CAPPING OFF
TRIUMPHS & TRIALS
COMMENORATING THE CLASS OF 2021
To our readers,

As the University community reflects on a tumultuous year, members of the Class of 2021 prepare to step into a brighter future.

Their time at the University has been nothing short of extraordinary. For many fourth-year undergraduates, their earliest memories of U.Va. are shaped by the community healing that followed the trauma of Aug. 11 and 12, 2017. The community went on to experience a Bicentennial celebration, the inauguration of the University’s seventh president and a men’s basketball national championship.

Despite these significant memories, when COVID-19 cast a shadow over University life, we learned to miss the sweetness of every-day, oft-looked-over moments. Reliable annual traditions like Trick-or-Treating-on or Lighting-of the Lawn were canceled or made virtual. Class discussions, library study sessions and time with friends moved mostly online. We grieved but adapted.

This weekend’s Final Exercises will be many students’ and families’ first celebratory gathering of such a scale in over a year. Over the past three semesters, the Class of 2021 demonstrated collective resilience and excellence, more than deserving of this opportunity to commemorate their time together. The University of Virginia is a better place because of these students.

To the Class of 2021, wherever you’re celebrating, congratulations! You are so much more than the moments you sacrificed or endured — you went above and beyond to cultivate community and progress. The Cavalier Daily extends our deepest gratitude to all of you who have shared your stories and used your voice to shape our University. We wish each of you the best in all you’ll do.

With gratitude,
Jenn Brice
editor@cavalierdaily.com

University lifts mask mandate for fully vaccinated members of the community

University leadership announced that those who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 do not need to wear a mask indoors or outdoors. UVA is one of five schools to adopt this change in mask guidance, which state that schools can hold graduations with a maximum of 5,000 people or 30 percent of the facility’s capacity. Graduating students are permitted to bring two guests.

“These changes are powerful examples of the benefits of getting vaccinated, both for individuals and our community as a whole,” University leadership said.

The changes will apply to graduation ceremonies scheduled this weekend for the Class of 2021. Physical distancing and capacity limits on the Lawn and Scott Stadium will remain in effect with the governor’s guidance, which state that schools can hold graduations with a maximum of 5,000 people or 30 percent of the facility’s capacity. Graduating students are permitted to bring two guests.

Dean of Students Allen Groves to depart U.Va. after more than 14 years

Dean of Students Allen Groves will leave the University effective July 1 to serve as senior vice president of student experience at Syracuse University after more than 14 years at the University, according to an announcement from UVA Today Monday.

“It has been a singular honor to serve my alma mater as University-wide Dean of Students these past 14 years,” Groves said in an email to the UVA community. “I’ve led a remarkable team of professionals and worked alongside exceptional student leaders in striving to create the best possible experience for our students. I’ll always be grateful for the opportunity to do something I love at a place that has given me so much, stretching back to my own time as a student here.”

During his time at the University, Groves broke a Guinness world record for the most high-fives given by an individual in a single hour, was recognized for LGBTQ+ leadership and served as a point of contact for students and parents regarding adjustment to University life, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse and the University’s Standards of Conduct.

According to Chief Student Affairs Officer Patricia Lampkin, Groves’ expertise on First Amendment issues was a crucial part of his success at the University. Over his first two years as dean of students, Groves worked with the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education to eliminate all unconstitutional speech codes from University policy, earning the University a “green light” rating from the organization, and he is a current member of the Committee on Free Expression and Free Inquiry.

Groves’ commitment to free speech was one he maintained throughout his tenure as dean of students, repeatedly warning students and faculty about the dangers of suppressing free speech or banning “hate speech,” which he said would cause away at students’ rights.

In his new role at Syracuse University, Groves will oversee programs, services and personnel ranging from student health and career services to multicultural affairs and residence life.
Fourth-year students reflect on job search experience

With Final Exercises approaching, the Class of 2021 shares its post-graduation plans

Elise Johnston | Staff Writer

With Final Exercises just around the corner, many graduating students have found or are in the process of finding internships and jobs for this coming summer and fall. Although their last three semesters did not go exactly as planned, many students remain hopeful that their time at the University will lead them to success in their post-graduation careers.

COVID-19 has completely reshaped the job market for graduating students. Employers have evolved how they are hiring, where they are hiring and what skills they are searching for. While the job market became limited at the start of the pandemic due to large numbers of layoffs and budget cuts, employers’ projects have increased by 27 percent more new college graduates from the Class of 2021 than they did from the Class of 2020. Although this percentage does not bring hiring back to pre-COVID levels, it does provide optimism for upcoming graduates.

Courtney Harris, associate director of employer relations for the University’s Career Center, said that there have been tons of industries, both large and small, working with the University in seeking to hire graduating students.

“We had more than 100 organizations participating in our larger career fairs, looking for both full-time roles and internships,” Harris said. “I think that is a really good metric for the fact that there are still plenty of opportunities out there for students.”

Harris also explained that when business shutdowns were occurring at the start of the pandemic, a lot of industries, such as hospitality and retail, were providing limited job opportunities to students.

“In the last couple of months, we have seen those opportunities rebound and companies start to post positions that they maybe weren’t able to fill this past summer,” Harris said.

Fourth-year College student William Wiltshire says that he was unable to find an internship this summer following his third year, given increasing COVID-19 case numbers.

“Last summer was a complete nightmare in terms of finding an internship,” Wiltshire said. “Because so much post-grad job searching relies on that post-summer experience, I was pretty frantic while applying this fall.”

While Wiltshire experienced hardships in his internship search, his search for a post-college career was successful as he is now employed and plans to work as an assistant teacher for Success Academy Charter Schools in Harlem, N.Y.

Similarly, fourth-year Engineering Kathryn Smith applied to over 100 jobs before ultimately accepting a job she found through the University’s Career Center.

“It was stressful applying and interviewing because of uncertainty in what I wanted to do and where I want to live,” Smith said.

Smith is now employed as a technical solutions engineer for the software company, Epic Systems.

Fourth-year College student Ashley Nguyen said her job search process has not been as stress-inducing as she had anticipated. Starting her first year, Nguyen worked as a medical assistant at a family medicine practice in Northern Virginia every summer since her first year.

“I am extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work there again after I graduate for my gap year,” Nguyen said.

In the fall of 2022, Nguyen anticipates heading to medical school and will be spending the next year getting more real-world experience before doing so.

While some students have experienced hardships in their job search process, the Career Center has played a major role in the ability of students to find employment. Laura Del Prato, assistant director of life-transforming programs in the University’s Career Center, said that in general, the job market for fourth years has remained strong.

“From our Handshake postings, we have seen the full-time job postings being consistent with what we’ve seen in other years,” Del Prato said.

Handshake, the University’s recruiting platform, helps students search for internship opportunities and apply for jobs, in addition to connecting students to other career-building events.

The Virginia Alumni Mentoring program was piloted in 2019 by Handshake to foster relationships between students and alumni — something Del Prato highly encouraged students to do because many job opportunities arise from building relationships with others. Currently, the program consists of roughly 2,500 alumni and 1,700 students, who work together every day to further students’ careers.

Fourth-year Nursing student Julia Abrams said although she is not mentally prepared to leave the University, it has helped her in her search for a post-graduate career.

“U.Va. helped with my career search by having one of my core classes last semester dedicated to making our resumes and cover letters as well as preparing us for job searches,” Abrams said.

This year may not have gone how University students have expected, but fourth-year students have said they will value their time at the University. Regardless of what events, clubs and organizations they participated in over the course of their four years, these experiences left fourth years with memories that they will carry with them throughout their lives.

Fourth years are both excited for the next chapter of their lives and bittersweet as they reflect on their time here.

“I sit in a room with all of my friends and we’re all laughing, and in the back of my head, I know the number of times we’ll all be together at the same time is limited,” Wiltshire said.

Smith, who has been an active member of the University’s ski team, remarked that she will miss the team once she graduates.

“I’m ready to graduate and start a new chapter, but it definitely makes it bittersweet to leave my friends and the ski team behind at U.Va.,” Smith said. “I’d love to be a student forever.”

