THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A RODMAN SCHOLAR

As the first round of midterms approaches, first year Rodmans have begun to acclimate to the UVA community. Having taken advantage of the Activities Fair held during the first few days here on Grounds, these students—fresh out of high school—have joined varsity and club sports teams as well as a variety of other clubs. Although this involvement does not come as a surprise considering the academic quality of Rodmans, what is most important is the future impact these organizations will have.

College introduces young adults to a completely different atmosphere than high school. Students are living with classmates while gaining much more responsibility. By joining multiple clubs in their first year, students are giving themselves chance to find out what piques their interest the most. They are making this new, confusing experience more enjoyable—something they can recall as the greatest time of their lives.

Even more interesting is the variety of clubs student are joining. Those considering majoring in Computer Engineering are involved with the First Year Judiciary Committee and the Cavalier Daily, while students interested in Aerospace Engineering are college mentors for elementary students. Future Civil Engineers are hoping to tackle the issue of sexual assault on Grounds with 1 in 4 while also advocating the use of UBikes. These clubs and activities aren’t just resume filler. First Year Rodmans are finding things to do that will allow them to grow as people, while also improving both the academic and social environment here on Grounds.

Rodman Scholars are social butterflies that have evolved from their high school cocoons. Right now, first years are spreading their wings, getting a sense of their new environment. Soon, they will find the clubs and activities that they enjoy the most and that they will grow from the most. When that time comes, they will be ready to tackle anything that comes their way.

—Ahmed Osman
On September 26, several Rodman Scholars volunteered for Alpha Phi Omega’s Open Project Day, which is held once a semester. Kathleen Galligan, a third year Mechanical Engineer, went to Montanova Stables in Keswick, VA and helped construct a horse pen, shovel hay and manure, and cleaned brush from trees while other APO volunteers worked throughout the stables with her. The project day was the first of the monthly projects which will be organized throughout the year by Kathleen as Service Chair, along with the new Service Committee in Rodman Council. The Service Committee is one of the many new initiatives the Rodman Council decided to tackle this year to further the Jeffersonian ideal of self-governance and bettering the community around us. Throughout the semester, the Service Committee will team up with several non-profit institutions in the Charlottesville area in order to engage Rodmans in community service. As a fun by-product, the Service Community noted that whichever class year has the largest turnout to service events over the semester will win a prize as a result of their efforts. As a UVA community and specifically a Rodman community, Rodman Council saw the Service Committee as a perfect conduit to engage in purposeful community service as well as kindle bonding among the Rodman community.

—Kathleen Galligan

FIRST YEARS LEARN ABOUT MORE THAN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

It’s been a while since the University of Virginia has seen its Rodman Ropes Course. The event’s roots are somewhat of a mystery; while most seasoned Rodmans can recall the story of the mythical “ropes course”—an event for first-year Rodmans to get to know each other—no one seems to know anyone who actually participated. Did it really even happen? No one knows.

Fact or fiction, some enterprising third years decided it was time to revitalize the annual weekend daytrip. When Joey Hsu realized some Rodmans in the Class of 2019 had trouble remembering their peers’ names several months in, he wondered, “What better way to facilitate comradery between engineers is there than to revitalize the old Ropes Course?” After an encouraging response from Ben Gilbert, a friend and fellow Rodman of 2017, the Rodman Ropes Course was finally underway!

Upon arriving, the first years were unsure of what to expect. The day was primary filled with team building exercises (surprisingly few of which involved ropes). Group charades made for an interesting first assignment—seeing a group of engineers try to act like a typewriter or copying machine is bound to expose personality.

Over the course of the day, we learned many new concepts. The most profound thing was discovered during a brainstorming session. Amidst the chaos, we had the revelation that even the ideas that fail to stand out in a group setting can often revolutionize a process. By being more inclusive and accepting of all ideas, better results can be obtained.

After a prolonged retirement, the Rodman Ropes Course seem to have made a comeback. After a success like this, I—along with many of my peers—hope that it is here to stay.

—Matt Anderson

RODMAN COMMUNITY EXPANDS BEYOND GROUNDS

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—Kathleen Galligan
ENGR 1410 UPDATE: CONTROLLED DESCENT DESIGN CHALLENGE

One of the undisputed highlights of the Rodman program occurs every Tuesday and Thursday. For a little over an hour each day, first-year Rodmans participate in Synthesis and Design, a class exclusively for Rodman Scholars taught by Professor Dana Elzey. Throughout the course of the first semester, students work together to solve a variety of open-ended engineering challenges. On Thursday September 17th, though, the scene inside the class was a bit more chaotic than usual.

The project at hand was the Controlled Descent Design Challenge. Professor Elzey had split the class into nine groups on the previous Tuesday, with each group given two days to come up with a device that would cause a sheet of paper to take the longest possible time to descend from the ceiling to the ground. Some pieces were pinned to the ceiling for several seconds by balloons, eliciting loud cheers from group members. Others did not quite perform as well, falling faster than a regular sheet of paper. The winning design used three balloons taped together to pin a piece of paper to the ceiling for several seconds, before allowing the paper to flutter to the ground after about eight seconds.

Even though not all groups experienced the same amount of success in this project, everyone gained valuable experience in the engineering and design process. The seemingly simple problem of keeping a sheet of paper aloft turned into a difficult, and at times frustrating, two day marathon. At the end of the testing, though, each group could feel a sense of pride and ownership in their design. These types of project define the experience of the First year Rodman Scholars in Professor Elzey’s class.

—Matt Gummersbach
WANT TO BE MORE INVOLVED?

If you have a great idea for a column in the newsletter, please reach out to Co-Communications Chairs Catherine Pollack (cep3qz@virginia.edu) or Sean Sequeira (sbs6eh@virginia.edu). We’d love to hear from you!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stay tuned for more information on the following:

Rodfest—Friday, October 9th

Loaves&Fishes Community Service—Saturday, October 17th

Young Alumni Reception—Saturday, October 17th

Family Weekend Reception—Saturday, October 24th

Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center Community Service—Saturday, November 7th

Habitat Store Community Service—Saturday, November 21st

Rodmans of all years got together during ENGR 1410 class for a surprise birthday party for Professor Elzey!