

Hello, Class of 2024!

Welcome to UVA! Despite the challenges due to the pandemic and social injustice occurring in the country, I strongly have hope that we will get through this together. I firmly believe that you are strong to overcome any challenges that come your way. Whether you are on Grounds or at home, you are a part of UVA. You are sincerely welcome and wanted at UVA.

Remember that there is still a lot to look forward to at UVA this semester. Thus, I'll reflect on something that has made me grateful for my experience at UVA. I transferred to UVA in Spring 2019 (the unusual time to transfer lol, but unique as well 😊). It was hard time for me, because my classes were all over the place, from one end of UVA to another end LITERALLY. I remember having to walk from my History class (Campbell Hall) to my Arabic class (New Cabell Hall) in 5 mins! I also got lost and took the wrong buses all the time. I felt bad at the time, but now when I look back, I figured that by getting lost helped me explore all the corners of UVA. I am also a Muslim and it was a bit hard for me in the beginning, because I felt that I didn't belong here. I would feel so insecure about myself. I struggled to fit in. But, gradually I met people, made new friends, and came to know about some of the programs and student organizations here at UVA. I was able to integrate myself within the UVA community. I was able to connect with people from different backgrounds, develop long-lasting friendships, and got to know my fellow peers. To be honest, learning leadership, communication, and social skills is not easy as it sounds, but what other way is there than to attain knowledge and practice such skills with other students.

Additionally, the UVA Muslim Student Association (MSA) helped my find my place on Grounds. UVA MSA is an amazing student organization and they have amazing speakers' events, banquets, and game nights. As a member of the MSA Leadership and Development Committee, I along with my one of my co-members, presented hosted a "Finding your Place and Space on Grounds" event. I introduced some of the third and fourth years who are involved in different types of programs here at UVA. I always tell new students to explore different areas of academics, which will help them figure out what's best. Some students come to college thinking they will do pre-med, but end up doing law or history. There are also many history majors who go to medical school. Such events are dear to me, because I love to help first years and transfers explore different options. I have a passion to connect with people, work with CIOs at UVA, working as a liaison between UVA student groups, organizing events, creating public statements, and always being present or available for anyone that needs assistance. I had a plan to join Taekwondo Club and Figure Skating, but due to the situation it is difficult to have in-person activities for the clubs. However, I am involved with Net Impact, FLIP,

Transfer Advisory Board (TAB), Muslim Student Association, Pakistan Student Association, and Arab Student Association. I am the secretary for UNICEF At UVA; and this month I was selected to be a member on the Student Council Diversity Engagement Committee. That said, UVA is a perfect home to anyone from anywhere!

I really believe you are able to make the most out of this semester! I know it feels like all hope is gone and this is the worst time ever. But, that is just a thought in the mind. The reality is so much different and if you challenge yourself and try new things, you will for sure be able to find hope during this difficult and unprecedented time! I wish you all the best and have faith that you will find your place and space on Grounds! Once again, Welcome Home Hoo!! 😊

Sincerely,

A Friend from the Fourth Year Class  
Class of 2021!