

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

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Welcome back to College Bound Notre Dame Admissions Podcast. Zach and I are super excited to be sharing our final episode of the season with you. I'm Maria Finan, one of the senior assistant directors in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. I am also a proud Double Domer, so not only received my bachelor's degree at Notre Dame, but my master's degree as well. And I'll pass this off to Zach to introduce himself and also our last topic for this week.

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Hey, everyone, it's Zach Klonsinski, an assistant director here in our Office of Undergraduate Admissions and a 2017 Notre Dame graduate. Thanks all for joining us on this great season. And this last episode, we thought we'd kind of do something a little fun, maybe a little clickbait. We acknowledge that. But we also want to ask this question of, you know, should you apply to Notre Dame? And we want to give you some food for thought as you're thinking about whether or not you should be applying to the University of Notre Dame. So, Maria. What's something that is a good way to start thinking down this road?

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Yeah. So I think one of the good questions you can start off by asking yourself is, are you specifically looking for an undergraduate-focused institution? I know that when I was applying to college, I actually wasn't thinking about this at all. But having been on both the undergraduate and graduate side at Notre Dame, I can tell you that it's really nice going to a university that's focused on the undergraduate experience. So we have more than double the number of undergrads that we do grad students. And what that practically means is that everything that exists on campus is basically for you, the traditions, the research funding, the amazing community life with 32 residence halls and 80% of students living on campus.

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I wasn't thinking about how, you know, what a university's focus was might impact my student experience, but it's absolutely something that I think you should consider as you're applying for undergrad. Is the institution that you're looking at focused on the undergrad experience, or is it actually more geared towards grad students?

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Yeah, absolutely. And one of the other things I love to think about is we're starting to introduce Notre Dame and really get students thinking about Notre Dame is are you someone who wants to be challenged academically and intellectually, especially in a collaborative, community-focused environment? You know, academically and intellectually, they sound very similar, but they're very different, actually. You're thinking of yourself. Are you someone who wants to be challenged academically? Do you want to improve your writing? Do you want to improve some of your mathematical or analytical skills? Do you want to be challenged in this kind of environment where you're going to be with people who are also being challenged but also trying to grow along with you and helping you in that process? And then at the same time, you also want to be challenged intellectually at Notre Dame.

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We have people of all faiths, backgrounds, very diverse perspectives, international campus as well. And so you're also going to have some of the beliefs about, you know, your beliefs about the world challenged here as well, and really trying to think about, you know, these things that I hold that are really important to me. They're different from a lot of people. And why is that? Is that a good thing? How do I find myself really existing in this world of being challenged academically and intellectually?

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So I think another thing to ask yourself as you're kind of applying to different colleges is are you interested in being part of a really spirited environment that has a lot of traditions? As I said in the last episode, you don't necessarily need to like sports, but I think a good thing to ask yourself is, you know, what kind of student experience are you looking for? Not every university is a division one school, but at Notre Dame we do have Division one athletics and that means there are a lot of athletic events happening on campus, there are a lot of traditions.

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Not all of those are necessarily sports related. Some of them are. I'm personally a big fan of the student section push-ups, so every time Notre Dame scores a touchdown, the students will put up a fellow student for the number of points on the board, which is a lot of fun. Can get a little tiring if we're really having a great game, but it's a sacrifice we're all willing to make. But there are also a lot of other fun traditions throughout the year. The first snowball fight is probably my favorite one.

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The fact that seniors wait until after they've graduated to walk up the front steps of main building is another great one. So really kind of think about what campus environment you're looking for. Some schools are a little bit more academic, but Notre Dame, I think, is a place that has obviously that academic focus, but also just so much history, spirit and tradition as well.

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Yeah. Something else to consider is, yes, we have a very international campus, as I mentioned before, but you can also go and get that international education while you're here at Notre Dame. So if you're someone who's interested in learning about other cultures, learning other languages, exploring outside of our campus here in South Bend, Notre Dame is also a wonderful place for you. About 75% of our undergraduate student body will study abroad at some point during their time on campus, and that is in the top ten nationally. So it is a commitment to our students that we make to get them these opportunities to get a global education.

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And it's really a part of the culture of our school. Most of the time it'll happen. And, you know, during the academic year, either for a semester or academic year program. Typically, during your junior year. But certainly, you can go abroad as soon as your first year on campus. You can work with great institutes on campus, like the Nanovich Institute for European Studies or the Liu Institute for East Asian, Asian Culture and Language. And then you also have a great environment with CUSE, our Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement, and the Flatley Center, also on campus.

