Good afternoon and welcome to Suffolk Spotlight, The International Student Experience.

We are coming to you from the heart of our campus in downtown Boston.

My name is Heather O'Leary and it's my pleasure you, to welcome you to our session today.

I do want mention that this session is being recorded and so for those of you who are joining us we will be able to send you a copy of today's session next week at some point.

I also want to let you know that in your Chatbox you will have the opportunity to ask questions.
of myself as well as our other panelists that are joining me this afternoon.

So, please feel free to add your questions into that box and we will get to them as soon as possible.

But first, let me start by telling you a little bit about myself.

So, I am the Director of Graduate Admission here at Suffolk University.

I have over 15 years of higher education experience.
I've worked in graduate admissions at institutions including Suffolk, Northeastern University and the University of California, Davis.

I also earned my MBA while working full-time and starting my family.

So, I have gone through the same process and asked a lot of the same questions that you might be considering today and I'm really happy to share my experiences with you.

I've had the opportunity over my career to advise hundreds of applicants.
and prospective students and read thousands of applications.

So, please don't hesitate to share your questions about our application process with me and then also, I want to introduce my two co-presenters today: Tracy Fitzgerald, who is our Assistant Director of International Student Services and Alvee Egonu, who is a current student in our Master's of Arts and Communications Program.

So, let's get started with what
today's agenda is going to look like.

First of all, why should you even consider attending graduate school in the United States?

Why is Suffolk University, as well as Boston, ideal locations for international students?

And, how Suffolk University supports our international students.

So, why study in the US?

There’s a lot of reasons.

Some of them are going to sound very familiar to you as you are considering your own process.
and you might have some of your own as well.

But I think some of the key reasons include,

it's really an opportunity to expand your network.

You know, one of the under looked reasons why individuals,

or one of the key benefits individuals have when they pursue graduate education is expanding their personal and their professional network.
A lot of people focus on the career opportunities, the enhancements in income,

but really all of that is predicated on the fact that you are going to be working and studying with individuals from around the globe, who are going to have varying perspectives and are really going to help deepen, not only your understanding of the material as you’re studying, but also deepen those professional connections that give you global access to opportunities around the world.
Suffolk University, for example, has over 80,000 alumni representing 144 different countries.

So, already it's one great way to tap into that network beyond just the students that you're working with in class.

Another reason is that you get to really gain a global perspective.

By studying internationally, not only are you setting yourself up as an individual who's willing to take personal and professional challenges on,
but you are going to be immersing yourself in a new culture and working again with individuals from around the globe who are going to bring those perspectives to the classroom.

Another great benefit of studying in the United States is that you are immersing yourself in an English language culture, which truly is the global language of business today.

So, regardless of the industry or the functional area that you are interested in pursuing, having those English language skills in a setting where you are living
and breathing it beyond just what you may have studied in your home country really is going to help set you apart.

Another great benefit is the world-wide recognition.

Now, it is known throughout the world the United States has some of the world's top educational institutions.

So, studying in the United States allows you to tap into that.
But, you also get your own personal recognition.

Opportunities for you to expand and build on your resume and to really be able to develop your own skills to make you a global traveler but also to tap into that global market, so to give you that global mobility in your own professional career.

Now, why Boston?

I personally, as someone who was born here and spent most of my life here,
think Boston is the best city in the country, if not in the world.

But, you don't just have to take my word for it.

There's a lot of great accolades as to how Boston stands out.

We have been named the eighth best city in the United States by USNews & World Report.

We are America's best city for startups.

So, for you budding entrepreneurs out there this is a great location
for you to launch your endeavors.

The eighth best city in the world for quality of life.

Deutsche Bank has actually named us that as late as 2017. "The Best City in the Northeast," according to Money Magazine, which I certainly agree with.

And then, number 8 in terms of best student city for, or best city for students in the world (Number one in the US).
And that’s by QS Top Universities.

So, again a lot of recognition for why Boston is such a really amazing place to live, to work, to study.

You get a small-town feel within a really metropolitan area.

And then how does Suffolk tie in?

You know, we are in the heart of Boston.

