

NEWSROOM

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EXCITEMENT AS A NEW SEMESTER IS UNDERWAY

FOR CAPTAINS, PHYSICAL DISTANCING DOESN'T MEAN SOCIAL DISTANCING.

by [Jane Heeter](#) | September 2, 2020*Above: Elena Flester**Read time: about 2 min*

For Elena Flester '21, the new semester means opportunity – even though it will look different from behind a mask and at a distance.

The [neuroscience](#) major and [biology](#), [psychology](#) and [leadership studies](#) minor typically stays busy – there's a lot to do between her work in the President's Leadership and Honors programs, volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club through the on-campus service club Innovative Minds, and involvement with the campus ministry, CRU. She also serves as a resident assistant, a peer mentor and an ophthalmologist assistant, all activities that are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On top of that, Flester spent the summer leading up to her senior year thinking about how to tackle her most exciting class: Human Anatomy, a lab course in which students use hands-on experiences with human cadavers to learn anatomy and pathology.

Flester took the course with Dr. Keith Lustig her junior year and is continuing her work this fall. After graduation she plans to either go to medical school or complete a physician assistant master's degree to continue and deepen her role in the health care field.

"Although things will certainly look different this semester, I am grateful for the opportunity to emphasize the research component of the course this year," she said. "Last year, I began a research project with the goal of

identifying ways to improve communication and trust between health care providers, parents, and pediatric patients through playtime and toys, and I anticipate that the structure of this semester will allow me to make significant progress with this project.

"It's thrilling to think that what I am learning and researching now could help someone in the future and make a positive impact on their life, so I'm looking forward to all this semester will bring!"

Flester joins the scores of Captains upholding Christopher Newport's social contract to conduct daily personal health screenings, wear face coverings, practice physical distancing and other practices in order to have a successful semester.

For seniors, it will mean a somewhat different final chapter on their time as Captains. Many, such as Ahmad Frej, are taking on the challenge with enthusiasm.

The [management](#) and [marketing](#) double major and leadership studies minor is preparing to seek employment after graduation in May. He's not exactly sure what that will look like, but plans to use the opportunity as a chance to learn and grow.

"What I am most excited about for this semester is career exploration. As a senior, I am personally responsible for finding post-graduate work that is related to my field of study. With the pandemic, however, I understand that this process may be different than years prior. That is why it is so exciting. I embrace challenges that help me step out of my comfort zone and this will be no different. I plan on using the Center for Career Planning and consulting with mentors as resources to assist me during the search process."

Claire Rooney '22 is president of the Newport Pearls, an all-female a cappella group on campus. The group is still holding auditions, although virtually, and is working with the Office for Student Affairs for a safe in-person option for callbacks and rehearsals.

Rooney, a management and [finance](#) double major and leadership studies minor, said the group can still fulfill its mission despite any necessary changes.

"Just because this semester is going to look a lot different, doesn't mean that we can't still enjoy the people around us," Rooney said. "This semester, the Pearls are focusing on spending time enjoying part of a group and strengthening our relationships with each other – it's all part of finding a compromise."
