

Episode 62 - David Hawkins

 Tue, 2/23 7:58AM  49:08

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

students, uk, college, university, schools, universities, applying, places, study, people, families, application, colleges, educate, scoops, offer, test, podcast, international, history

SPEAKERS

David Hawkins, Moira McCullough



Moira McCullough 00:01

Welcome to the College Scoops podcast. I'm your host, Moira McCullough and today we are talking with David Hawkins of The University Guys about what students need to know when applying to university abroad.



David Hawkins 00:12

The key difference is what are you applying for. So if you're applying to St Andrews or to Edinburgh or to any other UK University, you're not applying for general admission to the university, not even applying to admission to a school of engineering or School of Fine Arts. You're being admitted to that program of study. And that program of study is like picking a restaurant for dinner. That's what you're getting.



Moira McCullough 00:43

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 around 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 and 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@patreon.com/collegescoops and sign up as a sustaining listener, insider or Deluxe sponsor. We have exclusive benefits for our members free ebooks and even a College Scoops care package. David is one of a small number of independent counselors to hold the gold-standard international affiliation with the Council of International Schools. An Oxford graduate, David was the Head of College Counseling at the International School of Brussels (one of the largest in Europe), and before that was the Head of Careers and a History teacher at Taunton School. David holds memberships in the International Association for College Admissions Counseling, IECA, COBIS, HECA and the Council of International Schools. He also serves on committees for CIS and IECA. Now, as Director of The University Guys, he and his team provide bespoke, individual counseling to families pursuing global university options, recruitment services for international universities within the British Isles, and support for schools with various aspects of university advising. David, thank you so much for coming on the College Scoops podcast today.

D David Hawkins 02:46
My pleasure. Thanks for having me.

M Moira McCullough 02:48
Can you just introduce yourself quickly and just share a little bit about who you are?

D David Hawkins 02:51
Thank you. Yes. So my name is David Hawkins, I'm Director and Founder at The University Guys, a small team of independent education consultants, mostly based over here in merry old England. And we support mostly students from UK schools who want to apply to colleges and other countries, and an increasing number of international students from outside the UK or Western Europe, who then want to come here. So we're doing IEC work very much on student mobility from one system into another.

M Moira McCullough 03:24

So given that, because, again, we were talking a little bit earlier about the recent all the application responses, all the college decisions that are due out, and we were talking about what was different this year. Share with us a little bit about what you heard and what you're seeing in some of the students responses.

D

David Hawkins 03:43

Yeah, I'll be honest, I think a lot of us who do international advising had the same fear that we make a living out of borders not really mattering. And people need to get on flights and connect around the world and this sort of global trend to the world becoming smaller, which suddenly stopped that people couldn't go anywhere, borders really mattered. And I was terrified. And I think a lot of people were that the work that we do to help these students with aspirations to build their future, somewhere else was gonna fall apart. I think it's quite the opposite. To be honest. Our numbers are as strong as they ever have been just in terms of the university guys, we work alongside a lot of high schools across the UK. And we're seeing a continued growth of students in the UK schools aspire to study nationally. Also the same students from from the US wants to come this way for undergraduate study. And the only thing I can think about is it's one of those things that you don't know what you're missing until it's gone. But actually, the world has been a challenging place for a while now in terms of openness and people wanting to learn from other cultures and the ability to travel. And then it's been extraordinarily challenging for eight months or so now. I think people going what if I want a global future, I can't just assume it's going to be there. For that you have to go and do something about it. Certainly a trend we saw after the Brexit referendum here in the UK, from going, Oh, what if I want to have a European experience, I'll need to go and get one. I can't just pop on the 20 pound flight and go and be in another country. So it's been really interesting seeing actually quite inspiring how a younger generation still think this global connectedness matters to them.

M

Moira McCullough 05:27

What we learned so much, I think when you're younger, you just think everything's possible, which I think is really the strength that everyone kind of needs right about. Now, I know when we talked earlier, a lot of us students now are actually University of St. Andrews and University of Edinburgh are really kind of hot schools, at least in our area. What would you recommend to a student from the US who's looking at studying overseas? What is some of the advice that you would give, there's so many differences and culturally and programs, the way it's structured?