And we really truly are a place where the world comes to learn.
Boston is home to over 25,000 international students.

The city has a really rich history that was built on immigrants coming to this area and developing the city and bringing parts of their own culture to our place.

And currently there are over 100 countries represented at Suffolk University this academic year.

So while we talked, I mentioned earlier that we have
over 80,000 alumni in 144 different countries.

That list is just growing.

Suffolk continues to be a really rich place that is attracting students from all around the globe.

So, in terms of the academic side, why would you want to study at Suffolk University?

Well, we have over 50 graduate programs that really are designed to meet your needs.
Here's just a sampling of some of our programs which include dual-degree opportunities, certificates, as well as our full-degree options.

And the flexibility for students to study in a place that also allows them to tap into the vast networks that Suffolk University has.

We also have amazing faculty who are really committed to the success of our students.

Our low faculty-to-student ratio and the small class sizes mean that you really get
to interact very closely with our faculty.

I'm going to be talking to Alvee in a little bit about some of his experiences in working with faculty as well.

But our faculty, over 90% of them have PhD or terminal degrees, which means they are experts in their fields, which they are bringing into the classroom. But they're also practitioners.
They're not just focused on academics, but they're also working professionals that know what it takes to apply these theories and put them into practice.

Suffolk is also at the intersection of access and opportunity.

It, we are named, our nickname is "The Hub" and there is a great reason for that.

We are the center of so many world-class industries including healthcare, government, finance, art and communication.
You know, the opportunity to tap into these industries which are literally steps or subway stops away from our campus is you know truly a great opportunity.

We're also a recognized degree.

So, I'm not going to go through each of these individually but please note that those outside organizations that recognize the quality of Suffolk University, what we are teaching our students and the
impact our students have on the organizations and the companies they work with.

We have over dozens of accolades related to our success and the quality of our programs and our people.

So, at this point I'm actually going to ask Tracy to talk a little bit about the Division of Student Success.

So, tell us a little bit about the division that you work for
and how you work with international students.

>> Sure. So, at Suffolk we've created this new Division of Student Success.

We're in our fifth year right now.

And the Center for International Programs and Services is housed within the Division of Student Success.

So, our office is the International Student Services Office
and we like to take care of our international students.

We currently have about 1300 on campus right now and we have about 200 more international students who've graduated that are currently working in the United States that we also take care of.

But, the Division of Student Success encompasses a center for what we call nurtured care.

So, we offer key resources for students when it certainly comes to immigration advising,
employment advising which I know is a very typical question from a lot of our international students.

But we also meet the needs of students who want to make sure that they're very successful in their programs.

So, we offer content tutoring.

We offer strategic workshops for people who want to broaden their professional communication skills because one of the things that's
at the heart of the Suffolk's International Student Experience is learning how
to communicate their value to potential employers down the road whether it's
to an American employer or to an employer around the globe.

So, we have this Center for Learning and Academic Success, which offers that tutoring support.

We have the Career and Development Center which is going to be integral
to the student experience as well.

And we also have the Office of Disabilities Services, so if we have any students out there who have a recognized disability or might have something that happens during their Suffolk experience, there is that care available if need be.

And the really nice thing about the division is that we all work together to come up with very collaborate programming.
So, for instance, our office works with the Career Development Center to do programs that meet the needs of students who are applying for internships but may not know exactly how to explain their immigration status to a particular employer. So, we make sure that those students go out into those experiences outside of Suffolk confidently and with a sense of what kind of resources they have on campus.

>> Great.
Yes.

So, Tracy I noticed when I was reviewing some of the opportunities that our international students have to interact with your office, I notice obviously immigration is a big question.

It is.

Can you talk about some of the ways that your office helps support students through that process?
>> Absolutely.

So, we actually start that process pre-arrival.

So, if a student is applying to Suffolk and they have been accepted by your office, then we take over with communicating to that student about how to go about getting their immigration document.

And that typically for most students will be and I-20
which will allow them to apply for an F1 Visa.

Once they've crossed that threshold they will be on the path to getting the F1 Visa.

