

November 2023 Ethical Navigation: Hiring Readers

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 Amy Moffatt at Towson University and Kathleen Voss at Georgia Institute of Technology.

This month's scenario:

Over the past year, Tom, the VP of Enrollment at Turkey University has been excited to see enthusiasm build throughout the "pipeline." Inquiries, campus visits, website hits have all been up. Now, the application process is starting, and numbers are way up. While the university has moved to a holistic admission process, the admissions staff is the same.

Tom is excited, but also worried about his staff, their sanity, and making it through the admission process. While vendors have offered Artificial Intelligence options, the central administration of the university does not want admissions to pursue a technological approach to the challenge. Thus, the admission team is interested in exploring part-time readers. What ethical concerns should Tom consider?

Possible approaches: Colleges have and continue to use part-time readers, so Tom could reach out to colleagues at other institutions to learn about how their schools have developed and engaged these professionals. Even though these readers will be part-time, they will still be a part of the admissions staff, and NACAC Guide's Article I. A. 1. C. states, "Members should ensure that alumni/ae representative, interviewers, third party agents, vendors and other representatives working on their behalf follow the ethical best practices of the profession."

Therefore, as the university explores the possibility of hiring part-time readers, the office should consider a few of the following ethical principles discussed in the NACAC Guide:

- Core Value of Professionalism: "We believe that ethical behavior is the foundation of the counseling, admission, and enrollment management profession. We are responsible for the integrity of our actions and, insofar as we can affect them, the actions of our member institutions, organizations, and individuals." To this end, who will the university hire as part-time readers (recent alumni, experienced professionals, others)? How will the readers be trained, including learning about the ethical practices of the profession (Article I. A. 1. C.)? What processes will be in place to ensure readers will be supported in their work?
- Article I. B: "Advocating for students' best interest in the admission process is the primary ethical concern of our members. This requires that students receive college admission counseling they can trust. Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and unprofessional conduct can undermine that trust..." In what ways can a system of reading be developed that will allow the university and the readers to avoid conflicts of interest?
- Article C: "The college admission and counseling community depends on trust. An important component in building this trust is maintaining confidentiality." How will the office work to build a process which supports students and adheres to their institution's policies for confidentiality (Article I. C. 1. C.)? If a part-time reader has questions about an application, can they contact a high school or a supervisor (Article I. C. 1. A.)?

Given the complexity of admissions work, many other parts of the Ethical Guide might also influence the approach that Turkey University pursues as the university determines the details of the positions. The key concept is realizing that even though these hires might be part-time and/or seasonal, they are still admissions professionals.

If you have any questions feedback, or proposals for future Ethical Navigations, please contact 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.