What a beautiful time to graduate! We are all here together in one of the strongest cities in the world to celebrate everyone’s accomplishments; and although we are all sitting here today with the same gown and same flat hats with the silly tassels hanging off of them, we all have unique stories of how we got to this point.

As some of you may know, my journey can be summed up in one sentence: Suffolk saved me. Now, that may sound like a bold statement, but it is 100% true. It’s been a long and windy road, so I will give you the Reader’s Digest version. For my first year of college, I went to pharmacy school, and to sum it up: I didn’t like it, and it didn’t like me. I went from an honors student in high school to a level I was not accustomed to. I felt lost without any direction.

Despite my efforts and trying to prove I could pass those 200+ person lecture halls and complex chemical formulas, I finally accepted the fact that I needed to move on. You know that saying “Everything happens for a reason”? Well, I took that saying to heart because I wouldn’t be where I am today without accepting that I needed to change my direction in life. There’s a great quote by Vince Lombardi who said “The greatest accomplishment is not in never falling, but in rising again after you fall.”

So I sat down and started from square one. I applied to five colleges, including Suffolk, and was accepted by all of them. I knew I wanted to stay in the city but didn’t know what I wanted to do. I chose Suffolk because it offered many different majors and minors, so I knew I had time to discover which path would be right for me.

I will soon be proudly graduating with a BSBA in information systems with a 3.6 GPA (finally a major that I liked and that liked me back!), as president of the Information Systems Club, as former public relations officer of the Management Association, as a mentor, and also a daughter of a Suffolk Alum.

I have had the privilege of meeting and connecting with some of the most passionate and inspiring group of professors, especially in the ISOM Department, many of whom have become my mentors and idols. I remember the day of the majors and minor fair in 2010 as I quietly approached the ISOM table, run by Professor Mee and Professor Zouharis, and asked about the major. The following semester, I took Professor Mee’s Web Development class and
even though I sat in the back, he remembered me from the fair and didn’t hesitate to call on me our first class. From that day forward, I decided information systems was the perfect fit for me. My deep passion for the major and technology in general was confirmed when Professor Thomas joined Suffolk two years ago and became the faculty advisor for the IS Club. He brought out a new life in the department and in the classroom, and since then, Suffolk is now well known to some of the biggest technology companies in Boston. Working with him over the past two years has truly been a rewarding experience.

Even though I did well, the major was challenging. There were times of frustration; sleepless nights trying to get a query to run properly or to write the correct code just to move an image on a self-developed website over half an inch, but the faculty continued to push, and those times of frustration turned into victories. Those are the most unforgettable moments and the reasons why I am standing in front of you today.

Each and every one of you should be beyond proud of being able to sit here today with all accomplishments, challenges, and successes we have encountered because although this may seem like the end, it is only the beginning. I am lucky to have the most supportive family, who has been with me on this crazy journey from the start, and the best group of friends I could ever ask for. I know that the friendships and relationships we have all made at Suffolk will last a lifetime.

I’ll leave you with one last quote by Jarod Kintz who said: “The year you were born marks only your entry into the world. Other years where you prove your worth, they are the ones worth celebrating.” Today we celebrate those years. Congratulations, class of 2014! The best years of our lives have only just begun!