

HOUSE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chapter Services Committees are made up of outreach individuals in the Chapter who devote a portion of their time for very special Service work – helping those individual Oxford Houses in the Chapter which need help. For example, the Chapter Services Committee always helps the new house in a Chapter get off to a good start.

The Chapter Services Committee generally consists off the Vice-chairperson of the Chapter, a Chairperson(s) of the Committee itself and three or four individual volunteers from other houses in the Chapter. The five or six member Chapter Services Committee provides suggestions and help to the members of a new house or a house in trouble. Since each house is autonomous the Chapter Services Committee always offers suggestions first – not orders. “Bossism” works no better among houses than it does within an Oxford House. Remember the Committee’s collective experience strength and hope is a very powerful voice.

A significant role of the Chapter Services Committee is to impress upon the new house – or house in trouble – the importance of meeting the conditions of an Oxford House Charter. Oxford House relies on having a good reputation in the community and one “bad apple” can adversely affect the welfare of Oxford House as a whole. By skillfully carrying the message, the Chapter Services Committee can prevent problems from arising and for those problems that do arise the Committee can quickly provide suggestions for solving them. However the Chapter Services Committee should avoid becoming a super-power or a court for disputes that may arise among residents of a new or troubled house. Tradition Five clearly states: “Each Oxford House should be autonomous except in matters affecting other houses of Oxford House as a whole.” What that means in a nutshell is that if a house is operating in accordance with its charter and their Chapter guidelines, the Chapter Services Committee is limited to making suggestions. On the other hand, if a house is in violation of the any of three conditions of its charter or their Chapter guidelines, the Chapter Services Committee can take corrective action. Whenever corrective action is necessary it is a good idea to call the North Carolina State Oxford House Office to let them know or to get advice. Phone # 919/395-8206 or # 910/395-8192.

Some Pointers:

- Read and be familiar with your Oxford House Manual.
- Always schedule a follow up visit after initial visit. Consistency is important.
- Be accessible, return phone calls.
- Share ***your*** experience, strength and hope.
- On your first visit your primary role is to observe and develop a plan of action.
- Encourage members to **identify the problem** briefly, and then **concentrate on the solution**.
- Use your Committee. All too often House Services Chairperson tries to do everything on his/her own.
- You may want to schedule a House Services Committee meeting prior to the Chapter Meeting to help share information.