

Welcome to Grounds, Class of 2024!

I hope you have enjoyed your first month at UVA! Whether you are here on Grounds or at home, I sincerely believe you will have a great first semester. This is such a strange and difficult time that we're living through, but I think it's important that the UVA community welcome you to the family. That sounds cliché and I apologize, but it's true – you are in for some of the best years of your life and I welcome you to the Hoo Crew.

When I entered first year, I didn't realize just how fast college would fly by. I blinked my eyes and I'm already in my last year. I urge you to take advantage of all the opportunities offered to you at UVA. There are so many clubs, organizations, activities, and events happening all the time at UVA. Want to go on a hike? Join the Outdoors Club. Want to try out rock climbing? Head over to Slaughter Recreation Center and give it a shot. Want to experience virtual reality? The Media Center in Clemmons Library is where to go. There are so many things at UVA that you should explore and experience, because your time here is limited. That may be very strange to hear at this point, but it's true. If I could go back to first year, I would do so many more things – just to try out everything.

First year is an incredible time because you will meet so many great people who will become your friends for life, but I want to mention there will always be opportunities to meet new people. During my third year, I got super into rock climbing and would go to Slaughter every day. I met some really amazing people, just by talking to those at the rock wall. I would never have met those people if I didn't try something new. Do yourself a favor and break out of your comfort zone – you'll meet some really great people and you'll gain new skills. Your college experience is what you make of it; go out and do something!

This is a crazy world we are living in, so I wish you luck with the rest of your first semester and first year. We are all struggling through this, so please don't be afraid to reach out for help. Your professors know this is a difficult time – they're having a difficult time as well! Keep your head held high and take it one step at a time. Before you know it, you'll be applying for graduation. You got this, Class of 2021!

Sincerely,

T.D.
Class of 2021