

Hello, Class of 2024!

I hope you are settling into your new college life during this unpredictable, if not scary, time. I can not imagine the difficult choices and sacrifices you have had to make in order to get here. However, I know you can still experience a fulfilling and exciting college life which you so rightfully deserve while still being safe and protecting others around you.

I'd like to share some college advice with you based on my experiences that have made my time here at UVa so meaningful and special. Firstly, moving to a new town with new people constantly around you can be exhausting, especially if you don't know anyone. It's normal to feel overwhelmed, unmotivated to socialize, or homesick. However, my advice to you is to power through and force yourself to go to that event, or talk to that person across the hall. Everyone is in the same boat, and soon enough you will narrow down your circle to the people you can truly be yourself around. It just takes a little bit of time and will-power.

Secondly, join clubs! Personally, I didn't meet many people by going to class, and I'm sure it will be even harder this year with virtual classes. Clubs are here to expand your interests, destress, and meet lifelong friends! My favorite club, and possibly favorite part of my college experience, was joining Salsa Club. I got to attend lessons, meet so many amazing people, and even choreograph my own dance (almost...thanks corona). While this may seem unachievable this year, you can still meet people in clubs virtually and suggest meeting up in small groups (but please social distance, we don't want you to leave). The people and the clubs made me feel at home at UVa, and I can't urge you enough to put yourself out there and try new things. This virus will not be around forever, and it is extremely important to stay connected. Bond with your roommate, suggest a study session on the lawn with the person across the hall, or send a chat to a random person in your virtual class! It's time to get creative.

As for classes, I am a Psychology major and love my choice. It is okay if you do not know what path you want to take yet. This is why you came to college, to explore and learn. Take a medley of classes in different subjects and talk to your professors. Bonding with a professor definitely helps you understand more in class as well as just having a healthy support system both in and out of academia. They are here to help you and, whether you believe it or not, they genuinely care about you.

I was a nervous wreck when I first came here, and I wasn't even coming during a pandemic. This crazy year has made you more resilient and stronger than it took me over the course of my entire four years here. You got this, and you can only grow from here. Accept the ups and down, and make the best out of the situation, but don't forget to cry and turn for help when you need it.

Best of luck, we are rooting for you all!

Warm Wishes,
Rachel Corney
Class of 2021