Given updated state gathering guidelines that allow graduation ceremonies to have up to 4,000 people or 50 percent of the venue’s capacity, the University will hold Final Exercises in-person this weekend. With these new guidelines, students can bring two guests of their choosing.

“I am very excited that graduation will be in-person,” Wiltshire said. “It has always been my dream to walk down the Lawn for my last moments as a U.Va. student. I think it will be very special.”

After spending four years together at the University, graduating students have created indelible memories and built connections that will last a lifetime. As the Class of 2021 looks forward to walking the Lawn after an irregular final year, students feel proud to call themselves University students and look forward to visiting Grounds as alumni.
Over 9,000 students elect to use COVID-19 CR/GC/NC

This is the final full semester this COVID-19 grading option will be available to students

Lilly Whitner | Staff Writer

Number of students using CR/GC/NC option each semester

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
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In spring 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the University created the option for students to choose between a credit/general credit/no credit or a standard letter grading scale for each class. This decision was made with hopes that it would help students and teachers alike adjust to online learning and any other unforeseen circumstances that might arise as the pandemic progressed. Now, over a year later, students have been taking advantage of the grading option for three semesters with more students taking advantage of it this spring than in previous semesters.

However, according to University spokesperson Wes Hester, this grading option will no longer be guaranteed moving into the fall semester.

“We do not anticipate maintaining the COVID CR/GC/NC option going forward,” Hester said. “The COVID CR/GC/NC grading option was developed in order to help students grappling with unexpected circumstances due to the pandemic, and we anticipate that the majority of those circumstances will be mitigated with the return to in-person instruction and on-Grounds housing this fall.”

Despite this change for the fall semester, students taking summer session classes are still able to use the credit/general credit/no credit system.

Instead of having to choose credit/general credit/no credit for all of their classes or none, students could select which classes they wanted to use the grading option in. In spring 2020, the first semester during which the credit/general credit/no credit grading option was available, 9,752 undergraduate students and 1,875 graduate students — 58.5 percent and 23.8 percent of each population, respectively — elected to utilize the grading system for one or more of their classes.

Over the course of the next two semesters, considerably fewer graduate students opted to use the COVID-19 grading system. In fall 2020, only 806 graduate students elected to use this grading system while in spring 2021, 984 graduate students chose to use the COVID-19 grading system.

By comparison, the number of undergraduate students who used the COVID-19 grading system fluctuated over the course of three semesters. In fall 2020, 7,064 students elected to use credit/general credit/no credit. This spring, this number increased to 8,460 undergraduate students.

Second-year College student Carly Dovrin commented on her experience with this grading option amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. During the past two semesters, she used the credit/general credit/no credit option due to difficulties adapting to online learning. The pandemic also brought stress and anxiety to her personal life, resulting in her grades not being as high as they could be. This semester, however, she chose to take her classes for a grade.

“It has been nice to have this option as a cushion to help ease the blow of COVID and has also been a good way to boost many students’ GPAs,” Dovrin said. “However, this semester I decided not to utilize this option as I am worried that the credit/no credit grading option will not look great on resumes for future job searches or further education. I also knew taking my classes for a grade would motivate me to work harder again and start adapting back to my previous work ethic before the pandemic.”

Pre med students who will be applying to medical school after graduation have also had to weigh multiple factors in their decision about whether or not to opt into the COVID-19 grading system, including how medical school admissions committees may view this option on transcripts.

First-year College student Keertana Pasumarthi felt that taking the option may be a disadvantage to them when applying to medical programs, and fourth-year premed College student Katie Stombres agreed.

“Now all of my classes are on Zoom and I have very little opportunity to get much needed hands-on experience, not to mention the fact that I now have to bond with my professors during their online office hours so they can write me a recommendation,” Stombres said to The Cavalier Daily in November. “I do not have time to worry whether or not taking classes C/NC will mess up my application. I can’t afford to not get grades.”

Some medical schools, however, such as the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Harvard Medical School, announced last spring that courses taken on a pass/fail basis would be accepted during the admissions cycle.

In a letter to students in April 2020, Provost Liz Magill discussed the underlying impetus behind the decision to provide students with an alternative grading system.

“We were guided by several core principles: reducing the stress and anxiety among our students by making this decision prior to the start of the online courses; providing clarity and choice ... during a time of unprecedented uncertainty and disruption; and understanding the impact of transitioning to a remote learning environment,” Magill said.

Classes that are taken as credit/general credit/no credit do not impact the student’s GPA in any way. Under the COVID-19 grading option, undergraduate students that receive credit in a class will be allowed to count that class toward degree requirements needing a C or higher. General credit counts toward degree requirements if a passing grade below a C is rewarded. No credit does not count toward any degree requirements and is awarded if the student receives an F.

Engineering, Batten and Commerce graduate classes share rules and standards for their COVID CR/GC/NC grading scale. Credit will be awarded if the student earns a C or higher, while general credit will be awarded if the student receives a pass grade below a C. Students who receive general credit will earn the credit it hours associated with the course and satisfy degree requirements for Commerce, but not graduate Engineering or Batten requirements. No credit will be awarded if the student receives a grade of F.

Other graduate classes award credit if the student receives a B- or higher, and there is no general credit option.

April 30 at 11:59 p.m. was the final deadline for students to select the credit/general credit/no credit grading option for the spring semester. The College of William and Mary’s deadline was on the same day, a change from their previous policy in the fall in which students who wanted to opt in to the pass/fail grading option had to make their decision before the add/drop period. The University of North Carolina set a similar date for its pass/fail deadline, with students having to opt-in to the option by their final day of classes.

On the other hand, some schools — such as Yale University, Dartmouth University and Harvard University — returned to a normal grading system during fall 2020 and spring 2021.

After nearly three semesters online, students are excited to return to an in-person learning experience in the fall. Second-year College student Meg Woodard is looking forward to learning face-to-face.

“I definitely think it’s a nice option to have, with all classes being online, especially because I am a person who learns better in a face to face setting rather than over a computer screen,” Woodard said.

A return to in-person learning will pose unique challenges to students and professors who have grown accustomed to the online learning experience and its particular affordances. However, most students are looking forward to a return to normalcy.
Students discuss challenges with studying and finals

Many students found it harder to focus with virtual exams, missing the camaraderie of in-person finals week

Sierra Martin & Vivian Mok | Staff Writers

With the University planning to resume in-person operations in the fall, the majority of students took their final exams virtually for the last time this semester. Professors and students shared concerns for cheating with online finals and are anticipating a return to in-person final exams.

Final exams began May 7 this semester, only one day after the last day of classes, and ended May 15. In the past, students have had one reading day between their last day of class and their first exam. However, this year, there was not a reading day before exams started as the days were on Sunday, May 9 and Wednesday, May 12. Reading days are typically incorporated as designated days without exams which allow students time to study.

Due to a lack of any class-free days before exams, students like third-year Barton student Katie Zhang felt that this year’s finals were more rushed than in the past. Instead of having the last week of classes to prepare for her finals, Zhang said this semester’s last week of classes felt more like finals week than time to prepare for her exams.

Zhang also described how the online format made it difficult for her to complete her final papers. In previous years, Zhang benefited from discussing her writing with classmates, but online learning has made that difficult.

“Most of my best thoughts come from a conversation with someone that happened offhand,” Zhang said. “But it’s really hard [when working virtually] to be like, ‘Let’s find some time to discuss my paper’.”

Like Zhang, other upperclassmen also missed experiencing the in-person environment surrounding finals in past semesters and found it more difficult to study for online exams.

Second-year College student Vanessa Joachim said that students “don’t feel the energy shift” during finals season. Joachim said that she feels the exam environment because you go to the library, and it’s full of people studying — you go everywhere, [and] people are studying,” Joachim said.

Other students emphasized that virtual learning took much more of a toll on their ability to focus and engage in their classes, making virtual exams all the more challenging.

“I just couldn’t get myself mentally together,” fourth-year Education student Alexis Allen said. “Virtual learning made it a lot harder to stay engaged, and it was a lot easier to not pay attention.”

