

Episode 99-What We Wish We Knew Before We Attended College

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SPEAKERS

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Moira McCullough 00:00

What do I wish I knew before I tend to college? I wish I took advantage of all the resources available to me Day 1. Whether it was getting involved in clubs and activities, professional organizations, coffee chats with professors, introducing myself to members at the Career Center, or the alumni network. Building a network takes time, and it can be fun. So start early! 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, informative 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. As we approach our 100th podcast. The College Scoops team reflected on all the incredible advice and insights we have gathered in interviews with experts in the college or career arena. Today we are going to take a look back at some of their answers to one of our favorite questions. What do you wish you knew before attending college? In hindsight, we all could list a couple of things we wish we knew before attending college. Or to think of it another way. If we could go back in time and change one thing, what would you do differently? If you had the chance to go back to college? What do I wish I knew before I attend to college? I wish I took advantage of all the resources available to me day one. Whether it was getting involved in clubs and activities, professional organizations, coffee chats with professors, introducing myself to members at the Career Center, or the alumni network. Building a network takes time, and it can be fun to start early. For me my senior year in college was packed with things I wish I had done as a freshman or sophomore. I was actively involved in the student newspaper, I had a part time job I loved. I finally had the confidence to connect with my professors who I realized really like helping students. And since I knew graduation was around the corner, I

started to take advantage of each and every moment soaking in the last days of college before I entered the real world. The ability to attend college is truly a privilege. Not everyone in the world has the opportunity. And four years flies by really fast before you know it you are working and living in the real world. So stay tuned to hear from our guests what they had to say when we asked them this question. In this first section, we focused on advice from our guests about how to go into college with the right mindset before you even step foot on campus. And maybe even before you have applied, these are just some helpful tips you should keep in mind. What do you wish you knew before you attended college?

C

Craig Heller 03:35

I think it's important to know yourself to know what you like who you are, what are your values? What if you have some sort of a guiding principle in life? Or you're starting to develop one? I think that's really important. I am not an advocate of knowing everything before you go to college. The question Do you want to major in what do you want to do? For some students is absurd. They don't know. There's nothing wrong with that. And unfortunately, there is a certain stigma put on it. Johnny wants to be a doctor and he wants to go to law school. What's wrong with me? But I personally don't buy into that. It's it's fine to not know. So for me, that's what I wish I knew. I wish I knew more about myself. I think that would have changed everything. For me.

L

Liane Crane 04:27

That's a kind of wish I had thought outside that four to five hour area kind of now knowing my personality. I think I applied to three colleges within like 50 miles. And I did end up transferring but I just think there's so much more out there. I can see from my own kids kind of going outside that area, their growth and maturity from just different areas, you know, Milwaukee's not much different from Rochester but then it's a lot different from Rochester and I can see my daughter's growth from from that environment and I I don't, I don't know why. But I just just like, I'm just going down the street. You know, so I kind of wish I expanded a bit.

C

Carolyn Caplan 05:07

I put no thought into applying to college, I went to high school, we're not very many people went to college, my mom filled out my application for me. And I went to University of Texas. And at that time, you only had to have a certain LSAT score to get in. I think I visited two colleges and came home and said, No, I'm not going to those. And she was like, Okay, well, this guy, it was just wasn't a big deal. Nobody was talking about college in my high school, most people didn't go to college. So I mean, I wish that I had known about a gap year, I wish I had known that it would be okay to take time off. And I think that my experience between when I went to college, and when I got my masters was so different 10 years later, because I was so much more mature and able to pay attention and learn in class, I was just not very mature. When I went to college, I came from a tiny little town and I had a lot to learn, I probably should have taken a couple of years to learn.

E

Eleanora Ferrante 06:03

And it's okay to not know what I want to study. And it's okay to change my mind. And it's my journey. So just because everybody else has a certain expectation for me, that doesn't have to be what I do.

M**Moira McCullough 06:19**

Oh, for all those students out there that are going undecided and nervous about that, that is the best piece of advice. The hard part was finding a place to call home. But now you have at the sweatshirt, your roommate and orientation is over. Your college experience has started in whether it is the first or second semester of freshman year, or you are in your sophomore, junior or even senior year. Here are some helpful tips from our guests about making the most of your time at college. Everyone says four years flies by fast but seriously, it does. However, no matter what stage you are in, during your college journey, take note of the following tips from our guests about friendships, available resources to take advantage of time management skills, signing up for classes outside of your major or minor and advocating for yourself.

