

Staff Stance

NHS tightens just three of four requirements

This month ESD released its new requirements for membership in the National Honor Society. While the new policies gradually up the standards for Pillar 1: Scholarship, Pillar 2: Service, and Pillar 3: Leadership, the recommendations for Pillar 4: Character seem inconsistent with the rationale for new standards.

Continuing to allow a student to be inducted into NHS who has committed an honor code violation, even if none occur during the junior year, seriously dilutes the integrity of this organization.

In years past, NHS required a minimum GPA of only 6.0, a mere 25 community service hours, and that candidates submit a two-page, double-spaced statement about individual commitment to the society's pillars of scholarship, leadership, character and service. Just when it couldn't get any more lenient, it did—just don't get caught committing more than two honor code violations and consider yourself swaddled in that blue stole come graduation.

How else could we account for, on average, 50 percent of each junior class “meriting” membership in NHS other than ESD being such a great school with so many exceptional scholars?

The new regulations have added much needed kick to the society's logistical requirements: soon juniors will need a 6.5 GPA or above, 100 hours of community service, and three leadership activities which actually necessitate getting involved and giving back to this campus.

These changes go a long way to give ESD's chapter what it subtly lacked — prestige. Skating by with a B average and showing up to *just enough* community service ventures won't be good enough anymore, and this will give inducted members a sense of pride previously met with an enthusiastic, “meh.”



Unfortunately, though, students can still have an honor code violation — effectively voiding Pillar 4. While a low B average is no longer good enough, cheating to bring that average up apparently still is.

Think we're overreacting?

Well, consider ESD's criteria for selecting Homecoming Court. Fact is, students are ineligible for this title if they have *ever* violated the honor code. Does the school consider this popularity contest more prestigious than its honor society?

We acknowledge that not all honor code viola-

tions are equal. Infractions can range from signing a friend out of study hall to cheating on a final exam. The answer may lie in revising the honor code to account for the seriousness of the offense.

Simply put, there should be a “violation gradient.” Signing a friend out of study hall could be Level I; copying homework, Level 2; and cheating on major assignments/plagiarism, Level 3.

Excuse one Level I offense as a mistake, but not enough to disqualify. It's as simple as that.

It is the National HONOR Society, after all.