Allen also described how online exams were more difficult to mentally engage with.

She enjoyed in-person exams more, because physically being in an exam room with TA’s around and with exam start and end times written on the board helped her mentally engage in a test. With online exams, Allen felt isolated from her classmates.

“When you leave an exam room and you meet up with people you’re like, ‘Oh my god, that test was hard’ or ‘that test was okay,’ and then you go to the Pav to eat lunch.” Allen said. “[Virtually] it’s kind of like you’re on your own.”

First-year Engineering student Ali Butcher stayed home in the fall semester and moved on to Grounds for the spring semester. Butcher said she felt more focused while studying for finals on Grounds than at home.

Despite this, she said it was still hard to take exams in living spaces rather than in a classroom.

“I think sometimes it’s hard to really understand that [the final is] something really important,” Butcher said. “It’s gonna affect your grade, and then you’re just sitting in your room, taking your exam.”

Throughout the last 14 months, students — especially those living in other states or abroad — have struggled with time zone differences during classes and finals, sometimes having to wake up particularly early or late for tests and classes.

Since Butcher is from Alaska, her real-time final exams were held four hours earlier in Alaska than students living on the east coast. She believes there was an advantage for students taking a final at noon in Charlottesville rather than at 8 a.m. Alaskan time.

Last semester, many professors allotted 24 hours for students to take the exam in order to accommodate time differences. Others followed suit this semester, giving an extended time window for exams so students could take the exam on their own time.

Time zones were not the only things professors and students worried about with an online format — Butcher said she was concerned that some classmates may have taken advantage of the new format and cheated on their exams.

“It’s definitely frustrating knowing that if you’re taking an exam, honestly, there are other people out there that could be cheating,” Butcher said. “I am looking forward to there being a more even playing field and also being able to focus better because you’re in a different environment than where you live and where you sleep.”

Over the last three semesters, professors also had concerns about cheating, and some instructors altered the formats of their exams by implementing anti-cheating software and diversifying questions to mitigate these risks.

Engineering Prof. James Groves administered finals in two of his six systems courses, each of which have 80 to 110 students. Groves used the Tests and Quizzes function on UVAGollab — the University’s online course management and collaboration system — to administer his finals, which consisted of multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank and short answer responses.

“By using Tests and Quizzes to handle about 75 percent to 80 percent of the grading automatically, administering the finals in my large class sections is manageable — whether taught in person or online,” Groves said in an email to The Cavalier Daily.

Groves said that his exams were closed-book and that cheating was one of his main concerns with online finals, but added that he didn’t implement any software to deter it.

“My biggest concern is that some students may not follow the instructions for closed book, closed note, use of the internet for answers and no communication with others,” Groves said. “My finals are timed, and so the time pressure should reduce the opportunity for cheating somewhat. However, I would not be shocked if some cheating occurs.”

Students like Allen believed that returning to online learning and exams next year will be an adjustment for many students — especially individuals who had many open-book exams this semester and who will be shifting to closed-notes exams next year.

“I think the switch back is gonna be hard,” Allen said. “I think it’s possible, but it just can be difficult.”
Fourth years reflect on past adversity and future hopes

Overcoming challenges after the Unite the Right rallies and during the pandemic is no small feat, but this class has done just that and more.

The University's graduating Class of 2021 first came to Grounds in 2017, immediately following the Unite the Right white supremacist rallies of Aug. 11 and 12. Four years later, these same undergraduate students are graduating amidst a global pandemic which has proved fatal for over 500 thousand people in the U.S. alone.

These framing incidents are tragic to say the very least, but the Class of 2021’s adversity throughout their often unconventional time on Grounds is a testament to both their strength as a community as well as all of their hard work. The class will celebrate with in-person ceremonies starting Friday, with Final Examinations extending throughout the weekend.

Although the time leading up to graduation is often spent looking ahead towards future plans, especially in a final year plagued by irregularities, many fourth years have found these last days on Grounds to be a time of deep reflection and a chance to look back upon their years spent at the University.

Fourth-year College student You-Jin Yeo, for example, was heavily influenced by her time as a career peer educator at the University’s Career Center and as an admissions intern in the Undergraduate Office of Admissions. From her interactions with students across all years of learning during these internships, she has garnered plenty of advice on how a student can truly capitalize upon their time on Grounds, which she happily shares with new students.

“For first years, I want to say explore,” Yeo said. “Try as many new things as possible. Focus on exploring and trying new things because that’s the only free time you actually have. You have to sort of start settling down for a certain major after your first year, so explore.”

Yeo recently accepted a job offer in an unexpected field of study — she switched from applying for jobs at large corporations to government work within the Department of Justice — which prompted her to generate advice for older students, as well. For Yeo, fluidity is one of the most important concepts to understand as students grow closer and closer to the grasps of the workforce.

“Don’t feel like one specific career, community or job is the one for you,” Yeo said. “You never know if down the road, something else will have been more suited for you … there’s just so many careers out there that we are not aware of, so don’t settle and continuously have an open mind.”

Furthering Yeo’s emphasis on exploration, fourth-year Nursing student Jae Guarrett highlights the true importance of finding joy-inducing interests outside of a standard classroom environment.

As an undergraduate who was able to find happiness within Salsa Club, Mixed Race Student Coalition and his fraternity, Pi Lambda Phi, Guarrett emphasizes the sheer significance of finding a niche or group that makes you happy, and he recognizes that joy can truly be found anywhere.

“I find that it’s so important to be able to find your joy where you can grasp your joy,” Guarrett said. “Within that, find it within your friends … as I end this chapter and as others begin their chapter or are right in the middle of distinct operations that separate it from other majors, Na decided to continue with the program. Four years later, he will be attending the University’s graduate program to pursue his master’s in athletic training following graduation.

“This experience from uncertainty to certainty has taught Na lessons that he, and others, can take to heart moving forward.

“Even though I am uncertain about the future and what it holds for me, I’m not worried about it,” Na said. “So far my past has shown me that every decision I make, even if I’m uncertain about my decision, has been beneficial in a certain way by showing me what I should do next.”

The University’s class of 2021 will be the final group of undergraduate students on Grounds to have collectively experienced these rallies firsthand in the community. Entering the University directly after these events was anything but comforting for students who were mere first years at the time.

However, the University’s response quickly assured many that the school in no way supported the violent actions of the various alt-right leaders who gathered in Charlottesville and ultimately wreaked havoc on the community that day. The rallies on Aug. 11-12 had been sparked by controversy surrounding the removal of Charlottesville’s Confederate statues — specifically the Robert E. Lee statue in Market Street Park, which can presently be removed as early as June 7.

Counter-protesters logically and beyond all united together against the oppressive efforts by far-right groups in the summer of 2017, collectively responding through events like the Aug. 21 student-organized March to Reclaim Our Grounds and Sept. 24 Concert for Charlottesville shortly afterwards.

“I remember in some of my classrooms the professors would address those issues as well, even if their class had nothing to do with politics,” Na said. “I thought the University community was very clear in what they’re for and what they’re not for.”

As fourth years looking back on their time at the University in relation to the pandemic’s vices and the dark notion surrounding the 2017 rallies, Guarrett emphasizes the long-term positive outlook that he and his fellow graduating classmates can benefit from as they prepare to don their caps and gowns.

“It’s about how you go forward with it,” Guarrett said. “I think a lot of people might go forward in the class of 2022 who might not have it all together yet, but I think we learned a lot from lessons and there’s a relief with this graduation there, too… The best thing I can say is that it’s all a journey and we’re all trying to figure it out. I know there’s people in my class as well who don’t have it all figured out and that’s all OK.”

University career counselor Hunter Finch adds onto Guarrett’s advice about warranted uncertainties. Having helped myriadss of students across the years with post graduate plans, Finch believes that one of the best things nervous graduates can do is allow themselves some grace in the face of big change.

“I don’t think anyone who graduates isn’t at least a little bit nervous about a huge life change,” Finch said. “You’ve been in school your entire life, most of you, and then all of a sudden you switch to a non-school … cut yourself some slack, it’s going to be a slight adjustment. [Know] how flexible and resilient you’ve been in the last year and a half.”

