

**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:** A few times each year, high school seniors and transfer students everywhere wait anxiously for that one answer from their colleges of choice. Have I been rejected? Wait-listed? Or am I in? Only a few around the globe are lucky enough to experience this anticipation and hopefully elation. It's a beautiful day in Santa Clara, and on this episode of Life Invented, we chat it up with the deciders, and specifically with a few members of the undergraduate admissions team at Santa Clara University who spend their days and nights working to build a diverse community of students that will soon call Santa Clara home. We go inside the admissions laboratory and hear directly from the team about what prospective students may want to consider, their own decision making process of choosing colleges, and the one thing future Santa Clara students might want to prepare for. You don't wanna miss it, let's go!

Alright, we are here with the deciders: Eva, Eddie, and AJ. Eddie, we're gonna start with you. So please, we want you to share your details; you know, introduce yourself, or as we say: dish yo deets.

**Eddie Kelinsky:** My name is [Eddie Kelinsky](#) and I am the Assistant Director of [Undergraduate Admission](#). My deets: I'm from the 626, Pasadena, California. Where I am a third-generation Pasadena-ian, if you will. My passions: I love film and television; I'm very interested in that. I'm very passionate about the environment; I was an environmental studies and political science major here at Santa Clara, so...

**j:** And you just graduated?

**Eddie Kelinsky:** I just graduated in June.

**j:** Awesome. Alright, AJ please, dish yo deets!

**AJ Williams:** [AJ Williams](#), Senior Associate Director & Transfer Coordinator. Generation X, which works out because Malcolm X is one of my guys, that's cool. In terms of where I'm from, I'm from San Jose originally but have literally lived in the four corners of the country. Started off in admissions up in Washington at the University of Puget Sound, which is my alma mater, then came back to Santa Clara and have been here about 10 years. And yeah, passions: anything dealing with race, society, the media, history, social justice, all that kinda stuff. So, very intrigued and attuned as much as I can be with what's going on these days.

j: Excellent, excellent. Alright, it's Eva.

**Eva Blanco Masias:** Hi! [Eva Blanco Masias](#), I am the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions here at Santa Clara University. I've been here at Santa Clara for 14 years, and also, a Generation X-er. Received my Masters' here in Education Administration; graduated from Yale, econ major. One of my passions is education, and so that brought me back to where we are now.

j: Excellent, and where are your peoples from?

**Eva Blanco Masias:** My peoples -- my family is a first generation family from Mexico that grew up in Los Angeles, Venice specifically. So, I'm a Southern California native.

j: It's not often that students, or potential students, get to hear from The Deciders that we have at the table; the folks who decide who gets accepted or not. Eddie you were a student just a few months ago, now looking back at it, you know having the experience and now looking at applications, I'm curious at your perspective and what you're seeing, and when you think about the new class that will be coming in here to Santa Clara. What are some of the trends that you've noticed.

**Eddie Kelinsky:** I think for me it's been a lot of reflecting of when I was a senior in high school, and having gone to a college preparatory, a very competitive environment, you know Santa Clara was not necessarily my first choice, it was in a group of schools that I considered myself interested in because it had the Jesuit roots and I went to a Jesuit high school and I liked that. I wasn't seeing myself here, I was ready to be out of California, you know; I had been here for 18 years, I wanted something new, and being on campus, when I stepped foot here, it was really special, and that just made me gravitate towards this university in a way that no other school really had that same draw.

j: What was special about it though, can you put into words kinda like--

**Eddie Kelinsky:** Yeah, I think that probably just a combination of the beauty of the physical campus of itself, but also the students here are really what made me want to come. People would go out of their way to be nice to you, to make sure you knew where you were going. They would stop and tell you how excited that they were to have you here, and to consider becoming a student here, becoming a Bronco, was really incredible you know, in a way that like-- I was considering you know, other UC schools for example, there you're another student. You know, you're a part of this larger institution, and they are wonderful for a lot of different reasons, but I felt like here I was going to be a member of a community and that's really what I found.

j: Excellent, and as Eddie kind of talks about his decision paradigm and how he ended up here, I'm curious Eva and AJ: when you think about your decision process in your own lives, what are some of those things that you now know that you wish you would have known back then?

**Eva Blanco Masias:** I showed up to campus without having seen the campus ever before, so I wish I could have visited a number of different places. So I always tell students: do that early, and don't put yourself under pressure, right. So if you are-- you know there's really no time to really get started, but even the 9th grade it could be really as easy as we're vacationing somewhere we've never been to and just down the street or a few blocks away there's a campus. Just step foot on it and just start getting a feel, a look and feel of the location, and the things that I would tell folks going through this is that one, life isn't a race. You know, take the time you need to take to make the right choices for you.

**j:** AJ, you got applications in front of you, you've got acceptance letters, what are some of the top tips and things you would have known thinking about your decision making process?