David Hawkins 06:03

Absolutely. I think the very fact that a student might be having that conversation, whether it's with a parent or guardian, or counselor, there's something in them, that means they want to do something different. The first thing I would say is go with that if you even if you're a high school counselor, you're a parent, and you're hearing your challenges that terrifies you. There's something in that there's something wonderful about the fact that a child is brave enough to articulate that. And encourage them to think about what it is now that might be a semester abroad from a US college, it might be the entire degree overseas. What I would then say is, and something that maybe one day I'll do and a PhD in. The word University is something that is so culturally conditioned. And actually, it's a fascinating thing that we're working with students right now applied to 16 different countries, universities, and every single university system is designed to work for the culture of that country. And you consume the news media and the social media, and unfortunately, our friends around the world. And so much of their perception of what university is, is based on their own country. And so a lot of students I feel, maybe pick the least worst option in their own country, because they don't really know what else is out there. But my own experience, I think, is really interesting. I started a history degree at Oxford University. And my my track towards that in the UK bottle was basically to be as narrow in terms of my academics as I could be. So I, I have no maths or English, or science after the age of 16. Because that's what I needed to do in the British curriculum to be suited to study this one subject. 100% of my classes over my three year degree were history classes. And I like history because it enabled me to do everything that if it was in the past, whether it was engineering, or language, or literature, or politics, if it was in the past, I could study it because I could say, well, it's history. I didn't know about the Liberal Arts and Sciences, I didn't know majors and minors and electives and distribution requirements. So I picked something that fitted me in my cultural understanding. But if I'd known that there was a thing called the Liberal Arts and Sciences, and I could just go to a US college, if I'd known St. John's College in Maryland existed, I have been there like a shot that would have suited me, but I didn't know. And so my advice would be, understand that what college university might be, could be something completely different. The best way we found at university guys of explaining how this word means different things are different people, is to compare it to another word that between our two great countries means different things, which is football, whatever, if you describe the game of football now, and I describe the game of football, now we'd be describing two completely different sports. Absolutely. And it's exactly the same way with how a US family might consider going to university and how a British family might get to the university. They're completely different experiences. If you've got that child who just loves one subject to the idea of doing general education and distribution requirements, absolutely terrifies them. If you're looking at their transcript, and they are spiky, in all the stem to get them to write an essay or read a book of extra they can't do it. The UK is awesome for them. We don't want well

rounded kids, we want you as flat as a pancake, as long as you love that subject. And so it's understanding that the best fit option might be in a completely different parts of the world. And I'll chuck this in for you for your listeners. It might also be significantly cheaper than staying in the US to college.

M

Moira McCullough 09:33

Having lived in overseas, that was what we loved when our kids were very young. And I remembered even the grammar school that what we call grammar school at age of what seven or eight boys in the UK have a decision to go to boarding school right? I think so. Yeah. So that was what it was very interesting depending upon where you are, that you had to make a decision at a certain point very young, how you want your future schooling to be and it started out very young. But I think that's so relevant. I love the fact that you first off said, they're curious, they're asking you about going overseas, embrace that. Enjoy that for the moment, and then delve into it and say, Well, what does that mean? Because University over in the UK, in Japan, in the US, also different. And so therefore you have that discussion. And then what are some of the things if we have students here that are looking at St. Andrews? Or University of Edinburgh? What should what are the schools looking for from them? Like what is different that they wouldn't have to maybe plan for? Or articulate for us schools?

D

David Hawkins 10:35

Yeah, so I thought, I thought about the UK model. Scotland is actually slightly different from the rest of the UK. And it just for historical reasons as to how the degree is structured. But if you talk about the UK, of which the boundaries number two great universities, the key difference is what are you applying for. So if you're applying to St. Andrews, or to Edinburgh or to any other UK University, you're not applying for general admission to the university, not even applying to admission to a school of engineering or School of Fine Arts, you're being admitted to that program of study. And that program of study is like, you know, picking a restaurant for dinner, that's what you're getting, you would turn up to a tan restaurant and expect to find Korean food on the menu. If you were admitted to study history, then you won't be given math classes. So because of what you're applying for, then the whole selection procedure is based on that. So if you're applying to study a single course of study, so let's say my example is history, then the requirements you would have to have are going to be based on that admissions office seeing are you good enough to study history here? So what you would write, in terms of our personal statements, isn't going to be about what kind of person am I and who would I be in your community? It's how good am I history? What have I done to prepare me for the study of history, what your high school counselor or your subject teacher would write is not about the nice

person you are. But how well prepared you are to study history. And then the biggest difference is, university is going to need to see that you are academically qualified in that subject area. So that's where for us students typically an offer of admission, would you based on achieving grades in APS, typically, there'd be a history AP in there, or LSAT Subject Tests, because again, they need to know that you know, enough, in effect, to walk out of high school have a couple of months off. And then day one be studying that history course, the Scottish model is ever so slightly different. Because in the in the rest of the UK, we have a three year bachelor's degree in Scotland is that your four year degree, which is I think, why St. Andrews and Edinburgh are the easier route into the UK system for students from the US where actually, you could apply for history. In your first two years, you could take a bunch of classes outside that course of study. And actually, if you got them decided that you actually prefer things literature, you could switch over to that if you want to do a jewel honors, you could pick up classes anthropology, so the Scottish degree offers a little bit more flexibility. But in the UK, if you're admitted to say King's College London to study history, and you decide that you don't like it, you quit. And then you reapply for the thing that you do like, Okay.

M

Moira McCullough 13:15

Which is so different, as you just said, you're there's one thing I hear about applying EDI or something like that. But this is something totally different, where you need to be very thoughtful and know that this is the area that you want to focus on. And if not, that's not the right school for you flat out.

