

Hello Class of 2024!

My name is Parker Lazear and I am a Fourth Year in the College of Arts and Sciences writing you to welcome you into the UVA Community. While this year is bound to cause some challenges, we are so happy to have you here with us! I know going to college in the middle of a global pandemic must be daunting, and I am sure you have more questions than answers about how your college experience is going to look. But, don't worry because we as a student body are dedicated to making the most of this year despite the changes.

Being at UVA has been truly such a life changing experience for me. The friendships I have made here are built to last and the things I have learned outside of the classroom will follow me wherever I go. One of the coolest memories for me was going to Paint the Town Orange. PTTO is essentially a pep-rally held on the downtown mall the Friday before the first home football game. It's a great way to feel connected to not only the UVA community but the Charlottesville community in general. While PTTO will not take place this year, when it starts back up I strongly recommend that you go. However, it's not really any one event that makes you fall in love with UVA, it's a mix of finding your people, finding your interests and finding yourself. For me, something that was really helpful my first year was getting involved. Did I join too many clubs? Absolutely. But, joining all of those clubs helped me learn what were the things I really wanted to do. If you haven't, go to the at-UVA website and just look through the different kinds of CIOs. Want to serve the community in general? Consider rushing APO! Obsessed with TED talks? Join TEDxUVA! Into aerial dance? There's a club for that too! Find clubs that are more than just resume builders, because when you are really passionate about what you are doing, you'll meet some incredible people. One of the big things in college is that you will not make many friends through your classes. Depending on your major you may have a few but likely your main friend group will stem somewhere else.

As I look back on my college experience the only thing I regret is when I would worry that joining a club second year was "too late." It's never too late to do something you might love or something you're interested in. Not everyone at UVA is going to be your friend, but everywhere you turn there is someone who is willing to help you out. Some of the best friends I have made in college have come from small interactions, like getting coffee. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to us! We are so glad you are here!

There are some not-so-secret things that I wish I knew earlier:

- Virgo (the Library Website) is not just for books/articles, you can find movies (I think Crazy Rich Asians is still on there)
- Kanopy is a documentary-based movie service that all UVA students have access to
- Vagrades.com is more helpful than theCourseForum because it actually shows you the grade distributions of classes
- Interesting topics with bad professors < boring topics with good professors
- ASK FOR THE EXTENSION!! 9 times out of 10 if you need an extension professors and TAs are willing to work with you

- Elevate meal plan > on grounds meal plan UNLESS you live on grounds
 - The meals are on the corner (which just objectively has better food)
 - The meals roll over year to year until you graduate
 - Honestly, it could make sense to get the elevate meal plan as early as you can so that you can go out to eat on the corner without paying with real money
- UVA People Search is a great way to find other classmates' emails if you are in a group project or something and don't have their emails
- Take more pictures! College will blow by so fast and it's nice to look back on all you do
- Have a designated pair of shoes you wear when you party—converse was my choice and by third year I had to throw them away because they had gotten so gross. Don't wear cute shoes to a frat.
- Figure out if you are a morning or afternoon person. I am not able to wake up and I haven't had an 8 am since my second semester. It's not always possible but not having early classes is clutch. If you're like me and hate Mondays, try to make your MW classes specifically later, it really helps
- One B won't kill you, in fact, a C won't either. I have many friends who have gone through the academic probation process. It's scary, but ultimately helpful. You will get the help you need and if you put in the work you will make it through anything. UVA is going to be harder than HS, and your grades matter, but what you learn matters more. When you get to an interview, being able to talk about something you've learned is more impressive than an extra .1 on your GPA.
- Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things.

College is a great time and we are all so glad to be a part of your experience. I know this year will be different and I wish I could give you more advice on how to navigate Zoom University, but honestly, I'm still trying to figure it out myself. If you ever have questions about anything please feel free to reach out by email: pn13bd@virginia.edu or phone: 804-350-0771. I hope you have a great first semester!

Wahoowah,
Parker Lazear, Class of 2021