

Episode 125-Ann LaFemina

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SPEAKERS

Ann LaFemina, Moira McCullough

M Moira McCullough 00:00

Welcome to the College Scoops podcast. I'm your host, Moira McCullough and today we are talking with Ann LaFemina about advice for rising juniors and senior as they start and refine their college list.

A Ann LaFemina 00:13

I've sat with representatives who have actually talked to students and said, you know what, ultimately, we don't have your major but this is students who are pursuing this degree or interest. This is what they do and they come out and are actually as marketable or if not more.

M Moira McCullough 00:39

This is the College Scoops podcast and I'm your host, Moira McCullough, we focus on everything college related from the admissions process to where to eat, stay and explore on and round campuses. Our guests include founders, educators, authors and experts in the college space. Join us as these experts share their knowledge, experiences and lessons learned to help you have stress free and formative and tasty college journeys. Whether it's your first or last child going to college, or you're just interested in going to a college town for a game or meal, we've got you covered. If you haven't already, please subscribe to the College Scoops podcast to get the inside scoop, send everything college related, and leave us a review. Thanks to all of our sponsors partners in the entire College Scoops Ambassador team for helping us bring valuable content to our community. If you would like to support college scoops as a sponsor, please head over to Patreon at patreon.com/collegescoops and sign up as a sustaining listener, insider or Deluxe sponsor. We have exclusive benefits for our members and even a College Scoops care package. Ann LaFemina's involvement in education has spanned over 30 years. She began her career as an elementary school teacher and served as an adjunct professor at Dowling College, preparing undergraduate elementary education majors for career in teaching. Her first entering into college admissions was through the experience she had with her four children. After moving to Florida in 2010, she established her independent college counseling practice,

and worked with students in all areas of the college admissions process. During this time, she focused much of our attention on working with students pursuing visual and performing arts, in addition, and has been a guest speaker at local area high schools, where she has shared her knowledge of the college selection application process. As her client base grew, she was introduced to students of all backgrounds and varied interest. These opportunities allowed her to grow professionally and in 2017, and began her current position as a college counselor at Cardinal Mooney Catholic high school, she immediately went on to work to implement a comprehensive college preparatory program to best prepare students for successful post secondary outcomes in 2020, and was appointed Chair of the Academic Services Department. Ann has maintained her college counselor role and guides hundreds of students and families on all aspects of college admissions, seeking many considerations within their post secondary options. Welcome to the College Scoops podcast Ann. Thank you so much for joining us today.

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Ann LaFemina 03:12

Yes, it's a pleasure to be here.

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Moira McCullough 03:14

Well, you're taking time out of your busy day, because you are a current college counselor. And I'm sure this is a busy time with all these students so I greatly appreciate taking time out of your day to talk to us about all the work that you do as a college counselor with students. And you just came off of a three day tour of schools in Florida. So we want to ask you about that. But thank you for joining us today.

A

Ann LaFemina 03:38

Yes, absolutely.

M

Moira McCullough 03:40

You're a mom of four. And you've had three of your students graduate already. I think three of your children graduate already. And I'm thrilled because your youngest is Olivia, who is at University of Alabama, she's helping College Scoops get Alabama on our website. You've been through the process. You've been there and done it any advice just before we start off to parents who are going through it maybe for the first time as a pro?

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Ann LaFemina 04:06

Yes. So you know what, every time it's a unique experience, right? You really have to kind of settle in and embrace the fact that you are going on a journey, it can be a lot more emotional than you can ever anticipate. There can be arguments that happen through the process. There could be mixed messages as you go through that. But I would have to say the first and foremost piece of advice that I would give any parent is to really just embrace the child and the student that you have in front of you, right because as parents, we always have these hopes,

