

Hey, Class of 2024!

Hope you are doing well and getting through your first semester! I am so blown away by the excitement and optimism that you all have and hope it continues throughout these four years. Coming into college right now is no easy feat, and you should feel proud of yourself for constantly persevering and grinding through these times. Just remember, each of you are here for a reason. You are valued, heard, and wanted here.

When I reflect on what made my UVA experience, I think of my experience meeting new people as an RA and as a student. I struggled a lot my first year to make friends that truly fulfilled me. If you are going through that, remember that you are not alone and that is very normal! But by the time second year came around, I realized how many acquaintances I had made just by putting myself out there. It may take time, but just know that your efforts to make conversation and smile at peers are worth it! Later in college, I joined Phi Sigma Pi, a gender-inclusive fraternity on grounds that introduced me to incredible people and new ideas.

My advice for you first-years is to be conscious of social media's effect and step outside the UVA bubble every once in a while. It is easy to feel stressed about others' college experiences or school. Just stepping off grounds for a bit can totally reboot your system!

Your class is going to bring so much joy, warmth, and drive to UVA for the next four years, and I am thrilled to be able to see that.

Have a great rest of your year and college experience! Side note: write a letter to your future fourth-year graduating self and see how much has changed!

Sincerely,  
Surya Mehta, Class of 2021