

## August 2024 Ethical Navigation: Summer Stressor

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PCACAC is excited to present *Ethical Navigations*, 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](#) 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:***

Harold Hazy is the School Counselor at Humid High School. While technically on break and only a ten-month employee, Mr. Hazy is a conscientious counselor, who regularly checks his email during the summer months. This summer he is noticing a higher volume of emails from anxious parents. It seems that Popular College is encouraging students to submit their applications "as early as possible" and is reminding students that the Common Application opened on August 1st. Because of this, Mr. Hazy has quite a few concerned messages from several parents demanding that their child's transcript and letter of recommendation be sent the day the college application opens so that the student can complete the application and submit everything in its entirety on day one.

Mr. Hazy is concerned. He knows that much of the data from the previous year and fall courses will not be updated in the high school system until the middle of August. Thus, the transcript will not be complete. In addition, the idea of writing effective and personal letters of recommendation for these students by August 1st seems impossible! Mr. Hazy knows the college process can, at times, cause stress and confusion for all involved. What approach could Mr. Hazy take to help turn down the temperature?

### ***Possible approach:***

Mr. Hazy remembers that NACAC has the Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission (GEPCA) on their website. This information could provide him with the language necessary to approach both the college AND his nervous parents.

In **Article II. The Responsible Practice of College Admission**, he reads,

*"A. Admission Cycle Dates, Deadlines and Procedures for First-Time Fall Entry Undergraduates NACAC members believe that college choices should be informed, well-considered, and free from coercion. We believe that admission practices should be student-centered and should not be designed to manipulate students into applying to or enrolling at a college or university before they are ready.*

*Students benefit if they have an organized and developmentally appropriate schedule that allows for a reasonable amount of time to identify their college choices; submit applications for admission, financial aid and scholarships; and decide which offer of admission to accept. Members are encouraged to work with other campus offices such as academic departments, housing and financial aid to create a consistent deadline that does not require students to make a commitment or accept an offer prior to May 1."*

Furthermore, **Article II concerning Recommended dates and deadlines states,**

"a). Application Deadline: October 15 should be the earliest application deadline colleges set for first-year candidates applying for fall admission." Even so, Mr. Hazy realizes colleges can allow students to

apply earlier; but, given this information, he hopes that colleges like Popular College should be providing applicants with ample time to submit documents like official transcripts and letters of recommendation.

Therefore, thinking about GEPCA's Core Values of **Collaboration** and **Collegiality**, Mr. Hazy could decide to confirm the information parents are telling him. First, he could check on the Popular College's website to see what deadlines and timelines are being expressed there. If that is not clear, he could reach out to his colleagues in the Admission Office at Popular College to double check the deadline information the parents are relating to him and asking if there is a benefit to completing all parts of the application early. Hopefully, these sources could provide language Mr. Hazy could then provide to the students/parents.

In addition, Mr. Hazy might also want to take on a larger initiative following another of GEPCA's Core Values, **Education**. If he decided it was prudent, Mr. Hazy could look for additional language by exploring other college websites or contacting admission officers—many institutions currently stress that while a student must meet a specific deadline, supporting documentation can be submitted after an application deadline. In addition to this information, Mr. Hazy could then send an email to his students and families reminding them that the current process of sending transcripts and letters of recommendation is tried and true and that many factors, including school start dates, Common Application updates, and the rollover of data from one year to the next in the school's system, needs to happen to avoid complications.

In today's climate, students, parents, school counselors, and admission officers feel a lot of stress concerning the college admission process. NACAC's ***Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission*** seeks to “*support both students and institutions by promoting best practices in college admission*” (*Preamble*) and can be a source of information to help reduce this stress.

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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.*