wishes and dreams for our children, our own goals, our own agenda and where we have the vision for them. But it really is about their journey. And so start by just sort of saying okay, this is who I have in front of me, right? And what are all the wonderful pieces of that? And how can I best guide them and help them to embrace who they are, and the kinds of things that you hope for them to discover, and to accomplish while they go through their college education. So, really, I think that just saying, because sometimes students start, where they're not on a solid academic ground, or maybe there have been some issues, or you have concerns about them going off to college. So just kind of settle in for that journey. But just know that so much happens and involves, as you're going through this process, students typically land where they're meant to land. And I think also, it's important to just have sort of an initial conversation about guidelines. So you, you may think, Oh, you can apply anywhere we want you to the sky's the limit, but you have to be a little bit careful with that. Because sometimes when you have that agenda with your child, they will go off into these tangents. And oftentimes, you'll say, Okay, wait a minute, that's, that's not what we were thinking. They're, they're there you are in New York, and they said, I'm going to California, and you said, Wait a minute, for the financial parameters. So we don't want to have any disappointments with that. So I think every so often to have those little bit of conversations about what does this all look like, and then never take anything off the list, because of maybe how far away it is, or the financial aspects of it, I really don't know where that's going to land as you go through the process.

M Moira McCullough 06:49

Great to hear that advice. Between the two of us, we have seven kids going through the process, and it's really good advice. And like you said, we have the conversations, because it is a journey. And throughout that journey, things change. students grow. They learn more, they're more self reflective. They learn what they like. They learn what they don't like. And you as a parent also kind of morphed through that journey, realizing maybe some things that your student needs that you didn't think that they needed, or something that they liked, that you never even knew about. And so I think that's really great advice and something that you must open up as a college counselor at a high school, you must kind of open up those parent meetings, kind of with that talk, exact talk that you just gave us right now, correct?

A Ann LaFemina 07:30

Oh, absolutely, yes. And I really try to hone in on the students that I work with is that this is your journey. So you do have to work within the framework of maybe what your parents are saying and offering you within that. But at the same time, the more you embrace this, the more you take this on, the more you engage, and the more you become accountable for all of these pieces, the better off you will be. And it will show in your application that you are really at the helm of this process.

M Moira McCullough 08:09

Let's say this is just getting down into details. But if they had a college that they wanted to apply to that originally, as a parent, you just didn't see that. I always say provide the pros and cons, give me a pitch, tell me why we should spend the money applying to that school. And I think that also is something very important for students, because as you said, take ownership

of it, do your research, find out and be able to share what it is that you will bring to that particular community and what that school, you know, can give for you. And that will help you in your conversations with parents in your applications. And it will resonate with the admissions reader who's reading that particular application. So that's really great advice. When you work with students, you have the parent side, great opening pitch for the parents like take a deep breath to its Yeah. But in terms of working with students, you just came from a three day journey, looking at 10 different schools. You mentioned in our earlier conversations with about 50 students, can you share a little bit about how you start the process with them and they kind of framework and guidelines and as they start in junior year, how it progresses and some of the advice and tips that you give to students?

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Ann LaFemina 09:19

Yes, so we actually start even a little bit earlier than the junior year actually in starting really early on in the freshman year just about the exploration of interest. And then just you know, that academic record and how you build that whatever that looks like and then moving through 10th grade we do all the more of career exploration and focus on that. And then when we get to the junior year, then we really then kind of move forward with the full process. For me my rationale of doing the college tour every year with my juniors is really and really kind of going through the state of Florida is not necessarily to promote one college Oh or another or saying and say, but it is really about the value of having your college counselor with you on site while you're touring these colleges and universities. I mean, they're, you know, I am and we start with these early conversations, you know, this was I'm gonna, what does this look like for me? What are my opportunities on this campus? What do I need to do to gain admissions. And it's not about sitting in an office, it's about being on that actual campus. And having that conversation that you would with your counselor just makes that experience just so valuable to number one further our relationship as we go through that, right, you know, they've just really kind of having those moments in time about your I Am, this is what it looks like. And I'm with the person who's going to guide me and help me throughout this process, as I go into my senior year. And we are able to sort of identify, Okay, this is a small university in size, this is an urban campus, this is the bourbon, this is a liberal arts college, and we mix it up. And so therefore, if they're telling me, this is the kind of university that I liked, or college campus that I like, but I want to do this in Kentucky, not in Florida, I want to do this in Massachusetts, then we can have those conversations from there. But not everyone gets to come on the college tour. And so additional ways is really I do a lot of outreach. So I go right to the classrooms and do a lot of conversations, I will hold zoom meetings, I will do parent workshops, and evening presentations. And right now we're gearing up for our junior only College Fair, which is coming up. So we do a lot of opportunities for students to have exposure and exposure with me, right there next to them, which I think adds a lot to that culture and community of developing what this looks like, and motivating the students to start thinking this is where I need to go next,

