SPENCER LAKE
BSBA ’84

How a fintech venture capitalist and global financier built his own path to success
Students are the lifeblood of Suffolk University. They are why we exist. In springtime their energy and excitement fill the campus, and you can feel the optimism in the air. Pictured here in the Samia Academic Center are (from left) Melinda Ngo, Class of 2024; Brian Le, Class of 2023; Hannah Leary, Class of 2024; and James Curry, Class of 2023.
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SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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On the Cover
Spencer Lake, BSBA ’84, photographed by David Woolfall in London’s Holborn neighborhood, not far from his Element Ventures office.
Our Mission Is Their Success

As an inspiring teacher, mentor, philanthropic leader, and employer of Suffolk graduates, it is hard to quantify all the ways in which Bruno Drummond, a triple Ram, gives back to this University. But there is no question about what drives him to do so. It is the power of Suffolk’s mission, Drummond explains, and the way in which we support our students (“Why I Give,” page 20).

“Everywhere you go at Suffolk, there is someone who cares about you and your story,” he says. “When you embrace students and your community, and you apply that vision over time, you will have successful individuals.”

The pages of this magazine are filled with powerful examples of members of this community who are supporting Suffolk students in so many different ways. It is a common thread that ties their stories together.

Through an endowed scholarship, Ed McDonnell, BSBA ’59, HDCS ’84, is making it possible for Suffolk students to travel abroad and explore other cultures. Dan Phillips, BSBA ’73, and his wife, Cathy, are providing stipends so that students who work unpaid internships can advance their career opportunities without worrying about basic expenses. The Demakeses—a quintessential Suffolk family—are supporting scholarships for students in financial need from their home city of Lynn, Massachusetts. An anonymous $2 million gift will support Suffolk’s Center for Women’s Health & Human Rights as it reinvigorates the path-breaking book Our Bodies, Ourselves for a whole new generation of students and others through a new online platform. And global financier Spencer Lake, BSBA ’84, is giving back to a Business School and a University that “believed in him when few others did.”

Our three new alumni board presidents—Dahlia Ali, JD ’15; Rachel Deleveaux, MEd ’07; and Linda Jones, MBA ’02, all women of color—are focused on opening doors for current students as well as alumni, and bring important perspectives and experience to that end.

Faculty and staff members across this University are sharing the lasting, life-changing gift of mentorship. That comes through boldly and clearly in the voices of students in English Professor Elif Armbruster’s First-Year Seminar—they fondly refer to her simply as “Armbruster.” Or Professor Jeremy Levine’s film students, who are being pushed and challenged “to create a rhythm of ideas and emotions” using filmmaking tools to tell stories that matter.

As we launch the first spring edition of the Suffolk University Magazine—bringing the publication to twice a year—I am filled with excitement about all that Suffolk will continue to accomplish in the future. The incredible commitment to support our students that I see every day from members of our campus and alumni community seeds the success of our graduates. And when our students and graduates succeed, we have succeeded as a University.

Marisa J. Kelly

Dina Singh’s Suffolk story included semesters in Madrid and at The Washington Center. The Class of 2022 honors student, dance captain of Fusion Dhamaka, and law major finished last fall, and is now working with a prominent immigration law firm in Boston.
A ‘Terrific Fit for Suffolk’

DR. EDIE SPARKS WILL BRING A PASSION FOR ACCESS AND EXCELLENCE AS NEW COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES DEAN

By Erica Noonan

Dr. Edie Sparks, an innovative leader with a passion for expanding access to education “could not be more aligned” with Suffolk’s mission, says University President Marisa Kelly.

Sparks—who will assume her post as the next dean of the College of Arts & Sciences on Aug. 1—makes the cross-country jump from the University of the Pacific, in Stockton, California. As vice provost and a history professor there, she championed the liberal arts—and the skills of engagement, problem solving, and citizenship that they promote—at a time when, she says, they are more crucial than ever.

“These things are key to how we prepare future citizens of the world to address 21st century problems,” says Sparks, a historian who earned her bachelor’s degree in English literature from the University of California, Berkeley, and graduate degrees in history from the University of California, Los Angeles.

“The fire in my belly is expanding access to education,” she says. “I know that a college education is one of the greatest democratizing forces in United States history. The transformational experience that Suffolk provides through its mission of access, its urban location, and its commitment to experiential and community-engaged learning is really exciting for me. It’s a really good match.”

A scholar specializing in American women’s entrepreneurship and business history, Sparks has a longstanding interest in societal barriers to success. In 2017 she published Bus Lady, chronicling three pioneering women in the mid-20th century who became breakthrough entrepreneurs in male-dominated business environments.

Suffolk Provost Julie Sandell notes that Sparks has helped to develop and implement programs and curricular innovations to support first-year students and advance global learning, and prioritized work that supports diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in her personal and professional life. “She will be a terrific fit for Suffolk with these priorities,” Sandell says.

To learn more about Suffolk’s newest dean, see www.suffolk.edu/sparks

Current vice provost at the University of the Pacific, Dr. Edie Sparks will become dean of the College of Arts & Sciences on August 1.

The Princeton Review named Sawyer Business School a 2022 Best Business School for the fourth consecutive year. The school also earned a spot on its list of 2022 Top 50 MBA Online Programs.
This winter, Jenni-Rose DiCecco, BS ’21, became Suffolk’s all-time leading scorer in women’s basketball, with 1,723 career points.

**Noteworthy**

**Spring 2022**

**A Window on Washington**

**SUFFOLK’S WASHINGTON SEMINAR GIVES STUDENTS AN INSIDE LOOK AT HOW REAL PEOPLE BUILD CAREERS AND NAVIGATE THE SHIFTING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE**

By Andrea Grant

“Y ou need to know who you are and why you want to do this—even if it’s as simple as a wrong you want to right or a broader social question you want to understand better.”

That’s what campaign and media strategist (and Obama administration veteran) Roger Fisk, BA ’94, MSP ’00, wants students to consider as they embark on political careers. Fisk shared lessons learned from his own path in a candid Zoom call that kicked off Professor Christina Kulich’s January Washington Seminar, an immersive course that gives students a feel for life inside the Beltway.

But what if you’re not sure you want to enter the political fray? Political science major Haley Donovan, Class of 2023, loves politics and wants to make a difference, but she has concerns about working in a hyper-charged, hyper-partisan environment. The weeklong series of intimate virtual meetings showed her how real people build careers, balance their lives, and navigate the ever-changing political landscape.

Students asked Fisk for career tips; discussed voting rights and election management with former Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar; dove into polling data with Political Research Center Director David Paleologos; and met with diplomats, journalists, policy analysts, and other insiders.

Now, instead of a binary choice—run for office or find another field altogether—Donovan has options. “I can see myself working in the nonprofit sector like our speaker from the United States Institute of Peace, or in education,” she says. “Maybe that’s how I’ll make my impact.”

Princess Margaret. Ronald Reagan. Margaret Thatcher. Those are just a few—only a few, mind you—of the global notables that Suffolk alumnus Edward “Ed” McDonnell, BSBA ’59, HDCS ’84, met over the course of a 55-year career in the food and beverages industry.

McDonnell has lived and worked in London, Brazil, and Asia. Because that international career has meant so much to him, McDonnell endowed a travel scholarship fund that provides financial assistance for Sawyer Business School students to travel abroad. Since McDonnell established the fund a quarter of a century ago, more than 300 McDonnell scholars have had the opportunity to explore the businesses and cultures of other countries.

“The more you understand people from another country, the more they’ll understand you,” he said at a November 2021 event celebrating his newly published memoirs, *Prep A Window on Washington*.

Prepare Yourself to Be Lucky. President Marisa Kelly praised McDonnell for his extraordinary generosity, and presented him with an album of thank-you notes from dozens of past travel scholarship recipients.

McDonnell is so committed to creating life-changing global experiences for others that he will make a legacy gift supporting the scholarship fund through his estate plans. It’s a way for his legacy to keep supporting Business School students for decades to come—something he encourages other alumni to consider in their estate planning.

“Anyone who wants a high-impact legacy—it’s worth it to make an estate gift to Suffolk because of the difference you can make,” he says.

To learn more about Planned Giving opportunities at Suffolk University, visit suffolk.giftplans.org

Have Scholarship, Will Travel

**AFTER HIS GLOBE-TROTTING CAREER, BUSINESS SCHOOL ALUMNUS EDWARD MCDONNELL IS MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR STUDENTS TO SEE THE WORLD**

By Ben Hall

Photographs from left: Getty Images, Michael J. Clarke (3)

National Jurist magazine named

**Aubrie Souza, JD ’22, a “Law Student of the Year.”**

One of 10 U.S. students honored, she helped create a Turbo Tax-style mobile app for litigants who lack attorneys.
Diana Gastelum, Class of 2022, is a climate changer: The environmental science major published her research on how Boston’s most at-risk communities can use microgrids to deal with sea-level rise and severe-weather impacts. Read more in Climate Xchange at http://bit.ly/wslpmRW
Paying It Forward

WITH THEIR NEW SCHOLARSHIP, CATHY AND DAN PHILLIPS, BSBA ’73, MAKE UNPAID INTERNSHIPS SOMETHING MORE STUDENTS CAN AFFORD

By Jon Gorey

Internships are the ideal complement to a college education, introducing students to real-life work experiences and real-world career connections outside the classroom.

