

Suffolk University College of Arts & Sciences Commencement
Sunday, May 22, 2022
Leader Bank Pavilion
Commencement Student Speaker
Matyas Csiki-Fejer

Thank you, Mr. Lopes for that wonderful address, and thank you to President Kelly, the Board of Trustees, Dean Bursik, and all the faculty, staff, friends, and families who have made this day possible. And more importantly, made the past four years possible. And a very special welcome to the Class of 2022.

It's an honor to be here today in front of you all. Four years ago, I entered Suffolk as one of the most clueless freshmen in the Class of 2022. I'd never set foot in Boston before move-in day. I knew nobody in the area, attended a commuter orientation despite not being a commuter, and even registered for classes late. They were random classes, too. When an advisor asked me if I asked them based on my program evaluation, I nodded, I smiled, with no idea what a program evaluation was.

It wasn't long before my unjustified confidence soured into self-doubt, and all of a sudden I felt alone, lost, and isolated in a place I had no ties to. And I think we all felt that way at least once during freshman year. But this haze of fear didn't last. I realized that everybody around me, students, faculty, administration, were all receptive to my concerns. Everyone cared about what everyone else had to say. Even in the worst moments, I wasn't alone. And you all know that moment. It comes around every school year, the boiling point where you're just fed up, nauseated with work, and paralyzed by anxiety where you consider dropping out at least a couple of times and start Googling "careers no degree."

Yeah. The second day of school was rough. But we made it through those days. We've made it through a lot. Environmental disasters, a pandemic, mass demonstrations, international conflict, political and racial activism, all within the past four years. Many of us have been impacted by these events. But all of us have lived in the tense, exhausting atmosphere they've created. In response, however, something incredible happened.

Both online and in person support communities blossomed in a way I never would have expected. The idea of solidarity, the value of supporting others, even those you may not know personally, has become more important than ever before. In essence, it's much more acceptable to ask for and to receive help from strangers than it was ten years ago. And this is during a time when bright flashing lights and terrifying headlines oversaturate every day and demand your attention at every second. Yet we still find time to support one another.

Think about those brutal Boston winters we've all lived through, and those wind tunnels that make traversing campus an extreme sport. If you're walking to Sawyer alone on a windy day you're going to be miserable. But if you're making the trek with two other people, suddenly, the wind is funny. Suddenly, it's a shared struggle that you can bond over and pull each other through. This is what the last four years have been about, a realization that everything we achieve is through the support of others.

As college students, we've been fed a narrative of stalwart, rugged, self-serving individualism, but the truth is, nothing that any of us have done has been the product of our own actions alone. We are all products of the relationships we share with others. We are all lucky, because compassion is the reason we're here today. Look around. The work of our families, of our teachers, of our classmates, without that we wouldn't be here, regardless of what any of us have done alone.

It is because of the efforts of all the wonderful people I met at Suffolk that I'm no longer the clueless freshman I was in the fall of 2018. Since then, I've been empowered to help build a cross country and track team for the university, to act as an RA, and to take on meaningful internships and work opportunities. You've given me so much more than I could have ever asked for and made me a more complete, more capable person. That is a debt I cannot repay.

I know that after all we've lived through, after all we've supported each other through, the incredible student body that sits before me is destined for greatness. In this life, we've been given mountains to show that they can be moved. Regardless of the challenge ahead, regardless of the odds of success, and regardless of where you come from, I know that the Class of 2022 will move mountains together. When we leave here today, wherever you go, whatever you do, carry compassion with you, and never let it go. Congrats, Class of 2022. We did it.

Thank you.

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