

Dear Class of 2024,

Welcome to UVA! I am so excited to have you all join our community; you are a bright spot during these trying times. We are all going to experience this school year uniquely, but I hope that we will be able to share and grow with each other as well. Whatever this year has in store for us, you all are an integral part of UVA and I cannot wait to see what you have to offer.

I have come to know UVA as a place full of incredible people with amazing ideas and stories. My first year at UVA, I joined the Jazz Ensemble, directed by Charlottesville legend John D'earth. The band room where we practiced every week quickly became a place for me to hang out with undergrads, grad students, and Charlottesville community members alike, either listening to John tell us what it was like to play onstage with Stevie Wonder or jamming to some original music written by members of the group. Even as we speak, the greatest minds in the Jazz Ensemble are figuring out a way to put together a jazz production virtually this semester, including original jazz music recorded by the students, music videos and dances, and even a documentary to go along with it. I have no idea what this semester will look like for the members of the band, but I am so lucky to have found my creative, vibrant little family here at UVA.

Though I wish that you all didn't have to start your college experience virtually, I know that you will make the best of it. If I could tell first-year me anything, it would be that making friends, joining clubs, and putting yourself out there is extremely scary and hard, but it will definitely be worth it. Remember to make your happiness a priority, and that many other first years are experiencing the same emotions you are feeling. I would offer you all good luck, but I know that you don't need it.

Sincerely,
Anna Wolz
Class of 2021