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Charlotte Haneke

Welcome to a special mini webisode of “[As Spiders Do](#),” the University of Richmond podcast, where we share stories about our amazing alumni. I’m Charlotte Haneke, Assistant Director of Student and Young Graduate Programming. While this is my first solo episode, I’ve been working behind the scenes as the editor of the last 10 episodes. On May 12th, we welcomed the Class of 2024 into the [UR Alumni Network Association](#). And although grad life is the good life, this transition can bring mixed emotions. To show you that you’re not alone, I recorded live interviews with six young grads from the classes of 2015 through 2023 about their experiences traversing the post-graduation landscape. Now, armed with invaluable insight, they’re here to share advice with the newest members of the alumni network. And if you’ve graduated earlier than 2024, hopefully you’ll find some words of wisdom for your own life too.

Jake Cardwell

Welcome, class of 2024! My name is Jake Cardwell. I am class of 2021 and I’m from Chester, Virginia.

Charlotte Haneke

Back in 2021, put yourself in your recently graduated shoes. What was the transition like for you going from college to quote unquote the real world? Was it a rough transition?

Jake Cardwell

It was difficult for me because, you know, there was very much that...since that one chapter of my life was ending and a chapter of my life that I didn’t know what to expect was about to happen. Personally, like a lot of my friends knew that, well, “I’m gonna go to grad school. I have this job lined up. I’m gonna do X, Y, Z.” I didn’t have that. So senior year was both really exciting and really intimidating for me because I enjoyed living out the end of my college experience, but I didn’t know what the rest of life had in store for me because I didn’t have anything lined up concrete.

Charlotte Haneke

Right. What do you know now that you wish you knew back then, when you were going through those trials and tribulations?



Jake Cardwell

What I wish I could have told my younger self is to not put so much pressure on yourself because you're only 22 and believe it or not, you have a lot more life to live.

Charlotte Haneke

That is true.

Jake Cardwell

After 22. So the first job you get, the first experiences you have, they don't have to be what you'll experience for the rest of your life. They can just be a stepping stone. They can just be a building block to what you have going on the rest of your life. If you love it, that's great. If you hate it, that's knowledge to prepare you forward. So we tend to take ourselves very seriously with what we do with our major and what we think about with our career paths, but it's okay to stumble a little bit once you get out. You'll survive.

Emily George

Hi, this is Emily George, class of 2020.

Charlotte Haneke

What was it like for you when you first graduated from Richmond?

Emily George

I missed Richmond right off the bat. I was not ready to graduate. I loved my time at Richmond, loved the community, loved my classes. And while I was certainly excited about what was to come, I was also very nervous. I had no idea how my classes and skills would translate into a job. And it's a little bit scary not knowing what comes next and leaving your friends. But I can say four years out of college and after graduating, I'm thrilled to be where I am and everything works out. And you'll find that you continue your Richmond community beyond Richmond and gain more communities along the way.

Charlotte Haneke

If there was one piece of advice you wish you could tell your recently graduated self, what would you go back and tell yourself?



Emily George

You will get a job. Yeah, I second that one. Awesome. I graduated without a job and it all works out. It completely works out and it feels scary and stressful and you probably have friends who do have a job as they're graduating but know that you're in good company if you don't as well. And you'll find something that's interesting or you'll find something that gets you excited and go from there.

Charlotte Haneke

We are all Spiders and we are here and we are continuing to gather and it's just amazing. There's so much more fun to be had.

Emily George

Always and I'm still connecting with Spiders. I didn't even know at Richmond and now we're talking sustainability or you know, Philadelphia and so the spider web is real and as cheesy as it may be.

Austen Winkler

My name is Austen Winkler, graduated class of 2015, and hometown is Richmond, Virginia.

Charlotte Haneke

Is there anything that you know now that you wish you could tell your 2015 grad self?

Austen Winkler

Utilizing just the resources around you and career services especially. I mean, I still use them because I've looked at different jobs, so I think that just utilizing that. They're great resources and just, it's the small school kind of allows for that.

Charlotte Haneke

What are your words of advice for the class of 2024?

Austen Winkler

Mainly that everything will be okay. That there's a place for them, a job for them. They're gonna find a home and not to stress too much.



Charlotte Haneke

We'll be back with more words of wisdom after a short Spider ad.