In preparing for their allotted day of Final Examinations, fourth years have provided a final chance to look back on how far they have come as students and as community members. Although experiencing tragedy both upon entering and leaving the University, the Class of 2021 has found ways to make the most of every situation — speaking out, connecting, learning and planning to take their next steps.
You made it through four years at the University, and you have most definitely procrasti-
nated on a few projects or papers along the way. You have also probably faced the consequen-
tes of putting off such work. But sometimes the procrastination pays off, and you end up with a
spontaneous, fulfilling product. You might have even realized the extra energy you would have spent if you had done the assign-
ment earlier really would not have been worth it.

While you are probably finished with the majority of your assignments now, there is still one big task left to procrasti-
nate — planning for graduation weekend. Rumors fly around that people book graduation weekend
restaurant reservations a year in advance. This might seem crazy, but if you have been anywhere near the UVa. Parent Network Facebook page, you know this year was especially stressful and problematic because many people actually canceled their long-reserved tables when they thought graduation was going to be virtual again. When the announ-
cement changed, families have resorted to booking Airbnbs away from the University, and finding plans for the family.

There is no need to settle for less than the best after successfully completing four years of a difficult and crammed workload. And you for sure do not want to be hangry when you finally get to walk the Lawn. There is never any need to be embarrassed about procrastinating in college, especially when there are still oppor-
tunities to succeed with your dining experiences this graduation weekend.

**Easy solutions for procrastination that transfers from homework to reservations**

`LIFE - Thursday, May 20, 2021 | 7`

**Last-minute restaurants to dine at during grad weekend**

**Maddie McNamee | Food Writer**

You don’t need to make all your reservations yet.

**Bodo’s Bagels**

If you don’t hit Bodo’s on your graduation weekend, you will probably get your diploma revoked. This is an absolute staple of Charlottesville and the University. Bodo’s has efficiently navigated feeding customers during the pandemic in the safest way possible. They are only doing drive-through orders at the Emmett Street and Preston Avenue locations, and there is no sit-down option on the Corner. This means there’s not even an opportunity for others to score reservations while you have been procrastinating. The Lawn may be too busy, so instead try taking your bagels to one of the gardens or somewhere further out like McIntire Park or along the Rivanna River. While the lines may be long, they will give you more time to reflect on your years at the University with your loved ones. With ample time waiting, you can share some — but proba-
bly not all — of your memories at Bodo’s after a night out.

**Brazos Tacos**

Tacos are suitable for any time of day, and this is especially true at Brazos. Whether you need breakfast, lunch or dinner, Brazos will supply you with fuel for the weekend. Any of their tacos with mashed potatoes are a must-have. It may sound off-putting, but just trust me — and I am sure you have had weirder combina-
tions of foods during your time at the University. I also recom-
mend any of their breakfast tacos at truly any hour. Brazos does not take reservations, which makes it feasible for all of us procrastina-
tors to secure the best tacos in Charlottesville. You can order your meal online and pick it up at the take-out window, then enjoy it at one of their numerous tables outside. Get an “I Love You So Much” taco filled with scram-
bled eggs, chorizo, mashed pata-
toes, toasted corn pico and que-
sos fresco, while your emotional,
nostalgic parents tell you those same five words.

**Blue Mountain Brewery**

It may be another place that does not take reservations, but Blue Mountain Brewery does allow dine-in, sit-down service — so grab a table early while you can. Located in Afton, this brew-
ery is a bit further from the hus-
tle and bustle of the University, but it is still constantly popping. The views are beautiful, and the brews are just as enticing. Many weekends they have live music outside, so it might trigger some nostalgia for your many nights at Coupé’s these past few years. Blue Mountain offers a sampler flight for $11 that includes 10 draft selections. They deliver it to you in an arc shape from light to dark brews, so it actually re-
sembles a beer rainbow. Their food is also incredible, and you can’t miss any of their pizzas or smash burgers to pair with your drinks. Enjoy the hopefully warm weather during graduation week-
end with their “Drink a Peach!” seasonal gose. The fruity, crisp

**Dr. Ho’s Humble Pie**

While restaurant reservations are filling, so are hotels. Many families have resorted to booking Airbnbs away from the University in nearby areas like Ivy Road. I know my mother did just that, and this is my final, publicized push to get her to try Dr. Ho’s Humble Pie on graduation week-
end — and you should try it too. Dr. Ho’s has an obscure variety of specialty pizzas, but they are all mouthwatering. They also are only doing take-out, so there is no need to rush to make a res-
ervation. Located in the North Garden area, Dr. Ho’s is in close

**Dairy Market**

If you have a family of picky eaters, then the Dairy Market is the place to cure any hunger-in-
duced anger. With a variety of food stalls, everybody in your crew will have the chance to choose something they like, even if that means having Moo Thru ice cream for dinner. The Dairy Market just opened in the past year, so it presents just another reason to celebrate the year 2021. You can grab drinks from Starr Hill Brewery and pair them with the cuisine of your choosing. The Dairy Market also does not take reservations, and the numerous vendors allow for a high chance of finding at least one short line. The space has ample seating in-
side and outside, so you should be able to find a spot to dine with your friends and family on your special weekend.

**PUZZLE SOLUTION**

*A SOLUTION FROM MAY 6 ISSUE*

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Top 10 ways you can thrive at the University
As you begin or continue your college career at U.Va., consider these tips for success from a relatively wise soon-to-be-graduate

Kaitlyn Hilliard | Top 10 Writer

1. Become familiar with Grounds
One of the first and most important things you can do as a student at the University is becoming familiar with your surroundings. Grounds is a pretty big place, so it may take some time, but exploration is arguably the best part of the experience. Learn the names of the halls and dorms, experiment with the quickest way to get from point A to point B and locate other random locations — such as Nameless Field, the Student Activities Building and the Special Collections Library. Start with a location you likely know — the Lawn — and work your way outwards. Soon enough, you’ll be the expert that is able to guide confused visitors from Newcomb Hall to New Dorms.

One of the greatest things about this University — other than your education — is the people that are here sharing this space with you. My time at the University would not be as memorable or enjoyable were it not for the people I met and built relationships with. Don’t just confine yourself to friendships within your dorms, apartments or houses. Extracurricular activities are great spaces to find other students with similar interests. Classes provide excellent opportunities to talk casually and create an initial bond with your peers. And if you’re feeling particularly adventurous and social, strike up a conversation with someone that is sitting alone and see where it goes. Most people in college — especially first years — are all in the same boat when it comes to looking for friends, so put yourself out there and socialize.

3. Get involved in extracurricular activities
As mentioned above, extracurricular activities are great spaces to make connections with your peers that share similar interests. Beyond this, clubs and organizations on Grounds help you to determine what it is that you are passionate about and what activities you may not feel as strongly about. The University offers a wide variety of club and intramural sports and more student-run CIOs than you can count. In the first couple of weeks of the semester, keep your eyes open for announcements about the Student Activities Fair, where you will be able to browse and sign up for the clubs that pique your interest. Don’t be shy to put your name down for ones that you are just barely intrigued by — you can always remove yourself from email lists later on. If you want to plan ahead, check out this list of organizations at the University.

4. Don’t be afraid to spend time alone
One thing I wish I knew coming into college was that sometimes you thrive the most when you are alone. There is this stigma in high school that being alone makes you a “loser” or an outcast, but the same does not apply in college. Spending time with yourself helps you to reflect on your emotions, struggles and high points. Also, by being alone, you learn who you truly are, deep down — what makes you tick, what makes you smile, what makes you upset and so much more. College is a pivotal point in your life. So, I urge you to take some time to learn about yourself so you can leave the University confident and knowledgeable about the incredible person you are.

5. Reach beyond the U.Va. bubble
Believe me, I understand how tempting it is to stay within the safe boundaries of Grounds, but don’t forget about everything that the City of Charlottesville has to offer. As a first year, I was hesitant to explore anything beyond the Corner, but the Downtown Mall is a great place to start your journey outside of the University. There is a seasonal Saturday morning farmer’s market from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. that is a great activity to try out to see a bit of the city and learn about some local businesses to support. Also, consider giving back to Charlottesville by volunteering your time and services to organizations through Madison House — the volunteer center for the University’s students.

