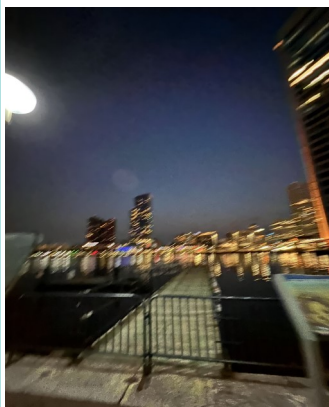


### We Are a Community By Tahlia Crowley



The city of Baltimore where Loyola Maryland University lies.

A crucial part of beginning this new chapter as a first-year student and being a part of a new school is knowing you made the right choice. The choice for a place where you can be involved in the things that you enjoy most while developing into the best version of yourself. Loyola University Maryland provides every student with a pronounced education, academic support, supportive staff, hearty dining food, successful athletic teams, endless clubs and more. Loyola has annually been ranked among the top 5 Best Regional Universities in the North. We could not have made this remarkable accomplishment without both our hard-working students and our dedicated teachers and faculty who want us all to succeed. Most importantly, we come together and serve as one. This unity we share is what makes us stand out when compared to the rest of our college competitors. Being a student-athlete on the swimming and diving team has greatly impacted my experience and included me in feeling a part of the special community here at Loyola University Maryland.

**“ JUST KNOW  
YOU ARE NOT  
ALONE, AND  
WE ARE  
ALWAYS HERE  
FOR YOU”**

### The Transition to College

College can be one of the hardest transitions you will face throughout your lifetime, whether you plan to play a sport, take part in the arts, or possibly both. You will be a commuter or a resident. Maybe you are going into a business field or want to become a part of our well-known Pre-Health program, which I am currently involved in! No matter who you are and what you plan to do, each has its own challenges. You may have feelings of excitement, nervousness, or fear of this change. For myself, I felt all of these emotions at different points in time leading up to move-in day. Just know you are not alone, and we are always here for you.

When September rolls around, the air is crisp, and the vibrant-colored leaves begin to fall to the ground. This is a time where you have to say goodbye to the ones you love most. Family, friends, teachers, coaches, and your dearest pets. The ones who have been part of your life from the start. Ripping out old pages to begin a new one, shiny and blank. A brand-new clean slate. During this process, I did not think I was ready, and I constantly questioned whether I could do this. Adjusting to change was never something I was great at. The thought of starting a new life seemed unreal and impossible. My five roommates and I exchanged some of these exact experiences. It is normal for you to feel this way.

### Your New Support System

My first day as a first-year, as I arrived on campus, I was completely terrified. My parents and I pulled into a parking lot, surrounded by hundreds of unfamiliar faces. As I looked up at the clear blue sky, I spotted a big brick building I had never stepped foot in. The ninth floor in Campion Tower was suddenly my new home. The students, Evergreens, parents, and staff on campus were extremely kind. Evergreens are committed upper-class students who support new students as a resource throughout their first year. They can even be the first people you meet when arriving on campus! In all, friendliness was some-



Passing by the front of Campion Tower where my roommates and I go to grab dinner.

thing I was not used to back at my old school. But here, they made the move-in process feel so much more normal. Right when I got here and at this moment, I felt a sense of ease and comfort. Walking in room 911, I was suddenly greeted by five girls I had only seen or conversed with over social media. These girls were both my new roommates and teammates. As soon as my parents had smothered me in hugs and kisses, exchanging their final goodbyes, I suddenly found myself bonding with these girls. The room filled with endless conversation and laughs about all sorts of things. I now knew everything was going to be just fine. We soon got to know the other people on our floor and then came the rest of the team. At Loyola University, everyone feels included. Even though things were hectic, overwhelming, and new for everyone moving in, someone always went out of their way to say hi, open the door, or offer help to anyone. For example, Faith Karr, one of my roommates and also a first-year here, described a pivotal moment in her move-in experience, "The evergreens were right there when we had driven into the parking lot. They supplied us with green bins to help move our items. Some even carried up extra things walking up nine flights of stairs! This showed me that they really cared about the students. It meant a lot for them to take time out of their days to help and support us and make us all feel welcomed." Loyola is a community we stepped right into and so will you.