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And they're willing to help you figure out your passions and find you resources to help you make the most of your team's opportunities to have that global experience and really become that true global citizen while you're here at Notre Dame.

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I think another thing to think about is kind of what sort of extracurricular experiences or connections do you want to make? So Zach mentioned CUSE, which is a great hub for undergraduate research. I think some students come in very much knowing they want to do research, right? Maybe you're a science major who wants to get involved in working in a lab. As an English major, I was not necessarily thinking about

research. And then I discovered that Notre Dame had funding, that I could come up with an excuse to go to London to do research on my thesis, which I wrote on Harry Potter.

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So if you're ever wondering, can you literally research anything in college? The answer is yes. As long as you have a good research question can put together a strong proposal and have faculty support, but also internships as well. So I think students are more mindful of the fact that you need to get experience before you graduate. And Notre Dame does an incredible job helping students find those opportunities. So whether you're somebody who knows you want to go work for a big consulting firm after you graduate because you're a finance major or you're somebody who wants to go work in the entertainment industry or you're an engineer, so many opportunities for you to get involved in research or internships.

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Over 85%. It's almost 90% of our students wind up doing undergraduate research or having an internship or doing both. I actually did both. So, so many opportunities that you can get involved in. And again, I think that ties back to kind of being an undergraduate-focused institution is there's a lot of support and resources to make that happen.

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Absolutely. Something else that I think you want to think about when coming to Notre Dame is the fact that we are a Catholic institution. We are a faith-based University, and so are you, someone who's excited to engage in philosophical conversations about faith? As we mentioned last episode. You never need to go to Mass here at Notre Dame. However, you will, during your four years, be required to take two theology courses as part of our core curriculum. They will be what will be like an introduction to Catholicism, and one will be more of a kind of higher level into kind of the faith world.

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But again, very academic in nature. We're not going to be preaching to you or trying to, you know, convert to Catholicism or anything like that. But just understanding how the Catholic world works and giving you that ability to engage in dialogue with the Catholic faith. Your best conversations are not going to happen in those classes, though, will be excellent ones for sure. But your best conversations about faith and life, in general, are going to be happening at 2 a.m. in your dorm with your friends. And really, this is a place that challenges students to ask the big questions.

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And if you're someone who wants to come here and study and think about, does God exist? What kind of human person do I want to be? All of that is something that is really exciting here at Notre Dame and part of our culture as well.

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Yeah. So I think we also ask you to think about, you know, are you ready? Do you want to educate your mind and your heart? So it's not just about the learning that happens in the classroom, as Zach says, it's really about that full person development. So I think that's something that is really unique to Notre Dame. You know, some colleges you can just go to and you can study your major and you can spend all your time kind of doing that. But at Notre Dame, we ask you to think a bit more broadly. So we really want that whole person development and hope that what you're learning in the classroom will inform kind of what you do outside of the classroom as well.

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Absolutely. And to close it out kind of with this last big question, tie it kind of to the mission of the University. Are you passionate about serving others and being a force for good in the world? That ties back to our founder, Father Edward Sorin, when he first arrived on campus. In one week, he already laid down Notre Dame's mission to be a force for good. And that's something that has guided us for almost 180 years now. This means that not only are you going to be going out into the world to find success for yourself, but how are you going to also use your abilities and your talents to serve others and make the world a better place? That is the ethos and the spirit of the University of Notre Dame.

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You can find some examples in our What Would You Fight For video series? I think we've mentioned that a couple of times, but really this is a place where we want you to come and figure out how can you, with your talents, your passions, make your individual contribution to make the world a better place and be a part of Notre Dame's movement to be a force for good.

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Awesome. I can't think of kind of a better note to end the season on the episode on. So if you're thinking, you know, should I apply to Notre Dame? Hopefully, your answers to some of these questions lead you to think that, yes, this is absolutely a place that I can see myself. This is something I'm excited about. So to all of our seniors, good luck as you go through the application process. Please know that the admissions team is here to support you. So if you have any questions, definitely feel free to email admissions@nd.edu, and of course lots of ways to interact with us.

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So feel free to check us out on social media [@NDAdmissions](#), but thank you for joining us for another season of College Bound. Zach and I are so appreciative and hope that this has helped you as you are working on your applications and considering applying to Notre Dame.