6. Make use of University resources
The University does a fantastic job of providing its students with a variety of resources ranging from the Career Center to CAPS — Counseling and Psychological Services. These services are free to current University students, so I recommend taking advantage of all of the programs that the University has to offer. In particular, as you progress through your college career, schedule appointments at the Career Center to help with resume building, interview skills and even internship opportunities. Additionally, there are resources specific to student identities such as First Generation resources, the Multicultural Student Center and the Office of African American Affairs. If you are curious about the numerous resources the University offers, check out the University website for more information.

7. Explore coursework outside of your major
If I could go back in time and do one thing differently, I would explore more academic fields during my time at the University. Although I did dabble in some varied coursework, there is so much more that I could have explored. Take my advice and try out some different subject areas — you never know what may spark your interest! Especially during your first couple of years at the University, consider fulfilling your general education requirements with diverse subject areas. Think of things you might have read or heard that seemed fascinating, and use that as a starting point. How often do you get four years to stretch your mind and explore different subject matters?

8. Don’t be afraid to ask for help
Somehow, a misconception has spread like wildfire that you are meant to endure college and all its highpoints and hardships alone — and that is simply not the case. Your parents, friends, peers, RAs, TAs, professors, deans and many more countless people are all rooting for and supporting you, so let them. When you encounter challenges — whether academic or personal — don’t be afraid to express yourself and seek out help. If students were capable of completing everything by themselves, don’t you think there would be far less resources offered to them? Remember that there is no shame in receiving help for coursework, and there is especially no shame in seeking out counseling from CAPS. The U.Va. community is here to help — don’t forget that.

9. Form connections with University faculty
In addition to socializing with your peers, it is essential to form connections with University faculty, as well. In my time here, I have met some incredibly kind and intelligent professors, advisors, graduate assistants and TAs that have transformed my college experience. University faculty can provide assistance with coursework, discuss career goals or further education and help you to gain valuable connections in specific professional arenas. Don’t underestimate the value of office hours either. Your professors want to form connections with you, so pop into their office during their free time — even if you don’t have specific questions, just chat with them!

10. Don’t limit yourself!
My biggest challenge for you is to maintain an open mind during your college career. Although you may think you know yourself well coming into this time, you never know what activities, subjects or people may mold you into a new and improved version of yourself. College will inevitably change you, and if you remain hopeful and optimistic, these changes will be for the better. Say yes to offers and challenges. Explore areas you swore you couldn’t care less about. Go with the flow. Allow yourself to grow — you won’t regret it, I promise.
We fund great ideas.

TO APPLY, START WITH A LOI

We’re updating our 2021-22 annual grants application process. Learn more at JEFFERSONTRUST.ORG
Dakota Baker

WAHOOWA! CONGRATULATIONS! We are beyond proud of you and so happy to share the excitement of your graduation day. It’s the result of your sincerity, hard work, dedication, and patience. This is only the beginning! Continue to make yourself proud. Be who you are. Do what you love. Go where God and your heart leads you. Be happy, be wise, and enjoy your journey.

Love, Mom & Dad

Devyn Lee

To our bilingual SLP-to-be Devyn Lee, Everyone deserves a voice. Wishing you success as you help people find it.

Love always,
Mom, Dad & Ryan

Kailyn Baker

KAILYN!! We love and are proud of you completing the first of your goals! WAHOOWA!

Love, Mom, Ian, Erin & Dad (always with you)

UVA CLASS OF 2021

Harrison Premen

Congratulations HARRISON BROWNING PREMEN for achieving your Masters Degree in Urban & Environmental Planning! So proud of you! WAHOOWA!

Love, Mom & Dad

Malcolm Mashig

Congratulations! It’s not the greatness within us that matters most... but the courage to bring it forth.

All Our Love,
Mom, Dad, Hunter & Harrison

Nik Popli

We are so proud of you and your public service leadership in keeping your community connected, informed and engaged! Wishing you continued success in everything you pursue!

Congratulations with love from Mom, Dad & Didi

UVA CLASS OF 2021

Erin Clancy

Erin, we are so proud of you. From the Cavalier Daily, to USingers, and a semester in Valencia, you’ve had a great four years as a Hoo. We can’t wait to see what’s next, just remember to bring a towel. And Don’t Panic!

Love, Mom, Dad and Megan (incoming Hoo #2!)

Love, Mom & Dad

UVA CLASS OF 2021

KAILYN!! We love and are proud of you completing the first of your goals! WAHOOWA!

Love, Mom, Ian, Erin & Dad (always with you)

UVA CLASS OF 2021

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UVA CLASS OF 2021
Congratulations on your 4 years of hard work and effort, graduate! You have persevered through multiple challenges, not the least of which was Covid-19 and the upheaval in your life and schooling. We love your humor and intelligence, and have loved watching you grow in your musical talents as well as your faith. You have shown true leadership in growing The Navigators at UVA, and the friendships you have made there will last for a lifetime. We eagerly await the next step in your life's journey and will support you in whichever path your heart leads you. We will love you always!

Love,
Mom & Dad

“May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.” -Psalm 20:4

Dear Shannon-
We are so proud of you and the smart, strong woman you've become! The mantra “Make It Work” has never been more appropriate and that's exactly what you have done over this last year. Your journey is just beginning - know that we are always here for you. Sparkle, Baby!
Lots of love, Mom & Dad
Nurses.
Strong.
Smart.
Compassionate.
Ready.

Congratulations, Class of 2021, from your
UVA School of Nursing
Dear Julia,

You have no idea how proud we are of you and your accomplishments at UVA! These four years have seen you grow from a bright, ambitious high school student into an amazingly self-assured, driven young woman with big dreams and an incredible future. Without a doubt, you have both given and gotten a lot during your time in Charlottesville. The University gave you Club Tennis, Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority, Oxford, and the Batten School, not to mention your incredible friend group and housemates. No matter how far you go or how successful you become, you will always keep this time at UVA near your heart.

We love you!
Mami, Daddy, and Jack
CLASS OF 2021 GRADUATES

Emma Brahmey
The little girl in the UVA cheerleading outfit has become our favorite woman in STEM. We are so happy and excited for you to start your next degree from The University!
Love always, Mom & Dad

Daulton Roach
Look Hoos Graduating!!! Four years of hard work, amazing experiences, incredible friendships and immense personal growth culminate in your UVA degree. We know great things are in your future!
We Love You, Mom and Dad

MIKE SWINGLE
Congratulations Mikey! So glad all the hard work (and play!) paid off and your UVA dream came true (and how cool to have another ‘Hoo / FIJI in the house)! Cherish these days always!! We are so proud of how you’ve lived your life, and are looking so forward to what is yet to come. Like Kipling said, “Yours is the Earth, and everything that’s in it...you are a man, my son.”
XOXOXO from your biggest fans,
Mom, Dad, Kris & D.J.

LOGAN ROBET HARPER
Congratulations Logan! You have worked so hard and achieved so much. We can’t wait to see what you do next. We are so proud of You!
Love Mom, Maw, Paw Paw, Dad, Landon, Trini

CLASS OF 2020 & 2021
Sibel Al-Barzinji | Griffin Asnis | Charlie Begala | Max Castroparedes
Strother Cech | Ji Cho | Devan Coombes | Cameron Cox | Robert Denton
Shriya Dodwan | Hunter Elam | Alexis Gingerich | Jake Green
Hannah Griffin | Tanmay Gupt | Kristen Grave | Matthew Greason
Arthur Harris | Taylor Harvey | Caroline Hatley | Maddie Hazzard
Andrew Holmes | Hugh Jones | Thomas Joyce | Sia Kim | Evan Luellen
Keenan Maher | Omar Metwally | Jay Moody | Jasmine Moore-Mangone
Morgan Negron | Kevin Nguyen | Priscilla Opoku-Yeboah | Aidan Parker
Nik Popli | Victoria Propheter | Garrett Scocos | Adele Reardon
Mazen Shalaby | Victoria Spiotto | Joel Thomas | Katherine Timothy,
Justice Wade | Javori Warren | Isabella Whitfield | Sydney Williams

Love Mom, Maw, Paw Paw, Dad, Landon, Trini

Meredith Mackay
Meredith, We are so proud of the amazing young woman you have become! Your intelligence, charm, compassion, work ethic and good humor will take you far! Wahoo!!
Love, Mom & Andrew
Reflecting on the Class of 2021

The CD Sports Staff looks back on a class that experienced multiple national championships, new athletic facilities and a global pandemic.

