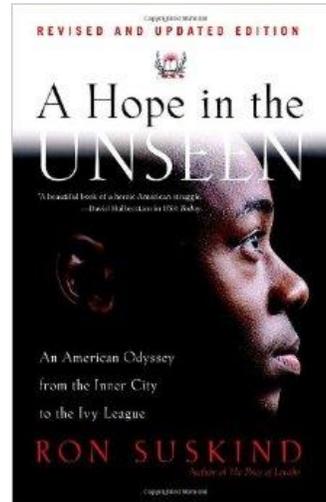


Framingham State Class of 2021: Summer Reading

Ron Suskind's A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League

**class of
2021
Framingham
State**



It is 1993, and Cedric Jennings is a bright and ferociously determined honor student at Ballou, a high school in one of Washington D.C.'s most dangerous neighborhoods, where the dropout rate is well into double digits and just 80 students out of more than 1,350 boast an average of B or better. At Ballou, Cedric has almost no friends. He eats lunch in a classroom most days, plowing through the extra work he has asked for, knowing that he's really competing with kids from other, harder schools. Cedric Jennings's driving ambition—which is fully supported by his forceful mother—is to attend a top-flight college.

In September 1995, after years of near superhuman dedication, he realizes that ambition when he begins as a freshman at Brown University. In this updated edition, *A Hope in the Unseen* chronicles Cedric's odyssey during his last two years of high school, follows him through his difficult first year at Brown, and now tells the story of his subsequent successes in college and the world of work.

The Common Reading Program is designed to welcome and connect incoming students to the Framingham State University academic community. It is our hope that reading the book will provide common ground for our new students to share with their peers, and to help students get acclimated to the academic life of the university.

The Assignment

As part of the FSU Foundations Program, all first-year students are required to read the book over the summer and submit a two-page typed essay at the first class of their Foundations seminar in early September. Students will choose two of the following three questions, answering the question and paired reflection on one page, and a second question and paired reflection on the other page.

1. Using examples from the book, explain how Cedric Jennings navigates the challenges he faces first at Ballou High School, then MIT in the summer, and finally at Brown University. Specifically, what tools does he use to work his way through these three educational institutions?

PAIRED REFLECTION: What tools did you use to be successful in high school, and what assets did you have to draw from? How will you apply these assets and tools as you begin college?

2. In the early chapters, Cedric is at once a DC kid and an aspiring college graduate, somewhat caught in two worlds. Even his father, who earns three degrees while in prison, calls him a “straight-A momma’s boy.” Describe what he does to live in these two worlds.

PAIRED REFLECTION: As you join the Framingham State community, what roles will you play—academically, socially, personally—that will transform you into something different than what you leave behind in high school? What will you do differently? What do you hope to be and accomplish?

3. Chapter 12, “Let the Colors Run,” and Chapter 13, “A Place Up Ahead,” describe breakthroughs Cedric experiences in his later years at Brown. Describe instances in these chapter in which Cedric moves from isolation to engagement.

PAIRED REFLECTION: What, if any, concerns do you have about moving from your pre-college identity to the one you envision having at Framingham State? What’s exciting about the prospect of college opportunities? What concerns you?



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