

Hello, Class of 2024!

Welcome to UVA! Though this fall semester is very unique, I hope that you are still able to make joyful memories (through safe and wise decisions!) If you are on grounds, then I hope that this transition is as smooth as possible to really immerse you in the Wahoo culture! If you are home, then I hope that you were able to experience this through the various virtual events. There have been many events these past few months that have been painful to each and every one of us. I hope that you are not discouraged, but rather that you are able to see the potential for change and the unity that sprouts despite the cracks of our society. You are such a precious individual, and we are more than elated to welcome you into the community!

I wanted to share a community that has been particularly helpful to me my third year - the climbing community! The small gym is located in Slaughter, and though I did not join the climbing team, I still found a wonderful group of people that shared this hobby of mine. Communities like these that are found in the most unsuspected times have been the ones that gave me the courage and determination when I wanted to give up. Even finding the small joys to celebrate in my own progress are really what help you move forward, so I hope you also celebrate those small moments as well. UVA can feel like a big ocean, but that also means there are many gems out there to uncover. I hope that this journey flourishes for you starting this first semester!

I remember my first day of move-in, I was so filled with anxiety that I was sick to my stomach. But as the weeks rolled in, I learned that college is really an open prompt. I changed my major countless times, going from the life sciences to engineering and humanities. Throughout my past three years at UVA and as I am going through my fourth, I truly feel that being your biggest advocate and cheerleader is truly key to not feeling overwhelmed. Seeking close, trusted individuals have helped me improve my mental health, and focusing on my own race as well as my own progress have also helped me to achieve things I never thought I would. Don't be so harsh on yourself over the smaller mistakes, but learn from them, and strive to improve, not to be perfect. You are truly capable of far more than you've ever expected of yourself, and afterall - every day is a new day to try, and there are so many joyful things in life.

Trust me, I know - so best of luck to you, and I hope you can one day be in my place to say, it's a good time to be a Hoo.

Go Hoos!!

Sincerely,
Sammie, a Friend from the Fourth Year Class
Class of 2021