But, then we also go in with doing some pre-arrival information that we think is going to be very helpful.

So, typically, if we're talking about like a fall admission,

over the summer we're communicating with that student to make sure
that they've understood their immigration
information that they have thus far,

but also to help them understand who
their new community is going to be.

So, we connect them to possibly
other international students, peers,

who are already here in campus, having
that experience if they have questions.

Once we get closer as students arrive,

we actually do a mandatory program called The
Mandatory New International Student Program --
it's a really creative name.

But, you know, it gets right to the point and that program is dedicated to helping the student understand cultural adaption, academic adaptation, and that's really an important point because some students are coming from a very different academic experience.

We also go over key immigration rules to follow, how to maintain the immigration status, and then finally we wrap it up with a
really dedicated session about employment,

which is fairly complex to understand.

We try to break it down in this particular session but then we end the session saying,

"look if you didn't understand everything, of course you can come in one-one-one for sessions,

and come to one of our many workshops that we have throughout each semester, both fall and spring."

So, from an immigration perspective, that's how we get the student from document issuance
to launching that first week on campus and becoming that successful student.

So that's kind of where, what our office does for an overview.

>> Great.

>> Certainly.

>> So, you mentioned certainly in the application process,

one of the roles that my office has is making sure
that students are not only academically prepared, but have the English preparation in order to be successful in the classroom.

So, things such as the TOEFL or the IELTS, you know English language tests, we are assessing that.

But for those students who maybe don't quite have the English preparation in order to be successful to enroll, what types of opportunities are available for them
to you know possibly still look at Suffolk University?

And in addition there are students who have that English preparation but find that when they get here, maybe they need a little bit of extra assistance.

>> Sure.

>> What does that look like?

>> Okay. So, you've mentioned two specific groups and I'll go to the first group first,
which is the group that might not have the scores that we're looking for in regards to the TOEFL or the IELTS.

So, last year we saw a very exciting new partnership with an organization called INTO and so now we have this new organization called INTO Suffolk.

And that allows students who might need like a pathway program with, that has dedicated English language support to come into Suffolk get
that English language support and then
transition smoothly into our degree program.

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00:16:03,856 --> 00:16:06,126
So, there's lots of different options here.

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It's not an all or nothing thing.

231
00:16:07,906 --> 00:16:11,836
It's a little bit beyond just
English and then degree program.

232
00:16:11,836 --> 00:16:16,566
It might be two classes in English
and then two classes in the program.

233
00:16:16,566 --> 00:16:20,676
So, we would make that evaluation
based on the scores that we see.

234
00:16:20,676 --> 00:16:25,536
So, for those students who might be thinking,
you know, I'm not quite certain or confident in my English language skills, we definitely would encourage that student to still apply and see if we can't take care of that through the INTO Suffolk partnership.

For those students who actually transition right into the graduate degree program, but are still a little bit, not quite confident of their English language skills, the Center for Learning and Academic Success, offers a series of really great workshops
dedicated specifically to graduate students.

And we call them the Ram Workshops or the Ram Talkshops because, Go Rams!

You're now a Suffolk Ram.

And these really focus on professional type of conversations that are going to be happening both in the classroom, with people that come into the classroom, business professionals, and then for those students who get those opportunities to meet professionals beyond the classroom.
And we want those student to gain that confidence of their language skills and I always like to remind students that are coming from another place around the world that doesn't have English as a first language, be very proud of that second language that you speak and don't worry about the accent because almost everybody on this campus has an accent, in some shape or form.
help those students meet those goals.

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>> Great. So, you also mentioned sort of, being adjusted to or you know coming

to the United States and getting adjusted both culturally as well as academically.

Can you describe some of the ways that you work with students in order to help

with that adjustment beyond just that mandatory orientation takes place?

>> Yes. So, you know, we do recognize our office

and really I think the whole
campus, your office does too.

Everybody around Suffolk recognizes the fact that when people are coming from so far away abroad their leaving support networks, families, friends and their taking that risk and chance so we want them to feel comfortable in campus.

