PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT 2013-2014
North Dakota State University Pi Upsilon

A. Initiations

Mechanical engineering students in the top 25% of the junior class, the top 35% of the senior class, and graduate students with a minimum 3.0 GPA were invited to join the Pi Tau Sigma – NDSU Pi Upsilon Chapter. Candidates were invited to an information session where the President and Vice-President gave a presentation regarding the benefits to be a PTS member; food was served.

Initiates were escorted into a dimly lit room where the PTS symbols were illuminated on a projector. The initiates were seated at the desks and the Vice-President and President stood at the front of the room. The initiates were then presented with the Rituals of Pi Tau Sigma. After the initiations, the chapter hosted a pizza party for the newly inducted members.

Three initiations were held during the 2013-2014 school year; two were held in the fall semester to accommodate for scheduling conflicts with the inductees, and one initiation was held in the spring semester. The first initiation of the fall semester was held on October 31, 2013 and three members were inducted into the chapter. The second initiation of the fall semester was held on December 12, 2013 and six new members were inducted into the chapter. The spring semester initiation was held on April 3, 2014 and six new members were inducted, including one graduate student.

B. Chapter Activities

The NDSU Pi Upsilon chapter chose to make this year's focus improving chapter visibility within the Mechanical Engineering Department at NDSU and increasing membership count and involvement. This was an important goal for our chapter to achieve as we regained active status only two years ago, and we wanted to improve the chapter's health to maintain that status.

To achieve these goals, functions were held throughout the year to involve other students in the department to garner interest in Pi Upsilon membership; these included a barbeque, speaker presentations and department events. To start off the fall semester, Pi Upsilon in conjunction with ASME hosted an on-campus barbeque on October 2, 2013 during the lunch hour to welcome students back to school for the new school year and to answer questions about membership for both organizations. Over 50 students were served hotdogs, hamburgers, pop, and chips and expressed some interest in joining one or both organizations in the future. This event was successful and improved the relationship between Pi Upsilon and the local ASME chapter that had been established by holding joint events last year.

In addition to the barbeque, two Career Fair Nights were held during the week of NDSU's Career Expo in conjunction with ASME. Both events were held to help prepare students for the spring and fall career expos, and both were open to all students in the College of Engineering at NDSU. The first event was held on September 18, 2013; a representative from NDSU's Career Center gave a presentation on proper career fair preparation, etiquette, and interview tips. The second event was held on February 25th, 2014. A panel of employees from several companies that would be attending the Career Expo were asked to answer student's questions about what employers were looking for in potential employees and how to have a successful career fair. Representatives from Bobcat, John Deere, and Xcel Energy attended the panel.

At the end of the fall and spring semesters, Pi Upsilon hosted a junior, senior, and faculty event to help facilitate conversation between students and professors. Both the fall and spring events were held at the Fargo Billiards and Gastropub, were students and faculty were able to play pool together. The events were held on December 13, 2013 and May 9, 2014, and approximately 30 people attended each, including students and professors.

Approximately once a month, our chapter invites a guest speaker to give a presentation to improve our members overall education. Typically, these presentations are conducted by NDSU faculty members who discuss their research and ongoing projects. These presentations focused on informing students about different areas of research currently being performed at NDSU. The attenders had the opportunity to discuss graduate school options and undergraduate research opportunities with the presenting professor. The other benefit of the presentations is that students had an opportunity to interact with professors outside of lectures. In addition to faculty lectures, a bank loan officer from Bell State Bank gave a presentation on the loan application process and general financial advice. Our chapter also sent 6 members to participate in and critique a demonstration of a new product line for JDP Automation during the spring semester. These events were greatly appreciated by our members and helped them understand different aspects of planning for their future.

Keeping in accordance with the chapter goal to remain an active chapter and become more involved, two members from our chapter attended the 2014 Pi Tau Sigma National Convention at Texas A&M. The attending members were able to fully participate in the convention's activates and obtained new information regarding chapter activities conducted by other chapters throughout the nation and how to improve chapter visibility and membership. Our chapter plans to implement these changes learned from the convention to improve the quality of our members experience in NDSU Pi Upsilon.

PTS continues to give tours of the Mechanical Engineering Department to prospective students. Members appreciate the honor to be the face of the NDSU Mechanical Engineering Department to potential students and their parents. All the members agree that giving the department tours not only helps out the department, but shows us how much we have learned throughout our years here in the ME program. This academic year we have completed approximately 70 individual tours, accounting for approximately 40 service hours for Pi Upsilon.

A traditional activity of Pi Tau Sigma is volunteering. This year, we again volunteered as facilitators and co-facilitators at the NDSU Science Olympiad. Eight of our members participated and accumulated about 60 service hours for Pi Upsilon.

This year, our chapter adviser Dr. Robert Pieri decided that it was time to hand off the responsibility of advising to a new professor within the department. Though we were saddened to have him step down from his position as our adviser, all members were grateful for the effort and care that "Dr. Bob" has put into his long term as Pi Upsilon's adviser. To select a new adviser, the issue was first brought up to the mechanical engineering department's chair, who then asked for volunteers for the position within the department. The chair then provided the list of volunteers to our chapter, and we held elections for a new adviser by popular vote at a chapter meeting held on April 4, 2014. Dr. Xinnan Wang was selected to be Pi Upsilon's new adviser, and he was welcomed as adviser at the chapter banquet and election meeting held on May 1, 2014.

Between the two semesters, we inducted 15 new members and lost 10 members due to graduation, a second consecutive year of a net gain in membership. Even with the increase in membership, we continue to try to determine ways to actively recruit new members besides simply hosting an informational meeting. The fall barbeque was helpful for the fall recruitment by having the opportunity to inform students about PTS before the informational meeting. Hosting events with ASME and holding the Gastropub event have also seemed to improve chapter visibility and interest in membership for eligible students. Next year, we hope to implement some ideas gained from the PTS National Convention and involve some of the sophomore students in the mechanical engineering department in chapter activities.

C. Other

None