

## January 2024 Ethical Navigation: Deposits Are Down!

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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 navigation is submitted by Jake Talmage, College Counseling Director at St. Paul's School for Boys.

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

Happy is the Vice President for Enrollment at Lang Syne College, a mid-sized university that enrolls a range of students. Happy recently updated the institution's administration about admissions:

- The good: even though the final deadline is still approaching, applications are slightly ahead of last year when the college met its targets.
- The bad: deposits are down slightly.
- The unknown: based on student feedback to counselors, Happy believes the delay in deposits might be due to issues with the new FAFSA rollout.

Lang Syne's administration is worried and wants to incentivize students to start depositing. Specifically, various well-meaning campus leaders suggested opportunities that included offering preferential housing, requiring deposits for the honors program by April 15, and incentivizing early deposits by offering additional scholarship money. Happy is left wondering what they could do.

***Possible approaches:*** The pressure is real. Lang Syne, like many colleges, is tuition driven and deposit numbers can be an important harbinger of how the admissions cycle will develop over the coming months. Thus, encouraging students to submit their deposits and commit to the institution is a priority. To pursue this, the university might want to plan additional yield events like organizing an earlier open house, awarding targeted scholarships, providing financial aid outreach to explain FAFSA implications to families, or initiating outreach to admitted students.

However, Happy should also work to educate his fellow administrators about NACAC's ethical guide and the institution's desire to support these best practices. Specifically, Article II, The Responsible Practice of College Admission, discusses May 1, widely considered the National Candidates Reply Date. Section A states, "*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...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.*"

Article II, Section A. 1. further explains, "***Recommended dates and deadlines:*** b) *National Candidates Reply Date: Colleges should use the widely recognized date of May 1 as the earliest enrollment confirmation deadline. Before being asked to make an enrollment decision and to commit to an institution, students should have time to hear from each school that admitted them and receive notice of* i) *Offers of financial aid and scholarships.* ii) *Admission to honors and other special programs.* iii) *Availability of housing.* c) *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.”*

Thus, Happy could work to initiate programs that would encourage students to consider depositing; but, they should also work to make sure the university allows students until at least May 1 if they need the time.

*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.*