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Moira McCullough 12:19

motivating them. But also I think allowing them to gain the confidence to ask the questions. And you as a parent probably saw that the first time you went on a college visit with one of your kids. It's like prepping them like go and talk to the admissions rep go and talk to the student. And there's that uneasiness, anxiety about that. But what you're doing is really, as you

said, cultivating that relationship, because at the end of the day, you will write a recommendation for them as a college counselor to the school. So you know the student better?

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Ann LaFemina 12:48

Yes absolutely. And I think that's something that happens both as a parent but something that I very much am cognizant of all the time is a student will come to me or a parent will come to me and say I don't think my students really excited to go off to college, or they're not really interested or they're not really engaging. And I'll pull that student aside and they'll say, you know what's going on? And they'll say, I do want to go, I just don't know how I don't know where to start. And so, so much I think of my role in their world is really about teaching them. How do you write a letter to a college admissions person? How do you talk to a college? Rep, how do you seek that help? You know, how do you set up those tours? And that to me, I think in terms of when I say embrace your student, brace your child in this journey. Sometimes it's not about the cue that they're not wanting to do it in the process is so overwhelming, with so many layers now that they're just hearing and hearing and hearing and they're just gets lost. And you just kind of need that hand holding to say, where do you want me to start first? What is the first thing I should do? And it's kind of pick one anyone but you know, that's basically how that goes.

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Moira McCullough 14:15

When you just went through that whole process and explain that whole situation. I was laughing because I think any adult who has been through a change whether it's changing jobs or moving, you know, house, it's overwhelming. And sometimes you just want to throw yourself into a room and shut the door and think I don't even know where to begin. So having that safety of that person who's your advocate, who's not necessarily you know, your parent who has the emotional aspect tied to you, you know, it's having you as a safe person to go to and just say I don't know where to start like, right me, and I'm sure you have different students are at different stages. So one may need help to, as you said, on one aspect of it, meaning you know, conducting the research somebody else have, you know the communications aspect. So that's your kind of role as a college counselor is to figure out the specific needs of each student. And that's through building that relationship and kind of knowing at the end of the journey, you probably can preempt, like, you know, the question that they're going to ask next, because you just know them so well,

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Ann LaFemina 15:18

Yes- absolutely. Building that relationship is really super important. You really want them to trust you, and you want them to know that you're listening to them, it is not uncommon for a student and a family. And I have to sit down and do a little negotiation of Okay, so this is what this looks like. And this is, so it can be about me saying to a student, this is what your parents are guiding you and asking you. So let's make sure we are ticking those boxes. And we are looking at their advice, because they probably are giving you really good advice. At the same time, let's make sure that we are sharing, as you said earlier, present me the case as to why I should be listening to your side of the story. And those negotiations in those conversations. I call them negotiations. But they're great conversations. And it is about developing sensitivity to

both sides. And I do think you don't have to be or had been a parent in this process. But going through that, and everything that I have brought from my own journey, I would say I definitely take that. And very much parent side, very much student side, I think you have to be as best you can to balance that and to show both sides that you're really there in partnership. And ultimately, you're there for the goal of whatever that may be.

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Moira McCullough 16:51

It's so true, because I just know going through the process myself there were at some point, you know, you're both making concessions, shall we say, in terms of it may come to a head words like no, this is a good example, like even reviewing essays. I remember I had one of my kids wanted that kind of like oversight, you know, can you take a look at the essay, the other one said absolutely not, don't even don't even go there. So I think there's certain times that as a parent, you're really going to have to step back and let your son or daughter take the lead because they are showing you that they're confident and that they're in control and that they you know, there's certain decisions that they are going to want to make in this journey that eventually, as you said, it's their journey when you work with students. And even coming off of this tour that you had some of the frustrations that students may have is just in knowing where to start and having that helpful person to guide them through that process. What are some other challenges that students are questions that students are asking that they necessarily need? And are there certain tools and resources that you use and that you love using that are really helpful to those students at different aspects of the journey?

