Pi Tau Sigma Annual Chapter Report

2012-2013

Boston University Alpha Mu

A. Initiatons

Our chapter holds two initiations per academic year, one in the fall and one in the spring. For each initiation, the eligibility criteria are the same. We obtain a list of eligible students, based on their class rank, from the undergraduate office. The upper 25% of juniors are eligible, and the upper 35% of seniors. A few weeks before our planned initiation, all eligible students are notified by email. The invitation contains information on what Pi Tau Sigma is, what the benefits of joining are, and the amount required for dues.

At the scheduled beginning time, the doors are locked and the lights in the room are dimmed. We like to promote an atmosphere of exclusivity, and to make the experience memorable and ceremonious. The eligible initiates are instructed to stand silently behind their seats. The chapter officers recite the rituals, accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation showing the insignia and the code of ethics. After each initiate has pledged the oath, the lights are brightened and the officers introduce themselves and explain some of the activities of Pi Tau Sigma. Dues are collected at this point, and each initiate signs a roll book for recordkeeping.

The initiation ceremony is also a social occasion. Dinner is served after the ceremony and students are encouraged to stay and socialize with each other and the officers for as long as they like.

The fall initiation was held on 11/16/2012, and 20 students were initiated. The new officers for the following academic year were also elected at this point. The roles were explained in an email prior to the event. Those wanting to run for office were instructed to prepare a short speech describing their qualifications. The elected officers for 2013-2014 are: President: Alexandra Howton. Vice-President: Meagan Moran. Treasurer: Thomas Hubschman. Secretary: Michael Pettit. Since there were several eligible students who were unable to attend, a small, personal initiation was held for those students at a later date. We reserved a room a study room and followed the same basic procedure, initiating 3 students on 11/29/2012.

The spring initiation was held on 4/17/2013, and 17 students were initiated. At this ceremony, current members were invited to attend in support of their peers, and a grand time was had by all. Again, we made a special effort to reach out to eligible students who were unable to attend and initiated 3 more students on 4/28/2013. At the spring initiation, we also collected money from seniors for graduation regalia.

B. Chapter Activities

As soon as the fall semester began, our chapter held a general meeting for all current members. This was before the first initiation. The purpose of this meeting was to welcome everyone to the new academic year, brainstorm ideas for events students would like to do, and to elect someone to serve as secretary for the duration of the 2012-2013 year. The need for this election is described in the 'Other' section below. Food was served, and members were strongly urged to attend in order to participate in the election. At this meeting we discussed our next event.

In early fall, we held our first event that was open to all engineers. It was an information session at which upperclassmen would be present to answer any and all questions that underclassmen might have. Upperclassmen gave lots of advice on various issues including classes, professors, internships, applying for jobs, and applying for graduate school. Our faculty advisor, Professor Park, was also present at this event. He spoke briefly about the process of applying to and getting into grad school, and answered questions about the endeavor. In all, this was a very successful event. About 30 students attended, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. Upperclassmen were eager to share their advice and stories, and underclassmen were grateful to be informed.

In February we sent the newly elected President and Vice President to the national convention. The trip was arranged by a travel agency that is partnered with the university. All went smoothly, and they found it an enriching experience. A couple weeks after their return, the old and the new officers had a social meeting at a local restaurant. The old officers told the new officers about what their duties would be, what they could expect for the coming year, and how to solve problems they might encounter. The two who attended the convention also told everyone about their adventures.

Our next event was the annual egg drop competition, held during Engineering Week in February. This is an event that our chapter traditionally does every year. All engineers were welcome to participate in this event. The goal was to construct an enclosure to house a raw egg, which would then be dropped from a third floor window onto the pavement below. The person whose egg survived intact would be the winner. In the event that more than one egg survived, the contestants would be judged based on their efficiency and creativity. The materials provided for construction were paper, straws, plastic cups, cotton, twine, and other readily available craft materials. The competition was intense among the eight or so people who attended. Everyone had a lot of fun building the contraptions and dropping them out the window. Several of the entries were successful in protecting the egg, and prizes were spilt among them.

In the late spring, we planned an event during final exam week. It was going to be a study break with free snacks and coffee that would be set up near one of the most popular computer labs in the mechanical engineering department. We were all set to go until we attempted to place an order through the student catering service and found out that student groups are forbidden from holding any events during finals period. Therefore, we could not hold the event. We

informed the new incoming officers of this discovery, so that they would not make the same mistake.

C. Other

It was necessary to hold an officer election immediately at the beginning of the fall semester because the position was left vacant following the untimely death of the student who was to occupy it. In the spring of 2012, Austin Brashears, who had been elected as the next president, passed away in a tragic automobile accident whole studying abroad in New Zealand. During the summer we decided that the secretary (myself) was the most qualified to take over as president so that we would not be without leadership in hectic first few weeks of the semester. It was decided to hold an election for the position of secretary as soon as possible, since we could not register our group with the student activities office with the position vacant.