

Introduction:

This is life invented. Invent the life you want to lead. Invent the life you want to lead. Be creative, be challenged, be the solution. Go Broncos.

Narrator:

Welcome to the life invented podcast presented by Santa Clara University. From campus life to what it means to learn in the Silicon Valley, we explore how to be a Global Citizen in an era of change. Join us as we explore the intersection of technology, experiential learning, and social justice. We're asking the big questions, how do we use these tools to create a future that we're proud of, and how do we invent the life we want to lead. This is: Life Invented.

j:

At the end of a typical Santa Clara University student's first year, 95% come back for more. And life as a Bronco means a lot of things including where you live who you hang out with, where you study, and party. As you start to envision what your life might look like at SCU, all sorts of questions begin to swirl.

Will I like my professors? Who will I hang out with? What will I do on Saturday night? Good thing is -- we got answers! It's a beautiful day in Santa Clara and on this episode, we're chatting it up with three undergrads who found their answers to these questions. Coming up, you'll hear how these California kids navigated through the decision making process of *dozens* of college applications, discovered their path, and are working to achieve their limitless potential as we speak. Come along and live vicariously through the experiences of these Santa Clara Broncos.

Alright lady and gents, we'd love you to share your details, you know introduce yourself, or as we say around here, please dish yo deets!

Nathan Metzger:

I am Nathan from the class of 2017, a [mechanical engineering](#) major. I've grown up my whole life in San Jose. I'm really passionate about music, and then also about social justice. So, something that has been really cool for me at Santa Clara has been seeing those two interrelate. I actually have a concert this afternoon that's really tying those two together. Those are both really big passions of mine and really just seeing how the two can impact each other is a really cool thing.

j:

Cool, Ms. Uma, please dish yo deets!

Uma Palaniappan:

My name is Uma, I am the class of 2017 as well. I'm a [psychology](#) and [public health](#) double major with a biology minor on the pre-health track. I am a millennial, so my family ethnicity I would say is from India. My parents immigrated in the early 80's. My passions? I'm really interested in science and medicine and I think my public health major has really allowed me to

explore this idea of what global health is and I think I'm really passionate about the intersection of how you can use technology to kind of help mitigate any of those issues or the power of technology to help starting to solve all of these issues.

j:

Nice, alright so Alonzo, please dish yo deets!

Alonzo Bilips:

I'm Alonzo, I'm from Los Angeles, California, I'm a millennial, and I made my way up to Santa Clara somehow some way. I'm a [bioengineering](#) major currently, I don't know if that will change, hopefully not, but you know this is where we are right now. My passions, hmm. I think just like Uma, I really want to bring healthcare to underrepresented communities just because I feel like a lot of people in my family have been in situations where they haven't been able to get the access that they do need, and I think that that is just a social injustice in itself -- to be in a system where you are set up already to fail and then you are not able to get the resources that you need in order to get out of that failing situation.

j:

Yeah man, that's a huge area of need especially with all the talk about healthcare and the access to healthcare going on in the country right now. Alonzo, I'm curious, what kind of high school student were you?

Alonzo Bilips:

Let's see, I was always really happy, just happy to be able to get an education, be around like-minded people who wanted to get an education and wanted to push me past my limits. I was blessed to be able to have teachers in an institution that wanted me to be better and always pushed us, even if we were like "oh, we've kind of hit the ceiling" they were like "no, you gotta keep going further" and I think that was a blessing. I was almost like a sponge in high school, just always ready to soak everything up. I'd probably say a leader; I was class-president every year in high school.

j:

I think you were probably a leader... I think your resume states you were indeed a leader.

Alonzo Bilips:

So yeah, a leader, but definitely someone who just wanted to help others, and someone who wasn't scared to admit that he was wrong or that he wasn't the best at something but was always on that path of growth.

Uma Palaniappan:

Yeah, so actually my senior superlative, they were voted on by the entire class, was chatterbox. So, I definitely was a chatterbox, I would also say I was a teacher's pet, but that was just purely because I really enjoyed a lot of the teachers I had in high school, and really connected with

them, and I think that you know the one thing that my high school did teach me that I think has been really important during my time here at Santa Clara is knowing how to fail and come to terms with failure, not feel like that failure was defining in who I was in that moment.

j:

Alright Nathan, how about you?

Nathan Metzger:

I didn't get an official high school superlative, but I would say probably: most likely to be involved in one too many things. I just really didn't know how to limit myself and decide what to actually get involved in. I tried to be the straight-A student, didn't always succeed. Tried to be involved in music on campus and sports. Got involved in a musical, lead a church retreat, stuff like that, and could never really find time to just like be a person, I think. Kind of involved, and then not super settled, I think would be a good way to put it.

j:

Alright, and Nathan, what about you, how many college applications did you fill out and send?

Nathan Metzger:

Yeah, so I applied to 12 colleges, and I applied to a couple of schools that have the 5%-8% acceptance rates, and I kind of knew I wasn't going to get in. When it came down to it, there were only two schools that I was seriously considering; that was Santa Clara and then another school that I was looking at that was more engineering-based, and a big part of that decision making process was deciding whether or not I wanted to come out of college being a really good engineer or a really good, well-rounded person, and I got the feeling from the other school I was looking at that I would come out of there being a really strong technical person. I would know how to engineer things, I would be design-minded, but when it came to things like philosophy and ethics and social justice, and music as well, I wouldn't really have been able to experience those.

j:

Uma tell me a little bit about your decision process, what does that look like?

