

Suffolk University Sawyer Business School Commencement
Sunday, May 19, 2019
Rockland Trust Bank Pavilion, Boston
Undergraduate Commencement Speaker
Malik Richard

On your mark, get set, go.

We have finally arrived to our own Olympics. Acting Provost Sebastián Royo, Dean O'Neill, special invited guests, friends, family, and my fellow classmates, a pleasant good morning. [APPLAUSE] It brings me great joy to be representing you on one of the most special occasions of our lives.

About four years ago, the race began to actualize our dreams, but for some of us, our race might have started more than four years ago, perhaps in a different country, or at a different school. My race started in Anguilla on an island measuring only 35 square miles with a populace of only 15,000. My race never starts on a smooth track. There were many hurdles to overcome in fact. You see, I was never taught to dream big. There was no measure for what big was, so I struggled to envision it daily. But little did I know that in order to find that big, I sorely had to come to Suffolk University. [APPLAUSE]

I can vividly recall my Career Start professor, Valerie Atherley, on the very first day of class emphasizing, and I quote, at Suffolk, we only create Olympians. The competition is not around us. The competition is within ourselves. It will take determination, passion, and lots and lots of hard work, unquote.

Well, my fellow classmates, professor wasn't joking when she said lots and lots of hard work. In the middle of our final lap, many of us wanted to give up. Our capstones were rigorous. Boston's weather was unforgiving and relentless. [LAUGHTER] But our mentors, advisers, and professors stood by and for us, and that is why we are all victorious today in our blue and gold. Can we please give them a round of applause? [APPLAUSE]

You see, the beauty about Suffolk University's arena is that the rules are clear. We understand and, yes, we demonstrate that diversity and inclusion are gifts and not penalties that disqualify members within the community. We understand and, yes, we demonstrate that individuals and groups are free to hold their own philosophical and religious beliefs without being persecuted and without imposing those beliefs upon others. Suffolk ensures that we are equipped with every resource necessary to become experts in both technology and interpersonal relations, where we learn to bridge the gap between love for devices and love for people, which enables us to accept each other's differences to support advancement and development. Oh, at Suffolk, we are so privileged to be exposed to a work and play environment that matches our individual

wants and needs with the ultimate aim of creating well-rounded individuals with an insatiable passion for life, success, and happiness.

This is the environment in which we battle against fear of the potential success that we are destined for. This is the environment that has built me into a proud member of the Beta Gamma Sigma, an honors student, provided us numerous job opportunities, unbreakable friendships, invaluable leadership positions and indescribable mentorships. This is the environment in which I'll continue my growth and success by pursuing my MBA in the fall at Suffolk University. [APPLAUSE]

My fellow classmates, I know you may still feel as though the race is never-ending, or that the hurdles are still too high for you to overcome, or that the baton is taking forever to reach to you. My mom and dad always reminded me that, Malik, your goals come at a cost. And no, they weren't talking about tuition. Well, hopefully not. But they said that your goals come at a cost of your sweat, your patience, your sacrifice, and yes, your sleep. So, whenever you feel like giving up, always remember why you have started.

And my mentor, Dean Shawn Newton, has always reminded us that, Malik, the race is not given to the swift, nor the strong, but for those who can endure until the very end. And it doesn't matter how fast or slow you are going, the only thing that matters is that we keep moving forward, unquote. Class of 2019, these words of encouragement have reminded me that sometimes in life we may start off on the wrong leg. However, it is OK to take water breaks and ask for help until we find our rhythm back. It has reminded me that it is necessary to focus on being slow and steady.

My fellow classmates, I want to leave you with a secret. In this race of life, not every spectator is going to cheer for you. Not every spectator is going to want you to win, but that is perfectly OK. We have trained and we have sweat for this moment. And I do believe that our strong work ethics was built on the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., who once said: If we cannot fly, then run. If we cannot run, then walk. If we cannot walk, then crawl, but whatever it takes, we have to keep moving forward, unquote. [APPLAUSE] Class of 2019, we are moving forward and we are going beyond the limits.

I want to remind you that your race is yours and yours only. So, pace yourself, and remember that practice makes perfect. So, no matter the adversity that we may face today, never forget that you will always be Rams Olympian champions.

It has indeed been an unmatched experience. And I thank you all so much for crossing this finish line with us. But now, class of 2019, make your way to your next starting line and make it yours. On your mark, get set, go. [APPLAUSE]