Today is a day in which I would like everyone to think back and reminisce on their journey at Suffolk University. Many consider today a day to say goodbye to their friends, their professors, their advisors, and the university itself. However, you should take the time instead to think about all the friendships you built, the things you learned, the changes you made in yourself, and how everything that you are about to say “goodbye” to, is essentially what has made our years at Suffolk, the best years of our lives. It seems like only yesterday when we arrived on that warm summer day to orientation and stepped into the heart of Boston. And now all of a sudden, we are wearing an elegant graduation gown and receiving a diploma for accomplishing our undergraduate studies. Yet, today we are not closing a chapter of our lives. We are merely starting a new one, the scary one I like to call “real-life.”

Growing up in Colombia made it seem almost unattainable for me to have the opportunity to study in the United States. Moreover, I would have never even imagined myself standing at a podium talking to a large audience about my own experience. But here I am, and I could not feel any more honored. Here we all are. We did it, and we should all be very proud of what we have accomplished. I feel like words cannot convey how thankful we are to all those that supported us the entire way: our parents, I could never repay mine for their unconditional support as I came to this country alone. But I never felt lonely because their support made me feel as though they were right here with me. I’ve also had my friends, who were the ones that made me feel at home in a country that was foreign to me. And finally, our professors, deans, and advisers, who have guided us through the Suffolk University journey. We would not have been able to do this without all of you.

Many people ask me why I chose Suffolk, and my answer is always: why not Suffolk? Not only am I a city girl, so that seemed like the right choice, but also Suffolk has given all of us unique opportunities that no other institution could have given us. We have learned incredible amounts not only about strategy and marketing theories, but also about ourselves. I have seen myself grow so much and I owe that to the experiences Suffolk has provided me with. I’m standing here in front of you and you may all think I have been here for four years like most normal college students, but the truth is I managed to complete this journey in three years. In those three years I learned how to do laundry, cook (a limited amount but it’s better than nothing), and manage my own budget…and I know I’m not the only one here that didn’t know how to do those things! I became involved in some of the many extracurriculars here at the University, as many others here have also, and was even able to rise to the presidency of the International Business Club, through which I learned about leadership and how to manage others, an invaluable skill; I was part of the Sawyer Ambassador program, in which I was the only international student, meaning I had the chance to not only learn from my peers but also share my experiences with them while striving to satisfy unmet student needs within the business school; and through one of the University’s many Global Travel Seminars, I was able to travel to China, which may be the most unforgettable experience I and the group of us that went have ever had. So if I had the chance to do it all over again, which I wish I had, I would not change a thing…except maybe doing that extra year, because three just wasn’t long enough!
I could spend hours talking about my incredible time at Suffolk University, but I’d rather focus on the future. So what now? I could not find an answer to that question until a couple of weeks ago, and I’m sure that more than one of you here has been there too. What lies ahead is different for every individual graduating today, but what is the same for all of us is something that will tie us together for life; and that is the Suffolk pride. We will each take our own paths and start our lives, but no matter which road you take we will always be able to go back to the place that gave us the tools to be successful…and that is: Suffolk University. Thank you.