Pi Tau Sigma Annual Chapter Report

2012-2013

Alabama Pi Omicron

A. Initiation

The selection process of our chapter is very rigorous because we have a very large student body. The initial requirement for a student to be considered is that they must be in the top 25% of the student body and be pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. This list is easily obtained by our advisors. After, the current body sits down and reviews all possible applicants to determine if their moral commitment to learning matches their scholastic success. That is, that all students of dubious moral standing are removed from the list of possible entrants.

After the list has been appropriately verified invitations and inductee packages are sent out. These packages contain a signature sheet with all of the names of the current Pi Tau Sigma members, initiates, and all mechanical engineering professors. Members are required to obtain 75% of the student and member signatures and all of the professor signatures. This ensures that they not only know each other but have met and introduced themselves to any professors they may not already know. The professors in turn may recognize them in the future and will be able to set them apart as members of the elite organization. In the package there is also a bent of Pi Tau Sigma that is tarnished and unfinished. The initiates are required to sand and polish the bent at least somewhat and wear it as a point of pride with business casual during the week preceding initiation. At initiation there is a competition for the best looking bent and competition is generally fierce.

For the initiation ceremony itself, the initiates go through several tests. Their first test is a written test on the history and regulations of Pi Tau Sigma. This is followed by an oral test about the principles of the physical world that each student should have learned by this point in their career. Once finished they are required to line themselves up in alphabetical order without using their hands or speaking.

Once they are in order, the initiates are led by a senior member around Hardaway Engineering building chanting “Pi” “Tau” “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. They are taught the points of the crest and at the end sign their names in our record book.

This year there have been two new classes inducted. The Fall initiation was on November 28, 2012 and the Spring initiation was April 11, 2013.

B. Chapter Activities

Our chapter has a diverse schedule of activities that we complete every year and this year was no different. Throughout the year we host many guest speakers for the members to network and learn more about their possible future professional careers. The most prominent of these this year was Boeing. Two representatives came and detailed a few of Boeing’s processes and activities. Many students traded information and one of our professors was familiar with the speakers from a previous project.

At the University of Alabama there is a prominent campus wide fundraiser called “Beat Auburn, Beat Hunger.” It is a food/can drive that we hold as a competition with Auburn. This year, we teamed up with Tau Beta Pi and ASME to pool our resources and most efficiently collect from the engineering side of the campus.

We attempted to team up with ASME for Brush with Kindness and Habitat for Humanity events, but the events ended up getting cancelled so we were unable to follow through.

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 for this is done by placing money in mason jars with the professors’ names on them outside the mechanical engineering office. The competition is fierce as several professors pride themselves on the difficulty of their coursework, but there are occasionally upsets depending on the timing of certain projects throughout the year.

C. Other

This year we were able to send two delegates to the Pi Tau Sigma national convention held in Columbus Ohio. Our president, Wesley Childers, and our vice president, Robert McCullough, were the two attendees.

They both enjoyed a fun and informative weekend at Ohio State’s Campus. From the convention they were able to bring back great ideas to help grow our chapter and become more involved in the community for years to come.

One idea that came from networking and alumni involvement discussions at the convention was to have all potential initiates create a linked in account and join the Alabama Pi Omicron “Group” in order to become members. We did this at our chapter’s spring 2013 initiation and it went well. Our goals for this implementation are to add ways for members to network with professional companies, add ways to communicate within our chapter, and aid in our continued connections with alumni.

Others ideas from the convention included several community outreach programs through local high schools as well as freshmen mentoring programs within our university which we intend to explore in the next few years.

Our delegates had nothing but good things to say about the convention and we look forward to sending two or more again next year.