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Ann LaFemina 17:55

Yes, so first of all, we do it throughout the junior year, and we're more focused on the second semester, I do have individualized Junior planning meetings. So I do say to all of my students, you know, much of my messaging is generalist, but I think that having a background as a former independent counselor, gives me a little bit of a unique window in what does that one on one and really identifying that students. So we really do start with embracing the profile and who you are going to be, and what that looks like within that application process. And the frustration oftentimes comes from the fact that maybe they've heard about a college, or they're just really almost at the beginning, where they're just only thinking about schools that they know, and they haven't really scratched the surface. Or they're just learning that, oh, my goodness, my GPA, my test scores may not land me in that college, and what does that look like? And I think a lot of the frustration that I'm seeing now is just how competitive and almost kind of how arduous this this process can be. So a lot of that is a little bit like, Oh, my goodness, they just didn't realize and of course, you know, a family who may have a student even two years ago going through this process, they'll say some of this has really changed a lot from just two years ago. So even though you kind of come to a meeting as a parent, you think, Oh, I've got this all dad, like Oh, awesome. This is all new. But some of the parts of the college process that can be as frustrating can be as exciting for me when I can tell students that you don't have to apply to each college as the same major you can mix it up if you have to. Colleges are now just doing a great job of what I call marrying degree So where you can or accelerating degrees, or just giving you the opportunity to do various majors and minors, and so that can be a little bit frustrating and overwhelming, because the opportunities and what's being presented out there in these colleges, and what's happening on each college campus that you don't know about maybe even more so not from a named school. It's just very

exciting. And so it becomes overwhelming and frustrating sometimes for where the vision of where they may see themselves initially, and having to try to readjust in that landscape, right, because test optional. What is that look like? Do I when I scores, you know, and just kind of all the elements in the process can become very frustrating to navigate. So I think it's really important to know your students, and to figure out what are the strengths, and when you say resources. So within there is just a plethora of tremendously great college resources out there. But things that I use somewhat out of the box is I'll say, start from the college itself. Get on that campus, comb their website, talk to the alumni from your high school, your cousin, your friend, and get in there. And I think one of the values of the college tour, which we were so lucky to have was not only admissions reps talking to us, and scheduled tour guides, who, you know, really kind of had the script of what they were supposed to say, which was wonderful. But we also ran into former CARDONE alumni on the campuses. Or I would say if you have a cousin or a best friend or someone who bring them on, and we would actually spend time listening to them, and they would talk to us about the application process, their favorite places to hang out on the campus. And then you were really getting the flow vibe of everything in this process. So I think I'm all about just really sort of making those connections, because I think you can do so much through paper and watching tours, like connections. And going through that I think is really the way to go.

M Moira McCullough 22:32

When you talk about I think the alumni too, when you have a school like Carnem Muni, and you have so many alumni out there who want to give back, you know, and I think most students do, they want to give back, they were in their shoes just a few years ago, and they were in it pre COVID. So that now they can't imagine, you know how challenging it must be not having the opportunity to travel tours and information sessions that have been scaled down or postpone for, you know, a certain amount of time, it's unnerving. And I think you're right, I love how you too, you start local too. I mean, it's really important because you don't need a lot of money in the beginning, you should start local, go to your schools that are drive away, just to get a feel, take the name off the school, I always say forget about the name, just walk around the campus, I'm big into the surrounding community college skips is all about the surrounding community that's going to be home, you know, where you're going to go out and eat, where you're going to get your haircut, where you're going to go shopping. So you really want to make sure that that is a place that you're going to enjoy as much outside of the classroom as inside the classroom. Those connections, the alumni are really important former teammates, former classmates, somebody from your religious organization, any of those are great resources for students. When you talk about the college admissions reps, are there anything you know, that they particularly like to hear are open to being asked by students? I mean, I know, years ago, they didn't want to really talk to students and students felt uncomfortable. But that's all changed recently,