The catch? About 40% of internships are unpaid, according to a 2021 National Association of Colleges and Employers survey.

While working for free may be a traditional way to gain experience, it’s a luxury many students can’t afford if they lack financial support—or a free place to live. After all, it’s hard to hear opportunity knock at your door when the landlord is pounding on it, demanding rent.

That’s why Cathy and Dan Phillips, BSBA ’73, have funded a new scholarship program that provides stipends for Suffolk students who work unpaid internships. The biannual scholarship ranges from $2,500 to $3,000, and helps eligible students cover basic expenses while they work without a paycheck.

“Both of us came from low income families,” says Dan Phillips, who had to work multiple jobs to pay for college. “Although it was challenging doing that and also keeping up with the academics, it turned out to be a rewarding experience that served me well in life.”

Phillips, who would go on to found Phillips DiPisa, a successful national executive search firm serving healthcare and life sciences organizations (from which he recently retired after 27 years), hopes the stipends can help students explore career opportunities they wouldn’t otherwise be able to pursue.

“Cathy and I both support the idea of students getting internships to help them leave school with more than just the academic experience,” Phillips says. “We wanted to make sure that students who don’t necessarily have the sort of connections or economic means to take an unpaid internship—because they might be coming from a family situation where even going to college is a struggle financially—have that same opportunity.”

Suffolk Law’s legal tech program has been named No. 1 in the nation (again!) by prelaw Magazine, which also featured Suffolk Law on its Top 25 Most Innovative Law Schools list.
At the 2021 NCAA Division III championships, Matyas Csiki-Fejer, Class of 2022, became the first All-American cross-country runner in Suffolk history.

911, What’s Your Emergency?

By Andrea Grant

T}reating 911 calls is a life-or-death job. Suffolk University Sociology & Criminal Justice Professor Jessica Gillooly studies how the descriptions that dispatchers provide to police sometimes add to the danger.

“For example, call-takers often have seconds to decide between coding a mental health call as a ‘suicidal subject’ (high priority), ‘welfare check’ (lower priority), or ‘emotionally disturbed person’ (even lower priority). How they triage the call will shape the nature of the police response,” says Gillooly, whose research on call-taker alarmism led to a January Los Angeles Times op-ed. Gillooly herself has worked as a 911 call-taker. She recalls in the op-ed the night a veteran dispatcher stepped in to clarify key details of a report she had taken about a trespasser: “Was I sure that the caller didn’t know the man? Could he have been a maintenance worker? I didn’t ask the caller and I didn’t know.”

Answering those questions set the stage for a less tense encounter. The “suspicous person” turned out to be a member of the cleaning crew. Dispatchers have a responsibility to distill facts from callers who might be distressed or making assumptions based on bias, Gillooly says. Her work offers best practices to avoid escalating situations.

“Some call-takers are so concerned with maximizing responses that they discount the risks that come from hyping up the situation to police,” she says. “This can be tremendously dangerous.”

Researching the Reasons Behind Vaccine Hesitancy

MARKETING CLASS HELPS INTERNATIONAL AID AGENCY UNDERSTAND WHY THOSE REASONS CAN RUN DEEP

By Ben Hall

From religious beliefs and fear of government overreach to conspiracy theories involving 5G networks and microchips in the serum, the reasons for vaccine hesitancy range from the sincere to the plausible to the risible. What’s interesting is that those reasons—and who does or doesn’t want to get their jabs—can vary widely from country to country.

That’s what a graduate marketing class learned during the spring 2021 semester. As part of its second big project with Suffolk University’s Sawyer Business School, the international aid agency CARE asked students working with Professor Pelin Bicen to research vaccine hesitancy around the world. The goal? To help the agency better understand and address this reluctance in regions where it planned to expand its outreach.

Using online surveys in the various native languages, the class collected data from 1,100 people representing different segments of the global population, including Bangladesh, Greece, Guatemala, India, Panama, Russia, Thailand, and Turkey, as well as different groups within the United States, including Latinos, Lebanese, Congolese/DR Congo, and African Americans.

Close to home

For Jonathan Berakah, BS ’19, MSM ’21, the project was as much a history lesson about his parents’ native Democratic Republic of Congo as it was marketing research.

“I didn’t think there would be anything that would surprise me,” he says. “But the more I researched, the angrier I became. The things going on there were inhumane.” During the colonial era, for example, the government of Belgium’s King Leopold II would amputate the hands of Congolese children if their parents didn’t meet their rubber harvesting quotas—atrocities that created a deep-seated mistrust of government. “The more research I did, the more invested I became,” he says.

Using skills he learned in his graduate marketing classes, Berakah discovered that of all the groups the class researched, native Congolese and people of Congolese descent expressed the greatest level of vaccine hesitancy. And within that group, the most hesitant to embrace vaccines were conservative younger Congolese females with higher levels of education.

That’s the complete opposite of what Shanelle Scheppe learned. Scheppe, MSM ’21, grew up in Colombia. Her parents now live in Panama, so she decided to gather data there. Her conclusion? In Panama, it’s men who are more hesitant.

“There was a stark difference between women’s acceptance versus men,” Scheppe says. “I was surprised at the open-mindedness of Panamanian women to be less hesitant and more accepting.”

Schepp says she enjoyed using her marketing skills on behalf of an “untraditional” client.

“Being able to work with a real-world organization was a great experience,” Scheppe says. “It was very satisfying to know that this work will help CARE help people they couldn’t have otherwise because they didn’t have enough visibility into the different countries’ attitudes and behaviors.”

Both Berakah and Scheppe turned this capstone experience into full-time jobs after graduation. Schepp now works at Kantar Consulting, where she uses marketing research to help companies understand what a COVID world will look like in five or 10 years. Berakah does market research for the data and market measurement firm Nielsen.

As for all the data the class compiled, CARE has been using the information over the past year and, in fact, reached out to some of the students to help them learn even more about certain populations.

“The research the students provided helped us craft messages we believed might overcome barriers to vaccination and influence vaccine uptake,” says Jessica Kirkwood, associate vice president at CARE. “We are so grateful to them for providing such rich and useful data to support our efforts.”

CARE continues its relationship with the Business School’s Marketing Program. This spring, another graduate marketing class is researching the impact of climate change on women around the world.
LESSONS IN

EMPATHY

AND

EMPOWERMENT

IN HER POPULAR FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR EXPLORING #METOO MEMOIRS, PROFESSOR ELIF ARMBRUSTER HELPS STUDENTS “FIND THEIR VOICES AND GET COMFORTABLE USING THEM.”

By Beth Brosnan

T he start of the school year usually finds English Professor Elif Armbruster abuzz with excitement. After all, there are few places she’d rather be than the classroom.

That epiphany first struck Armbruster as a college undergrad, somewhere around line 254 of Milton’s Paradise Lost (“The mind is its own place, and in itself/ Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Paradise”). Sitting in her dorm room, she is read and write and teach. I have to “I thought, ‘All I want to do with my life

Heaven”).

Paradise Lost

around line 254 of Milton’s

“People were truly being heartless,” she recalls, pointing to the death threats that Christine Blasey Ford received following the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings. “There was such a pervasive lack of empathy in the culture.”

Studying first-hand accounts

The hearings left Armbruster determined to create a setting where students could explore the historical, cultural, and political context of the issue. In September 2019, she launched a First-Year Seminar course devoted to #MeToo memoirs by authors like Roxane Gay, Janet Mock, Grace Talusan, and Jessica Valenti, who chronicle the impact of sexual assault on their lives.

Three years later, Rebel Girls and Nasty Women: Literary Activism and the #MeToo Movement is among the College of Arts & Sciences’ most popular First-Year Seminars. And now it’s the basis for a powerful essay Armbruster contributed to the new anthology #MeToo and Literary Studies: Reading, Writing, and Teaching About Sexual Violence and Rape Culture.

Mary Holland, the book’s co-editor and a professor of English at SUNY New Paltz, praises Armbruster for creating a comprehensive teaching model that others can follow. “I’ve moved and impressed by her class,” Holland says, “and deeply happy to know that professors like Elif are out there doing this kind of work.”

Creating a safe space

Her students universally—and fondly—call Armbruster by her last name. They call her course life-changing.

“Armbruster didn’t just teach us about the required readings,” says Lauren Muro-Belandria, Class of 2023. “She taught us about more valuable things, like recognizing our strengths and purpose in life.”

