

Suffolk University
College of Arts & Sciences
Commencement 2026

Student Speaker
Spriha Paudel, BS '26

Good afternoon graduates, families, friends, faculty, staff, administration, and distinguished guests. [APPLAUSE]

For those who do not know me, my name is Spriha Paudel.

And to the Class of 2026, congratulations. [APPLAUSE] Today we are not just celebrating degrees. We are celebrating every late night, every setback, every train delay, [LAUGHTER] every moment of doubt, and every version of ourselves that kept going anyway.

Some of us arrived in Boston from across the world.

Some came from just a few train stops away.

Some started here as first year students, while others transferred in carrying the uncertainty of beginning again.

Others came as graduate students, balancing careers, families, and responsibilities.

Yet somehow, all our journeys met here in the heart of Boston at Suffolk University.

[APPLAUSE] Suffolk became a collection of moments we did not realize would one day mean everything. It was solving math problems until midnight in the library's study rooms. It was speedwalking across Tremont because the T decided to test our patience one more time. It was those windy Boston mornings where struggling to open and hold the doors at Samia became a Suffolk tradition. And honestly, we all build biceps from those doors alone.

And because we are a city campus, no matter how many elevators we shared, we always ended up sharing stories, too. Between quick hellos, conversations squeezed between floors, and those awkward silent moments waiting to step out of those elevator doors, those rides became their own kind of community. At Suffolk, even the smallest spaces taught us how to make room for one another.

Growth happened in classrooms, internships, campus jobs, research, leadership, and saying yes to opportunities that once felt intimidating.

One of the most important things Suffolk taught is that stereotypes are meant to be challenged. As a computer science major, somewhere between coding assignments and debugging errors, I found myself stepping beyond what was expected of me. So if there was ever a belief that computer science majors are meant to be introverted, let today be proof that even an extraverted one can stand here and represent an entire class, because this class [APPLAUSE] didn't just meet expectations, we redefined them.

It happened in meetings of Student Leadership and Involvement, where ideas somehow turned into real events, organizations, and spaces for people to belong. It happened in clubs, big and small, where strangers became family. Sometimes belonging is not something we simply find. Sometimes it is something we build.

Some of us arrived here as first-generation students, carrying dreams our families never had the chance to pursue. Some came as immigrants, international students, and transfer students, learning how to rebuild a home while building a future. Others commuted, balancing long train rides, jobs, and responsibilities beyond campus. And some of us came from historically underrepresented communities that have not always seen themselves reflected in spaces like these. Yet Suffolk reminded us that every one of our stories belongs here, not despite our differences, but because of them.

For so many of us, this campus became home in many ways we never expected.

Home looked like familiar faces, communities we created ourselves, and the people who make this place feel like somewhere we belonged. Long after today, part of us will always remain here, in the library lights after midnight, in the windy Samia mornings, in the elevator rides between classes, and in the streets of Boston.

We learned resilience, not because things were easy, but because they weren't.

Schedules changed. Systems changed. The seasons changed. And through it all, we changed, too. We became leaders, mentors, and the people who now hold doors open for those coming after us.

That is what we should carry forward, the courage to keep showing up, the willingness to create space for others, and the belief that community can be built anywhere if we lead with heart. Congratulations Class of 2026.

From Nepal to Boston, and every place and story in between, thank you. [APPLAUSE]