

Where do I begin?

How are you? –nah, too boring...

Congratulations on starting your college journey here at UVA! Let me start by telling you that it is no easy feat. Your presence at UVA is a testament to your awesomeness...let me repeat this:

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This is especially important to remember when you are surrounded by awesome, driven and ambitious people everywhere.

College will be loads of fun, but it's also loads of hard work and planning. For many people, it's the first time realizing that classes may be shorter, but you have to teach yourself and be in charge of your learning. Usually, high school teachers taught you everything, but here, you need to do the reading before class, which you will be tested on. Also, what you learned in high school in one year is what you learn in college in 3-4 months.

[Insert spiel about working hard, planning and not procrastinating] – you'll hear in many times in various forms, but it must be mentioned.

Although, this semester, it must be very different than you expected. You may be living at home or if you're On-Grounds, socially distancing, or doing a lot of classes on-line. More of your lectures must be asynchronous now. To that, my advice: TREAT IT LIKE YOU HAVE CLASS, and DO NOT FALL BEHIND.

As someone staying at home and quarantined, college online is definitely a different experience for me. I can't imagine COVID-19 Zoom University must be for you. Most important element: SELF-CARE! Carve out time to do what makes you forget that time exists and that the world exists. Make sure to exercise, eat (reasonably) healthy, and check-in with your mental health & how you feel.

Also, as a first-year, my BIGGEST piece of advice for you is to explore and try new activities and go out of your comfort zone. You never know—you could find your new passion, or you find out you may not like what you used to like. This brings me to my next point:

You will evolve as a person throughout college; your circumstances will change; the types of people you'll like to be with will change; Know that it's completely normal to change your career path and/or major. If you know what you want in life, congrats! Keep pursuing it, but look at other options.

In high school, people seemed a lot easier to categorize and they may have even categorized you. In college, people change and grow. They're a lot more complex (and possibly interesting) than one can imagine. I'd advise you to meet and talk to as many people as you can.

Disclaimer: all of the above are lessons based on ONE anonymous college senior at UVA. Everyone's experiences are unique.

Good luck! I am proud of you, and you WILL do great!!!!

With warm wishes,

Anonymous senior