

Obligations of NHS or NJHS Membership

The National Constitution delineates seven (7) formal obligations of membership.

The first obligation is as much a duty of the chapter as it is a member obligation. **Article VIII, Section 4** indicates that all members must be inducted at a special ceremony to become active members of the chapter. One remains in the condition of being a ‘successfully selected candidate’ until this ceremony is undertaken.

The following list outlines those obligations as delineated in the National Constitution (listed as they appear in the current versions of the constitutions):

- **Dues (Article IV, Section 3):** Members may be asked to pay annual chapter dues. The constitution limits this amount to \$20 per student per year. For this amount and any other obligatory expenses bestowed upon members, the chapter should be able to provide alternative sources of funding for those students who may be incapable of paying due to legitimate circumstances. The authentic inability of a member or his/her family to pay such financial obligations should not be the reason for the disciplining or dismissal of any member. Chapters are not required to charge dues to members, but if they do, should delineate this responsibility of members in their chapter bylaws.
- **Maintaining standards (Article VIII, Section 1).** Once selected, all members are expected to maintain the standards by which they were selected. The implication here is that members are well informed concerning what those selection standards were as published in the description of the local selection process. Chapter advisers are charged with monitoring all members for compliance in this area.
- **Meetings (Article XIII, Section 1):** Chapters can hold meetings and *may require* members to attend. The schedule of these meetings should be well publicized. In addition, chapter officers should work closely with the adviser to see that the agendas for all meetings are well thought out and planned for.
- **Chapter Service Project(s) (Article XIV, Sections 1 & 2):** All chapters are required to sponsor a chapter service project and all members are required to participate (Section 2), assuming that the project meets the criteria as outlined in the constitution (Section 3). Chapters can sponsor and require participation in more than one project each year.
- **Individual Service Projects(s) (Article XIV, Section 4):** In addition to the chapter service project noted above, members are to engage in additional service according to their own talents and interests. The quantity of this service and the degree to which the chapter monitors this activity should be defined in the chapter bylaws.
- **Additional Obligations (Article XVI, Section 2):** If additional obligations exist for members of the chapter, such obligations should be spelled out in the *Chapter Bylaws* for all members to see. It is recommended that a set of these bylaws be presented to each member yearly as a reminder of these and all member obligations. Efforts to inform parents of these obligations should also be undertaken on a regular basis.

Publication of member obligations is the responsibility of the chapter. In addition to publishing the chapter bylaws for each member, chapters should include member obligations in the general chapter description that appears in the student handbook, faculty handbook, parent newsletters or any other official publications of the school or school system. Helping potential candidates and their parents understand what is expected of them if they are selected will assist a candidate in determining if he/she has sufficient time for this honor.

It is also beneficial for parents to understand the commitment of time and energy required once their student becomes a member of the chapter. Many chapters outline all member obligations and include such a list either in the candidate's packet of information or in a new member packet and then request (or require) that the student and parent/guardian sign the form affirming their understanding of the nature of all member obligations.