

College of Arts & Sciences
Suffolk University
Commencement 2024
Undergraduate Student Speaker
Chelsea Lopes-Daigle, BA '24

CHELSEA LOPES-DAIGLE: Thank you, thank you. I recognize President Kelly, the board of trustees, and the CAS leadership, who made this experience possible. [APPLAUSE] A warm appreciation to those who made the Suffolk experience worth it. Thank you loved ones, friends, and family. Thank you distinguished faculty and staff. Thank you esteemed guests, supporters, and cheerleaders. And most importantly, the reason we're all here, thank you fellow graduates. [APPLAUSE]

It is an honor to be here today. I'm so grateful to Suffolk University for the privilege of being a voice for my class and peers. We're gathered here to celebrate a remarkable achievement. You got those credits. You put the hours in, wrote the essays, presented projects, crammed for tests. And now, you get to graduate.

However, this event celebrates more than just completed degree requirements and ticked off boxes to receive your glorious piece of paper. There's a variety of accomplishments to reflect upon, achievements that come far before walking across this stage. You survived the Boston weather. [LAUGHTER] You pushed your sleep schedule to its limits. [APPLAUSE] You made it through COVID. You also pushed yourself outside of your comfort zone. You learned new things, even if it was that you never wanted to do

them again. You found your voice, whether it was speaking up in class or rallying for reproductive rights, marching for racial freedom, or protesting against genocide in Palestine. [APPLAUSE]

You, you not only left your home to become an individual, but you then crafted your very own community, if not communities. For me, it was meeting the first Capo Verdean I'm not related to. Shout out to Andrew! The teams that I performed with on stage. The safe space where I healed and grew. Like me, you learned how to live off dining hall food. But you also learned what it means to change course, when the path you find yourself feels more solid than the one that's been paved.

Every moment of that journey is worth celebrating—not just the finish line, but every step you took to reach the finish line. There may or may not be another graduation ceremony in your future, but there will be more challenges, managing tasks and assignments from your job, working with people you disagree with, advocating for yourself in our healthcare system, healing from past traumas, living by your values in our divisive political climate, balancing the finances of what you need and what you want, learning how to cook good food for yourself, speaking louder when you are silenced.

And there will be challenges that surprise you. Feeling that spark in the unpaid internship where you realize this experience, this is what I want to do with myself. Finding a place to make your home, learning how to mentor, to parent, to love.

And the challenge we must all face: Learning how to live to fullest extent of our potential, because although we are marking the end of this academic journey, this commencement isn't to applaud a resolution. It isn't a finish line or a destination. This degree is a glimpse of the greater potential before us, the expanded ends of our horizon, a horizon with more challenges to overcome, and more opportunities to take. So congratulations, Class of 2024. And enjoy your celebrations. [APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

A.D.S. - Alice Darling Secretarial Services

One Mifflin Place, Suite 400, Cambridge, MA 02138 617-876-8750