A Ann LaFemina 24:02

Very much. So I have found that having those interactions with representatives are really actually quite significant. And so I will encourage my students to make sure that they attend the rep visits here, or that they reach out to the reps when they come to the college fair to get to know them. Because that time, what they're not aware of is that it's not uncommon for a rep and you know, depending on the coach to be an initial leader of your application. So that is, you

know, when is that never a bad idea to sort of pick your brain on that. Now also when I'm sitting with seniors, and we have these supplementary questions that come up right as part of their application process. We will sit there and strategically write down everything that we hear from them on what they're saying about what the campus looks like what they're looking for in their students what that students it does. And we use a lot of that language in kind of sitting back and helping us craft some elements of those supplementary essays. But reps can also be great context for athletes. And so I'll tell an athlete, if you have an interest come down, sometimes the rep will say, Oh, I know Coach, so and so or I can get you in touch with the coach, though. And so that doesn't mean you're going to get admitted. And that doesn't mean you're going to end up on the playing field. But it's a great contact. Right? So now you're talking with someone who's going to be reading your application can help you maybe make a contact within a certain department. And also you can reach out to a rep and say, Hey, we're coming on your campus. Can you give us some of the inside places? Where should we go for lunch? Who should we talk to, and reps are also have been a great resource for helping you on your college tours. And then also something I'm finding that's been really terrific is that we have reps in our area, they will reach out to students that they've made contacts with and say, Hey, if you and your parent want to meet me at Starbucks, or Panera, or someplace, or even I can come to the campus, and answer some of your questions, or maybe share with you some additional scholarships, you can apply for to make this experience happen. Because right once you're admitted, a college admits you to enroll. So they kind of can help you on some of that, too. So I have really said to students, that representative can be a key for much, you just have to really learn how to use them to your best advantage.

M Moira McCullough 26:42

That's so important, even more so you know, in terms of not only when you are applying, but as you said, with the news that you've been accepted, I mean, you're in the best position ever. And if you have the opportunity to have several schools that you're now trying to make the decision, you're in the driver's seat, and it means a lot to be able to reach out and ask these representatives, like more detailed questions to make sure that that is a place that you want to be at, if you've gone from the one where you're almost afraid students are, you know, cautiously reaching out to the other side of the coin, where you're like, now you're in the driver's seat, ask them really to help you get all the details, you need to make that final decision.

A Ann LaFemina 27:20

Yes, and I think also to something that I've been a little bit more aware of, and trying to coach students when they're talking to reps. And they'll say, Listen, you know, remember, now you are the consumer, and they're gonna sell, but you don't have to go to a rep and say, do you have this major? What is this? You know? Or can I do that, really what you want to come have start with a conversation and say, This is me, this is what I like, these are my interests. These are some professional areas, I've been kind of gravitating towards classes that I really like, and this is what I like to do. And tell me how the Mi fits into your university. Wow, you know, it's it, make them really short of share with you? Because that's such a great question. And oftentimes, students will overlook a college and they'll say, Oh, I'm can't be interested in that that's not really a match, because they don't have my major. But I've sat with representatives who have actually talked to students and said, you know, what, ultimately, we don't have your

major, but this is students who are pursuing this degree or interest, this is what they do, and they come out and are actually as marketable, or if not more, and these are the companies. And wow, then it's like, Oh, my goodness, I only discounted this school, because I thought, well, you don't have what I want to do. And you miss the opportunity to have that conversation about, oh, I can do that. And it's, you know, so I have really felt like that is a big part of just sharing.

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Moira McCullough 29:00

That goes to the types of questions you asked not necessarily yes or no or you can absolutely find it two clicks down on the website. You don't want that. That is too easy to research. That was a great, tell me about here's who I am and how does that fit in? And how will that how will I be embraced? Or how will I be able to engage and thrive in your community? That's a great idea that gets me to a question, you know, brag sheet, is that something that you would help develop? Give us some advice for students.

