

I know you have heard this a million times, so I won't harp about how these are weird times. What you need to do now is focus on yourself, as well as the wellbeing of others. Welcome to UVA, and trust me, we are incredibly happy you are here. While you're probably confused and don't know where you fit in right now, *don't worry*. You have more than enough time, and you will find out soon enough!

My first year at UVA was weird. On the one hand I was having fun meeting new friends, going to football games, exploring the social scene, and taking college classes (except Calc, ugh). At the same time, I found it difficult to fully find my place within the University. First year is all about learning how to navigate independence. While you are doing so in an admittedly very different context, the elements are very similar.

My biggest piece of advice: *be spontaneous*. One of my favorite memories of first year occurred on a casual Saturday morning. I woke up exhausted, and was caroled to go to breakfast at Brazos with 3 friends (if you don't know what this is, I highly recommend you check it out). Following breakfast, I expected to go back home (after all, I had homework) – BUT NO. My friend driving brings us directly to the Escape Room on the downtown mall. I was in no mood to do an escape room, but I decided to be spontaneous. We successfully escaped, and now it was time to go home – BUT NO. We head straight to Carter's mountain and buy a big bag of apples and apple cider donuts and devour them on the hill. After that, its onto Goodwill, then the puppy store, then the bookstore, then Chick fila. By the time we got home, it was about 5:30, and we had eaten 2 full meals. While it was the most bizarre day that I never expected, it is one of my warmest memories of college. Say "sure why not," and *be spontaneous* (safely, of course).

All in all, this is going to be a great year. Please go into it with an open mind. While we have all been dealt a bad hand, how we play it is what matters. Welcome to the University, and make it your own. Good luck!

Best,
An in denial 4th year