

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE



ROBERT CALARCO, PRESIDING OFFICER

To the Suffolk County Community College Class of 2021,

Congratulations on earning your degree from Suffolk County's exceptional institution. You should be very proud of your accomplishments, and I commend each one of you for your hard work and commitment to your education.

College is a special time in one's life. The friends you made in college often will be the ones you find at your side well into adulthood. The professors whose classes you sat in will become the voices in your head during some of life's most unexpected moments. The halls you walked and the campus that was your home away from home will become a part of you, a heart-warming nod to getting your start at Suffolk County Community College.

And that is exactly what graduation is: *your* start. It is all too easy to think of graduation as the end of your time at Suffolk County Community College, but it is also the beginning of the rest of your life. The closing of this stage means the opening of the next. It is a circular theme that plays out in so many facets of our lives as we simultaneously mark one chapter's end and another chapter's beginning. On New Year's, one year ends and the next is right behind it. On your birthday, you mark the completion of another year on this Earth and the start of another trip around the sun. The same is true at commencement.

New chapters can be intimidating, especially as you enter a world that is still recovering from a difficult time in history. As students, you have endured so much change over the last year, but you rose to the challenge of completing your degree in the face of a global pandemic, and that means you are equipped to rise to whatever challenges the future may hold. You are strong, resilient and adaptable, and these qualities will take you far, even in a world filled with unknowns.

As a graduate of Suffolk County Community College, you have all the tools you need to be successful wherever your path leads you. I offer you this advice as you embark on your next journey: Be open – welcome new people, learning opportunities, and different ways of doing things, for that is how we grow. Be compassionate – let it be your gift to an ever-changing world in need of acceptance and kindness. Be brave – your generation will be the one to carry us into the future, so do not be afraid to stand up for what you believe in.

Thank you for choosing to pursue your educational endeavors here in Suffolk County. We are lucky to have you as members of our community.

Congratulations and best wishes,

Robert Calarco, Presiding Officer
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