Jasmin Rubiera

My name is Jasmin Rubiera. I graduated in December of 2022 and I am from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Jasmin Portillo

My name is Jasmin Portillo. I am from Richmond, Virginia and I graduated in spring of 2023.

Charlotte Haneke

What was it like for you when you first graduated? I know that that transition in life can have a lot of big feelings. What was that like for you?

Jasmin Rubiera

For me, it was just a period of limbo. Since I am now in the law school, just relaxed and kind of try to prepare for law school.

Jasmin Portillo

For me, I was applying to jobs that spring semester. I had that fear of what am I going to do after I finish? I did a couple interviews and I would get close but like...I wouldn't land anything and I spent a couple months in the summer just trying to figure out what did I really want to do? What would make me happy? And honestly, it was kind of just me trying to be more like, I guess, comfortable with trying not really anything that just came my way, but more like being open to any new opportunity. I planned so that I was going to take anything I got as a great learning experience. And I know the biggest stress when you're like a senior is, what am I gonna do? But I really enjoy just taking some time to decompress from school. But then, I wish I could tell myself that I all worked out the ends.

Charlotte Haneke

Is there anything that you know now that you wish you knew when you graduated? And with that, like what piece of advice would you give the class of 2024?

Jasmin Rubiera



Mini Webisode: A Web of Wisdom

I would say be open to new experiences and if something doesn't work out the way you wanted to, it's all be okay. Everything will work out eventually.

Hayden Roberts

My name is Hayden Roberts. I graduated in 2019 and I'm from Atlanta, Georgia.

Charlotte Haneke

What was it like for you when you graduated? Like what were, what emotions were you going through? What was that experience for you?

Hayden Roberts

This probably doesn't sound good, but I was like ready to get out. I was ready to like get a job and stand on my own. And then once I did, I was like very scared. Especially I had like a real tough time getting a job out of graduation, which is like an experience that I know a lot of people had. And it just made me really appreciate like the community and the safety net and, and everything. But I was really appreciative that Richmond prepared me so well and I got well adjusted and everything was fine.

Charlotte Haneke

Can you believe that you're celebrating your fifth reunion this year?

Hayden Roberts

No, you feel really old, but it also feels like it was kind of yesterday. I'm really excited to see all my friends.

Charlotte Haneke

So is there anything that you know now that you wish you can tell your 2019 grad self? And with that, what advice do you have for the class of 2024?

Hayden Roberts

I think I was just really worried about what was next and really stressing about jobs and apartments. And really, I should have slowed down and appreciated where I was. And so that's probably my best advice.

Zach Clarke



My name's Zach Clarke. I graduated 2020. And my hometown is Robinsonville, New Jersey.

Charlotte Haneke

You have a unique experience because you are the COVID class, class of 2020. What was that transition like for you going out of college into this crazy pandemic world? What was that transition like for you?

Zach Clarke

It was actually pretty crazy because we were on spring break when we got the announcement not to come back to school. I remember I was on a dock and we got the email from the school. I'd say like, hey, you're going to be gone for two weeks. Don't come back. And then two days later, turn in. They're like, you're not coming back for the rest of the year. And then like a week after that, I got an email from the job offer I had, the company. They said, hey, we're on a hiring freeze now because of COVID. And so I lost my job. I lost my senior spring semester at school, all in the same week. That was pretty tough. So I went back and I went and lived with my parents. So it was pretty crazy.

Charlotte Haneke

Wow. Is there anything that you know now that you wish you could tell your 2020 self?

Zach Clarke

I would say don't put so much pressure on yourself where your first job is out of school. It's about figuring out, getting the interpersonal skills, learning how to operate in an office environment, and building connections with other people. Not so much your first job, it's entry level - just do the best you can and you'll make connections and you're gonna open up a lot of career paths for the future. Guys, welcome to the Great Richmond Alumni Network. Everyone wants to support you. There's a lot of opportunities. Reach out to who you can. When there's alumni events near you, do it, trust me, all those people really want to help you out. So take advantage of what you can and enjoy being alumni.

Maggie Johnson

Thanks for listening to “As Spiders Do” from the University of Richmond Office of Alumni Engagement. We hope you enjoyed hearing from our alumni and learned a little bit more about what it means to be a Richmond Spider. This episode was edited and produced by Charlotte Pfamatter, Assistant Director for Student and Young Graduate Engagement. Our



Mini Webisode: A Web of Wisdom

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