

Hello Class of 2024!

Welcome to the University community! Whether you are reading this from your dorm room, from your bedroom in your hometown, or wherever else you might be during this ~crazy~ time, the UVA community is just as much your community to live in, thrive in, and grow in as any other Hoo. I'm sure you never imagined beginning your time at UVA under these circumstances. I can tell you that I, for sure, never imagined ending my time at UVA under those same circumstances either.

The world is changing and a lot of things are coming to light just as you happen to embark on what should be an intellectually enlightening journey. Don't shy away from those hard conversations that are bound to happen among friends, peers, or even faculty. It could be essential to your healing and growth during these ~unprecedented times~.

There are many things to look forward to, as well. You're likely to run through many social circles until you find the people who will ALWAYS be down for frisbee on the lawn, watching the sunset from Culbreth garage, or even making the walk to Barracks thinking that it would be WAY shorter than it actually is. You're going to make mistakes. You're going to think that Pre-Med is definitely the track you need to pursue. But you might just take one Women and Gender Studies class and realize that your interests surpass what you thought they were from high school (at least they did for me).

You'll find that there is no correct or perfect path for how to get through these 4 years. You'll also find that having no path at all just might be how you find the things, people, and interests that genuinely make up whoever you are at the end of the UVA tunnel. Take every opportunity as it comes. Sign up for every newsletter, attend all of the information sessions, and ask those you confide in to help steer you wherever it is you want to go.

Keep in mind that you should also give yourself the chance to be present and in the moment. Attend that Salsa Club clinic, try out that new restaurant on West Main Street, or sign-up for the Co-Ed Intramural Basketball team that only have available game times at 10:00PM on Wednesdays. The econ problem set or psych reading will be there for you when you get back.

Be excited because what you see now is only the smallest fraction of what this University can provide you. Be aware, be critical, and be appreciative for the institution that lays before you because for as much as it can provide you, it is waiting for you to make it your own.

With much love,

Your 4th-Year-Friend

Guadalupe Pinto, CLAS '21 (find me if you feel so inclined!)