

## ESSAY WORKSHOP

*Rice University's Vietnamese Student Association: College Leadership Workshop 2018*

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If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the Workshop leaders:

**Matilda Dang** | mbd2@rice.edu

**Sara Ross** | skr33@rice.edu

### EXAMPLE TOPICS:

#### **The “identity” question:**

Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

- Narrow down to a characteristic that defines you
- Can describe how you got it, how it manifests itself, or why it's significant to you
- Talk about your background or tell a story that reveals the values you uphold
- Can use dialogue or other story-writing techniques
- Don't overstate your identity

#### **The “failure” question:**

The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

- Pick one failure that had a direct and important effect
- Show what you learned from the failure and how it changed you
- Talk about in what ways those changes reflect who you are today
- Avoid frivolous incident or time when something went wrong
- Don't pick failures over which you have little control

#### **The “challenge” question:**

Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

- Answer all three parts of the prompt, but not necessarily in equal portion
- Elaborate the circumstances and the manner of your challenge
- Cover the positive and negative effects
- Challenges that didn't work out as expected are much less desirable (but not undoable). Don't spend most of the essay arguing against the belief or idea
- Don't make it sound like the idea you challenge is stupid