

Hello, Class of 2024!

Welcome to UVA! I imagine this is certainly not what you expected for your first semester on Grounds, but if there is one thing I learned throughout my time here it is that fellow Hoos like yourself will not only persevere but thrive as well. I know that this is a difficult time to be entering your first year of college, but I am certain that you will be creative in finding chances to make the most of your time here, even if you are at home for the time being. Remember that you belong at UVA, and your fellow Hoos are very excited to have you join our community!

Something that I love about UVA is that there are so many different opportunities to get involved in and meet new people. Although the activities fair was virtual this year, I hope you were able to find some organizations you may be interested in. One of the opportunities that I have been most grateful for was joining Madison House's Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope (CASH) volunteer organization. I joined during the beginning of my second year, and I have enjoyed every moment since. As a volunteer income tax assistant, I helped file tax returns for many Charlottesville community members. One moment in particular that was very meaningful for me was this past spring when I remembered a UVA faculty member from the year prior. He was very appreciative of the fact that I remembered him at another site from the year prior. After the session he thanked me and asked if I was going to be a volunteer at Carruthers Hall again. I told him I did not know if I would be at the same location, but I was definitely going to keep volunteering with CASH. Especially during these times, I challenge you to spend time outside of the UVA bubble and connect with the Charlottesville community. It could be something as simple as helping with trash pickup at a nearby park or making small talk with someone in passing. I will be forever grateful to Charlottesville for making my college experience a home away from home.

I encourage you to push yourself to try new things during your time at college, even during this mostly virtual semester. In addition, I urge you to not take this time for granted. Four years will pass in the blink of an eye. I am positive that you will find your home at UVA, just like I did! I wish you the best of luck with your first semester and the subsequent semesters following. We're very excited to have you!

Best of luck, and go Hoos!

Sincerely,  
Jei-Ming A.  
Class of 2021