K**Kate Sonnenberg 07:10**

Well, I wish I had known how important your classmates are. And I think so often, we choose a college, probably more college and graduate school program. But we choose a college because of its reputation, or its programs, or its location. And those are all things that are valuable to consider. But you really have to think about who you're going to meet, when you're there, who you're going to sit with at dinner, and who you're going to stay in contact with down the road. Because you're not going to remember every class you took, and you're not even going to remember every professor you had. And you're certainly not going to remember some of the things that kids think are important, like whether there is a nice gym. I mean, that's a nice thing to have. But I would never recommend that you don't go to a school that you feel connected to because the facilities aren't as great as someplace else. Because at the end of the day, when you've finished college, if you really care about a nice gym, you can join a beautiful fancy gym. But your friends, those are people you can't, you can't undo that. And you can never recreate that.

S**Sydney Montgomery 08:37**

So there, there are many things. What did I wish I knew, I wish that I knew that it was okay to say No. And I'm like, that's really so something that I'm working on. Now in my life. It's very difficult. I'm not great at it. So. But there are so many things that I think that I did as a freshman that didn't really go in alignment with my values. Because I felt like I couldn't say No.

P**Patrick Meade 09:07**

that's a good question. I think everyone who's been to college kind of has a few of those things in their mind. For me, it's that it took me a lot longer than it should have, I think because of the kind of high school experience I had, where I was just like a student at the school and you did your work and then you went home is the colleges are structured with so many resources. And that you they're there for you to take advantage of. They're not there to catch you if you fall. It's something that you're supposed to proactively take advantage of things like the writing center Center and the Career Center and all those places, you know, they're not, it's not remedial, like services for kids who are about to fail. It's the thing that you're paying for. And the same goes for the free theater tickets and the bus rides into the big city and all that you know the speakers that are coming to visit and the chances to have dinner with with you know, magazine editors and all the stuff that you get emails about all day long. It just took me a while to realize that I was the audience for that but I was there and that I should be doing all those things. And then pretty quickly college is over. And no one is offering for free theater tickets.

D

Dale Troy 10:05

I came from a very small high school, and I was a good student and went knowing that I was going to Yale, I was petrified. And because I had always gotten accolades for being good student, you know, that's who I was. So I remember saying to my parents, I'm not going to get A's anymore. So I just want you to know that, like, don't, don't be mad at me. What I wish I'd known is that it's not all about natural ability to continue to do well in school. There's so many other factors like I didn't have to worry about, maybe, you know, I'm not gonna be the smartest person in class, it doesn't matter.

A

Adam Shlomi 10:39

I recently had a trip to Alaska with one of my college friends. And we were sort of thinking about this question. I think the biggest thing is, I wish I knew how to manage my calendar in my inbox more because I know my first year was really overwhelming to wake up with 25 emails. And this was coming from a high school student who never really had an inbox it checked. I wish I had learned a little bit sooner and a little bit faster, how to be productive and organized myself, because I really had to learn on the fly when I got to college.

A

Andrea Schiralli 11:04

Math and science are like way harder than they are in high school, one actually failed like calculus in college, and I almost failed stats, it was really way too hard for me. But in high school, everything was easy. I think it depends on where you're going. Like the level of the classes can be different. I would say there's also stuff you never know what literally, most of my friends changed majored, like one from engineering to psychology, and then one from animal science to computer science. Like she was really, really bad at failing out of Animal Science. But then she, she's like really good at computer science. And like, did her PhD at Chicago. And now she's like, wrote a book about it. But I'm like, people might get discouraged when they're not good at something. But just try other things. And you'll eventually find what you like, I feel like high school is way too young to know what you want to do, or even what you want to major in. Unless you're one of those kids is like hardcore, like I want to be a doctor, I want to be a lawyer. If you're not one of those, I think just explore or engineer, just take a bunch of different classes, I always took Spanish in school, I never knew I liked French. And then I took one French class and I'm like, oh my god, prettiest language ever.

M

Marion Taylor 12:07

I wish that I had not been so afraid to step outside my comfort zone. When I got to college, and really explore courses, like economics, terrified, like environmental science, I never stepped foot in that science building. Because I didn't think I was good at them or I had no interest. So I stayed very close to all the humanities, the languages, the Englishes, the histories, because those felt safe to me. And I really regret that because I don't think my liberal arts education was as broad as it could be. And I think I would have had a better understanding of a lot of the major issues that are going on today. So I myself should have stepped outside of my comfort zone, and kind of broaden my horizons a little bit of college. So that's one regret I have, oh,

D

Deena Maerowitz 12:54

I think about this all the time. And I think part of the reason why I do this work is that period of my life was really so important to me, but I have some regrets. What I really wish that I'd done was to worry less about my grades in college, to worry less about how smart other people thought I was, and to really, really explore coursework and things that I didn't know about and areas of learning topics that I didn't explore as much. And I really wish that I'd let myself have that opportunity. I went to Mount Holyoke College, which was part of a five college consortium and I had the opportunity to take classes at all the other colleges and I did take classes at Hampshire and UMass and Smith. But I was always intimidated about taking classes at Amherst College. And I wish now that I hadn't been intimidated about that. So I wish that I'd let myself explore and take more risks.