But, we understand that there will be an adjustment process for most individuals coming to a brand new place.
So, we do offer workshops and there are groups on campus that can help those students deal

with some of those cultural adjustments.

One of the things that we like to point out to the new graduate students is

d that there's really great peer groups on campus.

The Graduate Student Association and the Suffolk University Graduate Business Association are

wonderful proactive groups that welcome those students into the Suffolk community.

And that allows those new students to build
those new connections that they need to have

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in order to sustain the next
phase of going into school.

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We have a wonderful group called Home
Away from Home, which welcomes all

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of our Suffolk students,
undergraduate, graduate and law students

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and it allows those international students to
connect with the domestic students who kind

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of enjoy that intercultural experience.

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So, we welcome that to everybody
on our Suffolk campus.

And as far, as you know, the other types of academic adjustments,

we understand that sometimes that not everything goes perfectly and you know, if there are times when the student is feeling a little down, we have resources on campus that can kind of help meet those needs.

Beyond those cultural differences, when the student might be thinking that, you know what, I just need a little bit more help or support.
So, we're here to make those recommendations when they need be.

>> Great. Is there any advice that you would give to international students or students you know study outside of the US who might be considering not only studying here in the United States but considering Suffolk as an option?

>> The advice I would have is just like we were talking about a moment ago. Connect. And whether it's connecting to
faculty, whether it's connecting to new friends

in the classroom, to staff here that is ready to welcome you, make those connections

and build those new support networks that you're going to need when you come here

because those are lasting relationships.

And I think what's unique to the Suffolk Experience is that you are in a classroom

that is kind of almost like a mini-United Nations in some respects,

but there's certainly domestic
students in the classroom as well.

And remember that those classmates that you have today are going to be your global business partners tomorrow.

So, as much as I know that students are excited to complete that degree and then go on to that next chapter in their life, don't waste away those moments and enjoy every single moment that you're here.

And make the most of those relationships that you're creating while you're on campus.
Great. So, at this point you know, I want to have a chance, Alvee,
to talk to you about the current student prospective.
Obviously those watching today are getting advice from myself and Tracy about both the application as well as the experience of being a student,
but you're living and breathing it!
So, can you just share with us a little bit about your background
and what you were doing before you came to the United States and Suffolk University?

>> Okay. Yes.

So, my name is Alvee Egonu.

I'm from Nigeria.

I did my undergrad at the American University of Nigeria, where I studied marketing.

And then I went on to work for about 6 and half years in the different sectors of the economy,
from the education to the financial sector.

And now, the oil and gas sector, where I did about three and a half years in communications.

So, I decided to take a study break to come and do my master's here in Suffolk,

where I'm doing the integrated marketing communications.

And I'm also a graduate furlough at the, you know graduate admissions office as a communication assistant.
Okay. Great.

So, what led you to decide to attend Suffolk University?

Okay. So, first I have two reasons.

First reason is I had two options.

Either I go to Dallas, UT Dallas and study marketing.

Or come to Suffolk, and study marketing communication.

I looked up both you know curriculum and I found out that you know Suffolk University was in line
with what I wanted to do in terms of my career path.

Setting courses which I was doing as a communication expert where actually what I wanted to do and allowed for me you know increase my knowledge and skills.

And then the second reason again was Suffolk University is known for its vibrant you know international study body,
which was one of the key
decision for me to come here.

>> Okay. So, we understand why
Suffolk, but stepping back a minute,

why did you decide it was important
to come to the United States to study?

What led to you choosing to come the US?

>> So, you know.

I decided to come and study here because the US
is known for its higher education opportunities,
which has definitely helped me to embrace a new diversity and also to experience you know a new life in a different cultural background.

>> So, what has been the biggest adjustment for you as you have started your graduate program?

You started last fall?

>> Yes, I did.

>> So, what has that adjustment been like?
So, I'll probably say that there are three adjustments but you know,

I would mention weather, but I mean weather changes [laughing] so I can't really say.

True [laughing].

It doesn't stay the same in Boston.

So, big one for me has to be you know staying away from the classroom since 2011,

which has been almost seven years now, and coming back to take that big step, you know,

in your career that you want to come and
do your graduate studies so moving back

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into the classroom was actually
a big adjustment for me.