D

David Hawkins 13:32

Absolutely. The cultural piece and that I have on my bookshelf behind me, I have books about different us colleges and on there. And it's very much the focus, when you flick through the Fiske guide and things is it's done alphabetically by college, because that's in the US Coast, as you're picking that experience, you know, what kind of education do I want to have? If you look at the UK equivalent, we don't have it that way when you're picking the college students subject by subject. So again, a student looking for say physics would be opening off the page or looking at online thing and searching for what I want to study physics. I've got these kind of grades, where can I look at this gonna want me? And so in the UK system, it is very much first and foremost, what do you want to study at university? And then where do I want to go? With something us system? It's where do I want to go to school? And then maybe what am I interested in studying when I get there?

M

Moira McCullough 14:21

So then take that and focus on all the students that you're helping right now from the UK looking at studying in the US?

D

David Hawkins 14:29

Yes, totally different. And it's, some of them are coming because they love that idea. And some of the talks and workshops we give for high schools here really focusing on the idea of, you know, I refer to the mind blowing emoji sometimes when I talk to students and parents and say that you don't have to pick a subject to apply for when you go to university in it. It really is sometimes in their faces that the mind cannot cope with that idea. What are you going to study the idea that Do you find you that we do work with students whose interests engineering and ballet. Now in the UK, they're having to give up one of those interests when they go to college suddenly, in terms of taking classes, it's hard to do in the US, but it's possible to do it. So it's such a different experience for them. And then when we start to think about, you know, what might you study in the curriculum, I mean, I've sat with students and look through Cal Tech's core curriculum with really talented engineers. And they're going, Okay, let's take an English class. And it just, they cannot compute that idea. So it's completely different systems.

M

Moira McCullough 15:35

Conceptually, they're just like, no, I'm not wired for that, like, we have no, you have to un-train yourself, really, in a sense of saying, you know, I think that mainly, a lot of your business must be focused on really making sure that the student is educated in that sense.

D

David Hawkins 15:52

Yes, well, I talk about coaching. And it is very similar. If I take that analogy of football versus football, you know, there are people from our sports over here, more commonly, rugby football, rather than soccer, who tried to come and play in the NFL, well, it takes them a couple of years to learn how to do it, you have to adapt. And we're trying to coach students as well to understand the terminology, the language, the strategy and the tactics in order to then make good decisions. So a lot of the work we do early on with a family, we're actually presenting them with different models of us curriculum. So we have a document where we show them without with the names off, I show them Harvard's curriculum, I show them Columbia's curriculum with all that reading. I show them Penn school of engineering curriculum, we show them the open curriculum at Brown, without the names on the go, Wow, this is so different. Which of these do you prefer? To get their

mindset of understanding that, that's the choices you have to make, and then helping them to make good choices. And the danger that that is for international students the world over is, I want to go to the Ivy League. And they're all the same as each other, they're just in different places, was, as we know, what you study at Brown is fundamentally different from what you study at Columbia. And people need to learn that work. It's a great pleasure to do it, actually, to be able to educate people. And I said, a lot of the time the students are coming to us, we're having a couple of sessions with them. And they're realizing, oh, yeah, I do love physics. Why am I having taken to lecture? I'll just stay in the UK or, actually, you know, I look at Canada, I look at Europe, that's the place where there's this little curiosity will take me.

M

Moira McCullough 17:26

Absolutely. And then how do you in terms of knowing and you know, we talked about fit all the time, and I know you have webinars on that. But how do you help students to connect them with with? If they decide, yes, I want to go to the US and I want to go for that experience. And, you know, how do you? How do you help them find the right?

D

David Hawkins 17:53

So it's an extra step when you don't have a cultural familiarity. And I often joke, clearly, I am not American, I was educated in the UK, I can't tell you who played point guard to Villanova in 1988. Because I struggle sometimes tell you what the point guard actually was. We don't have that level of cultural familiarity, but we do have is where the students are coming from. I used to I used to be a teacher. And there's a theory in teaching called the zone of proximal development, that if you want to take a student from point A to point z, you have to take them through all the steps in between, you can not only educate them, from the point they are to the next little bit, the zone proximus to where they are. And so that's what we do is saying, well, we want you to be able to understand the difference between the cultures of so many different US universities, so you can find fit. So we need to educate them on what are so what is Greek life? What does it mean to go to a Catholic school? What's an urban school, and we have various tools that we use, I'll give a shout out to cassava, which is a wonderful tool that we use working with our students to help them understand all these different choices that they've got. Because first of all, we have to educate them what these schools are. And in the same way, as listeners of yours in the US, might be able to name half a dozen British schools, but they couldn't tell you 50 or 60 is the same university I can tell my families till the cows come home the places like two lane and Wake Forest and Notre Dame, a wonderful schools, but they've never heard of these places. And so you've got to kind of move them along the line until they've coached them. So they've got the permission to know, you know, the faith environments here. That

rugby player comes play NFL knows what the route is to be able to run off often perceivable it takes time to get them there.