As four years come to an end for hundreds of Virginia student-athletes, we want to reflect on the unique four years those graduating Cavaliers have spent on Grounds. Here, we answer a few key questions about the Class of 2021 and look back on their impact on the University.

What sport’s graduating class do you feel had the greatest impact on you and Virginia?

Jacob Knupp, Sports Columnist:
The Cavalier women’s swim and dive team was by far the strongest team this season. The women’s team especially made an impact on me after watching them rattle off win after win en route to their first national championship. Crucial to the championship run were the seniors, and Paige Madden led by example with first-place finishes in three individual events. She was without a doubt the most dominant swimmer in the country at nationals, and the team will certainly miss her next year. Fellow seniors Caroline Ginelich and Kyla Valls also secured All-American honors, as Ginelich won the 100 back, 200 medley relay and 400 medley relay and Valls won the 200 free, 200 free relay and 800 free relay. The men’s team performed well too this season, and they will surely miss the likes of Keifer Barrum, who holds the Virginia record in the 100 and 200 breast.

Hopefully, the swim team’s success this past year under the leadership of Coach with stops at important landmarks in Charlottesville. Their walk across Grounds was riddled with unrest and tensions demonstrated the friction between campus and community. Jana Hazirly have been outspoken and helped activists and promoted causes important to the Cavaliers’ success. Not only did the seniors face the challenge of incoming freshmen who were likely to play and needed guidance, the top three freshmen are all foreign students. Seniors Jefferson Dockter, Spencer Bosik, Ethan Moshokwa and Jerome Romualdez led large freshmen and sophomore classes in adjusting to Virginia, while Matthew Lord and Gianni Ross played pivotal roles on the court in NCAA and ACC play. As a whole, the senior class had to juggle a talented freshman class with an unexpected amount of success as a team this year. Their leadership and wisdom served as an example for the Cavaliers and seeing their leadership against Stanford was indicative of their impact here at Virginia.

If there was one word you could use to describe the Cavaliers’ Class of 2021, what would it be?

JT: Baseball starting pitcher Andrew Abbott

JT: Baseball starting pitcher An

JT: Dedicated. From their first on and off the field, earning top honors for the Cavaliers and seeing their leadership against Stanford was indicative of their impact here at Virginia.

Who is the athlete you’ll miss most from the Class of 2021?

JT: Men’s basketball guard Tomas Woldetensae. Hailing from Bologna, Italy, he was definitely one of the biggest personalities on the Virginia basketball team, and I’ll miss his clutch three-pointers and the occasional pasta recipe. I wish we could have seen more of him on the court this past season, as his minutes took a dip compared to his junior year. As a junior after transferring from Indian Hills Community College, Woldeten- sae was thrust into the spotlight to jump-start a historically bad Cavalier offense. He emerged as the team’s sole reliable three-point shooter, leading Virginia with 52 made three-point attempts — the next closest was a mere 36. Unfortunately, Woldetensae has elected not to return for an extra season of eligibility. Even after only playing for two years, Woldetensae will go down as one of the most memorable Cavaliers to step on the court.

JT: Baseball starting pitcher Andrew Abbott. The southpaw reliever has been an excellent member of the Cavalier pitching staff since joining Virginia in 2018. He has consistently performed at a high level on and off the field, earning top honors with multiple ACC All-Academic Team listings, as well as racking up accolades for his incredible relief efforts early in his career. In the shortened 2020 season, Abbott had an incredible 1.39 ERA, striking out 28 batters in 15.1 innings. This year, he leads the ACC in strikeouts after transitioning to a starting role. He is currently third all-time in career strikeouts at Virginia with 280. In his most recent appearance, he pitched 7.1 innings of the Cavaliers’ combined no-hitter against Wake Forest, striking out 16 in the process. While he will likely join a team in this year’s MLB draft, his steady presence on the mound of Davenport Field will be greatly missed.

Akhil Rakkulapalli, Senior Editor:

Womens’ lacrosse defender Meredith Chapman. While Chapman was with the Cavaliers for just the 2021 season after transferring from High Point as a graduate transfer, the Apex, N.C. native was an outstanding anchor for Virginia’s backline. Chapman — a student in the School of Nursing — scooped up 41 ground balls and caused 23 turnovers across 18 games, including four ground balls and three caused turnovers against rival Duke. For her efforts, Chapman was named to the IWLCA All-South Region Team as well as the All-ACC Second Team. As Chapman leaves the program to pursue further education and a career in nursing, she will be remembered as a fierce competitor and strong leader within the Cavalier lacrosse program.

CD Sports Staff
In fall 2017, when many now-graduating student-athletes stepped onto Grounds, nobody could have known what the next four years would bring. Thrilling national championships, a myriad of ACC titles, brand new logos and even a global pandemic are but a few of the defining moments these Cavaliers have experienced in sports during their time donning orange and blue. While there isn't enough time in the day to recap everything that has happened in Virginia Athletics over the last four years, let's recap a few of the highlights.

The rowing team won its 11th consecutive ACC Championship in May 2021.

Men's lacrosse battled a gritty NCAA Tournament schedule in 2019, but emerged victorious in every competition, including the National Championship game against Yale.

After falling to UMBC in the first round of March Madness in 2018, the Cavaliers mounted one of the greatest comeback stories of all time the following year — winning the National Championship 85-77.

Carla Williams was named Director of Athletics at the University in October 2017.

Following an incredible season in the pool, the women's swim and dive team walked away with the program's first NCAA Championship in March 2021.

In November 2017, Men's and women's squash introduced at UVA.

In March 2019, Men's basketball wins the national championship.

In May 2019, Men's lacrosse wins the national championship.

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Virginia Sports through the eyes of the Class of 2021

A timeline of athletic triumphs for the graduating class

November 2017
Men's and women's squash introduced at UVA.

March 2019
Men's basketball wins the national championship

May 2019
Men's lacrosse wins the national championship
In a four-hour window on March 12, 2020, we saw college sports fall apart as all activities and tournaments were stopped by COVID-19.

Palmer Park, Virginia softball’s new home, was unveiled in early March 2020. The ballpark is the first competition site at the University to be named after a former female student-athlete.

In 2019, for the first time in 15 years, Virginia defeated Virginia Tech to win the Commonwealth Cup in a thrilling fashion. Bronco Mendenhall, the Fralin Family Head Football Coach, was given the honor of breaking the rock after the game.

Squash began its inaugural season in fall 2017. One year later, McArthur Squash Center was expanded.

After being shut down for the entire fall season due to COVID-19, Scott Stadium opened up to a limited number of fans for the spring football game in 2021.

The volleyball team, including four seniors, had its season end prematurely in 2021 when every member of the coaching staff was relieved of their duties. Now, the team looks to a brighter future with a new, illustrious coaching staff leading the way.

In 2020, Virginia Athletics launches a new brand identity.

In 2021, for the first time in 15 years, Virginia defeated Virginia Tech to win the Commonwealth Cup in a thrilling fashion. Bronco Mendenhall, the Fralin Family Head Football Coach, was given the honor of breaking the rock after the game.
The Cavalier Daily

PARTING SHOTS

Where the seeds of transformational change sprout

When I look back at my experience as a UVa student and as the 131st Editor-in-Chief of The Cavalier Daily, more than anything I think of my time in the CD newsroom because it reminded me of the storytelling I pursued and the incredible community that bound our staff together. Once you get beyond the general mess of the office — it has, after all, been passed down by generations of college students — you realize that it is truly an extraordinary place where the seeds of transformational change sprout.

