PI TAU SIGMA OUTSTANDING AWARDS

Florida Sigma Omicron

By: Marcus Spanolios, President 2016-2017

***Initiation*:** The 2016-2017 academic year has been one of remarkable success and growth for the Florida Sigma Omicron chapter of Pi Tau Sigma. After experiencing a difficult Spring 2016 semester with only having one initiate, a goal for this year was to sustain high initiation numbers. The Fall 2016 class had 15 members, including one Honorary Initiate, who is now our new Faculty Advisor, while the Spring 2017 initiation class had 11 members.

Department Involvement: This is the second year of our chapter teaching the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department's Introduction to Engineering course for the underclassmen, where we lecture about opportunities for student involvement within the MAE Department, then proceed to give a tour of the department's machine shop and manufacturing lab. Afterwards, we perform a hands-on activity where students construct composite beams and test their designs for strength-to-weight ratio by way of a Charpy Impact Test. Another event hosted by the Florida Sigma Omicron chapter was the MAE Undergraduate Research Symposium which is the Department's annual research project presentation competition in which undergraduates can share their research with faculty, fellow students, student organizations, and notable members of the External Advisory Board. This year, presenter participation totaled 15 presenters, 6 presenting individual projects, 6 representing the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and 3 representing Design, Build, Fly. A panel of four judges consisting of two UF MAE professors, a retired Major General, and a Ph.D researcher at Eglin Air Force Base, listened to each presentation then deliberated to rank the top three projects.

Community Service Events: We have held eight community service events over the academic year, including two GatorTRAX events where we teach local elementary schoolers about STEM related topics and engage in hands-on activities involving these topics. We also participated in the annual Engineering Fair where hundreds of students from all over Florida attended to learn about engineering. The Florida Sigma Omicron chapter displayed and demonstrated a pneumatically driven golfing robot and lectured about the importance of machinery and automation.

Company Tours and Lab Tours: This year, the Florida Sigma Omicron chapter became an Associate Member of the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce's Advanced Manufacturing Council where we began being exposed to different manufacturing initiatives in the area, along with building relationships with the different industry members. This helped us secure two company tours in the Spring semester. We toured Exactech and Fracture, two of the area's most technologically advanced companies, and as a result, our Vice-President received an internship offer from Exactech. Along with offering company tours, we also scheduled four tours of various research labs on campus, which allows our members to learn about what type of projects our professors are conducting.

Conclusion: The 2016-2017 academic year has been a very busy one for the Florida Sigma Omicron chapter, but has also allowed us to have a much larger exposure in the department, and to our fellow students.