M

Moira McCullough 19:34

So when do you have when do you work with a lot of your families when when a lot of the students come to you.

D

David Hawkins 19:40

But this is one of the challenge of the different systems actually. Ideally, we'd like to work with them from their junior year onwards to enable them to make really good choices. And that's increasingly why we'd like to do other work with high schools and other organizations is to educate the high schools and I said the UK process being quite straightforward. We don't have college counselor in the UK. It's not a job that someone has Scooby Doo. And when I was running University advising at a UK school, I was still teaching 90% of my time, because that's the model. So it's educating them that you have to start early. A lot of times we pick up people far too late. And we just have to very quickly get them somewhere that will suit them.

M

Moira McCullough 20:18

So there are no college counselors over there. So to the extent that the student is working with somebody like yourself, and or the parents have had an education at a university or in the US.

D

David Hawkins 20:32

Yes, but there are the international schools here who have international school counselors in the same way as you would recognize it at a private school in the private high school in the US. And there are some schools which have increasingly getting better at this because the numbers about it's a great pleasure to work with people who who do it. But a lot of schools, it's a completely different culture, because the UK application system is what you want to study, what grades have you got, and it's a much more seamless you, you don't need to have all that level of knowledge of the nuances between different universities. And that's the reality of it is the head of physics will be helping the physics kids, and they had the classics we have in the classics, kids, because it's that academic piece. So it's a real challenge. Sometimes for somebody in the UK school, if a child says I want to go to the US, we've got no idea where to start. And so a lot of our resources that we put out

online, and you mentioned the webinars and the podcasts that we do is to try and help the schools know, at least enough about it to be able to educate the students now with a business hat on, it's then nice if those families can come and work with people like us, reality is quite quite a high price within a market. And if we can do so at least putting information out there. So students know, okay, to apply to the US, I need to be starting eight to 10 months earlier on the college process as I would do if I was flying to just to the UK.

M

Moira McCullough 21:53

This year two must have been, it was hard for everyone, obviously. And we talked earlier about the test optional. That must have thrown you guys a curveball, especially given the fact that for UK students who who are always based on test tests, and yeah, numerix. How did that work with your students?

D

David Hawkins 22:11

Yes, I think I'd be interested in without sort of a week away from hearing some of the sort of early numbers and application results in the US. And so it'd be interesting with my hypothesis is proved right, or is often the case completely wrong. We'll have to see, I think the challenge for a lot of the students here is that they just weren't able to see places, which is complicated to apply to some of its competitive and is an early decision application. Because how can you really commit to go a long way away, when you just you've never seen the place, that's quite a big thing. The lack of of the of the need to do it, and he actually works in the people's favor here. As I mentioned, the timelines are different here. So you know, in a normal cycle, we would have families get in touch with us in September October, saying oh, now we're thinking of applying to the US. These will be students with extraordinary high high school grades, they will be tracking towards the most selective UK schools where entries based solely on their their a levels or their IB Diploma, they wouldn't have an SST and AC t would be saying that, I just don't think you're going to be ready in time. This year, that whole piece of work taken out the same way students that we would be working with and either every single year in October, we'd be having conversations with families where everything about the student made them competitive for the top us schools they were aiming for, apart from the sap or their AC t score either because they just never did the work for it because then they're good testers in our system. So that must work elsewhere. Or they just couldn't get their head around a completely different type of test. And so we'll be having said that point that there were some great schools that are test optional you Chicago bu for the IB kids wake up Miami, Northeastern and shovelling those kids ever so slightly that way, you know, yes, your three stars a level but that 26 ACT. That's not cutting it. I'm afraid of the other top 20 school this

year. Again, no data point to say to those families, you're not going to be competitive because they're just test optional. So that way round actually that it was more of an incentive for people to do it. The challenges students who your side coming here, because we need to test we must have the tests and UK admissions without the ability to sit exams, the students were still awarded grades. They didn't do the exams, but the teachers did assign them a level grades which there was a complicated process by which they got them because we can't do university admissions without high stakes testing. Poor kidney us doesn't have any testing. We're really sorry. We can't accept you. We don't have any proof that you're academically qualified to do our course. We had a student last year who come to us relatively late in the cycle. But I had a couple of offers in the UK including Imperial College London, and they needed to see a particular math test called step paper which is a an extra last test even beyond the level of AP'S and labs and things, and he was going to go to a British Council Center in New York, and he would take it. And he couldn't. And Imperial College said, Okay, well, if you really have to take it, we will make you a near miss candidate, or you have missed the conditions of the offer. And that means you aren't fighting with everybody else who's missed the conditions of the offer for whatever spaces are left and he didn't get a spot. I haven't done anything wrong. It's not his fault, there was a global pandemic and the test center is closed. But in the UK process, we must have those test scores.

