



Hammerman Hall with a bright cloud formation above.

**“Students are challenged to understand the ethical dimensions of personal and professional life and to examine their own values, attitudes, and beliefs.”**

[The Loyola Mission](#)

## How to Leave Home

By Elizabeth Ottenritter

If you're anything like me, knowing how and exactly what you're going into is crucial for any new experience. This was especially difficult during my college search. I did everything myself, and struggled through long applications and tests of my knowledge. Still, within three weeks of making my decision, I had no idea where to go. I didn't feel like I'd completely adjust to college life anywhere. Being unsure of how different my life would be was a scary idea. But in about mid-April, I took a tour that changed everything for me. The beautiful campus, navigable and blooming with spring colors, encouraged me to stand where I am now. Loyola University Maryland. However, everyone knows the feeling of making a major decision—so what's after? Loyola's incredible ability to integrate you, provide resources, and make adjustment easier overall is an experience like no other.

## The Mission

Loyola University Maryland is not only committed to the educational and spiritual traditions of the Society of Jesus, but the whole person as well. Preparing students to “learn, lead, and serve in a diverse and changing world” ([About Loyola](#)). Building relationships with communities is an important aspect of growth and development. The Jesuit experience is extremely personal. Its highly structured and elevating journey will allow you to embrace new problems with realistic solutions. Although this is all just a moment away, it takes sincerity and dedication to finding yourself. Getting out of the comfort zone and allowing challenges to broaden your worldview is a key aspect of getting integrated into college. The worst thing you could do is not take advantage of the unique opportunities that are difficult to find anywhere else.



View from the bridge, next to Hopkins Court

## Actually Leaving

Leaving home is always the first and possibly toughest step. I know that the weeks leading up to moving in were filled with anxiety and uncertainty. I went into it not understanding how I'd live so differently. Whether you live twenty minutes away or twenty states away, the departure is a giant leap. It's okay to not feel 100% on board with this. I always thought moving in would be this huge process that took hours of labor and heavy lifting. While it does take many Ikea bags and organizational skills, I was shocked at how easy it was to get my dorm key. I pulled up with my family and the staff couldn't have been more friendly. I live about forty minutes away from campus on an extremely efficient day for traffic. My experience was a little different than someone who's from New Jersey, for example. But no matter how far away you are, I'd recommend not going home all the time. It reminds you too much of your life before and it's a slippery slope.

## New Home

Now you're living in a whole new place. It takes routine and consistency to feel normal. For the first few weeks, it won't be easy but it won't be hard either. When starting anything new, there's always a period I call the "in-between." You're not quite home but you aren't quite there either. This time is filled with trying new things or talking to new people. The most reassuring thing for me during this time was that I knew I'd get past it and everything would soon be normal to me. It's a temporary feeling that'll go away. However, there's a lot of opportunity within this. Almost everyone is in the same exact boat of unease, so it's a good chance to relate to others. Finding friends to complain with or figure out new schedules can make everything seem a lot better. Loyola has many resources for students that enforce the idea that no one is alone. [The Counseling Center](#), located behind the Humanities building, can be extremely helpful for incoming first-year.

## A Helping Hand

One thing that I learned very quickly at Loyola was that everyone has a kind presence to them. My second day of classes consisted of me getting lost twice, and that's incredible because the buildings are not difficult to navigate. I was desperately trying to find my class in Maryland Hall, but I didn't see the room number anywhere. My head was spinning and I threw away any ounce of shyness to ask a girl in the hallway. She must have been an upperclassman because of what she did. I nervously asked if she knew where this classroom was, and she instantly smiled and took me right to it. She even said, "have a good day" after I profusely thanked her. I'd say that represents most people here—they want and love to help you. Community has always been very important to me, so finding friends right away and loving my campus had a huge impact. I encourage you to ask questions, get lost or seek guidance. It'll show you how much you can trust a community.

## The Community

I recognize my experience isn't universal, so I wanted to get more perspectives on leaving home and coming to Loyola. Freshman RJ DeVico had a lot to say about his journey. "Coming to Loyola was great, like I got to meet all of you and just the campus in general is gorgeous. I'm from PA and my aunt and uncle are alumni, so I knew it was an easy choice." RJ is a member of the male acapella group, The Chimes. Although it's hard work, he never misses a meeting. "Those are my people, it's such a family. We'd never let each other down." On the other hand, freshman Mollie Walsh is a part of an intramural indoor soccer team. "I never thought I'd do it, really. I don't even play soccer but everyone offered to teach me." Mollie is a business major from Scranton, PA. "I miss home, you know. But it's very rewarding to be here. Everyone is so nice that I almost forget about it." There isn't a "right" way to leave comfortability, but taking those doubts and challenging yourself to push forward might just be the answer.



*A great place to meet friends outside the Student Center—lots of tables and beautiful flowers.*

***"The excellence of  
any university  
begins with its  
community."***

[Our Loyola  
Community](#)



*The Writing Department hallway is good place to chat with friends or study.*