Several people have since asked what it was like to be the editor of the newspaper during the pandemic. While I truly enjoyed the experience of connecting and engaging our community, my answer usually involves the incredible weight I felt on my shoulders as a 20-year-old tasked with adapting the paper’s financial, operational and editorial affairs amidst the unexpected challenges thrown our way. It was a long and arduous journey, but the positive change we created in our community made it all worth it.

I will never forget returning to the empty office, alone, for the last time before the University closed in the spring wondering when we’d be able to return. I’ll never forget how we printed our first newspaper from our childhood bedrooms, laughing together on Zoom from across the country at a 2 a.m. work environment where we continually came up with original ideas for our COVID-19 coverage — breaking news about virus outbreaks with student housing and highlighting the need for progress and change in our community and use our platform for standing with The Cavalier Daily as we continued to shine a light on the need for progress and change in our community of student self-governance.

I could not be prouder of you all for persisting through everything we faced by producing incredible journalism. And while our intramural basketball season didn’t end as planned, thank you all for helping to create an environment of unconditional love and support.

To our readers: I know that sometimes you just open the paper for the crossword, but there are few things as satisfying for a writer than arriving at a morning class and seeing someone read a story you worked on. So thank you for your support, emails and, yes, even the Facebook comments. Keep holding the paper accountable and pushing it forward.

I know the newsroom where I spent so much time will be buzzing with in-person activities again soon. And while I couldn’t have expected many of the challenges thrown my way, I am grateful to the University community for standing with The Cavalier Daily as we continued to shine a light on the need for progress and change in our community of student self-governance.

NIK POPLI was The Cavalier Daily’s 131st Editor-in-Chief and 130th News Editor.

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To better serve readers, The Cavalier Daily has a public editor to respond to questions and concerns regarding its practices. The public editor writes a column published every week on the opinion page based on reader feedback and his independent observations. He also welcomes queries pertaining to journalism and the newspaper industry in general. The public editor is available at publiceditor@cavalierdaily.com.

HAVE AN OPINION?

The Cavalier Daily welcomes letters to the editor and guest columns. Writers must provide full name, telephone number and University affiliation, if appropriate. Letters should not exceed 250 words in length and columns should not exceed 750. The Cavalier Daily does not guarantee publication of submissions and may edit all material for content and grammar. Submit to opinion@cavalierdaily.com or P.O. Box 400703, Charlottesville, VA 22904-4703.
**Sportswriting is more than just writing about sports**

Sports have always been bigger than just wins and losses. They play a profound role in our lives and are deeply interwoven into the very fabric of our society. Countless sociocultural issues are inextricably linked to sports, but they don’t always get the attention they deserve. Over the course of three years writing for The Cavalier Daily’s sports section, I’ve learned firsthand that it’s the responsibility of sports journalists to go beyond the box score and shed light on the lesser-known stories within the sports world.

Since I started covering Virginia sports in 2018, I’ve written 156 articles across various sports. From the men’s lacrosse team winning its sixth national championship to the football team beating Virginia Tech for the first time in 15 years, there’s no doubt I’ve enjoyed reporting on all the things the Cavaliers have accomplished on the field.

However, dozens of other news outlets also covered those exact same events. In truth, the articles I’ve connected the most with are the ones that tackle less visible, off-the-field subjects. While these pieces may not revolve around a big game or a star player, they are often just as important or interesting to the Virginia community. As a writer for The Cavalier Daily, I’ve had the opportunity to cover a number of broader societal topics through the lens of college sports. These include hard-hitting issues such as the pay disparity between head coaches of different Virginia teams and the challenges Club teams face just to survive on Grounds.

On top of that, I’ve had the privilege of speaking with many Virginia student-athletes — past and present — and sharing their unique stories beyond just what they do in the blue and orange. In the last couple of years, I’ve talked to athletes who were forced to leave their sport for one reason or another. I’ve learned about the different career paths graduating athletes pursue once they are in the real world. I’ve also written more lighthearted pieces including a Valentine’s Day-themed feature on a student-athlete couple. I’ve even spoken with a former two-sport athlete who opened a non-profit coffee shop in Charlottesville that empowers adults with cognitive disabilities. While athletes’ performances are frequently public display, these other fascinating aspects of their lives usually go unnoticed.

With all that being said, I didn’t truly see the immense value of sports journalists’ forays into non-traditional sports coverage until the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the country in March 2020. For months, the world of college athletics was on pause. The sports section faced a challenge — how do we write sports articles when there are no sports to cover? Believe it or not, these unfortunates circumstances were a hidden opportunity for our talented sports staff. Since we didn’t have any games to write about, we pursued another avenue — unreported stories tangential to sports. The financial state of college athletics, the local economy, physical and mental health, student-athletes with unique backgrounds and social justice initiatives are only a sample of the topics we covered once the pandemic hit.

We replaced stat sheets and post-game press conferences with in-depth research and expert interviews. Instead of analyzing games and highlights, we scoured the community for narratives that may have flown under the radar and explored them from multiple perspectives. In spite of the pandemic, we were writing a greater number of articles of a higher quality on a more diverse range of subjects — something that many wouldn’t have thought was possible given the situation.

As my time in The Cavalier Daily draws to a bittersweet close, I understand now that sportswriters don’t have to just focus on sports. They can also be investigative reporters, political correspondents and business journalists all at the same time. They can cover a championship game as well as how the players protested injustice or write about a key player while touching on the complicated road the athlete took to get to this point. Clearly, sports journalists can serve the community in a lot more ways than simply reporting what happened during a match. While it took me awhile to realize that fact, I’m glad I eventually did, just in time for my 137th — and last — article.

**VIGNESH MULAY** was a Sports Writer for the 290th and 132nd terms of The Cavalier Daily. He was also a Sports Editor during the 131st term.
Is graduation impressive enough?

I don’t know if it’s the pandemic or a newfound sense of emotional maturity, but there’s been a serious lack of drama in my life as of late. To fill that gaping void, I’ve found myself perusing the U.Va. Parent Network Facebook page more and more frequently, and let me tell you, it is chock full of good stuff.

Recently, someone’s mother reached out to her fellow parents — why they don’t just ask their kids, I’ll never know — asking about any graduation traditions. She was met with the classic traditions of carrying balloons and getting absolutely shitfaced at 6 a.m.

Personally, I think hundreds of students parading hundreds of balloons across the Lawn is a spectacle in and of itself, and drinking alcohol is one of the things University students do best — aside from making everyday things competitive and running naked for long distances. The mom, however, found this unacceptable, repeatedly commenting, “Was really hoping for something more impressive.”

Ever since reading this assessment of U.Va. graduation, I haven’t been eating. I haven’t been sleeping. U.Va. is the sole reason for my unfounded superiority complex, and now someone’s own mother is questioning whether or not we are IMPRESSIVE? The horror.

I’ve been racking my brain for ways to make this graduation the event of the bicentennial that these parents deserve. My first thought was that we should choreograph a flash mob, but let’s be real, it’s 2021 and that’s a little too cheugie even for me. At my fifth grade graduation, we all sang “Step Into the Spotlight.” Although it was a bit off key, it really seemed to get the crowd going, so I’ll leave that on the table. I do think we should update the song for something a little more relevant to our generation. My vote is for “Bodak Yellow” since that’s the song that scores my daydreams about pregames in dorms before catching the bus to frat parties. It would truly be a poignant moment.

Another important tradition at U.Va. is the infamous Honor Code. We could use these gatherings as an opportunity to call out all of those little rascals with a Chegg account by name. Shame them in front of their parents and peers, maybe even throw a few tomatoes. It got medieval peasants hyped, I’m sure it could do the same now.

The Parent Network was also quite appalled by the fact that students would be walking a mile from the Lawn to Scott Stadium. They forget, however, that our fearless leader University President Jim Ryan is a track star, and for him that’s a 4 minute warm up. To make the occasion truly memorable, Ryan should lead our pack, running in an iconic “Run with Jim” T-shirt. He could even get a T-shirt gun and have Cav Man shoot them into the crowd upon our arrival. That would be sick.