M

Moira McCullough 25:39

Have you heard about Anchor, it is the easiest way to make a podcast and it's free. You can use their own creation tools to record and edit your podcast right from your phone. Anchor will distribute your podcast for you. So it can be heard on Spotify, Apple podcast, iTunes, and many more. You can make money from your podcast with no minimum listenership. If it sounds easy it is because it is here's how you do it. Download the free anchor app, or go to anchor.fm to get started. You do have a lot of us clients that now are coming to you. Because obviously, as you also mentioned, price. Which, you know, my son came home and he said, can you believe how much University Chicago cost? Having lived overseas, and going through this, having younger kids at the school system, I thought, why can't I have had you when I was over here in high school in college, you save a tremendous amount of money. So in terms of application rates, what did you see, you saw a tremendous number of students from the UK applying to far more colleges in the US, is the standard number of students of colleges that your students apply to?

D

David Hawkins 26:57

Yes, we work a lot of students who are are putting together multi-country strategy,

philosophies that will include the UK and the US, maybe Canada, maybe some European place, not unusual that we got kids about four or five different countries. I think it's a minority of the students that we work with always, particularly now, where it is I am going to the US that is it. That is my only option. I think, you know, issues that we have the students that can get visas flights have been canceled them and that everybody needs to have a second option. So typically, then the students that we work with are going to the US it's because it's offering something that I don't feel like we get here. So that might be a particular name brand school, and however much we hate the fact that families won't name brand schools, they believe there's a cachet to it. So they go for that. It might be a particular combination, it might be a financial option. So our list of Western suppliers who is extraordinarily top heavy, we try and work against it. But but that is just the way it is. And so in that you might find some to doing three or four colleges only in the US but they're doing one UCAS application. It's fairly common. I was working with one today was doing go Yeah, what about McGill? What about University Toronto? Oh, yeah, you'll probably do both as applications in about 45 minutes start to finish. And yeah, you'll probably get an offer. Okay, great. That's worth it. That's a return on my investment. Though. So in terms of the numbers that way, it depends a little bit on the predictability of the outcomes. And that sense of what is it worth putting that effort into? What will the family pay? Particularly, again, this idea, we're talking about the high stakes testing we have here of a levels. A lot of students now are heading into January where the school is going to be setting some really big mock trial exams, which there may not be a level two summit in Wales is canceled, but A Levels Scotland today announced they're not going to have that that end of school exams. So students are really focusing on those. If I now say to them that hey, what about you, she can't go. And they look at those supplemental essays and go, Well, that's a huge amount of work. What's my child's going to UChicago, probably not heights and really tough school. Okay, and well, maybe I'm sitting on an offer from UCL or Lancaster or Sheffield in the UK. That's not a wise return on investment. So at this time of year, the list sometimes get radically smaller.

M

Moira McCullough 29:16

And I have seen over here, a lot of students and families are questioning because of the fact that it's all many of the schools went virtual, right? And I actually have two kids in college and they were absolutely different. One was all in person. One was virtual. And the question is, let's save the money go to a local, either a public university or Community College and save the money for grad school. Is that some of the discussions you're also having stay in the UK for undergraduate and if you want to go to graduate then look at the US for that.

D

David Hawkins 29:50

Yeah, I mean that I think that's been an issue for lots of people particularly. I have a conversation with a student and the parent initially, and and the student is really excited and I'm having to be the You know, come to Jesus meeting for the family of Look, this is a lot of money. And you know, yes, you're smart, but you're not walking to Harvard. And by the way, that's a need based on the Merit Scholarship. You know, if you're paying private school fees in the UK, they're probably paying a lot of money to go to Harvard. So that idea of the year abroad is a big deal. One of the interesting things that we're seeing and you mentioned St. Andrews, they've been doing a lot is what we're seeing is two plus two programs, where a US school is partnered with a school over here, where the students will start here for two years, and then go to the US. So St. Andrews has had it with William and Mary for many, many years. CLS pome wonderful English language University in France has it with Columbia, and with Cal Berkeley. And perhaps the most, the hottest program that I'm seeing over here is Trinity College, Dublin and Columbia are two years, two years in Dublin and 19-20 year olds, and then two years in New York. And there's loads of other similar programs and a Bachelor of Business with Bocconi, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and USC, Creighton in Nebraska was a great series of programs that were out there, but this idea of two years here, at a cheaper cost, those are really proving very popular. But I am saying loads, people from the US wants to come over here. And because it's one application for up to five different schools, it's actually not a lot of work to tag on to what you're doing. Or when we when we work with families from the US. Particularly, they're only doing a UK application, they almost, you know, feeling a little bit embarrassed when they're talking to their friends, their friends are stressed out to high heaven about dealing with college essays. they've written one very formulaic essay, they've applied, they've got their grades, it's going to cost them 35,000 US dollars a year, only for three years. Obviously, mostly for us, it's being here. So for the Trinity one, if you are in the EU, you have to apply to Trinity. And then also via the Columbia School of general studies for the joint program, I don't know where USA would apply. For the seals, po ones, there's a separate application site.

