

Hello, Class of 2024!

Welcome to Charlottesville, home of UVA!! First year is always awkward compared to other years of college and this year will be even more difficult and awkward, but that should not ruin the experience. This first year is when you will grow the most and that comes with some discomfort as people generally don't like change, but as you adjust and grow everything will feel great. You'll be glad you chose UVA as your home for four years (or more if you dare). Just remember that you chose to be here for a reason, that you belong, and that everyone here is glad to welcome you to the community.

I remember my first semester on grounds and personally it was the worst as I've never been that social and I felt like I didn't belong, however I did not let that stop me from pursuing my passion. I went to the Activities Fair (back when we were allowed to go out on the Lawn in person) and started looking around for clubs that represented my hobbies (mainly athletic and outdoorsy things). I had recently started rock climbing and knew there was a club but assumed that I wouldn't fit in cause I was new and not very good and also a quiet nerd in the E-School. I couldn't have been more wrong, turns out that I am not alone as many of the members are science related majors and there's a nice mix of extroverts, introverts, and ambiverts. I joined the club and have been a member since, attending practice twice a week, learning how to climb, and making some friends along the way that I'm more similar to then I ever could imagine. If it weren't for the UVA Climbing Team, I don't know how well I would've survived my first year. They welcomed me in and made UVA feel like home (which if you knew me and my personality, it would say a lot). Find your place where you belong, it may not be obvious where that place is but it is out there, and you'll feel right at home.

I know that times will be tough at points and you might even start wondering why you're even here (had many of those times myself), but those are just brief hiccups that will pass during your experience here at UVA. When you're in one of those lulls in life, just try your best to surround yourself with your closest friends or relax with your favorite hobby to maintain morale, studying can wait a day if it means caring for your mental health. I wish you the best of luck on your education and life here in Charlottesville.

Sincerely,  
Anonymous 4<sup>th</sup> Year  
Mechanical Engineering Class of 2021