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It was quite tough.

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It took me about two months to you know adjust.

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But once I got into the system,
I'm pretty much comfortable.

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>> Okay. Great.

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So, what has been a highlight
of your experience so far?
Can you tell us a story about something that has really stood out for you?

Hmm. This might sound funny but an experience for me would probably be you know the train ride, commuting for about almost an hour, from you know [inaudible] to North Station and from North Station down to Park Street.

To me it's been actually fun because I mean I haven't taken a train ride before in so many years so coming here and doing it almost every day, which is like [inaudible].
And I get to achieve a lot within that one hour that I'm shuffling from you know my house to North Station.

I mean you'll be able to get a lot of things done.

You know, trying to do your reports, or trying to do some work, which has, you know, it's actually been helpful.

>> Okay.
So, that’s a new experience for me.

Great. Can you tell us what your interaction with faculty has been like?

I had mentioned earlier about the close relationships that faculty do develop with our graduate students.

What has your interaction with faculty been like?

So, I believe student to faculty relationship,
It's very crucial in the university community.

And I have been fortunate enough to experience one or two faculty relationships where I have been able to interact with my professors and probably tell them my career path and what I hope to achieve after studying at Suffolk.

And they have been able to put me on the right track, make some certain references in who I need to go and meet in terms of my internship.
And I have been referred by two professors which I'll have, I have like two interviews coming up in two weeks time for internship positions which you know I believe I hope to make a decision out of one.

So, I believe Suffolk and professors actually helpful, you know in making the right recommendations for you to follow your career path.

>> Great. Great.

So, I mentioned that Boston is a great city.
Not only from my own opinion but also from the recognition, and Tracy's as well.

Can you tell us how you have found Boston and how has that been incorporated, the experience of living and studying here?

How has that been incorporated into your education?

>> So, first of all.

This is actually not my first time coming to Boston.
I usually come to Boston every summer for vacation because I have family here. And right from the very first time I stepped into the United States in 2012, I made up my mind that you know Boston is where I want to be. Boston is where you need to meet people, you need to network. Boston is the home for schools, top schools are here in Boston. And if you, I mean if you really want to make out here in the States,
Boston should be your destination for you to come and study.

>> Great. So, why do you think people, maybe outside of the United States should consider coming to the US, rather than pursuing their graduate education in other parts of the world?

What are some of the benefits that you have seen and experienced?

>> Well, some of the benefits would be one, education.
This is the right place for you to come and study in terms of you know higher education opportunities.

Another reason would be for you to experience a new life in a different background, make everlasting friendships with people from different parts of the world.

You know you never can tell when they might be helpful.

And, also, it's to allow you to also increase yourself in terms
of personal development, you know.

You will meet people who you need to try out new things out here that you think you never had, but once you develop that, you know, personal relationship with yourself, which will definitely help you in a long while.

>> Great. What advice would you give perspective students if we were interacting with some perspective students, what advice would you give them
as they were considering pursuing their graduate education

and how they might go about making that decision?

>> So, from a graduate student, a personal advice I would give is I would leave it,

I would advise you know certain students and I'll leave this quote from Steve Jobs who said you know, "You should stay hungry and stay foolish."

In other words, never be satisfied where you are.
Try and [inaudible] step up from your comfort zone and try new things.

>> Great. So, we have gotten a question from the group around financial aid and whether or not how our housed international students might be considered so.

Suffolk University takes the investment in education very seriously and we are committed to assisting our students financially for them to pursue their education.

So, we have a very robust merit aid
scholarship program that students are considered

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at the point of admission and so are
notified at the point of admission whether

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or not they are granted a scholarship.

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Some of those scholarships are financial
alone and is added to their student account.

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Others combine a fellowship
which includes a work component.

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So, it'll be a combination of
scholarship as well as a work component

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in which the students get paid for.
So, Alvee you mentioned you're a, you know, an assistant, a grad assistant in the Office of Graduate Admissions, so.