“She created a safe space where we could open up and talk about issues that we are living through,” adds Mack Brown, Class of 2023.

To create that safe space, Armbruster lays a strong foundation, providing students with historical context and readings on the women’s movement, as well as definitions and statistics on sexual misconduct and assault from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

She also takes steps to “set a tone and make sure we’re comfortable talking about heavier material,” says Brown, an English major from Belmont, Massachusetts. That material can be devastating. In her memoir The Body Papers, Grace Talusan documents how she was sexually abused by her grandfather, beginning at age 7. “For most of my life, I believed I was a bad person because something bad had happened to me,” she writes.

As Armbruster observes, that’s an all-too-common side effect of sexual assault. Sharing their stories is a powerful first step for survivors, she says, enabling them to move from isolation and self-blame into a sense of community and empowerment.

For Abhi Larmore, Class of 2023, there was nothing abstract about Talusan’s memoir. A close relative of hers had recently been sexually assaulted, and when the assailant went on trial, Armbruster reached out to Larmore and provided support. “She really expanded my understanding of what my college education could be,” says the political science major from Wilmington, Delaware.

“She creates such a safe learning environment, you feel able to ask questions, to learn and grow. That’s a real insight into who she is as a professor and as a person.”

Finding their voices

Armbruster assigns biweekly writing responses to all the readings, but instead of 12-point, double-spaced papers with 1-inch margins, she asks students to submit hand-written letters, to encourage greater immediacy. Her final isn’t an exam or a term paper but a creative project in which students are required to engage with all the assigned memoirs and additional readings, but are free to choose what form that project will take.

Muro-Belandria created a comic book featuring scenes from each of the memoirs for her final project. Another student designed a board game called “The Road to Equality.”

Still another stitched a dazzling pair of patchwork pants, with each individual square featuring images of women from advertising and pop culture.

“We literally didn’t have to stay between the lines,” Larmore says. “Traditional schooling can come with boundaries. But when you take those barriers down, you can allow more discovery.”

Helping students make such discoveries “is perhaps the most important work I can do,” says Armbruster. “I want them to find their voices and get comfortable using them.”

For her final project, Samantha Gelerman crafted a fabulously feminist pair of pants with patchwork images of women from advertising and pop culture.
When Tom Demakes, MBA ’13, informed his three sons—Elias, MBA ’12; Timothy, MBA ’13; and Andrew, MBA ’12—that they all needed to get master’s degrees if they wanted to continue working in the family business, they were not really surprised. Their father had long stressed the value of education as the best way to get ahead in life, no matter your age.

What did surprise them, however, was the news that their father, then in his mid-60s, would be joining them at Suffolk University’s Sawyer Business School. “They would sit on one side of the class, and I would sit on the other,” recalls Tom Demakes, president of Old Neighborhood Foods in Lynn, a meat-manufacturing company established in 1914 by his grandfather. “They didn’t want anyone to know that they were going to school with their dad,” he chuckles.

Father and sons not only all went on to earn their MBAs, but they also grew to admire their Suffolk professors and classmates. “It was a great opportunity for all of us to bond together and interact with other professionals,” says Andrew, director of operations for Old Neighborhood Foods. “We met a lot of wonderful people that we were able to learn from and network with.”

Tom—who got his start in the family business at age 5, sweeping sawdust from the factory floor—was struck by the students’ work ethic. “They were all working during the day and going to school at night,” he says. “Everyone was there to learn and grow as much as they could in order to educate themselves and go on to have a good future.”

Demakes took such a liking to one of those students, Jeremy Himura, MBA, MSA ’12, that he hired him as his company’s CFO. “I knew he was smart and hard working, and that was good enough for me,” he says.

Investing in the future

Now Tom Demakes and his family are investing in other smart, hard-working students. Last fall, they pledged $250,000 to create the The Demakes Family Undergraduate Scholarship, which will be awarded to undergraduate Business School students from Lynn who have financial need. “I want these students to continue their education, get good jobs, and become productive citizens in society,” Tom says. “That’s what the world is all about.”

“The Demakes family’s philanthropic support exemplifies their longstanding commitment to Lynn and their respect for the University’s mission,” says Sawyer Business School Dean Amy Zeng. “Their timely and generous gift will enable a number of students from Lynn to continue their educational journey here, while opening new opportunities for more students from Lynn to pursue a Suffolk education.”

And for decades, the Demakes family has supported local organizations in Lynn, including the Demakes Family YMCA, the Agganis Foundation, Girls, Inc., and Kipp Academy. “I believe that you have to keep paying it forward as much as possible,” Tom says. “No matter what you do, what counts is that you make a difference.”

GIVING THEIR ALL FOR SUFFOLK

TOM DEMAKES AND HIS THREE SONS EARNED THEIR MBAs TOGETHER. NOW THE FAMILY HAS ENDOWED A NEW SCHOLARSHIP TO BENEFIT BUSINESS STUDENTS FROM THEIR HOMETOWN OF LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS

By Tony Ferullo

It’s a very rewarding experience to give someone an opportunity to pursue their dreams.”

–Andrew Demakes

Brothers and Sawyer Business School classmates (from left) Timothy, Andrew, and Elias Demakes at Old Neighborhood Foods in Lynn, Massachusetts.

Opposite page: Marill and Tom Demakes.
Bruno Drummond, BSBA ‘03, MSA ’09, MST ’20, knows what it’s like to have to work for what you want. “Nothing was ever given to our family,” he recalls of his childhood growing up in Belo Horizonte, a city of close to 3 million residents in southeastern Brazil. “We had to fight for it.”

What his family did have was a deep belief in education. His parents were first-generation college graduates who worked tirelessly to send Drummond and his brother to private high school; they also helped fund college for six of his cousins. “They taught me that education is the only investment that doesn’t lose its fair market value,” he says.

Drummond made a significant investment in his own education when he decided to leave Brazil and transfer to Suffolk’s Sawyer Business School in 2001, shortly before the start of fall term. That big leap was made easier, he says, by the admissions officer who “moved mountains” for him, working with the registrar to organize his class schedule.

“That was the start of my Suffolk relationship,” he recounts. “Everywhere you go at Suffolk, there is someone who cares about you and your story.”

The 18 months Drummond spent completing his BSBA degree were often tough. He strove to improve his English while taking rigorous courses and supporting his young son. “It built my endurance,” he says.

Then, at the end of his senior year as he was preparing for his final exams, he received a call with the news that his father had passed away. “It had always been his dream to see his son graduate from college,” says Drummond, who flew home to be with family.

At this devastating time, with graduation in the balance, his Suffolk support system stepped up. His professors reassured him that he’d made the right choice and told him they’d work with him to ensure he would still graduate. From that moment, Drummond knew he’d found a second home.

“Suffolk is a safe harbor. It’s small enough to know everybody, but it’s big enough to make big life changes,” he says.

That sense of community led him back to Sawyer to earn a master’s degree in accounting. Just a year out he launched Drummond CPA, now Drummond Advisors, recognizing the need for an accounting firm specializing in businesses operating between the United States and Brazil. The firm provides legal, accounting, and tax advisory from seven global offices.

From the beginning, Drummond has made it a point to hire Rams and to collaborate with Professor Jodi Detjen, the academic director of Sawyer’s MBA program, to create immersive capstone projects for students (see sidebar). “He wanted to give back and do it in an academically sound way,” Detjen says.

After completing a second master’s degree in taxation, Drummond joined the Business School faculty as an adjunct instructor and steadily increased his philanthropic contributions. The Goncalves-Drummond Endowed Scholarship Fund is a particularly meaningful gift, which he established to honor his parents who so deeply valued learning. The inaugural scholarship was awarded in 2021 to Sawyer accounting students Owen Langone and Huong Ly.

“The Goncalves-Drummond Scholarship Fund is a particularly meaningful gift, which he established to honor his parents who so deeply valued learning. The inaugural scholarship was awarded in 2021 to Sawyer accounting students Owen Langone and Huong Ly.,”

Building Knowledge And Networks

Immersive consulting is a vital component of the Sawyer Business School experience. Over the years, undergraduates and graduate students have consulted for a wide range of companies and organizations, including a local coffee chain, a cannabis/robotics startup, a global engineering firm, an international ad agency, and many more.

Bruno Drummond knows how important those opportunities are. That’s why he and his company, Drummond Advisors, have established a partnership with the Business School to fill the pipeline with international companies and organizations that have consulting assignments. One of the first companies MBA students worked with was Logbank, a Brazilian fintech company that wanted to better understand the regulatory landscape in the U.S. market.

“Bruno knows his customers’ needs well, which makes it easy to match them with our students,” says Professor Jodi Detjen, MBA program director. “Having this formal partnership means our students can work with a range of sectors. From an experiential education standpoint, it’s invaluable.”