M

Moira McCullough 32:08

So could you actually get accepted to the Trinity in Dublin? But yes,

D

David Hawkins 32:12

you could say yes. You could be accepted to Trinity. And then to the joint program, you're not I don't think it's a Columbia for the for the Sciences Po/Cal Berkeley. You have to do a Sciences Po application and a UC application, and then a separate application. And so

yeah, so it's I mean, it's just these individual partnerships. But it's I think it's the future for these places.

M Moira McCullough 32:35

I think that is going to be something where I know a lot of students I I could just imagine I know my kids, I'm all about international, I told you, we lived over there. And my daughter's disappointed as a junior that she's lost the opportunity, you know, at this stage to spend junior year overseas.

D David Hawkins 32:52

So one of the things we didn't get on probably should have put in there is your FAFSA, you can use it at national universities.

M Moira McCullough 32:59

Okay. So can you spend a minute on that, that's why you can use for international courses.

D David Hawkins 33:04

So it's not for every university. But if you go to the department Education website, I think these things just to Google FAFSA for international universities, there is a long list of universities outside the US which are approved to accept your federal aid. So you can use that to fund your studies in another part of the world. Even though I have US citizens over here who don't know that they can use the FAFSA to study in the UK, it's a really wonderful opportunity to bring down the costs

M Moira McCullough 33:31

To bring down the cost of the 35,000 a year education

D David Hawkins 33:34

In some places. 1000 Belgium - 1000 euros tuition.

M Moira McCullough 33:38

That's it.

D

David Hawkins 33:38

I said you've got a lot of beer money to spend in Belgium.

M

Moira McCullough 33:41

Exactly. Oh, my gosh. Good to know. Thank you so much, David. I appreciate that. I'm sure what the other thing that three year. Yes So David, go back. You said one application for five?

D

David Hawkins 33:54

Well, so I think the best way of looking at comparing it to us which call UCAS. UCAS is a bit like comparing it to the university California system. Okay. The university California application one application for a state system. The UK is one biggest state system. So we have one application portal. There are some schools like discussions we keep mentioning that are on the common app as well. But if you're applying to more than one UK school, you should be using you UCAS and it's one application portal. It is and again cost 26 pounds. That's it.

M

Moira McCullough 34:27

So I need to spend \$2- \$5000 on all the applications I spend spend that on those. Okay, and one other thing when you talked about it to and to plan I love that. So is it undergraduate? Is it two years always starting at like Dublin and then finishing off at Columbia? Or do you get to choose as a student,

D

David Hawkins 34:45

I suppose two years typically is two years starting here, two years over there. But there's all sorts of amazing ways of doing this and from wonderful programs and, and I'm a big fan actually, the American universities abroad I like them before. they've actually been a savior for a number of our students. Just in the COVID situation, there are places like American University of Paris on campus and your own Franklin and Switzerland, where quite often a lot of students there are on study abroad from us school, but also European students can get an American accredited degree without using Europe. But we have a bunch of students who couldn't get to the US this fall. And they've basically done their

study abroad first.

M Moira McCullough 35:21

Okay, so that's how that's how you guys pivoted.

D David Hawkins 35:24

A few students, a lot of places have been called out, or one of the first ones who came out and did it. And they said, a lot of the students look, you're not gonna be able to get here. But can you get to x, y, Zed place near where you are. And so they've got lots of students around the world there. And given the difference in COVID restrictions, some students having a whale of a time in places where they wouldn't be able to in the US.

M Moira McCullough 35:45

I'm sure they are. I'm sure their parents are thrilled. So then, in terms of next semester, any again, are they probably offering the same type? I know a lot of schools, I know my daughter's at Michigan, and then just said, don't even come back freshmen for spring semester. Are you saying that as well?

 36:05

Yeah, I think a lot of us schools have done their absolute best that they can do. There are just some realistic constraints that you can't do. If it's not safe for your embassy to be open, you can't get a visa. And that's just nothing and something other than weather, the stats of this will come out yet. We saw a huge rise in waitlist activity for the class of 2020. Loads more kids being held to wait lists, and the students who got off waitlist with us citizens. Because why would you take on a waitlist you can't get to you was Yeah, if you get on a boat like Greta tunberg, and you get to the US somewhere, you'll be able to get to the college. But if it gets to India, or somewhere in the MCs coast, and there's nothing you do about it. And if you try to offer the synchronous campus experience, so we've had a lot of students who just said, Look, you know, even from here, the West Coast is eight hours, that is not easy. And all your friends are college, they're having a life and we most UK universities are open for some form of ink on campus learning. Even if lectures aren't happening, small groups are still meeting and you're waking up in the middle of the night to log on to zoom to be part of the university, the other side of the planet. That's tough. I think universe has done the best that they can do. But you can't replicate that experience. So I think for the class of 2020. That's been a tough experience. We have a number of

students who just decided the Yamaha us dream was great. But I wants to get started here.