S

Stephen Friedman 13:49

I wish I knew economics and business. I am so regretful about lacking in finance. And the nuts and bolts of the business revenue versus cost amortization of programming. I wish I knew could speak that language. I feel like my language I speak is more research than finance. And sometimes that gets a little in the weeds. I wish I knew the business aspect better.

H

Harlan Cohen 14:20

Yeah, I just wish that I knew that discomfort is just it's part of that it's part of that package. There's no part of the website that says you know, welcome to uncomfortable you. It's like that it's just part of it. And if you're uncomfortable and you feel it, it means you care. It means it's it's good. There's no shame in feeling discomfort, and focus less on being wanted and more on what you want, and trust that good things will happen.

J

Jed Applerouth 14:54

That for me, realizing in hindsight, you know the college was really about this transition period between the educated being adult, learning how to navigate these situations how to manage things, friendships and leases and travels, applying for jobs. That was really the purpose, in many ways was a buffer between, you know, before I had financial responsibilities economically.

M

Mikala Bush 15:17

Honestly, I think one of the biggest things that I wish I knew is that opportunities are all around you, you I mean, it really is true. I think that when I was in high school, I sort of had this idea in my mind of sort of just the academic setting and ways in which opportunities would present itself through, you know, research or a shadowing a professor or you know, something like that definitely has probably evolved, right. You know, since I've, I've graduated from college, and maybe students are much more aware of that. But opportunities are around you in the friends that you make. They're around you in, you know, the places that you explore outside of your campus. And I think that's one of the things that I particularly loved about Athens is sort of the the social entrepreneurship that students seem to find around Athens, because you know, that that community sort of thrives normally off of that campus, right, especially if you're on a college campus, it's like outside of the city. Unity relies on you know, the business of that university. So you need to explore, you know, the surrounding community and make sure that you're giving back and investing in that and find opportunities, find a passion that you have, not just for your campus, but for the

wider community that you have, while you're calling this place home. And don't be afraid to take opportunities, you just never know what's going to happen. Just push past your fear, and just treat every opportunity. Like it's, it's going to bring value to your life, because nine times out of 10, it will, and college is a time for you to be free. So relish in it.

M Moira McCullough 16:51

Listen up seniors with graduation around the corner, there's still time to get prepared for the transition from college to career,

J Jason Vallozzi 16:58

I think to be a lot more strategic, and I think every year of your college matters to career launch, you need to be building relationships, you need to be building your resume every year. Your resume again, I feel for those employers that we applied as communications grads to they probably had 3040 resumes, we still use the bulletin board going back 20 years ago in a joking way. That's so envious of college clients now, because if they utilize LinkedIn, they have a whole different access to people where I had manila envelopes, which wasn't too exciting.

J Jenna Zipf 17:32

So I'll answer this in two ways. One, we're just talking about it. So LinkedIn, LinkedIn started in 2004. That was my freshman year of college. At the time, I think they had just hit a million users when I started college. So I didn't even know about LinkedIn, it wasn't on my radar, it was so brand new. And then by the time I graduated in 2008, I think there were already like 10 million users what I said earlier, there's 740 million users now. So it's a huge thing. So I wish I would have known about LinkedIn a little bit earlier, I wish I would have gotten on LinkedIn earlier, I did join right after I graduated. But had I joined while I was still in school, and started making connections with people that I was in class with or with professors. While it was still very relevant. And when there was context around those interactions, I think that would have benefited me a lot as well. So you guys do have that advantage. If you're a student listening to this, LinkedIn is very much a thing now. And I definitely recommend you get on that and you start taking advantage of it. The second thing for me, though, is really the importance of establishing good habits and routine. So I was kind of forced into it just by being a student athlete in college, you don't really have a choice, you have to be very, you know, efficient with your time and you have to go to the workout when they say that you have to go to the workout and all those things. But then what happens when I graduated is I was like, Oh, I don't have to do something like I don't have to work out when someone tells me to workout like, I can kind of step away from that. And you start to lose some of those good habits if you haven't established them for yourself. And so I think the importance of establishing them, you know, for me, it led to working really long hours, maybe skipping workouts, just things that weren't as healthy in terms of self care, and led to that burnout probably, or helped contribute to that burnout that I had in my career because I didn't set those boundaries for myself. So I think as a student, if you can really get in the habit of setting, setting good habits, good routine, early, and like take that into your future. You know, once you graduate as well, it's just gonna help you so so much because it gets harder. It's like the the more you get in your bad habits, the harder it is to break them,