—Ben Hall

Why I Give

Bruno Drummond, BSBA ’03, MSA ’09, MST ’20, founder of Drummond Advisors, is a three-time Suffolk graduate and adjunct instructor with a deep commitment to philanthropic leadership and to engaging with Suffolk students and graduates. He is a global entrepreneur, teacher, and mentor who inspires and hires. A member of the Sawyer Business School Dean’s Cabinet, he consistently seeks new ways to give back to an institution that, he says, “has given me so much.”

By Danna Lorch
‘THIS SCHOOL IS FOR EVERYBODY’

SUFFOLK’S THREE NEW ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENTS SHARE A COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION, AND TO GIVING BACK TO A UNIVERSITY THAT HELPED GIVE THEM THEIR START
By Alyssa Giacobbe

Rachel Deleveaux, MEd ’07
President, College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Board of Directors

Remarkable times call for remarkable leaders, and this year Suffolk can boast three exceptional alumni board presidents. For the first time in University history, each board is led by a woman of color, each of whom brings a high level of professional experience to their role, as well as a zeal for energizing and expanding connections between alumni. Get to know them here.

Rachel Deleveaux, MEd ’07
President, College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Board of Directors

Rachel Deleveaux has, in the words of a colleague, “dedicated her life to breaking class ceilings.”

A career diversity, equity, and inclusion strategist, she currently serves as assistant vice president for organizational culture, inclusion, and equity at Simmons University and has been a member of the College of Arts & Sciences Alumni Board of Directors since 2019.

“I was initially interested in joining the board because I felt like I had a different perspective,” she says. “I come from a socioeconomically disadvantaged background, and I’m a Black woman. But what caused me to stay involved is that the board has really responded, respected, and made room for me.”

Last summer, she was elected to the role of CAS board president, the first-ever Black woman to hold the role—and precisely why she was inspired to run for it. “Historically, boards have been predominantly white,” she says. “They’ve been male-driven. I thought it was important for alumni to see not only diversity in the board but also a board that supports diverse leadership.”

As president, one of her goals is to increase alumni giving. That begins, she says, by encouraging board members themselves to give more, and to give earlier (Deleveaux is herself a member of Suffolk’s Summa Society of leadership donors), “because I don’t think you can ask anything of anyone that you’re not doing yourself,” she says. By January, more than 90% of board members had already given for the year.

Dahlia Ali, JD ’15
President, Sawyer Business School Alumni Board of Directors

Linda Jones, MBA ’02
President, Sawyer Business School Alumni Board of Directors

Linda Jones saw joining the Sawyer Business School Alumni Board of Directors as a way to repay—and pay forward—the success she’d enjoyed as a Suffolk graduate.

“The minute I got my MBA from Suffolk, it seemed like the world opened up to me,” she says. “I wanted to give back.”

She’d spent several successful years climbing the ranks at companies like State Street Corporation, SunLife Financial, Bank of America, and Santander Bank before joining MIT as the University’s vendor program manager for information systems and technology; she knew she was capable of being a good leader and contributor. From the start, she’s brought her expertise in managing an organization to determine ways to better support current students as well as to help advance the careers of other alumni.

“My work in technology project management and banking is about asking, ‘What can we do to better serve the customers?’” she says. “I want to do the same thing for Suffolk. And as a Black woman, I thought it was important that people see diversity in leadership, too.”

After three years serving on the Business School’s alumni board, she ran for and was elected president on a platform of diversity and inclusion. That has meant making sure the board itself is as diverse and inclusive as possible and that it is constantly looking at “ways to make the message clear to students and alumni that this school is for everybody,” she says.

One of the first things Jones did as president was to ask her committee chairs to choose their successors. “Before, we weren’t looking at who we could help mentor and coach,” she says. “We were just seeing how things went. I wanted it to be a thoughtful process: Who are we empowering to move to the next level?”

In addition to encouraging a 100% giving rate from the board, she’s also brought in speakers to talk about diversity and inclusion, including Suffolk’s executive director of the Center for Career Equity, Development & Success.

“The pandemic has created some limitations in how we meet and collaborate, and so I’ve worked hard to mix it up,” she says. “I believe our message should come through loud and clear: It doesn’t matter where you’re coming from. You are being well served at this school.”
She also hopes to use her term to help expand the school’s outreach to include more and different students and to reconnect with inactive alumni. To that end, she has facilitated the CAS Board partnering with the other alumni boards.

“Together we’re thinking about the work we can do to support diversity and inclusion, and ensuring that we’re keeping a finger on the pulse of ever-changing needs,” Deleveaux says. “And, perhaps most importantly, to make sure that we have solid systems in place when we leave.”

Dahlia Ali, JD ’15
President, Law School Alumni Board of Directors

Unlike many of her fellow members of the Suffolk University Law School Alumni Board of Directors, Dahlia Ali—an associate in the Chicago office of Paul Hastings, focusing on tax law—is not based in the Northeast. That’s why she decided to get involved in the first place.

“I wanted to bring a geographical diversity, especially as someone who moved to the Midwest with zero connection to the Midwest,” she says. “I thought being on the board might help open doors to Suffolk students and alumni here and elsewhere, and offer an example to other alumni of how you can be very involved from a distance.”

After a year spent as the board’s clerk, she found she’d grown extremely invested in the work, particularly in establishing a scholarship for first-generation students. She decided to run for president to provide continuity among a group that had made great strides, and to make sure the scholarship was successfully endowed.

“As a first-generation graduate student, seeing that through was really important to me,” she says. As president, she wants to highlight the idea that the board serves not only alumni but also current and prospective students—that its work is for everyone. “One of my favorite stories is when one of our current board members called a student to congratulate her on her acceptance,” Ali says. “The prospective student hadn’t actually read her acceptance email yet! That’s how active and involved we are.”

She also works with different student organizations across the Law School to be a resource for speakers, volunteers, and professional connections.

“If we don’t have someone within the actual board to meet their needs, we utilize our network to get them what they’re looking for,” she says. The idea: Make students and alumni very aware of the power of the Suffolk network into which they can tap.

“I went to Dubai for a summer internship and I was so pleasantly surprised to meet four or five working attorneys from Suffolk,” she says. “The Suffolk network is just so expansive.”

In addition to the three school-based alumni boards, dedicated alumni volunteers are leading alumni affinity groups.

Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD) Council
Suffolk University’s GOLD (Graduates Of The Last Decade) Council comprises undergraduate alumni of the last decade to serve young alumni and student communities through involvement with Undergraduate Admissions, Career Services, the Alumni Association, and the Annual Fund.

Suffolk University
Black Alumni Network
The Suffolk University Black Alumni Network (SUBAN) celebrates and serves current and future Black alumni through mentoring, philanthropy, volunteerism, and events.

Women in Leadership
Alumnae Network
The Suffolk Women in Leadership (WIL) Alumnae Network advocates for the professional and personal development of Suffolk’s women graduates. WIL provides resources and programming for both graduates and current students.

Suffolk University
Veteran Alumni Committee
The Suffolk University Veteran Alumni Committee (SUVAC) celebrates and serves student and alumni veterans through events, mentoring, philanthropy, and volunteerism.

The Suffolk PRIDE (LGBTQ+) Alumni Network will launch in 2023

For more information on how to get involved with alumni boards and affinity groups, please email alumni@suffolk.edu.

Beyond the Boards

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Mission Driven | Spring 2022

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suffolk.edu
On January 6, 2021, attorney Alyse Constantinide, BA ’07, JD ’10, became a witness to history. The next day, she made history when she arraigned the first defendants charged in the Capitol attack.

By Shalene Gupta
Photography by Kelvin Bulluck
“What’s great about America, and why I liked working for the U.S. government, is that we can have a difference of opinion,” Constantinide says now. “But that also means we respect the process. And what I saw that day was an utter disregard, not just for the process but for the entire U.S. government system as a whole.”

‘Everything was happening so fast!’

Constantinide was sent to Capitol Hill because of events that took place the previous June.

Following the murder of George Floyd, protests broke out all over Washington, D.C. So did looting. After the D.C. police were accused of arresting protesters and charging them with looting without probable cause, Constantinide and other members of her team were recruited to serve as special legal advisors during future First Amendment protests—including the January 6 Stop the Steal rally.

Her office had been briefed by the D.C. police to expect a “rowdy crowd” that day, but as she and a police lieutenant drove toward Capitol Hill, she could see that was a serious understatement. At that point, several thousand people were making their way from the rally at the Ellipse up to the Capitol grounds.

“Everything was happening so fast,” Constantinide says. “We were trying to get up to the secured area, but there was a sea of people everywhere. They were all amped up, holding signs, and yelling. Someone hit our hood. It was just completely out of control.”

When Constantinide finally arrived at the Capitol building, she found chaos. Hordes of people were scaling the scaffolding, banging on the windows, and breaking down the doors. They were attacking police officers and yelling obscenities at them. With mounting dread, she realized the police didn’t have the reinforcements they needed to hold back the rioters, much less to arrest and charge them.