M

Moira McCullough 37:30

And what what did a number on St. Andrews did, they actually did a lot of your you said they had on campus programming a hybrid scenario. So no luck, no large lectures, smaller classes and small pods stay. Yeah,

D

David Hawkins 37:46

that's the idea. So we're using the term bubbles over here, you are put into kind of a bubble, whatever it is. So my three daughters go to school here. And they are in class bubbles. So that that is their little group. And if there's a case linked to that bubble, and that bubble has to isolate for a period of time until they will test it and can go back in again. And so the universities have been doing that in whatever ways they can do. It's different for different universities, you know, a very urban campus with high rise dorms is in a very different situation from a completely rural campus where people are spread out, you know, you can hire tents and do classes intense, those bigger lectures, I think there's something I think colleges are doing anyway, there's been a drift to having more virtual experience these kind of things, you can't go to the lecture that is recorded for you, the notes are typed up, but that's just the way things have been going. So those things have stopped. But actually, the idea of having still students in some form working together is still going and actually and some of us are just because the nature of it, if it being a system of private education dominates at the college level, unlike most of the places, we've had groups of UK universities who've chartered flights to bring in international students from other parts of the world and saying that will test you all you have to quarantine will test your temperature when you get on the flight or fly you to university will quarantine you there are there are students from all around the world you've still been able to get here for for university. It's not been a normal experience. But I think it's been a very positive experience compared to what the options might be which were either no college or and you know, the death knell for teenagers. Another year at home with mom and dad.

M

Moira McCullough 39:20

Yeah, gosh, that's such as that you think I've done really well, or universities that have done really well? You mentioned like the to and to plan? Yeah,

D

David Hawkins 39:29

I think that's that's, I think I suddenly went to see more and more of I think I don't have the sort of singularity names. I think everyone's got difficulties and challenges. What I do think it's something that they sort of came to when I was doing a web webinars the start of this, we always use this term. That's a good skill. It's a good college. Yeah. And we kind of know what it means without really being able to define it. Good by whose reckoning is the kind of complicated question. I'd like to think that we could all now look around within our community with within where we got friends and Family, which have been the morally good colleges, yes. Who's looked after the students, the more one who's looked after their catering staff, the domestic staff that their faculty who hasn't just told their adjuncts to go away? who's worked hard to look after the students who couldn't get home? His borders were closed? And I don't think we have the answer to that question yet. But I think the next couple of years, we will start to have this kind of stuff. And we'll be looking in here, we'll be asking some serious questions, some colleges that probably could have done more, and those places that actually aren't on the radar right now, but really looked after everybody, and you'd hope in sort of the Celestial wheel of karma, but those places get rewarded.

M

Moira McCullough 40:39

Yeah, well, I I love that. Because I actually, I said, I have a senior right now. And my questions to him on college fit, were very different than my other two. I said, look around and see how they're communicating on on social media, how they handled this. Are they hybrid? Are they in person? Are they only virtual? Is that the environment you want to be in? And

D

David Hawkins 41:02

Good by whose reckoning is kind of complicated question. I'd like to think that we could all now look around that within our community with within where we've got friends and family, which have been the morally good colleges, yes. Who's looked after the students but more one who's looked after their catering staff, the domestic staff that their faculty who hasn't just told their adjuncts to go away? who's worked hard to look after the students who who couldn't get home? His borders were closed? And I don't think we have the answer to that question yet. But I think the next couple of years, we will start to have this kind of stuff. And we'll be looking and we will be asking some serious questions from colleges that probably could have done more. And those places that actually aren't on the radar right now, but really looked after everybody, and you'd hope in sort of the Celestial wheel of karma, that those places get rewarded.

M**Moira McCullough 41:50**

Yes, well, I love that because I actually, I said, I have a senior right now. And my questions to him on college fit, were very different than my other two. I said, look around and see how they're communicating on on social media, how they handled this. Are they hybrid? Are they in person? Are they only virtual? Is that the environment you want to be in? And like you said, you don't the summer doing it? Well, we're trying to do the best that we can. Some have scaled back and change. But I think those questions I was asking my students right now are my son right now. So David, what do you wish you knew before you attended college?