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Ann LaFemina 29:30

So a blank sheet - Really what I work with my students are is taking and a brag sheet can mean a lot of different things. So just kind of in my world, I will work with all my students to make sure that they have a resume, you know, so that and so really, we will start there with a full compilation of everything that they've done presented in a very neat, concise and really well executed document. And I do that because a lot of colleges now when You're answering the specific questions unique for that college will allow you to upload a resume, do you have a resume that you want to upload. And so, you know, I'm always about getting a little bit over prepared. But we will do that, we will kind of take that element and make sure that it's really something you're super proud of, and you will have no issues uploading to your application. So I do do a lot of and the resume to me is an area where I'm very picky about how we do this and the wording that we use. And we'll even include links to websites within that or, and it's not about a lot of words, but it's about where someone can glance at it. And then if they want to do a little bit more self exploration from that they can. So we do do that we also use those because a lot of our students are applying for scholarships, and a lot of scholarships do like to have a resume, if you're asked to do an alumni interview or an interview as part of your application process, a resume can be a really helpful tool. Now, brag sheet, though, for me, is going to be a supplementary document that you can give to your counselor in addition to your resume, and you can give to your teachers as an additional document. And that is where you can then sort of do anything for if you're presenting it to a teacher, you're saying, Okay, remember this project that I did this lab, this essay I wrote, and you just thought it was just terrific, well, that would be just wonderful. If you could put that in your letter or just kind of jarring their memory or you know, a teacher may only know you in a certain context. So the brag sheet becomes the supplementary piece that really can help them to sort of create the story, right? You know, you want them to really be able to have a story about you, not just You're a great student, and even to say I'll even encourage a student, you know, if you have a grade you are uncomfortable with in that class. And in the second semester, you did better, that teacher can become a great letter of recommendation, remind them how you came to extra help you took their advice. So for me, a brag sheet is the supplementary piece, where you get to sort of take yourself off the chronological listing of who you are, and say, This is me, this is my voice. And this is kind of what I want you to add to that.

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Moira McCullough 32:42

It's so important because we're asked all the time for recommendations you are asked, you know, you have to write them. Teachers are writing recommendations, not only for their current students, but they may also volunteer or have other students that they are helping in their journey. So I always think it don't make their job hard. They're already doing you a favor, by writing something that isn't to be thoughtful, and hopefully share different components of who you are as a person and how you will thrive in a particular college university settings. So trying to give them all the information they need, as I said, to jog their memory and help them share you in a light that any reader would say I want that student, it's a perfect student, you're actually kind of describing I think is so important and is that for students, they really need to get to know their college counselor so well and allow that college counselor to know them because without that communication, it makes your job so much more difficult for any student going to meet their college counselor, really just open up and share everything in anything because that's your job to kind of distill all that information into sound bites, help them create a great resume brag sheet application essay supplemental. So if anything out of this whole conversation today to go and talk with their college counselors other than the normal check in just once or twice because that's just, you know, going through a checklist, and that doesn't help you as much as it could going forward.

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Ann LaFemina 34:15

Absolutely. I tell my students all the time, get to know me say hi, stop and tell me about your college visit. You know, just email me. Give me your impressions because the more that I get to know you, literally my exuberance in typing that letter of recommendation becomes not just to do this, it's to I have to tell you about like she's just terrific, you know, and so you know, I try to use that no matter what, but the more that you do get to know that student and that personality. I think that the tone from the counselor really comes through, you know, you can probably read between the lines like oh wow, she knows her students. He knows who those students and how that look.

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Moira McCullough 35:03

Absolutely. So we talked about getting to know your college counselor, really working on that resume when you can summers are perfect time to get that in it current state and then work with your college counselor to try to refine that and have them help you creating a brag sheet with as much information about your past projects, your successes. And I love that acted to about I agree with you with the failures, I think and failure, what does that really mean? That you may have had struggled in one class versus all your other ones. But sometimes those recommendations might be the strongest ones that you could actually ask for. So don't discount the teachers that you struggled with, they may have a really good story about the eventual outcome that you had.

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Ann LaFemina 35:45

Absolutely, yes.

M Moira McCullough 35:47

Any other last minute tips or advice for students as they start to refine their college list?