“This is not a local police matter,” she told her boss by phone.

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S
pencer Lake’s path to the highest echelons of global finance began in an unlikely spot: the cab of a Budweiser delivery truck, traveling back roads around Rock Springs, Wyoming.

There are many routes to success. Lake’s would lead him from Rock Springs to Suffolk University in Boston and then to Manhattan, Hong Kong, and London, where he scaled the ladder at leading investment banks including JPMorgan Chase and Merrill Lynch. At HSBC, one of the world’s largest financial institutions, he led the team that helped Greece restructure its 260-billion-euro debt, ran the markets division globally, and rose to become vice chairman of global banking and markets. Today he’s a co-founding partner in a $130 million venture capital fund focused on fintech.

Lake was just 21 when he found himself behind the wheel of that Budweiser truck, but he’d already done a lot of living. He’d grown up on a small island off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada, where his parents ran one of the province’s largest and most successful fishing companies. The Lake Group had ocean-going trawlers that fished the Grand Banks, multiple processing plants, and distribution chains in both Canada and the U.S.

It was expected that Spencer, the oldest boy in a family of five children, would one day run the business. “He was like a little made man,” jokes his older sister, Sarah Lake. He was also a born prankster, adds younger sister Suzanne Lake Giles—“funny, playful, and stubborn as hell.” “A total hellion,” agrees Sarah.

At age 15, like all the Lake children, he was sent off to boarding school in the U.S., a rude shock for a teenage boy used to island life and a large, boisterous family. He excelled at sports, scraped by in the classroom, and moved on to Clarkson University in upstate New York to study engineering. There, he admits, engineering often took a back seat to partying, and after two years “it was suggested I might take some time off to find myself.” That search took him first to Iceland,

By Shalene Gupta
Photography by David Woolfall
where he worked in a fish-packing plant, and then to South Africa, where he worked as a welder and a door-to-door salesman. By his own admission, Lake was “starting to bottom out.” He felt far from home and family, and far from the life he once imagined he might lead. And by now, there was no family business to fall back on. The Newfoundland commercial fishing industry was collapsing, done in by declining fish stocks and mounting debt. Major companies like the Lake Group were nationalized, and the family sold its holdings for pennies on the dollar, leaving them with virtually nothing.

After his South Africa jobs ended, on a whim Lake followed a friend to Wyoming, where he landed a job driving a Budweiser truck. He was good at his job—so good that one night his manager invited him to dinner in his Winnebag home in the distributorship parking lot and told him that if he kept it up, one day Lake might have a shot earlier. He crammed two-and-a-half years’ worth of courses into 18 months while working as a bartender, and graduated in 1984 with a degree in finance and marketing. He went on to get an MBA at NYU, and joined JPMorgan Chase in 1987.

Suffolk also taught Lake something not found in the curriculum: Look at the person, not just the résumé. If hard times offer hard-won lessons, Lake was ready to learn his. He quit his truck-driving job and moved to Boston, where his parents had settled, and began applying to colleges. With his checked résumé, most schools wouldn’t give him the time of day—until he sat down with an admissions officer at Suffolk.

“Suffolk was the one place that said, ‘We think you’ve learned a lesson. We think you’re ready to apply yourself,’” Lake says. He took the opportunity and ran with it. Enrolling in the Business School, he crammed two-and-a-half years’ worth of courses into 18 months while working as a bartender, and graduated in 1984 with a degree in finance and marketing. He went on to get an MBA at NYU, and joined JP Morgan Chase in 1987.

Look at the person, not just the résumé

Although Lake never became an engineer, he still thinks like one. He sees banking as an engineering problem, and looks for ways to build structures that will solve problems in banking and create success stories.

“I’ve never met someone like him,” says Marc Murphy, CEO of the Irish fintech firm Fenergo, now valued at over $1 billion. “He can see the way the market is going—the problem and the solution.”

A few years after he joined HSBC, Lake was asked to become the global head of capital markets, a new group that encompassed eight different financing businesses that had never been bundled together before. “That reflects not only the trust that HSBC had in him, but also the vision that Spencer had about what needed to be done,” says Roger Thomson, who worked with Lake at HSBC for a decade. Lake created a business division that generated $11 billion in revenue, with 4,000 employees operating out of 65 countries, and helped make HSBC’s capital markets team No. 1 in the world for several consecutive years.

In 2016, HSBC went through a leadership change. Lake was among those in the line of succession to become CEO, but when the firm went in a different direction, Lake understood that his time was up. “That was a catalytic moment for me, and I think about it all the time,” he says. A generous supporter of the Sawyer Business School, he is a member of the Dean’s Cabinet, and has hosted Suffolk events in London.

In 2019, Lake joined two other venture capitalists to raise a $130-million fund and form Element Ventures. They invest in technology solutions that enable all of us to go from here to there with just a click,” Lake says. “In everything, that’s what I look for: simple changes that make life better.”

In 2020, Lake joined two other venture capitalists to raise a $130-million fund and form Element Ventures. They invest in technology companies that make it easier and safer for people to bank. One of their latest investments is in a company that ties a person’s identity and password irrevocably to bitcoin as soon as they buy it, so it’s impossible to lose even if a computer or hardware storing the bitcoin gets lost.

Lake knows a thing or two about finding what’s been lost, about what success looks like and finding the right road to get there. “There are no short cuts,” he says. “I’d like to be known as the guy who really cared about his people and his business, who rolled up his sleeves and worked hard.”
When Boston’s new mayor Michelle Wu announced in early December her decision to move people living in tent encampments at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard into nearby transitional housing, she stressed the city would deploy a “public health and housing-first approach.” The goal: Develop a sustainable strategy so that those living in tents would no longer need to return.

As many as 140 people were living in the encampment, most of them contending with addiction, mental illness, or both. Over the next few weeks, city teams vacated individuals from the area—an effort blasted by some homeless advocates as intimidating and reckless, and praised by others who felt the city had to take humane action before winter arrived.

Meanwhile, an interdisciplinary team of Suffolk University faculty—all women, and experts in law, policy, sociology, criminal justice, and related disciplines—and several likeminded researchers and social workers were following the mayor’s moves closely. The group had first joined forces in early 2021 under the banner of the Women and Incarceration Project (WIP) to oppose construction of a new women’s prison in Massachusetts. This time, the group came out in support of Wu’s Mass and Cass plan, as the first of many steps needed to break the cycle that underlie homelessness and incarceration.

What was needed, the group argued, is an approach that addresses the fundamental human rights issues that underlie homelessness and incarceration. WIP members met with public officials. They wrote op-eds. They published resources outlining what a safe move from the encampment could look like. Any housing plan, they argued, must include more than just a roof overhead. It must also provide the support needed to rebuild relationships, manage healthcare, and pursue educational and work goals.

Above all, the Suffolk professors stressed, the formerly homeless need to know they’re not one small mistake away from eviction.

**LIVING ON A KNIFE’S EDGE**

Susan Sered, chair of Suffolk’s Sociology and Criminal Justice Department, understands how minor missteps can cascade into catastrophic outcomes—particularly for women.

Consider the case, she says, of a woman living in transitional housing who has no car but must travel miles to meet with her probation officer. Should she beg a ride from her abusive ex-partner who is still using opioids, putting her safety and sobriety at risk? Perhaps she’ll be forced to trade sexual favors for the bus fare that amounts to almost one-tenth of her monthly disability income. Or she could skip the meeting, triggering an automatic revocation of her parole.

Any of these options could erode the progress she’s made to get her life and family relationships back in order, and send her back into the vortex of the criminal justice system.

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Sered says these kinds of impossible choices are so common among the women she studies that whenever she provides an incentive for involvement, they always request the same thing: a transit pass. Such a basic need is easily overlooked, but addressing it is key to helping those who live on the knife’s edge between independence and institutionalization.

“On the face of it, the tent encampment at Mass and Cass is not a women and incarceration issue,” Sered says. “But when you dig a little deeper, you find out that many of those women have standing warrants and open cases. So in the process of moving them out, some of them were actually whisked off to the counties in which they have open cases.”

Sered is one of the co-founders of the Women and Incarceration Project, which seeks to educate policymakers, journalists, and the general public on issues affecting the 1.2 million women under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Between 1980 and 2019, the number of incarcerated women jumped by more than 700% nationally, according to The Sentencing Project, a D.C.-based think tank.

“We believe that empirical research is a powerful tool for opposing the U.S. epidemic of incarceration,” the group states on its website.
Incarcerated women also report significantly higher rates of abuse, chronic illness, and mental health challenges than incarcerated men and nonincarcerated women. “What people find most surprising is that almost all incarcerated women have been victims of violence in their lives,” Sered says. “And for women, the strongest predictor of incarceration later in life is to have been a victim of childhood sexual abuse.”