D**David Hawkins 42:27**

I wish I knew there were places beyond the UK. And when that would have been a lovely experience, to understand. And I Oh, quite often, I mentioned I have three daughters. Oh, yeah, their father runs a company, having kids go to university in other countries, I mean, their exposure to universities is just unbelievable. So that'll be helpful for them. But that idea that it isn't a one size fits all experience, I would have, I'd really love to have known that I might have found something out there, that could have been better. Even if it wasn't a realistic option to know that the choices I made were at least made with the full knowledge of stuff that's out there. So I'd love to have known that, that I would love to have known that actually, this idea of the brand actually fades into insignificance, the more you go, I will not lie and say going to Oxford didn't help me with my career a little bit. But that's very much kind of a British issue. I have nothing to compare it to I might have had a similar career had I had a knock on there. But actually, it's how well you do the job and how well you treat people, which I think is except successful. And so I wish I maybe looked a little bit more deeply at other places out there and much more, what is his educational experience gonna be like, I was very lucky that the place that I aspired to was actually a good fit for me. I loved history. I love color music, I love rugby. I found the place that enabled me to do those kind of things. But it was more by luck than judgment. And if I if someone had talked to me about fit and educated me about fit, I might have looked at some different places. Maybe that was my first choice. But there's my second, third or fourth choice. Because there are things that I wish I knew which I don't. And being a slightly middle aged man with three small children, I'm probably not going to be able to go back and read the works of Tolstoy or Shakespeare all learn how to do bookkeeping, which I might have done, how to add a slightly broader educational experience.

M**Moira McCullough 44:18**

Well, you don't know.

D

David Hawkins 44:21

There's retirements, I'm looking forward to that. Exactly. The next generation students going through it, they are going to look at things very differently. character will count looking at not knowing not not having to have the bumper sticker, as we say, or the sweatshirt. There's gonna be more into that name. And they're going to be their eyes are going to be open to look at other opportunities. If we are all about food at college, as well. So if you had a location at any of your UK schools that you said you absolutely if you go to St. Andrews, you have to go here, or Imperial. are in Are there any food locations that jumped out at you? I think yes, that's a great. A question that I was not asked before but immediately some options come to mind, I'll go back, I go back to my alma mater, I go back to, to Oxford, not my college, which is a whole different thing we could talk about. But I'm one of the famous dudes in Oxford is called St. Charles a very wide streets, lots of difference between it. And on either side of the road of St. Charles is you have two really famous pubs. One, which is called the lemon flag, and which is actually owned by St. John's College, so so maybe go and have some food at the lounge, because you're actually paying to subsidize students. So John's is a very wealthy college. But the idea that I am doing a good deed, by maybe eating at a flag and then cross the road safely if you made me have a couple of pints of English Ale, and go to the eagle and child, which is where, where CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien and their academic friends would meet for a drink of an evening and talk about their stories. And there's just something about the history of that of seeing it sitting in a pub. Where were these people, friends who then change literary canon? Yeah, I'm a fan of both particularly CS lewis's work. So that's, that's kind of something you have to do. That's a great question. I can talk about lots of us colleges where I've had one.

M

Moira McCullough 46:12

So give me a give us a US college that that you think if ever I'm in that area, I need to stop by that place.

D

David Hawkins 46:20

So if my friends Tim, Tim Neil in the background are going to listen to this, they will they will be thinking as I plug it every time but I have fallen in love with Sewanee, the University of the South. You must go my people were listening to us for 15 minutes or so. And Michael a sense of my personality. It's in the rural mountains of Tennessee. It's beautiful. And yet it looks like an auction in Cambridge college because a lot of the original foundation came from the links that Episcopalian church how to have a choir that to be in the Honors College is you have a gown You are a scholar, the President is called the Vice Chancellor.

My friends I mentioned him the other works in their admissions office sent me a link in the day to their service of mine lessons and carols. So if somebody who's Oxford educated that who was British as they come, but earns a living of helping kids go to the US there was a little bit of England setting in the mountains of Tennessee. And every time I say I try to get a good discount for my three daughters. Because if there was early decision for 10 year olds, I might have them sign up,

M

Moira McCullough 47:20

You might have them already. I love that. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. It's been really informative. And I know it's gonna help everyone out there who is either looking to study abroad or looking at studying in the US.

D

David Hawkins 47:33

Great pleasure. And thank you for the work that you guys do at College Scoops keeps it's increasingly been very helpful for my students, as they say, having to learn what they don't know that they don't know. So I appreciate the work that you guys do.

M

Moira McCullough 47:45

Thank you to David for joining us today to discuss how students can better prepare to apply to schools in the UK and Europe and what those schools are looking for specifically, the structure of universities are very different in terms of applications, programs and terminology depending on the culture. Schools in Europe and the UK offer undergraduate degrees in three years not for like the US. Typically the cost of a bachelor's degree in Europe is far less than the US as well. Did you know FASFA can be applied to certain international universities? To learn more about David Hawkins and The University Guys, you can go visit their website at TheUniversityGuys.com or follow them on Instagram and Twitter. You can find all of our show notes and links to the helpful resources mentioned throughout our conversation on our website at Collegescoops.com/podcasts. Please take a couple of minutes to rate review and subscribe to College Scoops. Thank you for listening to our College Scoops podcast. Our entire college scripts team strives to make the college journey a little bit easier, less stressful, fun and tasty by sharing all the insights groups 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.