

**Suffolk University Sawyer Business School Commencement**  
**Saturday, May 22, 2021**  
**Fenway Park**  
**Undergraduate Student Commencement Speaker**  
**Alessandra Eduarda Kambundo, BSBA '21**

Good afternoon family, faculty, and fellow graduates. I'd first like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you and the pleasure of sharing the vibrations and emotions in this beautiful park.

Second, I would like to congratulate the Class of 2021. We made it!

My name is Alessandra Eduarda Kambundo. I am originally from Angola, and today I'm receiving a degree in Entrepreneurship with a minor in Global Business. About five years ago, when I first landed in Boston, I thought I knew how to speak English. I was confident that all the Beyoncé songs would give me an English 101 class. I thought I would "single lady" my way around downtown Boston. And as you can imagine, I was completely wrong.

However, after five months of leaving here, I learned how to speak English. And I found out that I actually had an accent and I felt so insecure about it.

So, all throughout college, I tried losing it by pronouncing certain words the way other people were pronouncing them, but yet, the accent never left.

So, as I was writing this speech, I had all these ideas of what I wanted to tell you about. But I was not certain whether it would be good enough or relatable. Then, I remembered my accent and that made me even more insecure.

So, I asked myself, who am I speaking to and who am I speaking for? So, here's who I'm speaking to: I am speaking to the best generation ever. I am speaking to a generation that is woke and fights for equality, inclusion, respect, and kindness and a generation of women and men that, besides spending way too much time on Instagram and TikTok, is a generation that believes in themselves and the power of change in the world.

Then I'm speaking to my fellow International students. You have traveled thousands of miles away from home, learned a new culture, a new language, a new lifestyle. Staying away from your families in order to fulfill a dream of getting a higher quality education.

Then, I am speaking to you specifically, because we all took a leap of faith and entrusted this University with our future. And not only did they transform our lives, but they incentivized us to speak up and show off our accents, because it is a clear reflection of our people, our story, and our culture.

In the last four years we have gone through social, political, and even economic hardships. It has shaped us in amazing ways. But in the last year specifically we have been through a pandemic, and many of us lost loved ones, our jobs, business opportunities, et cetera.

However, as unfortunate as this pandemic has been, we cannot fail to acknowledge that it has shown us how much we care for our community. It has enlightened in us our entrepreneurial capacities. And it has given us a break from our busy lives to plan out for our future, and live life, not in theory, but in action.

So, as we close this chapter of our lives, let's make a decision. Go grab on to our accents, discipline, and all the knowledge that Suffolk University has provided us. Go out into our countries, our cities, our work space, and represent our University, making it the symbol of diversity, acceptance, intellectuality, humility, and professionalism — all while being our truest selves.

And remember, this Commencement is a celebration of the end of the season and the beginning of the next one.

So, to the Suffolk University Class of 2021, congratulations and good luck on your next journey. God bless you.