

On Compliance

Perhaps the biggest threat facing honor societies today is the proliferation of organizations with low and very flexible standards claiming to be legitimate. The problem was elaborated on in the Winter 2004 issue (see p. 2, "Psst...hey buddy: Wanna belong to an honor society?")

By making sure we are in compliance with our own rules, we will be taking a major step toward protecting the value of membership in KTA. Accordingly, we are reminding advisers of the rules and will be checking on as many chapters as we can to be sure we are in compliance. We expect that most instances of non-compliance are the result of mistaken interpretations of the rules, or poor instructions passed along from retiring adviser to successor, or poor communication between adviser and the staff member who compiles a list of initiates.

Chapters found to be systematically and purposefully in non-compliance will face penalties ranging from probation, censure or revocation of the charter.

The most common areas of non-compliance seem to be the following:

1. Inducting more than just the upper 10% by failing to count students inducted in the previous year in the upper 10% of the senior class. If you have 223 seniors you can induct 22, but if 18 of the top 22 were initiated as juniors, you can induct only the remaining 4. Students must rank in the top 10%.
2. Inducting more than just the upper 10% by replacing students who decline the invitation with the next highest ranked students on the list. Students must rank in the top 10%.
3. Inducting students from non-journalism/mass comm majors from other departments within the same communication unit (e.g., interpersonal communication majors in a college of communication). Non-j/mc majors are eligible only if the administrative structure is such that the j/mc head reports to the same dean or director as the other departments within the college. Non-majors must meet all of the other requirements for membership, including the nine semester hours of professional j/mc courses (see 4-c of the Membership Requirement document). With rare exception, courses meeting this requirement will be taught by the j/mc unit. In most cases individual inspection of non-j/mc majors will be required to verify that the professional course requirement has been met.
4. Inducting non-qualified masters students. The Constitution (Art. III 1-3-e) was amended August, 2007 to clarify graduate student eligibility. Masters students must rank in the top 10% of those who have completed the equivalent of two semesters of full-time coursework in their graduate degree programs. Doctoral students must have received no more than two course grades of B in their Ph.D. program, with A grades in all other courses, and must have completed all requirements for the degree but dissertation (ABD).