PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2013-2014

Alabama Pi Omicron

A. Initiations

The selection process of our chapter is rigorous due to a large student body whose growth as accelerated significantly over the past few years. The basic membership criteria is respected with the top 25% of Juniors and top 35% of Seniors from the Mechanical Engineering student body being selected for review. A list is developed and provided by our advisors for review by the current body of members. The moral commitment to learning relative to the scholastic success of the selected students is reviewed so that all students of dubious moral standing are removed from the list of possible entrants.

Upon verifying the selection, invitations to are sent instructing where the pre-initiation meeting is held and inductee packages are sent out. These packages contain a signature sheet with the names of the current Pi Tau Sigma members, initiates, and Mechanical Engineering professors. Members are required to obtain at least 75% of the initiate and member signatures and all of the signatures from the professors. This is primarily an introduction tool such that the members can associate and learn about one another as well as meet the professors. Meeting the professors is critical as it allows a personal connection which might bring recognition in the future and will allow inductees to be set apart as members of an elite organization. The package also contains a Pi Tau Sigma bent that is tarnished and unfinished that the initiates are required to sand and polish. Furthermore, they are required to wear with business casual as a point of during the week prior to initiation. At initiation there is a competition for the bent with the best finish.

For the initiation ceremony itself, the initiates go through a series of tests. First is a written test on the history and regulations of Pi Tau Sigma. This is followed by an oral test about various physical and mechanical principles that a student of this level would be expected to know. Once finished they are required to line themselves up in alphabetical order without using their hands or speaking. The initiates are then led single file by a senior member through a predefined path chanting “Pi”, “Tau”, and then “Sigma” in order down the line. After the lap has been completed the members are taken into a darkened room for the completion of ritual initiation. There they swear to uphold the oaths of membership and are taught the points of the crest; at the end they sign their names in our record book.

This year there were two new classes inducted with the Fall initiation on November 14, 2013 and the Spring initiation was April 17, 2014.

B. Chapter Activities

A number of activities were completed this year with more of a focus on increasing the potential of the current membership and expanding the name of Pi Tau Sigma on campus. Throughout the year we hosted guest speakers for the members to network and learn more about possible career

paths. The most prominent of these this year was BMW. Two representatives came and detailed a few of BMW's processes and activities. Professional development courses related to developing tools such as Linkedin profiles were also held and multiple group meeting were held to attempt to engage the memberships to act in campus activities and learn about their fellow members. A banquet was held at a local restaurant for the initiates to give them a chance to relax and meet with each other and the officers in greater depth.

We attempted to host Habitat for Humanity events and tutoring sessions for the student body, but the events ended up getting cancelled so we were unable to follow through. We were, however, able to help with the annual Science Olympiad hosted by the University's College of Engineering. Middle schools from across the state were invited to participate in a number of competitions and challenges related to robotics and engineering.

Many of the meetings this year were held with the intent of restructuring the current organization, with a greater the normal level of cooperation by advisors to help with the changes. The results are that some traditions will be yielded for next year and a new set of structures will replace them on a trial basis next year. There is expected to be a shift in the activities of the officers as well as an increase in total meetings with a more consistent structure and greater departmental participation. Further cooperation with a number of similar organizations within the Mechanical Engineering department is expected including the local ASME and SWE chapters.

Every semester we host a competition for awards known as the Purple Shaft and Blue Screw. The awards go to the professors who the students feel "shafted" or "screwed" them during the semester. The voting was done by means of an online survey due to difficulties associated with campus expansion. The competition was fierce as several professors pride themselves on the difficulty of their coursework, but the reigning champion remained on top for another year.

C. Other

This year we were able to send four delegates for The University of Alabama to the Pi Tau Sigma National Convention hosted by Texas A&M in College Station, Texas on February 21st through the 23rd. Our Treasurer, David Kwong, as well as Ethan Bruton, Alexis Cornelison, and Holly Judge were the attendees. Our representatives had numerous opportunities to interact with representatives from other universities and employers such as Schlumberger and British Petroleum. They participated in the election of national officers and listened to speakers from the hosts, the national officers, and others who were invited such as recruiters. The PTS speakers encouraged chapters to increase their involvement as a student organization. There was a career fair where the employers and recruiters spoke with the student representatives regarding resume critiques, seeking internship opportunities, and other related activities.

The convention was considered informative and an overall fun weekend on the Texas A&M Campus for the representatives. From the convention they were able to bring back a number of ideas to encourage chapter growth, increase involvement in the community, and learn to deal with many of the challenges held by the organization. Some ideas that were born of this included some attempts to build stronger relations with the college's administration. Our delegates had

nothing but good things to say about the convention and we look forward to sending our representatives again next year.