A Ann LaFemina 35:53

Yes, just you know, really remember that so much the students that I sit with in the junior year is not necessarily the students that I sit with in the senior year. And you know what so much changes. And I would really say that the hardest part is to get the students to just be the reflection of just looking at themselves, it's because everything you do in high school mostly is about being in a group, right, or what you're doing with the group and the group. And so really, it's the start of the you being you. And just to sort of start to define that is really among the hardest pieces in that process. But the more that you do, the better you will align yourself with where your true right fit school is. And I'm with you, and you say summer, I cannot tell you how I think I'm like I've listened I love summer, just the same reasons that everybody else loves summer, can we just kick back but the more you can kind of embrace in your summer and really look at yourself and say, Alright, what are a couple of things I could do this summer? To help in the profile of who I am now. We don't do anything for a specific college. Oh, he's kind of careful about that. But am I an athlete? What am I training opportunities? What are my camp opportunities? Am I an artist? What about you know, getting ready for those auditions? And what are those steps look like? The college tours? What is it that I can do? internships and career shadows all tucked in? Just Go call your family, friends and cousins? Could you do this? Can I come and just shadow you. So you know, you don't have to go to college, knowing your major, but just having some of those experiences. And I cannot say enough about any rising sun rising 10th graders rising. The summer should also be about those additional pieces, either for enjoyment. But also, just to kind of add to the you in who you are. I just think that it is just a great time to work on some of these things. And just to embrace that. And then what can you do beyond that?

M Moira McCullough 38:10

Would you also suggest I know with me, it's better if I have a timeline too. So maybe, you know, take some goals that you have for the summer and set up some timelines as in, you know, by the end of June, I might want to have my first draft of my resume so that it can be reviewed and just set certain goals and objectives that you want to have. Because I'm sure you see too as senior year fall, it's such a busy time. And in hindsight, it's so much easier if you get certain things completed in the summer that are necessary that allows you to really work at your grades work at connecting with the schools and work at the final application.

A Ann LaFemina 38:46

Yes, absolutely. I mean kind of a little bit of an inside joke. I even started with the seniors this year, as I said, your calendar is your new best friend. And I said to them at one of our workshops, when someone calls you and they say Let's go out for lunch, they know I'm hanging with my calendar, I can't go until I've mapped everything out. I think you're taking this a little too seriously as the feminine but I cannot say enough for sitting down even just going back to

the old fashioned large calendars and putting it all in and I'll say to them when you do that just putting in the clubs, the organizations with board the SAP AC T prep, whatever you're doing, and then oh, where's the time for the college process? And that just to see it in real time and you think, you know, an early action deadline, some colleges now or even mid October we have a couple of those. So this stuff comes up quickly. And I really mean it when I say the calendar is your best friend and such great practice for when you go off to college anyway. But when you really see the visual of that timeline, like, Oh, my goodness, you know, this is something I really should be mapping out.

M Moira McCullough 40:10

And as a parent, I think it's so important to have a visual of that as well, for students to share it with parents, because some parents aren't going to realize all the other requirements criteria of a student's, you know, sports, necessarily at school, or some of the big assessments or requirements that the school has in fall that then once they map onto that calendar, they're like, Wow, now I really, you know, how can I help you and support you, I shouldn't be planning a vacation at this time. Because that's going to be critical during your work in the college, you know, research. So I think it's really important for parents to I was, like, shocked at some of the things that my son had on this calendar thinking, Oh, my goodness, of course, we can't go away on that particular weekend, or, or whatever, you know, with a family commitment, it might be best to work with your student work with their son and daughter and make sure they have the capacity to join in on family obligations during that timeframe as well.

A Ann LaFemina 41:07

Yes and I think something that I message or try to message to students is that in this process, yes, it can be a regret, if you do not get into the college that you, you know, kind of hoped, wished and dreamed up. That is always a disappointment. But what you don't want to do is to look back and have regrets. So something can be regretful that the college didn't see you as the match for that particular university. But what you don't want to do is say, Oh, I just wish I. And so if that is how you're sort of going into this process, then you're really sort of thinking, I don't want to look back and say I missed this opportunity. And so that's a big concept that is really something that if you kind of let that resonate in you, as you go through, then you say I am making the right decision. Because I know that I did everything I possibly could ensure that still doesn't soften the disappointment sometimes that the rejection is a part of the process. But you're like, you know what, I really feel so good about everything that I tried to do at the time I started until the time I finished. And that to me is always the goal.