WIP includes transgender women in its research, Agigian says, “because trans women go through the same kinds of life experiences as any other women, and may be even more likely to have traumatic experiences and be victimized than other women.”

**An Incarceration ‘Policy Window’**

Massachusetts is an interesting state for a project like this to launch: While the growth rate for female imprisonment has been twice as high as that of men since 1980, over the last decade the Bay State has seen a steady decline in the number of incarcerated women. As of 2019, Massachusetts had the lowest incarceration rate of females in the country.

But Massachusetts is also home to MCI-Framingham, the second-oldest women’s prison in the U.S. When it opened in 1877, MCI-Framingham was regarded as a pioneering improvement over the carceral status quo, in which women who were jailed alongside men regularly faced violence and sexual abuse. Its early champions included feminist leaders like Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross.

But nearly 150 years later, the facility stands in disrepair, and in early 2020 the Massachusetts Department of Correction announced it would close the prison by 2024. State officials said they would build a new “trauma-informed” and “therapeutic” prison for women, at an estimated cost of $50 million—even though fewer than 200 women are currently incarcerated at MCI-Framingham.

WIP researchers saw this moment as an opportunity to lend their multidisciplinary expertise, and began advocating against the construction of a new women’s prison. Local activists with Families for Justice as Healing, a Boston-based grassroots organization, were already fighting back against the state’s proposed plan, holding rallies and filing transparency complaints.

Central to WIP’s case is the lack of evidence supporting the effectiveness of prison-based mental health or trauma treatment programs. Instead, the researchers argue that for a fraction of the cost both to incarcerate women annually and to construct a new facility, lawmakers could redirect resources to strategies actually proven to help, such as secure housing. They have also advocated for strategies that would release a large majority of the over 160 women currently held at MCI-Framingham under existing state policies, and for several pending bills in the Legislature that could decarcerate the state even further.

Rachael Cobb, chair of the Political Science & Legal Studies Department, and a political scientist involved in the project, calls this moment an incarceration “policy window” because so many people and institutions are talking about criminal justice from different perspectives—from police commissioners raising alarms about crime, to Black Lives Matter activists calling out patterns of systemic racism, to progressive district attorneys advocating for bail reform.

“We have an opportunity to get out there, because this is a time when op-eds can make a big difference.” Cobb says. “I think people are receptive to the kind of public airing of ideas and sharing of information about incarceration in a way they might not have been a few years ago.”

**Community-Based, Community-Inspired Solutions**

Many Americans have spent little time thinking about incarcerated women, even beyond watching Netflix’s award-winning comedy-drama *Orange Is the New Black*. WIP scholars say a lot of their time is spent trying to simply educate the public and correct misconceptions.

“Women who have criminal records really, really struggle to get jobs,” says Sered, who has been following the same cohort of women released from MCI-Framingham for more than a decade. While men with criminal records face barriers to employment too, they typically find success in jobs, such as furniture moving, that don’t involve client-facing work. Child care, education, and working with the sick and elderly are all typically female-dominated professions, but can be very hard for women with criminal records to access or re-enter.

Over the next year, WIP plans to disseminate its research further, and expand its work with more local community organizations, activists, and legislators.

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SOUNDING THE ALARM

SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR CARLOS MONTEIRO SHEDS LIGHT ON THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS AMONG CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

By Andrea Grant

The suicide rate for Massachusetts prison guards is more than four times that of the nation’s highest-risk demographic (men aged 25-44). To find out why, Suffolk University Sociology & Criminal Justice Professor Carlos Monteiro talked to correctional officers and their loved ones.

In 2016, the Massachusetts Department of Correction had a crisis on its hands—and it had nothing to do with its inmates. Instead, data showed unusually high suicide rates among its staff. Twenty correctional officers had died by suicide in the previous five years. The department sought answers from two Boston criminologists.

LIFE IN PRISON

Monteiro and his colleague, Northeastern University Professor Natasha Frost, had worked in Massachusetts prisons before. Like most researchers, their efforts were focused on incarcerated people. The harmful effects of institutionalization are well known and studied, Monteiro says. But researchers typically fail to see the detrimental impact on correctional officers (COs) working in those same conditions for large portions of their lives.

Frost and Monteiro began a multiyear study to help the Department of Correction better understand the profession’s challenges and identify possible solutions. They pored over police reports and interviewed relatives and friends of the officers who were classified as having died by suicide between 2010-2015, a group that ranged from new recruits in their early 20s to senior officers in their 60s. They also talked with current officers to gain insight into the family and work-life factors that may lead to crisis-level distress and even suicide among COs. The same themes emerged again and again.

“JUST TREAT OFFICERS AS PEOPLE, AS HUMAN BEINGS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO TALK TO PEOPLE AND ASK THEM HOW THEY’RE DOING—MANAGEMENT DOESN’T TALK TO STAFF UNLESS THEY’RE YELLING, BERATING, OR DISCIPLINING.”

— CO INTERVIEW

Long, stressful shifts take a physical and emotional toll, leading to a host of personal problems, from divorce to substance dependency and chronic health conditions. Officers exhibit high levels of post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety. Widespread negative perceptions of COs among the public and in the media, along with the forced overtime and staffing shortages brought on by the pandemic, add to the strain.

LIFELINES

COs play a critical role in rehabilitation. They get to know each inmate and are often in the best position to flag changes in behavior and personality for follow-up care. In airplane emergency instructions, caregivers are taught to put on their own oxygen masks first before they can help others. It’s the same with COs—when their needs are being met, they are in a better position to help the incarcerated people in their care. When they struggle, so does the system.

There are positives the Department of Correction can build on to change the culture. COs Monteiro interviewed described mentoring relationships within the profession. And many take pride in their ability to communicate well and de-escalate tense situations, essential skills for officers who don’t carry guns inside the prisons and can be outnumbered by 60 to 1 on a typical shift.

Changes like adopting the rotating schedules used by other 24/7 professions such as nursing and policing could make a world of difference to the officers, especially early in their careers.

Currently, the schedules are determined by seniority, with the newest officers working the least desired shifts including weekends. “They end up having some days off, but they are usually during the week, so those officers miss out on time with family and friends,” says Monteiro. When those ties are weakened it can be difficult to rebuild them, damaging the officers’ support networks. “It can wreck relationships, this schedule,” one correctional officer told him. “It would help morale to have a rotating schedule. Let the young guys off at least a weekend a month.”

Preventing issues from developing—and having an early warning system when they do—could help COs maintain better overall health and resiliency throughout their lives.

“When we began this work we wondered whether troubled people were self-selecting into this profession or if there is something about the job that triggers these problems,” Monteiro says. More than half a decade of work with COs has convinced him that there are destructive institutional and cultural issues at play. A new study will allow Frost and Monteiro to follow new recruits through their first years on the job to see if, how, and when working conditions affect their well-being. “The goal is to enhance our ability to identify risk factors and develop potential early interventions,” he says.

“THE STIGMA HAS TO GO AWAY BECAUSE IT’S A REAL THING—you can’t always be rough and tough. HAVE A LITTLE MORE CARE AND COMPASSION TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER. YOU DON’T HAVE TO LIKE THE PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH, BUT YOU HAVE TO RESPECT THEM AND RESPECT THAT WE’RE ALL DOING THE SAME JOB. WE ALL WANT TO GO HOME.”

— CO INTERVIEW

IF YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE IS HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE, PLEASE CALL THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE AT 800-273-8255.
Jeremy Levine is standing in front of his Production I class in Suffolk’s Samia Academic Center, showing an old black-and-white Buster Keaton comedy. “This is a film called Sherlock Jr.,” Levine tells the dozen or so students paying rapt attention to the silent movie. “He’s a film projectionist and—as Buster Keaton often does—he gets himself into some trouble here.”

On screen, Keaton literally walks into a movie, and then is forced to navigate a changing landscape as the film cuts to different scenes. He sits on a bench only for it to vanish, leaving Keaton sprawled on his back in a crowded streetscape. He steps off the curb and almost falls off a cliff. He peers over the cliff and suddenly finds himself surrounded by lions.

While Keaton’s experience is extreme, what happens to him happens to characters in every film we watch, as directors and editors cut to different camera angles and entirely new scenes, expecting the audience to follow. “There’s often a total physical displacement, and sometimes we move from one time period to another as well,” Levine, an assistant professor of communication, media, and journalism, tells his students. “In 1/24 of a second, we are transported in space and time. And we accept this—it just kind of washes over us as we’re watching film and TV. Why does this work?”

For the rest of the class, Levine deconstructs that question—challenging students to think about a medium they’ve grown up with and see it in new ways. It’s all in preparation for them to make their own films, and use the tools of writing, shooting, and, yes, editing to create their own unique stories.

“The biggest takeaway we want to consider is digging into the head of the character whose point of view we are in, asking what are they feeling in this moment in the story,” he says. “Your job as an editor is to flow with the audience and create a rhythm of ideas and emotions so the film almost becomes an extension of your viewers’ own thoughts and feelings.”

