

Dear First Year,

Nobody can deny this year has been unlike any others. But I am writing to you today to tell you about how great of a place UVA can be once you realize the importance of friendship. My first year was a normal one. I went to parties, failed some tests, and met hundreds of other students. At the time, I was having the best time of my life. I thought having all of these “friends” enhanced my experience at UVA. But this enhanced experience was short-lived. After a while, you start to realize that the opinions of how hundreds of other students perceive you shouldn’t and don’t matter. It took a while, but I learned who the handful of people that truly wanted to be my friend were and I made it a point to spend quality time with them. And the truth is the memories that will stick out the most will be the ones shared with those closer to you in a more intimate setting rather than at a crazy party. But this year, you are so lucky to have the chance to develop more memories of quality time with close friends by default. Take advantage of this, build good friendships, and don’t wait like I did. I am a fourth-year now, and I am lucky to have a great friend group. Pandemic or not, I am happiest when I am hanging out with just them. I don’t think my social life has changed drastically because going to large-gatherings don’t seem as interesting to me anymore. Don’t get me wrong, they are fun. But they are the most fun when you’re surrounded by people who mean something to you. So, build your squad now, and once that vaccine is out, get ready to party like it’s 1999 with them (and hundreds of other fellow Hoos). P.S. I’d love to meet whoever reads this, don’t be shy! Shoot me an email at rs5qr@virginia.edu

Truly yours,

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