

Hello, Class of 2024!

Welcome to UVA! I know this can seem like a very challenging and daunting time, especially since you have started your first year of college during a pandemic! I definitely understand the sense that you're missing out on your first year of college, but it will only go up from here. I am optimistic that you and your class will find creative ways to make friends and make the most of your first year, whether you're at home or on Grounds.

Something that I have loved about UVA is that there are so many different types of people on Grounds—there is a group for everyone. Into my first year, I still felt like I hadn't found my place yet. Two and a half years later, I cannot say the same thing. One of the places that's really become a home for me is the Women's Center, which I joined the beginning of my second year. In addition to free counseling services, they have 9 internship programs (!) and two mentorship opportunities (the Men's Leadership Project and the Young Women's Leaders Program). They have so many opportunities that there is really a place for everyone, regardless of your gender. I was involved with the Gender Violence and Social Change team for two years, helping advocate for survivors across Grounds. This year, I am fortunate enough to be on the Engaged Scholarship team where I am working directly with other interns. It has really been wonderful to be part of a place for so long and find other people who are passionate about social justice and activism like me. I have really grown a lot in this program, and I know you will find a similar organization that helps you become the best version of yourself, just like I did.

I encourage you to push yourself to try new things during your time at college, even during this mostly virtual semester. I'm confident that you will find your home at UVA, just like I did! I wish you the best of luck with your first semester and the rest of your years at UVA.

Sending support and energy,
Gabi Szabó, *she/her*
Class of 2021