Honor societies have existed as a part of the higher education tradition in the United States since 1885. In 1925, the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) was established to help colleges and universities assess the value and credibility of these organizations.

Over the past few years, several groups have emerged calling themselves honor societies but do not meet the standards to be ACHS certified. To help you make more informed decisions, ACHS has asked us to share basic questions that you should ask when you are determining whether an organization is a legitimate honor society:

- **Is the society ACHS certified?** This link allows you to search all member honor societies that are certified and meet ACHS standards: [https://www.achshonor.org/achs-certified-society-search#/](https://www.achshonor.org/achs-certified-society-search#/)

- **Are there minimum standards for membership?** Being invited to join an honor society means that members have distinguished themselves in some way.

- **Does the society hold nonprofit status?** Certified honor societies will always be nonprofit (501 c3) organizations. Don’t be deceived by the organization having an .org website address. You can check for nonprofit status here: [https://www.guidestar.org/Home.aspx](https://www.guidestar.org/Home.aspx).

- **Does the society have campus chapters?** Honor societies typically have registered and recognized chapters at institutions of higher education and have on-campus leadership from students and/or faculty.

- **Does the society’s website provide transparent information about the society?** A legitimate honor society’s website will always provide information about National Officers or Board Members, Headquarters Staff, criteria for membership, benefits of membership, membership fee, a constitution and/or bylaws, and chapter charter policies or procedures.

- **Do society members participate in society governance?** Members of legitimate honor societies play a substantive role in governing the organization, including electing leadership.

You can find more detailed information about legitimate honor societies at [https://achs.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/ACHS-Checklist-for-Students.pdf](https://achs.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/ACHS-Checklist-for-Students.pdf).

Please share this information widely so that prospective honor society members can make more informed decisions.

With appreciation,

Marianne Fallon, PhD
Psi Chi Executive Director