Uma Palaniappan:

I am the most indecisive person, so no wonder college was so difficult for me just because I was like, you know "I need to apply to as many, see what all my options are" and my parents were just so excited the day I deposited, because they were like "we're done, we don't have to worry about this". But kind of back-tracking a little bit, I did apply to a lot of different schools, and I think the reason why I did that was because wasn't sure what kind of school I wanted to go to. I didn't know if I wanted to go to a large school, a small school, private school, public school, religious, not religious, and so what really came down to me was two schools, again, it was Santa Clara and then a large state school in Boston. You know, if I decided to go to Boston, the first year might have been a bit rocky, not having my family who I consider one of my biggest

support systems, being able to only come home maybe two or three times a year, I knew it was going to be a transition, but I kind of think I had my mind set on Boston just because a lot of my friends were just like East Coast, best coast, like “bye, we’re gonna go explore and then eventually come back” and so I think because of that I always put Santa Clara on the back-burner. But then, I remember I came for an acceptance night at Santa Clara where I got to stay in a residence hall, I got to take a class, and I instantly met a student that was also in the same boat as I, and we were kind of just talking about the different types of schools we were looking at and why we were interested in Santa Clara, and I think that that weekend really helped me resonate that I think a smaller school is probably where I’m going to be more conducive. I liked the idea of going to a private school, I went to public school my whole life, I thought there were more resources allocated. My dad was stoked, he was like, you’re staying in-state, we’re so happy to be close by. My mom was I think the only mom in my entire friend group who was disappointed that I was staying so close to home. She was like, “you really need to get out of California and explore what the world has to offer, Uma”.

j:

Alonzo, how did you navigate your decision process, you know as you got down to your short list of college options?

Alonzo Bilips:

One was in Boston, and it was like a medium sized school, and they recruited me for baseball, and I was like “Oh, I’m gonna love it, I know I’m gonna love it”. We touched down, it’s like 45 degrees with a 10 degree wind-chill on a Sunday morning, and we hop in a cab and the cab driver is like “this is such a beautiful day”, and I was like, that’s the first red flag. So we get to the school and we’re touring the school. The tour-guide was really nice but there was just this lack of welcoming energy that I was missing from that university, and I just couldn’t see myself fitting into the quilt of that university, I just couldn’t find my niche there, so that kind of threw up another red flag, and actually the following weekend my dad and I came up for preview day at Santa Clara. As we walked around, everyone had smiles on their faces, it was sunny that day which made it better, so it was all around just a better experience and I could find myself fitting into the school.

j:

Okay okay, so speaking of touring the campus, I know that there are palm trees and cool architecture, rose gardens and all that good stuff, but in addition to all that, what were the other first impressions that you had when you stepped on this campus?

Nathan Metzger:

I think something that I noticed at Santa Clara that seemed like a small thing at the time was that people didn’t have headphones in their ears when they were walking around, which stuck out to me because at a lot of other universities I had walked around, that was a common thing. I think the reason that stuck out to me was because it seems like a really small thing, but when you stop and think about it, it speaks volumes about the campus community that as you’re

walking from class you're not kind of in your own zone, but that you're really willing to kind of be out there and meet people and talk to people, say hi to people as you pass, and also with the size of the school you know that you're gonna see someone that you know on the way to class so you probably will say hi to them. During my first couple of days here during my first year I noticed that people were really willing to kind of go out of their way to meet people. What struck me was that it was the sophomores too who really wanted to get to know me, because I lived in a residence hall that was first-years and sophomores, but the fact that sophomores who kind of had their established friend groups were still willing to meet the first years and talk to them and just kind of be mentors for them really stood out to me during my first couple days here.

Uma Palaniappan:

What's really great about the community is that it is small enough that you're still-- you're able to get to know people, but it doesn't feel like high school where you know every single person or every single person's business, and I think that that sweet-spot size has really been helpful in terms of classes, getting to know professors, as a senior with two majors, I pretty much know every student in all my classes because I've taken multiple classes with one another, that's kind of one of the few things that has struck me pretty early on.

j:

Uma, Alonzo, Nathan, thanks for sharing your decision story with all of us and the details behind how you chose to become a Santa Clara University Bronco.

Nathan Metzger:

Thank you, go Broncos!

Alonzo

Go Broncos!

j:

Coming up on part 2 of this discussion with these three, we dive into their lives on campus including a bit about their living situations, what they do on the weekends, and they have some special advice for any and all of you going through the process of deciding which college campus you will call home. You don't want to miss all of this and more on the next episode of Life Invented.

Aldo Billingslea:

This is [Aldo Billingslea](#) from Santa Clara University, urging you to invent the life you want to lead.

Narrator:

You've just listened to the Life Invented podcast presented by Santa Clara University, and there's so much more to explore. Visit us at scu.edu/podcasts, and learn more about Santa Clara's commitment to innovative and inspiring opportunities.