M Moira McCullough 42:32

Absolutely. I use a phrase of the harder I work, the luckier I get. Yeah. Yes, that's it work really hard, and it pays off. And what do you wish you knew before attending college?

A Ann LaFemina 42:47

Oh, my goodness. Well, that you would change your major several times.



Moira McCullough 42:55

And then you have the possibility that you that there are options and opportunities to do that. And that you can it's a good point, as you said, college is a time to to go and explore and be curious and try a whole host of different classes that you never really had the opportunity to up until that point, I didn't try half as many classes if I could go back now, boy, yeah, it would be jam packed.



Ann LaFemina 43:19

Yes. Oh, and if I could go back, I've always feel like I would love to do eight semesters at eight different universities, because there's just so many great programs and colleges out there to choose from, but I think that I may not have been prepared. And this I think is really common, just how kind of self reliant, and how you have to be prepared for some of those alone moments a little bit and how to navigate those. And, you know, you just really kind of want to take yourself back to sort of when you started as a freshman in high school, and you're trying a little of everything. But there is a little part of that in college and you have to sort of figure out, you know, it's okay to go sit alone sometimes, or to be your own advocate, or to talk to your professor, or to go to the writing center. Those are great things. And I think, you know, those are missed opportunities sometimes. And maybe if I could go back and know that that is a little bit of part of the adjustment. Maybe that would have been I might have been just a little bit better for that.



Moira McCullough 44:25

So they're all there all those resources are there and I didn't take advantage of them either. And I think that's the one missed opportunity in terms of colleges want you to succeed. They're there to help. They have a lot of different resources, tools and a network of people who are there to support you during the college journey at any stage. So great advice. Do you have a favorite food on a college campus that you would die to go back to?



44:52

Well, I was just on the campus of USF University of South Florida in Tampa and And we actually toured a couple of those colleges. We were actually touring at night. Now just I will answer your question, but don't miss an opportunity after you've done a tour, if you can get back on the campus, no sneaking in, but if you can get back on that campus, because the night culture tells you a lot about a college, right, what, what do you see, you know, our students were surprised to see tennis, you know, people playing tennis and people at the library and eating later and kind of what that it's a different vibe. And it's really important to sort of learn that, but my goodness, we went to the hub, and there was some kind of a blueberry cobbler that was just, it was great. I could see, I have to tell you, we eat on every college campus as we go. So you either come home with that true appreciation of your your New Year, mom's home cooking, but there were a lot of great meals and so many options that determine specials, and then

international cooking. And you know, just it's just it's kind of very exciting. So it is really hard, but I really, I was so glad I didn't turn that blueberry cobbler and it was delicious. I found, and this is terrible, that I was having a cookie after every meal.

M Moira McCullough 46:24

So the freshman 15.

A Ann LaFemina 46:27

Everything was delicious. So I think that definitely do you have that opportunity to eat on a campus? That would be terrific advice.

M Moira McCullough 46:37

And I love the night tips. It's really good advice. Because I think at different times of the day, you'll experience different interactions with students and you'll get a better feel and vibe of the community based on the different times of day that you are there. So great piece of advice. And I love the food, the freshman 15 That's why I walk everywhere and you got to walk you gotta walk, because it's worth indulging in the campus food. Thank you so much for joining us today and sharing all that helpful advice. Thank you Ann for sharing your knowledge on the college admissions process from the perspective of my high school counselor, and offering us many helpful tips and recommendations to get a better understanding of how to utilize counselors abilities and knowledge to find the right university. Parents listen to your students embrace the journey and let your students drive the process. It can be overwhelming and students sometimes do not even know where to start. They oftentimes need their handheld. Students. Your college counselor wants to help you and they are a tremendous resource for you get to know them so they can advocate for you. You can find all of our show notes and links to the helpful resources mentioned throughout our conversation on our website at collegescoops.com/podcast Please take a couple minutes to rate review and subscribe to College Scoops. Thank you for listening to our College Scoops podcast. Our entire College Scoops team strives to make the college journey a little bit easier, less stressful, fun and tasty by sharing all the inside scoops we have curated along the way. We would love to hear from you about topics to cover and your ideas and everything college related. Reach out to us at collegescoops.com or follow us on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.