For the grand finale, we should bring out the Common wealth Cup that we won back in 2019 after beating those darned Hokies. We can all join in for a chorus of the “Good Ol’ Song” — the explicit version — one last time.

For real though, for a class bookended by the Unite the Right rally and a global pandemic, I think the fact that we got here is impressive enough. Congrats 2021 — go drink a borg and try not to let go of your balloon!

KATIE MCCracken was a Humor columnist during the 128th, 129th, 130th and 131st terms.

**HUMOR**

**Is graduation impressive enough?**

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Also, if we’re going to be there anyways, we might as well give the Lawn one last farewell streak. My pale white behind will reflect the afternoon sun to the sky as I reflect on the memories I made over the last four years at good old Virginia.

For the grand finale, we should bring out the Common wealth Cup that we won back in 2019 after beating those darned Hokies. We can all join in for a chorus of the “Good Ol’ Song” — the explicit version — one last time.

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I’ll never get over my fascination with the power of chance. Ever. As someone raised with no grounding in faith, circumstance and chance will forever captivate how I make sense of the world. When it rains on bad days, I’m like, “yep.” When it’s sunny on good days, the same.

It’s not a perfect system though — sometimes I’ll wake up believing everything happens for a reason, and that chance plays into some semblance of a bigger, cosmic picture, and some days I’ll wake up and believe we’re all just pixels in someone’s virtual Barbie Dream House. I know it’s all superstition, but to the best of my ability, I need to make sense of a meaningless world. And that’s why, in some ways, rethers me to this moon rock, and makes this conglomerate of happenings we call life mentally click.

But chance doesn’t always serve me well. Chance tells us how, but doesn’t always tell us why.

I was in a stranger’s home the morning I got the call that my friend was away from pancreatic cancer. The final track of the album, “Crow,” details a story of Elverum taking his daughter to a park, and seeing a crow — playing into the record’s extended metaphor of his late wife embodying a crow. The last line on the record, a body of work I put so much expectation into giving me answers, was simple and somber — “and there she was.” That pissed me off.

At a certain point, I got frustrated with my fruitless pursuit for explanation and meaning — I just wanted to find escape. "Don’t Know When I Will Believe" by Shy Girls happened upon me when I needed it most. By chance. I found peace in that song because it sounds like some melancholy march into the unknown, and most days, I just needed the strength to lace up my shoes. To march. And truly, like the chorus suggests, I felt comfort in knowing that somewhere else in the universe, someone else didn’t know when they’d believe. Because neither did I. The closing string section felt like liberation. I never wanted it to end, and when it did, I’d rewind and keep walking. Rewind and keep walking.

I still don’t have answers — it’s not like I pray to chance and circumstance. But two years removed, what’s ultimately changed is that I’ve come to terms with not having answers — I don’t think I need them anymore. I’m okay with just being — being with the understanding that the simple act of being is courageous and beautiful, and my inability to understand is also courageous and beautiful. Being as we write this never ending love letter we call grief, listened with ink blots. Sometimes, we can’t make out what’s being said, and most of the time, we’re pretty sure it’s never going to end. But we keep writing, writing and writing, because the pen and our hands are one.

I’ve been listening to "Picture Me Better" by Weyes Blood a lot recently. I’m not going to pretend like writing that love letter isn’t incredibly difficult, but this song makes me feel a little less alone. The chorus of “waiting for the call from beyond / waiting for something with meaning” sits me down where I stand. I’m making peace with waiting. Every lyric of this song floats in the waters of my mind — I acknowledge their presence, and they are home. “If I could’ve seen you just once more / tell you how much you’re adored.” “Picture us better / we finally found a winter for your sweater / got a brand new big suit of armor, it’s tough / since you left, I’ve grown so much.”

I write this article with a couple of understandings. One, the understanding that this is how I choose to utilize the last time I’ll have this platform. I’m making peace with finalities. Two, the understanding that this is an imperfect article, the understanding that I won’t be able to capture everything worthy of being captured. I’m okay with grief being imperfect. Three, the understanding that the songs I’ve written about here, and every single one of the songs that have carried me to this moment, and makes me feel a little less alone.

I think we’re being and being better, Rehan. We’re trying to make the world a little more beautiful, little by little. And I’m not sure if I’ll ever believe that we live in a world without you, but I do know that I believe in you — and that’s enough to get me through. I see you in every step, and I breathe you in my every breath, because I make the choice to move in your remembrance. We make the choice to move in your remembrance.

There’s a bench, dedicated to your memory, outside of the dorm you used to live in. When I first visited after it was built, I saw a beetle, sitting on the arm rest. I visited you there last week, and there was a beetle, sitting on the arm rest. And there he was.
Alumna artist Aleeta celebrates new single

Virginia native Aleeta sat down to talk about her experiences as a musician and Class of 2020 graduate

Omari John | Staff Writer

As the number of vaccinated people has increased massively over the past few months, cases are starting to drop. Life is feeling like it is getting back to normal, including the important events in our lives that had to be completed online last year that can now occur in-person this year — college graduations included.

Since last year’s graduation ceremony took place virtually in 2020 — the University decided to invite 2020 and 2021 alumni to this year’s graduation ceremony so those who missed out could have the opportunity to embrace one of life’s most important moments. Once the University extended this invitation, many graduates from across the country came back to Charlottesville for their special moment, including musician Aleeta.

Aleeta has been covered previously by The Cavalier Daily given her selection as one of the local Charlottesville artists to perform at UPC’s Tiny Desk concert in February 2020. However, her journey with music began much earlier than that. While she started writing music when she was 12, her time growing up in Virginia and attending the University heavily influenced her sound.

“I mainly write about love or relationships and heartbreak,” Aleeta said. “So some of [my music] was inspired by experiences that you go [through].” When I was at U.Va. there were other topics, like I talked about social issues.”

During her time at the University, Aleeta enjoyed being able to connect with other musicians and producers in the Charlottesville community.

As a part of University Records, Aleeta’s experience with their live shows helped her find musicians and bands from the University. She furthered this ability to connect with other local musicians when she worked at the Southern, a popular Charlottesville venue for live music.

While Aleeta had influences prior to college, she noted several major artists that inspired her during her time at the University — ones that she had previously overlooked as she grew up.

“I think one of those artists is definitely Solange,” Aleeta said. “I kind of slept on her a little bit.”

Aleeta also became more interested in artists like SZA and Jhené Aiko. Reflecting on these changes, Aleeta noted that she got more and more into R&B as a genre when she was at the University, which she found interesting given that the genre is “not necessarily the most popular music that you hear.”

It’s also important to note Aleeta’s newest single “Permission,” a track that highlights her phenomenal vocals as a star in the making. The mixing of her background vocals and piano underlying the lyrics of the song is beautiful. Even thematically it’s very interesting and reminiscent of “Girls Need Love” by Summer Walker. The song focuses on a romantic relationship between two people who were separated for a long period of time. The other person has been hesitant to fully embrace the relationship now that they are closer together. But Aleeta is saying she wants to cherish what they have together. It’s a great song to listen to while taking a late night drive.

As for Aleeta’s future plans, she is working with her managers to release an EP soon and is excited to take advantage of live shows that are becoming more and more accessible as many people become vaccinated.

“A lot of venues and concerts are really starting to open up — so I really want to hone in on that,” she said.

As she reflects on her time at the University, she advises current students to pursue their passions and be confident in their path.

“You’ll figure things out — don’t feel like you’re not ready or you need to be perfect or like things need to be aligned,” she said. “Don’t wait around for other people to give you the go — just go and do what you want to do, even if it seems like the scariest thing in the world.”

Congratulations UVA Drama and Dance Graduates of 2021!

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Jakob Hans Cansler
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Rain Egguiguren
Jessica Leigh Fidler
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Payton Moledor
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Fiona O’Reilly Sanchez
Cameron Schafer
Maille-Rose Smith
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Drama Minors
Max Bacall
Grace Gyamfi
Hanna Kornell
Shefali Prasad
Veronica Seguin
Mia Shaker
Davion J. Zeno

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Lauren Hall
Kiana Pilson
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