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Welcome to College Bound, Notre Dame Admissions' new podcast. We're super excited to share with you what's unique about Notre Dame. In the future, we'll have some current students sharing their experiences, and in the meantime, we'll be providing insight into the application process. We want to help you learn about all the academic and extracurriculars at Notre Dame and make sure that you can put forth your best application.

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I'm Maria Finan, one of the admissions counselors in the office. I am actually a Double Domer, which means I not only got my bachelor's degree at Notre Dame, but I loved it so much that I got my master's degree in English as well. With me is my co-host Matt Greene, and I'll let him introduce himself.

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Hi everyone. Thanks Maria. My name is Matt Greene. As Maria just said, I am also in the admissions office, starting my fourth full year, and I am not a Double Domer like Maria, but I am a Notre Dame grad. I graduated in 2016. I studied American Studies. So today, for our first podcast episode, our inaugural episode, we are going to discuss the overall application, and we're going to give you a general overview of our application. And some of the common terms with our application at Notre Dame involve holistic, contextual, and some of the deadlines that we will have.

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Holistic means well-rounded. We're taking a well-rounded look at students in their applications and what they bring forth, in their, when they're applying to Notre Dame. Contextual involves the context of who you are as an applicant. So where you're coming from, your high school, what you put forth in your application, and then of course the deadlines or when you were declined, when you need to submit your application, and those final deadline dates when we will accept the application.

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So for Maria, I want to ask you first, if you could go over and explain what holistic review means.

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Yeah, definitely. So a holistic review is a word you'll probably hear a lot when you're filling out applications, and it's really the idea that we can't look at one piece of your application and decide whether or not a student should be admitted.

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We really do look at everything you submit. So there are kind of three academic pieces and also three non-academic pieces. They're all equally important and that really helps us get a full sense of who you are as a student. On the academic side, we're going to look at things like rigor, so what classes are you taking? Have you taken rigorous courses, kind of based on what your high school offers? We're going to look at your grades and how you've done in those classes and then we will also look at test scores if you choose to submit them.

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This year we are test optional. So if you are not able to submit a test score you do not have to. But if that is something that you feel strengthens your application, we certainly encourage you to include that. On the non-academic side, we have the activities you're involved in outside of the classroom and any kind of

leadership roles you may hold in those, we also have recommendation letters, and then the essay section. We will definitely go a little bit more in-depth in future episodes, but kind of those are the big components that we're looking at when we talk about holistic review.

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And again, we'd look at all of these pieces. We're never just going to pick out one thing and feel like we know who you are. We really want to build a complete picture of you. Matt mentioned context. Matt, could you talk a little bit about kind of how context plays into our holistic review process?

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Yeah, absolutely. The context of a student and their application ties a lot into our holistic review process. Part of the main context we look at is again, as to who the student is, where they're coming from, but then also their high school. That's one of the main context pieces with our application and wording. And we find out your context in what is offered to you from your high school based upon the recommendation letters that you receive from a counselor or teacher at your school as well as, each school will provide to us what's called "the school profile."

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And it's basically your school's resumé, if you will. It gives you stats about test score opportunities, as well as what classes are available, student teacher ratio, all of these things that give us a sense of what is provided to you at your own high school. Another aspect of the contextual review with your high school involves what rigor is available to you with courses. So as Maria mentioned, we are going to be looking at the academic rigor that you have in your classes and on your transcript.

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So we want to be able to see what courses your school offers in regards to what the reader is, and that changes from school to school. So, we are not going to be comparing schools to each other, different states, what they have. We're going to be looking at your own individual work, especially with classes and how that compares to the rigor of the school. Especially this year too, we're seeing some challenging times, and we are very, very aware that we are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and that's going to be part of your context as well as a student. So how that has affected your classes, how that's affected your extracurriculars.

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That also might tie a lot into if you have a long commute to school, or you might have extra family responsibilities, even more so now with the pandemic, you might have had some before. Well we are going to be looking at those pieces of your application and bringing that context to life as well. So even before the pandemic, we're going to be looking at a lot of what you had personally that might affect what you are doing in school or outside of the classroom. But we're definitely going to be taking a look at that context. So kind of the next step is to know when to apply Notre Dame and what our deadlines look like, so could you explain what Notre Dame's Restrictive Early Action deadline is and how that might compare to a school that has an Early Decision deadline?

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Yeah. So our Restrictive Early Action deadline at Notre Dame is our November 1st deadline. Students who apply for that first deadline will find out usually around mid-December, and we give you until May 1 to decide. So Notre Dame's Restrictive Early Action is non-binding, and the difference between an early

decision versus non-binding Restrictive Early Action is that we are not requiring you to come to Notre Dame. The one, kind of, restrictive piece of our early action is that we're asking that you don't apply somewhere else Early Decision.

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We just want to have an opportunity to enroll you. So if you really want to apply Early Decision somewhere else, you can wait until you hear back from that school and apply to us during our Regular Decision. So again, our Restrictive Early Action is non-binding, and the only restriction is that you cannot apply to an early decision school. You can apply to as many other public or private schools as long, again, as it's non-binding. So when you're thinking about when to apply, the really important thing is that you submit your application whenever it's going to be the strongest.

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So if you're someone who had passed/failed grades this spring, and you really want to show us what you can do your senior fall, go ahead and wait to apply until our Regular Decision. Again, whenever your application is the strongest, that is the best time for you to submit. Matt, would you mind talking a little bit more kind of about our regular decision for student to think that that's the best fit for them?

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Yes, absolutely. So for our Regular Decision deadline, that deadline date is January 1st. And if you apply using a renewal decision deadline, you would find out a decision from us around late March. And just like anybody that would apply Restrictive Early Action as well, you would have until May 1st to decide. May 1st is usually the pretty universal deadline across US colleges and universities. With regular decision, we actually see a majority of students that apply to Notre Dame in a given year, a majority of them apply in Regular Decision, and a little bit more than half of the class is admitted during Regular Decision.

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Again, we want to emphasize that there really is no preference for us for when you apply. You can take a little bit more time if you would like to apply during Regular Decision, that is totally fine with us. And for students who are applying and they're looking to apply, and even after you apply and even get accepted to Notre Dame, we still know that visiting campus in some way is very, very important to students and understanding what their decision will be for college.

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So usually in April every year, we at Notre Dame have Admitted Student Days for you to come and see campus with your family. This year, because of the pandemic, we had virtual programming, but we still wanted to bring senses of campus to students, so that's going to be either in-person hopefully in a very normal year, but even if we have to, we had a lot of successful virtual programming.

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Thanks so much, Matt. I know that I'm really excited to share, kind of, more about our experiences going to Notre Dame and more about the experiences of our current students, kind of, going forward. We'll be spending the next couple of episodes telling you a little bit more about, kind of, how we read applications. So we will be going more in-depth and giving you some, kind of, best advice we have to offer. We'll also talk about financial aid, merit scholarships, and of course what life is like as a student on campus.

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In the meantime, if you'd like to connect with us feel free to send us a message on Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat. You can follow us at @ndadmissions. We also have a Facebook page if that's how you'd like to connect with us. We really look forward to hearing from you, and of course, helping you apply to Notre Dame.