Hello everyone, thank you for checking out this workshop. We'll be talking about the holistic admission review process. But just to start, we just wanted to do some introductions.

My name is Brian Denzak, and I'm an Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission at Suffolk University. I'll now pass it over to my colleague to introduce herself.

Hello everyone, my name is Aya Al-Namee, I am the Assistant Director of Admissions and also the Coordinator for Access and Inclusion at Suffolk. I'm very excited to be with you all today.

Brian, I'll give it back to you.

Okay, great. Just to start, what exactly is holistic admission? What does it mean? Essentially, it's a process where an admission decision is made with a consideration of multiple elements of an applicant. So if you kind of think of it as each applicant is a puzzle all of the different components that make up an application are the pieces to that puzzle that let us know who you are as an applicant and how you might fit into the university. One of those pieces is involvement.

Colleges and universities would like to know about you as a student, as an applicant and how you might fit into the university. What are you interested in? What are you passionate about? It's also an opportunity to find out more about you behind the test score, behind the transcript. And such things can be like what clubs and organizations you're involved in, what part-time jobs do you have outside of the classroom? What are the family responsibilities that you have that you do outside of a classroom as well, and any sports and activities that you're involved into.

Those are all those pieces of involvement that colleges and universities look into to figure out what your interests and hobbies are. Also just to note, it is good that if you are in any clubs that use acronyms, definitely make sure that you spell those programs out or those clubs out instead of using the acronyms when you're filling out your application.

So then the next kind of piece of that puzzle that we review is the letters of recommendation.
In general, most colleges and universities require at least two to three recommendations from people who know you really well. They can be your guidance counselor or college advisor. They could be teachers, they could be coaches, mentors, somebody who really knows you and can really testify at who you are as a person. Again, it's another opportunity for where colleges and universities to find out more about you than what just test scores or transcripts can say. Again, it can be a variety of different people. They could also be, if you're involved in plays or debate club, they could be your advisor for those programs as well.

There's a whole range of different people who are available who would make great candidates to write a letter of recommendation for you. And most colleges and universities do like at least one letter to come from a teacher, 'cause they do wanna know, have at least some idea of what you're like in the classroom and who you are as a student. But again, you have a whole range of different opportunities of different types of people who would be good fits to write a recommendation letter for you.

The next part when it comes to what makes up that holistic admission is the personal statement or the personal essay. That essay is written during the admission process that shows the admission committee more about yourself as an applicant. Again, it conveys something that your transcript and test scores cannot convey to us. The personal statement provides colleges and universities, insight into your personality and ideas to how you will contribute to the school community, evidence of your writing skills, explanation of any extenuating circumstances and a better understanding of why you're applying to that particular school.

This essay is really an opportunity to really kind of sell yourself as an applicant, as a potential member of that school community. Definitely, take the time to write a really good essay, proofread it, make sure it's good to go before you submit it in your application. 'Cause I think sometimes students can find the essay to be a really daunting task, but it's really a great opportunity to really use that space to let us know who you are. Again, I've said this a couple times, but is that opportunity to really tell us something
about yourself that maybe the rest
of your application may not convey
to the admission counselor who's reading it
and to give us more, then what?
Again, your test score
or what a transcript could say about you.
Now I'm gonna hand it over to my colleague to continue on
with the next part of that holistic admission process.
Interviews can be part of the puzzle for you
as you're applying to different institutions.
They're offered usually by mid-size to smaller schools
as part of the official experience.
As the universities you're applying to become larger,
Sometimes it's harder for them to interview everyone,
but some institutions will
still offer information interviews
which means that you can go
and ask them questions about their institution,
which can also be part of that holistic review process
and something that where you can advocate for yourself.
In terms of interviews,
these are usually explained on the institution's websites.
It gives you an idea of what to expect
and what they're expecting of you.
But the idea behind them is to provide a different angle
about yourself that maybe is not mentioned
in your essays or is not mentioned as part
of the application that you have submitted to them.
It allows them to see your personality traits,
it allows them to see how you interact
as an individual, your thought process.
In terms of preparing for them,
I would say that you really should know the institution
that you are going to be interviewing with
making sure that they have the program
that you're interested in
and you have done your research,
because it's kind of a both way interview, right?
They're trying to get to know you
but you're also trying to get to know them
and the institution that they are representing.
In terms of interview skills,
I think that's something that we all can be practicing
if we have the opportunity to.
There are a lot of different resources online
where you can kind of record yourself
and hear yourself, answer questions live.
I highly recommend that you can do some practice
and making sure that your interview skills are
in a good shape before heading in,
and going especially if the interview is an official part
of your application process.
If you use your network, talk to your friends,
talk to your family members, see if someone else can
also help you practice just to make sure
that you are ready for that.
Most importantly, be yourself.
That's really the whole idea
of the interview is to get to know who you are.
So being authentic and being...
not kind of putting up a front
but really just understanding who you are
and how you want to convey that to the admissions personnel
I think is very important.
And follow up is good.
If you're able to send out an email
or a letter in the mail just say,
"Thank you so much for interviewing me
"and I look forward to hearing back."
I think that also shows your thoughtfulness
and also gives a good idea about you as an individual
to the institution that's interviewing you.
Next, we will talk about demonstrated interest,
and demonstrated interest basically means your interest
in a specific institution
and how you can convey that to an institution.
I would say that piece of the puzzle
also depends on where you are applying.
Some institutions use that a lot,
some institutions don't use that at all.
So understanding and working
with your admissions counselor
to understand demonstrated interest is very important.
There are a lot of different levels to that.
It can be as simple as emailing somebody.
If it's a small institution,
emailing your admissions counselor can count
as part of demonstrated interest
and it can go up to applying early decision
which is a binding process,
and you are basically saying
that this is the number one institution for you,
if they offer you admission, you will be attending.
So understanding that level of variance
in demonstrated interest is good
if you can work with your school counselor
and you can work with your admissions counselor
to understand that for your school is very important.
And then next after you understand is taking action, right?
So if it is visiting campus, you can try.
If you can visit campus in person??
If you can visit campus virtually.
If it is setting up an interview with an alum
or setting up an informational interview
with an admissions counselor,
attending college fairs, attending high school visits.
A lot of us visit your high schools.
Those are also smaller pieces
of that demonstrated interest aspect of your application. You're basically showing that you have thought about the institution before hitting submit on your application. That's always a good indicator about you as someone who's thoughtful who has put some thought behind the process before just hitting submit. But it also allows you to understand what these different institutions have to offer to you. Lastly, I'm sure you will have more questions and you want to know more about the application process specifically at Suffolk university. So if you are interested here we've provided contact information directly to our undergraduate admissions office and we will help you there in all aspects of your application. And then we also included our welcome center information. That's if you're hoping to come visit and schedule a tour, we would love to see you on our campus. Thank you so much for joining us today and hopefully we will work with you in the future.