T Tara Falcon 19:33

make sure that you are very clear on your worth, and that you're sticking up for it. So you know, that can come in a lot of different ways that can come from having conversations with your colleagues at work, kind of open frank conversations about compensation. Make sure that you are getting paid as much, if not more, depending on the work that you're doing. Then your male counterparts you know, have those frank conversations I remember having those conversations with You know, other analysts that I was working with when I first started out, just to make sure that, hey, you know, this, everything's equal here, you know, we have equity and compensation, I think that's really important. And then also just don't ever think that there's a ceiling. And I struggle with this sometimes, too, especially as I'm about to go out and raise capital as a female founder, where you know, 2% of venture capital dollars go to female founded companies, statistically, I'm like, boo, if you know, some days, it feels like the cards are stacked against me. But I have this little thing on my desk that says, why not you? And reminds myself, well, why not? You, you know, maybe you're, maybe you're the one that pushes that 2% up to 3%, or, you know, or, or whatever, you're part of the 2% or you expand that. And so, you know, just never question your worth, always know what your value is, make sure that you stand up for that, you know, always be an active participant in those financial conversations, I think is incredibly important.

M

Moira McCullough 20:52

And when you talk about standing up for yourself, I have to just make this plug, I also tell my kids this all the time, I was in sales for a company. And when I went off on my honeymoon, my client who was a large telecommunications client signed the deal before I left, because they knew that the compensation may get distributed in different ways that were not to my benefit as the lead person on that sale. I came back and my manager basically said, great compensation, Here's your check. And it was a 7030 split in his favor. I remember seeing that and I called up my mother, I said, What do I do? She said, Go ask him why I sat down and had a conference, why did you get that 70% By the end of that conversation, it had reversed, advocate for yourself, know your worth. And don't be afraid to push back.

T

Tara Falcon 21:42

I think the biggest thing that I wish my I wish I could go back in time and tell my younger self is that your self worth and your social worth are not and should not be defined by your net worth, regardless of where you're starting, especially if you're you know, financially starting off a little lower than you'd like to be. Don't let that define you. Ultimately, your financial story, your money story is yours to write. And even if you didn't have you weren't the author of let's say the first 18 years of your money story. As soon as you become an adult and financially independent. Now the pen is in your hand. And it is your job and duty to write that story in the way that you want it to be written. And and I really wish that I had had that perspective when I first stepped foot on campus because I let I basically let the size of my bank account, which was very small, at the time, determine the size of my social capital, I shied away from certain interactions or going to certain parties or standing up for myself in certain ways. Because, you know, I felt less than because financially I was, you know, numbers wise I was and I let that burden me for far too long. And I would not want anyone else to do that.

M

Moira McCullough 22:54

Yes, the transition from high school to college was challenging. But the transition from college to career also presents another host of challenges that students have an opportunity to prep for before graduation. 1 - whether you have a job or not update your resume and LinkedIn profile. It's a no brainer. You have so many resources on hand, Career Center professors, alumni and peers who can help you. Take advantage

of this network before your last day on campus. 2 - gather letters of recommendations from professors, your internships, employers, coaches, leaders of academic clubs, and any other leader or mentor who can shed some light on your abilities, skills and motivation as a potential higher. 3 - apply to professional associations and clubs while you're still in college, as they may have reduced rates and admission requirements for students, if you can save a little money, why not? 4 - get financially literate, establish a budget and stick to it. 5- brush up on technology or industry platforms that are relevant to the industry you're working in or applying to. Oh, and by the way, pay your parking ticket. Thank you to the entire College Scoops team for creating really awesome content in all different mediums to help high school, college and graduate students and their parents. Whether you're applying to attending or graduating from college, we are dedicated to delivering impactful, authentic, and timely information to help you at whatever stage of the college journey you are in. Thank you to our awesome guests for taking the time to share their expertise and knowledge with us. Check out our show notes and website for the list of guests we highlighted today on our episode. Special thanks to Zoe, our podcast production editor for her help creating this special segment. 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 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