Levine heard about her story more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, while he was teaching classes at the nearby University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Most of the time, he admits, he and his partner and collaborator, Rachael DeCruz, spent their time on the couch “doomscrolling and being sad about the state of the world. We were kind of searching for a way out of it.”

For Levine, that meant searching for stories—and when he came across Oliver’s in a newspaper, he couldn’t resist it. Unable to find a working phone number for her, Levine and DeCruz decided to just drive out to meet her. “We literally walked into her convenience store while she was on the phone trying to get someone signed up for the vaccine,” Levine says. “They talked for three hours—an unnerving experience for Levine, who hadn’t had a conversation that long for a year—but by the end, he knew he’d found the star for his next film. “She is a force of nature,” he says enthusiastically. “She brings such light. We were immediately blown away by what she was doing.”

Within months, they had finished their short documentary, which follows Oliver as she wheedles, cajoles, and begs the residents of a town of 350 people to commit to taking the vaccine, accompanied by a jaunty roots music soundtrack.

“Beyond making a feel-good film about a determined woman, Levine and DeCruz are exploring how film accomplishes its art for the very first time. And yet, Levine isn’t just talking the talk. In his own 15-year career as an Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker and a two-time Sundance Institute fellow, he’s used cinematic tools to communicate big ideas about race, class, and politics in America. At the heart of every one of his films, however, is an emotional resonance with a character whom the audience comes to understand and identify with, causing them to see issues in new ways. His 2021 short film The Panola Project focuses on a Black woman named Dorothy Oliver, who lives in the tiny town of...

Panola, Alabama, and recently set out on a singular mission: to try to get all of her neighbors vaccinated.
Telling uncomfortable stories

Levine has been a storyteller from his earliest years growing up in a Jewish-Catholic family in Beverly, Massachusetts. He still has a cassette tape on which he recorded an interview with his Jewish great-grandmother for a Hebrew school assignment, detailing her experiences fleeing Russia under the cover of darkness to escape antisemitic pogroms. Discovering such a vital part of his family’s hidden past always stuck with him. “Her story would have been lost without recording it in some way,” he says. “It’s important to hold onto that and share it with others.”

While Levine was still young, his father quit his finance job to follow his passion: becoming a theme park reviewer, inspiring Jeremy to think he might one day become a writer himself. He also began getting into film, particularly the documentaries of Michael Moore, who found engaging new ways to tell complex stories to mainstream audiences. His political awakening came during a high school trip to Israel, when he witnessed discrimination against Palestinians. “I had always learned about the oppression of the Jewish people, and how it’s our responsibility not to let anything like this happen again, but then we were facing those people to live in this one area,” he says. “It felt like such a contradiction.”

The experience lit a fire under him to tell these kind of uncomfortable stories. At Ithaca College, he made his first film, Walking the Line, about violent vigilantes on the Arizona border trying to keep immigrants out—the flipside to his great-grandmother’s experience. He and fellow student Landon Van Soest were encouraged to tell the harrowing story by their professor, Ben Crane, who helped them hone the story and apply to festivals where the film was shown. “He really pushed us and treated us like working professionals,” Levine says. It’s something he now tries to emulate for his own students.

After graduation, he moved to New York, where he and Van Soest followed up their first film with Good Fortune, an Emmy award-winning film that interrogates the failure of foreign aid projects. At the same time, they founded the Brooklyn Filmmakers Collective, an organization dedicated to nurturing groundbreaking films, while also taking on editing and production work for other clients.

Searching for their next film, Levine and Van Soest heard about an alternative school in St. Louis started by a juvenile court judge to give young people who’d been kicked out of school another chance to earn their diploma. The filmmakers thought it might serve as a backdrop to explore the school-to-prison pipeline, “a set of policies that have pushed children, especially children of color, out of the classroom and into the criminal justice system,” Levine says.

Eventually, they decided to focus the film on a student named Daje who was struggling to turn her life around. “She had so much to say, with this charisma and stage presence that just stole the show,” Levine says. Along her path to graduation, she became pregnant with the child of a fellow student, Antonio, who was criminalized from a young age for stealing candy from a store, eventually landing in juvenile jail. As they filmed her journey, the filmmakers had to navigate the intense emotions Daje had to deal with in the face of trying experiences. “Something I also like to impart to my students is that we are humans first, interacting with other people—and of course we’re also filmmakers and storytellers,” he says. “But if you are experiencing tragedy and you are not engaged in that, then I don’t know that you should be making films.” Ultimately, their film For Ahlem won 11 festival awards, including eight for best documentary, and was featured on several top 10 film lists in 2017.

Mentoring student filmmakers

After a decade of producing client work to make ends meet, Levine decided to transition into teaching film as well as making it. “It seemed like the perfect vehicle, where I could do what I love to do, and also think with students about projects they found important,” he says. At Suffolk he now teaches two production classes, bringing his experience to bear on helping students direct, film, and edit their own documentary productions.

In addition to teaching students their way around the camera and sound equipment, Levine sees his real role as helping them discover their passion for storytelling. “If you don’t know what kind of stories are meaningful to you, then it doesn’t matter that you know all the ins and outs of the camera,” he says. “I work with students to explore their own history. What are the moments that left a mark on them? What are the issues that they care about?”

When Sayler Coryn Tyson, Class of 2022, came to Levine’s Production II class last fall, it was the first time she’d used an actual camera—because of the pandemic, all of her previous classes had been over Zoom. For her film, she wanted to focus on Boston’s tight-knit Italian community in the North End, where she lived herself. “There are such deep ties among the people there,” she says. “It feels like the whole city is being gentrified but the North End is staying the same.”

Ultimately, Tyson’s film, The Good Guy focused on a man named Richard, whose larger-than-life personality and tough-talking pride seemed to epitomize the neighborhood. As he told Tyson and her fellow filmmakers his story, Richard spoke candidly about relationships and custody issues. “I often felt overwhelmed with how much he shared with me,” Tyson admits. When it came time to edit the film, she and her partners struggled to figure out how to present him in all of his complexity, while not flinching from parts of his story that didn’t cast him in the best light.

Levine met with the group after class and had them write out every story thread they had on three whiteboards—putting into practice his lessons on editing to help them find the emotional heart of Richard’s story. Eventually, the filmmakers decided to present Richard’s story in his own words, overlaid with scenes of him creating an abstract soundtrack of rich Italian classical music—making the story visually captivating and uplifting, in stark contrast to the less savory aspects of his character.

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The People's Prosecutor

Answering a new challenge

Late in 2021, Constantinide made the difficult decision to leave government for private practice. “Being a prosecutor was my dream job,” she says. “But part of loving a job is knowing when to step away.” January 6 had taken its toll, and she was ready to tackle a fresh challenge in a field that had always interested her: the environment.

As a principal with Beveridge & Diamond, one of the country’s top environmental law and litigation firms, Constantinide conducts investigations and helps companies comply with environmental regulations. Having refocused her prosecutorial instincts in the environmental space, she guides organizations operating in competitive and complex markets—from social media and telecommunications, to manufacturing and transportation, among others—to build effective environmental compliance programs.

“Our clients want to do this work. We provide solutions that help them fulfill their regulatory obligations and pursue environmental stewardship initiatives,” she says.

Constantinide was also drawn to B&D to join a number of lawyers with high-level federal government experience to work on challenging legal matters in the areas of climate change, emerging contaminants, environmental justice, and environmental, social, and governance. The work has changed; the work remains the same—standing for the rule of law, to ensure that no one is above it. “I preach to my daughter all the time about our contract with society,” she says. “And that’s something I learned at Suffolk.”

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Breaking the Cycle

Some ideas they suggest to reduce incarceration include decriminalizing pain-reducing substances and sex work, and having well-trained and resourced medics and social workers on mobile crisis-intervention teams, instead of police, respond to mental health emergency calls.

Suffolk University Law School Professor Erin Braatz, who works in the areas of criminal law and penal reform, says one goal of the WIP effort is to expand the conversation about what exactly punishment should look like in the 21st century. “To even have a hearing in front of the legislature where people are invited to share their ideas on that question would be a success,” she says.

What makes the Women and Incarceration Project both unique and valuable, Braatz says, is that it is “based in the community, and attempting to reckon with a problem that can only truly be addressed through learning from and collaborating with members of that community.”

Then again, she adds, working together on a local level to respond to the needs of the community has long been a Suffolk strength. “I truly believe that real criminal justice reform can only be achieved through these types of local-level projects,” Braatz says. “For that reason, Suffolk is ideally positioned to achieve the goals of the community.”

The leaders involved in the effort say they feel lucky to work for a university that values this kind of public engagement, and that encourages scholarly activity beyond the realm of academic publishing. “This work is actually respected at Suffolk,” Spered says. “Nothing that I write is just for academic journals alone. We’re all really committed to getting this research out into the world.”

