

WAHOOWA, Class of 2024!!!!

Welcome to UVA!! I'm sure many of you are either on Grounds or taking class from your hometowns, but nonetheless, YOU are the Class of 2024. This transition from high school to college for many of you has been unsettling, discouraging, and maybe even uneventful, and I'm sure it has been tough for many of you to feel like college students while behind a computer screen. But hey, I wanted to remind you all that all the students here at UVA welcome you and are here to support you in your first year of college. The Class of 2024 is welcomed and wanted here at UVA, and let me tell you...the amount of resources, support, and love that the UVA students, faculty, and staff have for you here and for the years to come are immeasurable. Don't be disheartened!!! With a pandemic going on right now, these are unprecedented times make it difficult to cultivate ideal lifestyles and solutions for your college life. However, I hope to once again welcome and encourage you all that UVA is here for you!

With my last year here and your first year entering UVA, I have to say, both of our classes are quite special to have been nudged to really take advantage of and cherish the UVA community. Having been at UVA for three years now, I wanted to share with you the fact that UVA has soooooooo many smaller communities and organizations under its umbrella that truly welcome all students and make them feel at home. One particular organization was a christian fellowship CIO here on Grounds called Grace Christian Fellowship. I entered college and hung out with my friends from high school. However, I entered college seeking to make more friends outside of my preexisting bubble. As you might very well have figured out by now, it was difficult to make new friends or to find there "perfect" group of people I wanted to surround myself with: I did not know where my interests were, I didn't know what kinds of people I wanted to surround myself with, I didn't know who I'd "vibe" well with, and I was also shy and scared to reach out to others. With literally so many awesome christian fellowship CIO's on Grounds, I began first by reaching out to various events and fellowships like Chi Alpha, Cru, and Grace Christian Fellowship (GCF). I will interject and say that along with christian fellowships, all CIO's are extremely welcoming and will bring you in and have you become a part of their family. But yea, from there, I began branching out and meeting new people through these different fellowships, and I ultimately ended up staying with Grace Christian Fellowship because I felt more comfortable with the other first years but also pre-existing members/UVA students. In GCF, I've met all of my closest friends that I have right now, and I've grown so much as a person and in my faith. You most likely have heard this saying, and it truly is so, so, so true. Those who you surround yourself with has a very big impact on who you become. So, Class of 2024, I encourage you all to be uncomfortable, to reach out to different CIO's, to take advantage of UVA's resources, and to make friends online especially during this digital era.

With you all now taking your first couple weeks of school, I want to encourage and also reassure you all that you do not have to go 100% school school school mode. I came into first year stressed and determined to knock out as many major and college requirements that I could possibly knock out and really to just challenge myself and get ahead of the game. I'll tell you right now though, that doesn't work out too well for many people! Take it easy, live out your first

year in college, and don't be so stressed!! You will have 4 entire years to work on your college requirements, and I guarantee you that whether you take it slow or fast, things will work out in the end. I hope this first semester or really this first year serves as a "dipping your toes in the water" for you all, and I truly hope for the best in your classes and extracurriculars. Don't compare yourselves to those around you! Everyone has their own pace in life, and you all have so much time :) Wishing you all a happy first year, and once again, WAHOOWAAA

Sincerely,
A friend from the Class of 2021