**AJ Williams:** For me, I had no clue, no clue about this stuff, and that's part of why I like doing it now. But, I played basketball, and coming up in the household, it was always an expectation -- you're going to college; but nobody really knew how to tell me to do that, so I figured you know, basketball could probably pay for it. That was a big part of it, the money aspect. I didn't even apply, two schools coming out of high school -- I had schools that were looking at me for athletics. That ended up taking me to prep school on the East Coast. Came back home because it got real cold and I realized I was a California guy.

**j:** Your blood wasn't made for it?

**AJ Williams:** It wasn't made for it, I'm a tropical person. But I ended up at a community college and then at a University, and what I will say is that each step after high school I learned. In terms of the process, honestly I wish I would have known just about the different types of schools out there; the actual process of applying and all of that.

**j:** Let's play this game real quick, we're gonna do rapid-fire questions to ask yourself when you are in decision mode, I just want you guys to throw 'em out there.

**Eddie Kelinsky:** Do I know for sure what career I want to go into and then the supplement for that is: is this particular university and the aid being offered going to assist me in achieving that career goal?

**Eva Blanco Masias:** What if I'm undecided? How do I go about selecting a major and can I change around?

**AJ Williams:** I would say what type of institution are you prepared for?

**Eddie Kelinsky:** What's the political climate like?

**Eva Blanco Masias:** What do students do for fun?

**AJ Williams:** I always ask students: where do you see yourself living after school?

**Eddie Kelinsky:** How have my academics in high school prepared me for this specific program that I'm interested in?

**j:** AJ, everyone knows there are challenges being a typical first-year college student; how does Santa Clara University help address these challenges?

**AJ Williams:** Yeah, that's a great question, and the reality is: whether you go to school 5 minutes down the road or 3000 miles away, you're gonna get homesick at some point, you know. We have a housing situation here at Santa Clara, that's the residential learning communities. So it's themed housing, you live with folks that hopefully share similar social and academic interests and things like that. So those kind of things can help. Getting involved, and you know, with social clubs, cultural clubs, all that of kind of stuff helps. So I tell folks all the time: it's a college, universities-- our students have fun. If you party too hard, you ain't gonna last too long, if you study too hard, you're gonna burn out. So it's about balance, you know.

**Eva Blanco Masias:** I can't tell you how many times I hear from students just what wonderful relationships they have with their professors. You know, instances where sometimes students will do really bad on a test and it's not uncommon that that professor might tap them on the shoulder and say, "come see me" you know, "let's talk about this, let's make sure that you're getting this and that next time around there's some improvements". So, there's some real engagement, it's real genuine. I've heard of professors inviting students over for a Superbowl party, or "let's just go have coffee, or dinner", and I think that when you build some real genuine relationships with your mentors, with your educators, that just goes a long way because it really, I think, ignites a passion for what you're learning. That's one of the aspects of a Santa Clara education that I find to be just really unique. I hear that over and over again and again, this has been over the span of the 14 years that I've been here.

**j:** Eddie, so you just graduated in June and now you get to help aspiring students to invent the life they want to lead, so how did SCU, how did being a Bronco, prepare you to do just that?

**Eddie Kelinsky:** You know, we're a smaller university, so the opportunities here are meant to be-- you know, they're yours for the taking as an undergraduate. So I was able to do and accomplish just about everything in college I was interested in. I wanted to lead a life where I could learn more about the world and global culture and I was able to study abroad in Germany in a program that specialized in the EU so I got to travel to like 10 different countries through the program. That was something that I wanted to do and Santa Clara had the resources to help me accomplish that.

**j:** Alright deciders, you guys are the experts. How should students get ready for what they're about to experience when they come to Santa Clara University?

**AJ Williams:** Just prepare to increase your bandwidth. So these folks work hard, they play hard. Like I said, it's about balance. So if you thought you were busy in high school, get ready to have that load increase, but in a fun way.

j: Get ready, get ready, get ready.

**AJ Williams:** Exactly, exactly, in a fun way.

**Eva Blanco Masias:** Prepare to not sleep! No, and I say that playfully. You know, I actually hear from a number of students, to both Eddie's and AJ's point, there is so much to do. There is absolutely so much to do, and I think every student who's accepted here, we're super excited to have them visit us, to be here, to ultimately be a part of the community because we know they bring something special with them.

**Eddie Kelinsky:** And prepare to stock up on sunscreen if you're not used to sunshine.

j: Guys thank you for your time, so much. I think that everyone listening is gonna really appreciate hearing from the folks behind the scenes giving those admittance letters to very hopeful students. Thanks again, and we appreciate it.

**Eddie Kelinsky:** Thank you.

**AJ Williams:** Thank you.

**Tanya Monsef Bunger:** Hi, my name is [Tanya Monsef Bunger](#), and I'm the director of the [Global Fellows program](#) here at Santa Clara University, and I encourage you to invent the life that you want to lead. To be a dreamer, be a leader, think global, find possibilities that are limitless.

**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](https://scu.edu/podcasts), and learn more about Santa Clara's commitment to innovative and inspiring opportunities.