

New Student Convocation and Rambler Read Small Group Discussions - 2020

Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen by Jose Antonio Vargas

Discussion Leader Facilitation Guide

Thank you for facilitating a New Student Convocation/Rambler Read Small Group Discussion! Please discuss the themes of *Dear America*, Jose Antonio Vargas' keynote address, and the transition to college. Start by asking students to introduce themselves and facilitating a brief icebreaker.

Sample agenda/outline:

- Introductions
 - Facilitators share their names, where they call home, and what they do at Loyola
 - Students share their names, where they call home, where they are living this fall, and their major
- Review the purpose of small group discussion (new students are with their UNIV 101/201 classmates and PA)
- Facilitate discussion on themes of *Dear America* and Jose Antonio Vargas' keynote address
 - Use questions below, notes from reading, and quotes/themes from Convocation
 - Ask open ended questions, and utilize active learning techniques like [think, pair, share](#)
 - Share your thoughts on the book & why the themes are relevant to you as a Loyola student or to Loyola's mission and values
- Facilitate discussion on the college transition, being a student at LUC, and taking classes online
- Wrap-up discussion with statement about how this conversation will continue throughout the year in UNIV 101/201, in Core classes (like UCWR 110), and through other involvement opportunities. Thank students for participating, and encourage them to stay connected to you and each other.
 - If you feel comfortable, share your cell phone number and/or links to or your UNIV class GroupMe/Facebook group

Sample Discussion Questions

- What elements of the book, or keynote address, sparked your interest, or surprised you? Why?
 - How has your identity, and your community, shaped your education, your understanding of the world, and your path to attending Loyola?
 - What issues of social justice matter to you, and how might you work to address those issues while attending Loyola and/or living in the City of Chicago?
 - What is one action you can take, as a first-year college student, to engage with the issues discussed in this book? How might you get started?
 - How can you be a person for, and with, others at Loyola? What does this mean to you, and why is the "with" part important?
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- What makes a place a home? What does it mean not to have a home? Have you gone through something like this before? If not, could you endure living in limbo?
 - America once prided itself on being "a nation of immigrants." Are we still? How and why has the national view of immigrants and immigration changed? How should our policies change?
 - What does it mean to be an American? To be a citizen? Who should get to choose?
 - When did your family first arrive in America, and where did they come from? How has that shaped your family narrative and your perspective on what it means to be American?
 - Why is race is a charged issue for Americans? How do race, nationality, and immigration influence one another? How have things changed, or not changed, after this summer?
 - How has reading *Dear America*, and hearing from Jose Antonio Vargas, affected your opinion about immigration, migration, citizenship, and being an American?

- How are you feeling about starting your first semester at Loyola?
- How has the pandemic affected your life, in positive or challenging ways?
- What is your biggest worry about the fall semester?
- What are you most excited about for your first semester at Loyola?
- How are you preparing to navigate your first semester mostly online?
- What questions can I answer for you to make you feel more prepared for your first semester?
- How do you want to make a difference at Loyola?
- What is something we should know about you to understand you better?