

Selection of Members by the Briar Woods NHS Faculty Council

The NHS faculty council understands that students and parents are curious as to how exactly members are selected once they have submitted their membership request packets. We hope that the facts below will answer many of your questions and help those who are considering requesting membership in the future.

Who is on the faculty council?

Annually, the principal appoints five licensed teachers to the faculty council to make fair and impartial decisions. To provide as wide a perspective as possible, each of these teachers is selected from a different academic department. Teachers may be appointed to multiple terms, but the overall composition of the council changes each school year.

Do all five members of the faculty council review my packet?

Yes. All 5 members of the faculty council review your membership request packet, discuss it, and vote on your membership. Students are selected members of NHS with at least 3 “yes” votes. This past selection cycle, the faculty council spent 3 entire school days reviewing membership packets.

My GPA is a lot higher than another student who got in. Why didn't I get in?

First, you must remember that there are four criteria: scholarship, leadership, service, and character. You can have the highest GPA in the school, but if you do not provide clear and consistent evidence of the other three criteria, then we cannot offer you membership.

Second, the national-level NHS rules forbid the faculty council from even considering your grades during its deliberations. The only thing your GPA is used for is determining if you are eligible to request membership.

How much leadership and service are you looking for?

This is a difficult question to answer objectively. Ultimately, you must provide clear and consistent evidence that you seek out and engage in leadership and volunteer opportunities more often than the average student. If you think about it, with all the sports, student organizations, and volunteer opportunities that Briar Woods and the wider community offers, it really does not take much effort for the average student to have a couple of different leadership experiences and a couple of different volunteer experiences. This is why the membership request packet recommends that you identify and document at least two different experiences for each category with no maximum. The more leadership and service you document, the better.

I have just as many leadership and service experiences as my friend who is a member, but I didn't get in. Why?

This is related to the previous question. You must provide clear and consistent evidence that you seek out and engage in leadership and volunteer opportunities more often than the average student. Perhaps you did not document your experiences well enough. Perhaps your experiences are not recent enough. Have you been a leader or volunteered since middle school?

You must also consider that not all experiences are equal. Is volunteering one time for a few hours the same as volunteering multiple times for multiple hours? Some organizations seem to have a very large number of officers compared to their overall membership. Does the leadership required to be an officer in these organizations get diluted? Is volunteering for an organization that you derive direct benefit from the same as volunteering for an organization that only benefits others? Is claiming volunteer experience while being an officer of the organization "double-dipping"? These are just a small sample of the questions that the faculty council debates. While you may not agree with our answers in your situation, please know that we did think deeply about it and discussed it before we each made our decision on how to vote.

How does the character piece work?

This is really the hardest part for the council to judge as character is a very subjective thing. It is human nature that we tend to remember negative things more often than positive things. With this in mind, we generally do not decline membership to a student based on a single teacher's negative report unless the teacher has specifics of a flagrant violation of the school rules or honor code. When multiple teachers provide negative feedback to the council, it begins to establish a pattern, and starts to weigh heavily against the student in our deliberations.

We also don't hold things against you forever. We realize that juniors and seniors have grown and matured from when they were freshmen. The council has declined membership to students their junior year for character issues, and upon seeing evidence of maturity, offered membership the next year.

If you still have questions:

Although they are your point of contact, the advisers may not be able to answer your questions immediately. They will forward your questions to the faculty council, and we will try to respond in a timely manner.