

- To the professors, administrators,
00:09
family members, friends,
00:12
and of course, my fellow classmates
00:14
that are able to be here today
00:16
and to everyone watching at home, thank you and hello.
00:20
I'm so honored to represent the class of 2021
00:24
as we gather here with excitement for the future.
00:28
As I have your attention for the next few minutes,
00:31
I'd like you to reflect
00:32
on a seemingly simple question, where do you belong?
00:39
I'm sure we all remember committing to Suffolk.
00:41
I had a smile pinned to my face for the next three days.
00:45
You see, my mind was set
00:47
from the moment I stepped foot on the freedom trail
00:50
because it wasn't just about my education,
00:53
it was about the experience as a whole.
00:56
I felt as though there was a new me
00:58
just waiting to be found, waiting to truly belong.
01:03
I saw myself rushing to class
01:05
alongside jagged streets and jaywalkers.
01:08
I saw myself here as a Bostonian at Suffolk.
01:14
As incoming students, we all set out to redefine ourselves.
01:18
I remember signing up for just about every club
01:20
and event I could.
01:22
I'd made a place in many different ways,
01:25
but where did I really belong?
01:29
And though that question
01:30
may mean something different to everyone,
01:33
Suffolk lets you know
01:34
that it's supposed to mean something different to everyone.
01:38
In the next two years, I found my place to belong.

01:41
This time was filled, but the navigation
01:43
and trials of hard coursework and learning moments,
01:47
but sophomore and junior year were also times
01:50
of incredible friendship,
01:52
academic conferences, job opportunities,
01:55
and all the moments I hoped for in my college experience.
01:59
What I was unable to see when I began
02:01
was how much of these years would be made up
02:04
of the in-between moments of my education.
02:07
The endless hours of studio time with peers
02:10
that turned into my best friends,
02:12
the late night walks to Bova, the smiles at the T stop
02:16
when you recognize someone you know
02:18
and how Suffolk staff can make you feel so at home
02:21
by just remembering your name.
02:24
Being a Suffolk student extends farther than the classroom
02:28
in ways I could have never predicted.
02:30
It doesn't mean you belong to just a school,
02:33
it means you belong to a place, to a community.
02:38
And when COVID-19 forced life
02:40
as we knew it to take a pause,
02:42
we as students kept going.
02:45
For some, it meant unlearning everything that was familiar,
02:49
anxieties arose and the pounding question returned
02:53
to an entire nation of college students,
02:57
where do you belong?
03:00
We have transformed our learning styles
03:02
and redefined what it means to belong
03:05
as a college student in 2021.
03:08
Through the struggles, we formed a new kind of community
03:10

that only hardship can bring.
03:13
We as students began to see the power
03:16
that the college experience holds in our lives.
03:19
For me, that experience was my tie
03:22
to this city and my jobs as an RA, a tutor,
03:26
and an MFA employee.
03:28
Suffolk again began to show how deeply rooted it is
03:32
in my life and where I really belong.
03:35
Whether you started your college experience
03:37
at Suffolk or not,
03:39
I'm so glad you ended up here,
03:41
here with peers that care
03:44
and professors that look deeper than just my coursework
03:47
to help me succeed,
03:49
here where I feel seen and heard by my university.
03:53
Simply put, here smiling with you all today.
03:58
I've heard so many professors
04:00
and professionals state how we deserve a gold medal
04:03
for our dedication to learning.
04:05
Well, here we are, this is our gold medal.
04:09
We are living through history and we are the history.
04:14
Our journey has made this day means so much more.
04:18
Be comforted by the fact
04:19
that we are figuring this out together
04:23
and together though our success
04:25
and our struggles are never the same,
04:28
we grow strong and we form a new kind of belonging.
04:33
But for now my fellow graduates take this day
04:37
moment by moment.
04:39
We all have our own story of belonging at Suffolk.
04:43
Take a sigh of relief

04:44

in knowing that you are here, you made it,

04:48

and that is enough.

04:50

It is an honor to stand in front of you

04:52

and a privilege to walk beside you.

04:55

Congratulations to the class of 2021.

04:59

And just in case no one told you yet, you belong here.

05:04

Thank you.

05:05

(audience clapping)