

Dear First Year Student,

Welcome to UVA!! We are so excited to have you in our community whether you are on Grounds or at home. I remember my first year and how nervous and excited I was to meet new people! I know it must be even harder now but definitely take it one day at a time. Something I would recommend is to try something new/fun everyday! That way you have something to look forward to and can even make new friends along the way. I remember in my first year I joined many clubs and interests until I found some great new hobbies!

I joined Salsa my first year and I could not recommend it more! I actually tried out for many dance teams haha until I made one LOL. Dancing is not my forte but I started attending Salsa lessons at UVa (they are still hosting them via Zoom!) and it was so much fun! The instructors were super nice and you met so many people. Of course with the pandemic and all I cannot imagine getting that close to someone! But it was such a great experience and I went on to do the Salsa showcase. I made some of my best memories in Salsa honestly!

Another interest I had since high school was basketball. I was on the basketball team for years and this was something I wanted to continue in my free time. So I joined an IM team with one of my clubs. This was such a great decision. I made new friends and this is where I even met my current boyfriend! You never know where you'll meet people and what roads they will take you to. I encourage you to try a lot of new things, even something you never dreamed of doing. You never know where it might lead you to!

I hope that this first step of your journey is a great one. Although there are many uncertainties, I hope that you find something that grounds you at UVa. These 4 years will fly by trust me. Make friends, have fun, and focus on your schoolwork as well! I'm a premed major and even with all the extracurricular premed activities (shadowing, working, volunteering, etc), I still managed to find time for my friends and hobbies. Make sure you have a balance! Take care of yourself first and I hope you enjoy the ride :)

Your friend,
SJ