

Hey Class of 2024!

I really feel for you guys and admire your bravery for entering college during such tough times! My sister is a 1st year (though they're plebes and call it "freshman") at a different school so I know what you all are going through these days. I think back to my 1st year at UVA (I barely remember it, it flew by), and can barely imagine going through that during a pandemic.

Anyways, enough of the depressing stuff, I hope you know that we are thrilled to have you joining our UVA family, even though we can't express that excitement in our normal ways. It may feel daunting to walk down the sidewalk and pass other masked students, exchanging little more than a glance (even I feel pretty isolated walking around and I've been here for 3 years!), but know there is a smile under every mask that I hope you get to see soon. It almost makes me miss the chaotic sidewalks between class changes—almost...

For those of you feeling a little lost in these first few weeks, don't give up!! I was particularly hermit-like 1st year so it took me (what seemed like) a long time to find my place and my people, but I eventually found them in the Music department. My only regret looking back on that time is that I didn't try out more organizations. I was so ambitious with taking as many credits as I could (0/10 would recommend), that I barely had any time to join other clubs or orgs. (RIP to the hundreds of brochures I picked up at the activities fair and never followed up on...). That's another thing I hope you guys get to see, the utter chaos of the activities fair in all its glory.

My sincere hope for your class (and my sister's) is that you all will be able to experience the majority of your time at UVA in "normal" settings! There really is something special about this place that isn't always obvious until you really get to experience it.

I wish I had some groundbreaking, all-encompassing single piece of wisdom to share, but alas... Instead I will end by wishing you the best of luck for this semester, and providing a cheesy quote by Audrey Hepburn:

"Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible!'"

Sincerely,

A Friend from the Fourth Year Class