



My dorm room all set up!

“I EXPECTED COLLEGE TO BE VERY INDEPENDENT. YOU ARE IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF YOURSELF. YOU HAVE TO HAVE SELF-MOTIVATION TO BE SUCCESSFUL.” - BREE SMITH

## This is YOUR Journey! By Kate Callahan

Welcome incoming first-years! I hope you are exhilarated about this new journey and the next four years. These years are full of promise and opportunity and I am so glad you have decided to join our family. Loyola has a captivating history that dates back over 100 years. Loyola University Maryland was “founded in 1862...they found their inspiration in St. Ignatius of Loyola the founder of the Society of Jesus, and that’s how Loyola—our Loyola—became the first institution of higher education in the United States to bear his name” ([LOYOLA.EDU](http://LOYOLA.EDU)). The minute you step foot on campus you will immediately hear about Loyola, and “to this day, we remain committed to the ideals embodied by the members of the Society of Jesus through its rich history. Those Jesuit ideals include an emphasis on academic excellence, the importance of the liberal arts, and *cura personalis*—the education of the whole person” ([LOYOLA.EDU](http://LOYOLA.EDU)). These insights and core values along with the nature-rich campus and welcoming environment will make you feel at home faster than you might think. You will soon find familiar sights and sounds that you seek daily.



## ACTIVITIES

Moving in is one of the biggest moments in the four years. But even your move in will be filled with friends and mentors who quickly feel like family. No sooner will you move in then next up you jump right into Fall Welcome Weekend. Fall Welcome Weekend flies by allowing you to possibly connect with new friends and allows you to start to show off your new home. Loyola’s Family Weekend is toward the end of September and is action packed with sporting events, cultural events, community events and even live shows on campus for you to enjoy with your family. Exploring campus with family and out-of-town guests will continue to create a sense of community.

During this time, you will have the chance to interact, and meet commuter students, professors, advisors, and even facility members. From activities fairs, panels about the common text (the summer reading book), and fun events like Casino Night, you will have the chance to experience loads of fun on campus within seconds! I remember when I did my third tour of Loyola during Admitted Students day. After visiting over six schools, I just felt different at Loyola. The campus made me feel welcome, comfortable and relaxed. Several other schools I toured were characterized by concrete buildings and dismal days. However, at Loyola, your daily walk across campus is filled with glorious green grass, cherry blossoms in the spring and sometimes a white-outlined treescape as you walk from class to class in the winter. It is not uncommon to be asked to jump into a game of frisbee, meet friends in the hammock, or even enjoy an afternoon partaking in a sand volleyball game. These daily sights and sounds at Loyola bring peace, tranquility and a level of relaxation.



My Dad and I after I got all moved in!

## FEELINGS OF ALL SORTS

As a current freshman almost done my second semester, I have questions for you. Do you think you will feel disconnected? Do you think you will be homesick? Do you have other worries before arriving? These are emotions we ALL face when transitioning. These feelings may feel unusual, but they are normal. Many of your peers around you are feeling like this, too. People just portray emotions in different ways. College is a whirlwind of emotions, and sometimes it may feel like an emotional roller coaster. The initial thought of leaving, moving out of your house, away from siblings or family can be terrifying for many. Some may feel like college is not for them. Beginning anything new is scary—there is always this feeling of an unknown. No matter what you may think, many people are in the same boat as you. This was very difficult for me initially, but as I ventured out and connected with friends, and shared stories, we all quickly realized we were here together for the next few months and we shared common thoughts and concerns. Coming into college as a new freshman is an exciting time. You have opportunities to challenge yourself in ways you have never been able to before. Go to the information sessions that you might think are DUMB, and PARTICIPATE in the never-ending icebreakers. These programs are designed to help and, in my case, were the reason I met the best friends that I have today. The more comfortable you become and the more you put yourself out there, the quicker you will find others on campus who are just like YOU. Almost finished with my first year here, Loyola feels like my home away from home. Surrounded by friends, family and caring professors truly makes it like our own little community. This Jesuit learning ecosystem allows us all to learn and grow each and every day.

## NATURE BUILDS COMMUNITY

Loyola's campus is very welcoming—not an overwhelmingly-sized campus or student body where you never see the same face twice. I enjoy some of the expected experiences of each day, as they often bring solace and comfort in knowing that the Loyola campus is my community. From Humanities porch, lawn chairs, and hammocks, which quickly become everyday study spots, you look forward to reaching them and your friends at the end of each day! My friend Cece says, “Loyola makes me feel like part of a community, like I am bigger than something. With the big, open, green campus I constantly feel surrounded with nature.” Also, considering the smaller population, class sizes are more individualized and you are able to form relationships with professors. Seeing a familiar face makes you feel welcomed, and worthy. I interviewed Brennan Sweeney, who works in Student Engagement, to get his input from a staff perspective. He said, “Loyola has helped me grow into a strong communicator. Through my classes and living and working with fellow students I've gained the skills to work together in a team to realize a common goal. As a professional, I think Loyola's Jesuit values have helped me to be an easy person to understand and relate to. I try to meet people where they're at and understand all sides of a situation before looking for a solution.” Hearing from both a staff member as well as a fellow freshman, both who mention feeling welcome and connecting well with others, provides confirmation that this feeling of the Loyola community is felt and seen by all who embark on their journey here at Loyola University Maryland!



The Humanities porch, with its beautiful view of the Quad, is a great place to study or hang out with friends.

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SWEENEY '26



The campus Quad is so beautiful when the weather is nice!

## MESSINA

Messina is probably a term you've heard over 10 times at orientation, tours, accepted students day. And you wonder what Messina really is and how it will impact you. First of all, Messina is a course group that is only for first-years. It provides us with the connections, resources and opportunities that will help us to be successful. It is a foundational program that although is only for first-years will carry you through all four years. Messina has been part of Loyola's program since the early 2000s. Through Messina, students will have the opportunity to "explore, enrich, connect, and live" ([LOYOLA.EDU](http://LOYOLA.EDU)). This group is mainly determined by your major, and the NEVER ENDING surveys they have you fill out in the summer. You have a class with this group both semesters of your first year. Messina is the first and greatest gift you will receive from Loyola. Gathering with a group of students who you may not have crossed paths with or even thought to connect with is an amazing start to embark on this new journey. Your Messina will quickly become your biggest fans, your friends with the listening ears, the friends you trust and likely have for the next four years and beyond. Although it may seem foreign to be placed in a group with complete strangers, these faces you see daily will lift each day and make those difficult days a little bit easier. The relationships you make with the people around you provide endless comfort, and make you feel at home.



My amazing Messina group!



Double rainbow after a rainy day!

## FINAL THOUGHTS?

Loyola has provided me with numerous opportunities already. The sights, sounds, and feelings of this campus differ from any other and that's what makes this University so special. No one's experience is the same, and your experience here is what you make of it. Over the course of your four years here: put yourself out there, join a random [club](#), participate in [intramural sports](#)! Engage in something that forces you to step outside the box. They always say, time flies when you are having fun. Live in the moment, and enjoy where you are!