We also have administrative fellowships where students have the opportunity to work for departments across campus without being awarded.

Tell us a little bit about your financial.

Was, is your fellowship part of your merit-based award,
or is that an administrative fellowship
where you're working on campus?

>> So, I got admission and I was fortunate
enough to be given a $6,000 grant,

which is placing to two semesters.

Fall and spring.

And I had it in the back of my mind that
you know as much as I had a financial grant,

I also actually wanted to work on campus.
And there are so many campus jobs that you know for students to apply.

And the reason why I chose to apply to the grad office was because since I already worked in the education sector for about two and half years as student recruitment, you know, executive, I feel that I would be valuable to that department and try [inaudible] to add value.

So, you know I applied to the grad office you know and based on my experience you know,
they decided that okay yes, they would hire me, which I was glad about.

And yes, it is part of my financial aid package.

>> Okay. Great.

So, Tracy you mentioned you also have students that are working with your team and in your office.

What are some of the types of projects or assignments that students are working on?

>> So, we have had some international students
become graduate fellows in our office.

Recently we had a young woman from Saudi Arabia who was completing her master's degree in higher education. And so she became a critical part of our office, helping us do a lot of data analysis and gathering. And she was able to put a lot of information onto a large spreadsheet so we could actually see what in fact we really do [laughing].
It's always really good to come around and reassess where we are and she took away from that experience a real great sense of what it takes for an office like ours to operate.

She, herself, was an international student so she knew her own side of things. Much similar to the way that Alvee does but for her she was also able to gain that sense of administrative sense of what it could take if she wanted to go home and do that kind of work abroad.
And we all had a chance to kind of sit down with her and share our own experience and then kind of extrapolate on that and tell her what she could do with that experience back in her home country.
How decisions get made on who gets those administrative fellowships.

So those are positions that are available and posted on campus.

There's actually as part of the Graduate Admissions Office, as part of the outreach that we do to admitted students, we share with them the opportunities of these job postings and are then students are able to come and apply.

I know for our office we're looking for sometimes certain skill sets so.
Alvee's experience not only in education but also his communications and social media work was a gap for us in terms of the office and one that we wanted to be able to take advantage of.

So, in terms of how decisions are made, it is as if you were applying for a job.

So, if you do go to the financial aid website, it would recommend providing a cover letter and a resume for these positions.
And then you are going through a process typically an interview.

I know Alvee you went through an interview process in our office and then candidates are selected based on their strengths and how well they fit with the position.

We also have gotten a question about when students can apply and so students, we actually have entry terms in the fall and in the spring.
Fall is typically the largest entry term as you would probably expect.

The very traditional students coming to campus and starting classes in September but many, if not most of programs, not all, but most of programs that the graduate students apply to also have a spring entry term.

So, in terms of summer, we typically don't have many students starting in summer.

For them, it's much more limited in terms of course offerings.
So, my recommendation to you would be consider applying fall.

For this year, we're in the midst of evaluating applications right now.

Our next priority deadline is March 15,

so I would certainly encourage you to submit your application.

And if you're interested in learning more about that application process,

you can certainly feel free to contact our office.
We have a lot of resources available about how you may stand out in the application as well.

So, at this point, I, we don't appear to have any other questions so I do just want to share information about how you may contact us if you do have additional questions as well as connecting with us.

So, the Office of Graduate Admission, we are available to students via email.

There are questions that you may find answered through perusing our website,
which is www.suffolk.edu/graduate.

You may also reach us via phone, but most of our international students do reach out to us via email which is GradAdmission@suffolk.edu.

You can also connect to us, and I would recommend following us on twitter, which is @SuffolkGrad as well as liking us on Facebook, which is Facebook/SuffolkGrad.

There you will find a wealth of information and some highlights of stories and other successes.
of our students, our faculty and our alumni as well as some key bits of wisdom that we like to share about the Suffolk University experience.

So, thank you so much for your attention today and for your participation.

As I mentioned at the beginning of our session, we have recorded the session and will be following up with you via email making that recording available to you.

We look forward to reading your
application very soon and welcoming you

to Boston and to Suffolk University.