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The Stories That Matter

“He ended up loving the film,” Tyson says. “It gave me a lot of confidence that it’s possible for me to find this character and effectively tell his story and be proud of the outcome.” With Levine’s help, the group is working to submit the film to festivals.

Another student, Alec Maskell, Class of 2022, was inspired by Levine’s showing of Errol Morris’ iconic The Thin Blue Line, to meld nonfiction with a scripted reenactment scene in his group’s project: the story of a woman struggling to find herself after having to close down her family’s 100-year-old liquor store during the pandemic. “This idea of blending documentary and fictional narratives really inspired me,” says Maskell, who appreciated Levine’s hands-on experience in advising student projects. “He really pushed us and challenged everybody to produce to the highest standards possible.”

For his part, Levine has been excited by Suffolk’s diverse student body. “Some students are the first in their family to go to college; others are older students,” he says. “I’m impressed at the ways students are able to bring to light specific stories I have not heard so much but are clearly important to them.”

And he’s also continuing to develop his own new projects. One focuses on a wrongfully convicted man released from prison who is fighting to free his still-incarcerated mentor. Another tells the story of a former white supremacist struggling to come to terms with his violent past as he performs as a vagabond clown named Buttons. Like his past films, both use captivating central characters to explore complicated and unexpected stories of race and class in America. “We’re interested in telling these big societal stories,” he says. “But they also have to focus on somebody that the audience is going to want to spend time with for a while.”

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Mark Condon, MBA ‘86, is the owner of Phetikon Corporation in Rochester, New York. Maureen Garey Gordon, BS ’92, JD ’95, MBA ‘98, just expanded her real estate brokerage firm, MG & Associates Realty, to include a new office handling both residential and commercial real estate projects.

Lynn Williams Fitzpatrick, BS ’54, and her husband recently became the owners and impresarios of The Noble House Inn, located in Bridgeton, Maine. Located on Highland Lake, it’s a popular site for romantic weekends and wedding celebrations.

Angela Davis, MBA ‘95, was appointed assistant undersecretary for law enforcement and criminal justice for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She leads commissions on groundbreaking issues such as law enforcement statewide, body camera implementation, school resource officer guidance, and the missing persons task force. Davis was formerly employed at a college as an associate dean of students.

Michael Hamilton, BSBA ‘88, MBA ‘95, was promoted to chief information security officer at Visor in 2021.

Michael Brophy, MBA ‘95, has worked as a lecturer in the School of Business at Bridgewater State University since 2016. He is also the proprietor of Brophy Professional Genealogy & Heir Search.

Vin DiCiamm, BS ‘78, JD ‘81, created Affiliated Monitors (AM) in 2014 to provide independent monitoring and assessments of corporate compliance and ethics programs.

Ricky Pinciaro, BS ‘79, is president of the board of directors for the Newport Bay Club and Hotel in Newport, Rhode Island.

Robert Chmielinski, JD ‘92, MBA ‘94, is working with Suffolk law students in their mentorship program.

Ron Massa, MBA ‘99, opened the only Yogis faction franchise in Massachusetts. The franchise is part of Xponential Fitness (NYSE: XPOF), which also owns Club Pilates, Pure Barre, Row House, and CycleBar—the largest curator of boutique fitness in the industry.

Elizabeth Boume Griffins, DIP ‘99, exhibited photography and paintings in Scotland, France, and Norway, and was part of an online traveling exhibition on altered landscape throughout Europe. In October she became the director of the Spilsbergen Kunstneren/Arts Center located in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, where she curates a residency for artists interested in working in the high north, and exhibitions of artists working with images and issues related to the polar regions.

Christine St. George Conant, MSCJ ‘99, works for the State of Rhode Island as a supervisor for the Department of Children, Youth and Families in the family support unit.

Amy Joyce, BFA ‘00, is working with the American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston. American Ancestors/NEHGS is a leading resource for family history research, one of the oldest of its kind. She also volunteers for Roslindale Studios, which is an annual neighborhood art event.

Liam Martin, BA ‘00, is a contractor for Bugsen, serving on the Global Security Operations Center team where he conducts threat monitoring and supply chain protection for companies across the globe. He is applying for an international masters in Central and East European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies through the University of Glasgow.

Sara Wingerath-Schläger, MPA ‘04, serves as senior program director with Tuesday’s Children, running a trauma-informed mentoring program for military bereaved families.

Adrian Ross, MBA ‘06, returned to Canada to grow his company, ARE GROUP, an international management and public relations agency based in Montreal, Canada. The agency represents a roster of leading artists and has worked with a wide range of projects and live performance festivals and events globally.

Jorge Rivera Bujosa, BSBA ‘06, continues to work in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean in the architectural construction sector. He works with specialized construction products which are LEED accredited and sustainable.

Alexandra Horeanopolus, BFA ‘06, moved into a teardrop camper in 2021 and took her small business creative (g8000things) on a cross-country, reality-city adventure to find inspiration from the outdoors. Drawings and watercolors became prints, stickers, and pins as she explored national parks, state forests, and the myriad small towns and cities across the North American continent.

Megan Connor Tierney, MPA ‘07, is a mother of two and a major gift officer at the Umbrella Arts Center in Concord, Massachusetts. She also serves as board chair of the Boxborough Recreation Commission and sits on several other boards including the Wild Harbor Sailing Board and the grants committee at her children’s school.

Heather Morillo, MEd ‘09, earned a PhD in urban studies with an emphasis on education policy and linguistics in 2019 from Rutgers University. She moved to Virginia in 2021.
provided executive support to the director of Global Services. She previously supported the SVP of BCH Alliances and two EA positions at Boston Children's Hospital, focusing on professional development (formerly known as the Career Center), University’s Center for Career Equity, associate director for Suffolk’s Career Center, and recently stepped into the role as director of enrollment at Lasell University.

Natalie Breen, BSBA ’14, is the director of business development for Cummings Properties, overseeing a portfolio of 400-plus clients. She serves on the Medford, Massachusetts, Library Foundation Board and the Friends of the Chevalier Board of Directors.

Randy Grimshaw, BS ’14, resides in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, and works for the Hudson Valley Cancer Center as a hematologist/oncology physician assistant.

Adam Lauver, MA ’14, co-authored a study on vaccine hesitancy communication in the journal Vaccine: X. The article is titled “Influencing trust and vaccine uptake: Offering invitational rhetoric as an alternative to persuasion in pediatric visits with vaccine-hesitant parents (VHPs).”

Julia Martin, BA ’15, moved back to upstate New York at the beginning of the COVID shutdown. Adapting to starting a career amid a pandemic, he eventually put his marketing degree to use and is now a senior advertising manager for a cybersecurity company in Boston.

Talia Abrams-Kudan, BA ’17, MSCJS ’18, is now in her second year at Suffolk University Law School in May.

Matthew O’Brien, BA ’20, is continuing his education, pursuing a career in municipal government while also beginning a career amid a pandemic, he eventually put his marketing degree to use and is now a senior advertising manager for a cybersecurity company in Boston.

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Class Notes | Spring 2022

Michael Silva, BSBA ’10, along with his wife, traded their North End apartment for a house down on Cape Cod when work went remote. They enjoy the beach walks with their dog, Henry, and a slower pace of life.

Christopher Gray, BSBA ’11, was promoted to dean of enrollment at Lasell University.

Jenny Joseph-Hayle, MPA ’13, recently stepped into the role as director of the Mc Govern Institute for Brain Research at MIT.

Mikaela Trzesniowski, BS ’16, obtained her MSW in 2019 and is eligible for her license this spring. She is working at a private practice as a therapist.

Talia Abrams-Kudan, BA ’17, MSCJS ’18, is now in her second year at Suffolk University Law School in May.

Matthew O’Brien, BA ’20, is continuing his education, pursuing a career in municipal government while also beginning a career amid a pandemic, he eventually put his marketing degree to use and is now a senior advertising manager for a cybersecurity company in Boston.

Julia Baker, BA ’21, is a survey analyst for Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance and continues to teach dance.

Cheyvna Beckedorff, BS ’21, spent nearly a year working at an immigration and criminal defense law firm while applying to law school. She started her first semester as a law student at Massachusetts School of Law in the spring of 2022.

Noelle Breen, BA ’21, obtained a teaching job abroad in South Korea after graduation. In 2019, she studied in South Korea through the Suffolk University Study Abroad program. “Suffolk University wasn’t just a place I got my college degree from, it is a place that changed my life and will always hold a place in my heart.”

Harrison Dunn, BS ’21, is in his first year at New England Law School while working two part-time jobs.

Teresa Ogles, MSCJS ’21, began working as an in-home community-based services worker with Winchester Community Mental Health Center in May.

LeeAnn Sherman, MBA ’21, is a communications strategist at a change management agency in Toronto, Canada, which is expanding its services into the United States.
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