll Brothers and Health Peak. And I just wanna say thank you. This is probably the most sponsorship we've had in a long time. We want to continue to fund our scholarship. We're trying to do, you know, the good work, help the students. We need not just your time and your talents, we need your treasure. Students need money. That's just what it is. And I know sometimes it's like, oh, they always asking for money. Yes we are. (audience laughing)
So, please donate.
I do put a lot of time into it. Fundraising is not easy.
It's an experience, and I'm dedicated to it,
and I appreciate everyone who has given.
Jenny mentioned a concept that I think has been
a general theme over the course of the night,
even though there's been, you know, synonyms used
for networking, relationships, you know,
social capital is something that we all have to have
in this world.
And Jenny wants us, wants SUBAN, but everyone in this room
to impress upon each other, but most importantly
the students to understand what social capital is,
so I'm just gonna touch on it really quickly.
It's a byproduct of one's social networks
and interpersonal relationships, right?
So it refers to the benefits and resources one can obtain
through their social networks and interpersonal connections,
information opportunities, resources that flow
through one's social networks are greatly enhanced
as that network becomes larger and more heterogeneous,
as different people occupying different spaces and groups
can offer different information and insights.
So the well-known saying, it is not what you know,
it is who you know, is paradigmatic,
a paradigmatic expression of social capital.
So my message to the students is this,
and I say it all the time, I'm texting folks, you know,
you should have never gave me that, I'm always saying,
come to these events.
You can study, you can get good grades.
Build your academic portfolio, and I think Sharifa said,
er plan was to come here
and just keep her head down and study.
That is not going to get you the opportunities.
It's connection. It's who you know that's going to do that.
So you have to, you have to absolutely build
your social capital and then leverage
those relationships, right?
You wanna meet people.
Do you all even know who's in this room tonight?
You have judges, you have CEOs, you have vice presidents.
I mean, look at our panel.
Like, you need to be at these events.
We wanna help you now.
When you graduate and Tony Richards has said this so well,
we're here to help you now, when you graduate,
you're gonna be trying to come back like,
Tamela, remember me? Right?
And not that I won't help you.
But you have us at your disposal now, so this is the time.
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.