

## April 2026 Ethical Navigation: Chasing a Pot of Gold, Part 2

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[The Potomac and Chesapeake Association for College Admission Counseling \(PCACAC\) Admission Practices Committee](#) is excited to present *Ethical Navigations (EN)*, an educational effort to proactively explore issues that might face professionals involved in the college admissions process.

Each month, *Ethical Navigations* explores a hypothetical scenario and potential avenues to approaching the situation using [NACAC's Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission](#) (GEPCA) as the lens. This guide is built on the *principles* of honesty, transparency, equity, and respect for students and fellow professionals while including the *core values* of education, access and equity, professionalism, collegiality, collaboration, trust, and social responsibility.

### ***This month's scenario:***

April Flower, the school counselor at May Showers High School, feels a sense of relief. May 1 is in the air. While many of her students received disappointing news in the final rounds of decisions at the end of March, all her college-bound students have choices and seem to be in good places as they consider opportunities for the next places to blossom. Furthermore, one out of three students have finalized their decision.

Just as April begins to plan and look forward to their upcoming Decision Day Celebration, Tulip wanders into April's office. Tulip had originally applied to several schools in the fall and had decided to enroll in Grass is Greener University. When Tulip made the decision, they withdrew other applications, including the application to Clover Hill University where they was admitted through Early Action in January.

Astute readers might remember that in March's Ethical Navigation, Riley O'Connell at Clover Hill University considered the implications of approaching a potential short-fall in yield. Based on the conversations, Clover Hill University decided to pursue several actions including offering additional scholarships in early April to admissible students who had withdrawn.

Now, Tulip has come to April Flower for advice. The new scholarship has made Clover Hill less expensive than Grass is Greener. Tulip is having second thoughts about their enrollment choice. But, Tulip is nervous about depositing at a second school and asks April for advice.

What can April do? Does GEPCA provide any advice?

### ***The Conundrum:***

April Flower believes in empowering students to be ethical by making only one enrollment commitment. April is frustrated that Clover Hill University is trying to find pots of gold by pulling students away from other places. This process is adding a new level of stress for her, her counseling team, and her students.

### ***Possible Approach:***

While April Flower finds the situation frustrating, she is happy that Clover Hill has been straightforward in their offer, providing information needed for her to advise Tulip. In today's admission process, this scenario or something similar could be a reality for some students, families, and their counselors.

At the time, when Tulip and their family chose to deposit at Grass is Greener, they did so by May 1 in good faith, taking into account all that they knew. Now, as May 1 is approaching, new information has changed their thought processes. Yet, the student still wants to operate in good faith.

NACAC does provide some advice. According to GEPCA Article 1, B. 1. B) iii, *“To provide college admission counseling in the best interest of students, members should: educate students and families of their ethical responsibilities in the admissions process including counseling students that it is unethical to: maintain an active enrollment deposit or the equivalent at more than one US college.”*

Thus, April Flower could encourage Tulip and their family to think about the ramifications of changing college commitments. Furthermore, if Tulip does change, April would want to encourage Tulip to withdraw from Grass is Greener as soon as possible so that Tulip has only one active enrollment.

However, knowing that part of the decision is based on finances, April could also encourage Tulip and their family to consider additional levels of the process including:

- Compare the four-year costs as well as any special programs available from each school to allow the family to consider whether the new scholarship is a significant part of the final decision process.
- Reach out to Grass is Greener to let them know about the new offer. With this conversation, consider appealing to Grass is Greener to see if they would reconsider the financial aid/merit scholarship package. A new package might further complicate the conversation in a good way.

Just as the spring weather is in constant fluctuation, college counselors and admission officers are aware that this time of year brings daily changes and challenges. Hopefully these April showers, will help students like Tulip blossom going into May and at their final college choice.

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*If you have any questions feedback, or proposals for future Ethical Navigations, please contact [info@pcacac.org](mailto:info@pcacac.org).*

*Do you have a question about NACAC’s recommended ethical practices or a suggested revision to the [Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission](#)? Please submit via [this form](#) and a member of the national AP committee will follow up with you.*