## My New Community

Community to me might mean something different from you. I think we both can agree that it is a group of people who come together to share a common goal. As an athlete who has been involved in their sport for over a decade, I can clearly see how Loyola Maryland's community has an atmosphere that positively stands out from the rest of the handful of teams I have been on. We do nearly everything together. From team dinner every night at five o'clock, six-hour bus rides, winning dual meets, conjoined practices/lifts with the boys, supporting other sports teams going to games, weekend nights out in the town, Powder Puff football, and so on. My second family is the perfect way to describe our team. We are all here to support one another through both the good and bad days. As a first-year student, who has entered a whole new chapter of their life being five hours away from home, I feel at home because of them. I have four coaches who deeply care about the whole being of every single athlete. We are not just people who perform for the title of their school. Every one of us comes into practice each day with the motivation and desire to become better. Healthy competition surrounds us in the water as we joke and laugh through grueling sets. Although this sport can occasionally cause me frustration and anger when I do not perform the way I hope, this place has never made me happier. I strongly believe surrounding yourself with positivity is the most important thing you can do. A positive environment will be a place where you thrive. Here at Loyola, positivity radiates throughout every individual I have met thus far.

My dad met many people at one of our competitions who attended this university in the past. I recently asked him his thoughts about



First dual swim meet with teammates cheering.

**"IT MEANT A LOT FOR THEM TO TAKE TIME OUT OF THEIR DAYS TO HELP AND SUPPORT US AND MAKE US ALL FEEL WELCOMED"**



Messina flags in Thea Bowman

the school. He said, "I have never heard anything bad about Loyola Maryland. The campus is beautiful, I have never seen anything like it before. People that go here love it. This was a great fit for you; it seems to be for everyone. I had this feeling all along." This team is a perfect example of what community means to me.

## Your New Community

Although you may not be planning to be part of the Swimming and Diving Team, there are several other groups surrounding campus exemplifying the word "community." One example is a group I'm a part of called Hound Hangout. This is an organization where they have a mission to foster inclusivity and build transformative relationships within and between the Down Syndrome community in Baltimore and the Hounds at Loyola. Hound Hangout serves as a place where we enjoy each other's company and make everyone feel welcome and valued. I encourage you to take part! My sophomore friend, Laura Latham, who has been involved in Hound Hangout for a couple of years now shares her overall experience: "Hound Hangout is a rewarding experience. It is nice to be a part of the community outside of Loyola while also getting closer to members within Loyola. I enjoy the opportunity to meet other people and establish relationships. This is the perfect place to do this as these are activities already set up that are made for socializing."

Do you have an interest in learning how to play the ukulele? Join the Ukulele Choir! Are you a Rubik's Cube expert? Or do you love learning about forensics and the endless topics that are talked about? We have it all! On the other hand, maybe these are things you aren't entirely interested in. Don't worry! Take a few minutes out of your day to look at all of our [Clubs and Organizations](#). You can find your people and discover over 200 student organizations. Here at Loyola, there is something for everyone. You can even create your own club with the help of our community.



## Home Away from Home

Undoubtedly, community is something we value here at this university. Becoming involved here is highly encouraged in order to help you succeed and to help one another to do so, as well. Loyola wants to inspire us to learn, lead, and serve in a diverse and challenging world. This is the place where you want to be. With Loyola Maryland, college life is possible, real, and ready for you. With the prestigious selection of applicants, being able to attend this university serves as a gift. As a result, we are right by your side, welcoming you with open arms. Here is your home away from home.



Both friends and teammates of the Class of 2026 Women's Swim and Dive Team

***"WITH  
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My friends and I participating in Powder Puff football helping raise money and awareness for a boy with Down Syndrome who wants to meet a famous NFL quarterback.