Pi Tau Sigma Annual Report

2009-2010

The University of Alabama Pi Omicron

A. Initiations

During the past academic year, the Pi Omicron chapter inducted the largest class in chapter history. During the fall and spring semesters, candidates for initiation were chosen by the faculty advisor based on current grade point average according to Section XXIII, Article III-V of the 2004 chapter guide. After the list of candidates was developed, a meeting of the current members was held to determine if each candidate possessed exemplary character. Based on group consensus, all candidates were invited to join the chapter. Emails and letters were sent to each candidate inviting them to attend the chapter's informal mixer. During the spring semester, graduate students in the department who either did not receive a BSME or received a BSME from a school that did not have a chapter of Pi Tau Sigma were invited to apply for graduate membership in Pi Tau Sigma. Following the guidelines of Section XXIII of Article III-IV a, it was determined that the chapter was eligible to induct five graduate members (because the chapter had 51 active members). Three applications for graduate admission were received and all of the applicants were invited to attend the spring informal mixer.

For the informal mixers, free food and drinks were provided to the candidates and a presentation was made explaining the requirements and benefits of membership in Pi Tau Sigma. A large portion of the active members were also on hand to talk to the candidates and answer any questions. After the mixer, each candidate was told to pick up a membership packet in the departmental office. Graduate candidates were told to obtain a letter of recommendation from two faculty members in the department. Graduate candidates were also told to send a copy of their resume to the faculty advisor. All three graduate members had outstanding resumes and letters of recommendation and all were invited to join. Graduate candidates were also required to pick up initiation packets in the department office. The packets included the history of Pi Tau Sigma, the history of the chapter, a key, and a packet of sheets containing the names of all current members and candidates and departmental faculty. Candidates were told to polish the keys by hand (no power tools were allowed, but chemicals were). The candidates were required to wear business casual during the week of initiation along with their polished key on a crimson and white ribbon around their neck. During the initiation week, candidates were required to obtain 75% of the current and prospective member's signatures along with all the department faculty signatures. This task was assigned so that each prospective member could meet and be congratulated by the department faculty and chapter members.

The Fall 2009 initiation took place on November 17th, with a total of 27 candidates deciding to join the chapter. The Spring 2010 initiation took place on April 22nd, with a total of 14 active candidates and 3 graduate candidates deciding to join the chapter. The initiates were required to take a test on the history and guidelines of Pi Tau Sigma and the Pi Omicron chapter. The initiate's keys were then judged to determine if they were adequately polished. The initiate with the best key received a $20 discount on their $50 initiation fee. Initiates were then asked general engineering questions (each candidate was required to answer two questions correctly). After this process, initiates were led into a candlelit room. They were stood in front of a candlelit table on which set the Pi Tau Sigma crest. The president and vice president explained the crest and read the guidelines of Pi Tau Sigma and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. Each candidate was asked to vow to uphold these ideals. After the fall initiation, new members were invited to join current members for a celebration dinner at their cost. After the spring initiation, a banquet was held at a local restaurant. Both the fall and spring initiates were invited and the cost of their meal was covered. Several older members also attended in order to get to know the newer members. A list of the members initiated during the past academic year follows.

Fall 2009 Initiates

Ben Austin, Ralph Banks, Lauren Bialoskurski, Brynn Bralley, Carl Breidenich, Drew Bullard
Tyler Campbell, Andrew Cibulas, Zach Coppens, Hunter Corum, Chad Ethridge, Mitch Eubank, Daniel Free, Daniel Gerber, Andrew Gilbert, Stephen Hamilton, Charles Heim, William Hicks, Thomas Langham
Kenny Mahan, Jesus Mares Jr., David Meyer, Brett Pennington, Rachel Roberts, Greg Stuhr, Frank Sutley, William Taylor, Daniel Whitaker, William White, Blake Williams

Spring 2010 Initiates

William Angel, Tanisha Booker, Philip Johnston, Frank Barringer, Sterlin Cochran, Mary Jones, Aaron Adams, Melissa Hembree, Nathan Ivey, Preston Jones, Andrew Saunders, Ryan Thomas, Ashley Randolph, BJ Short, Feng Qin, Scott Sumners, Christopher Sexton

B. Chapter Activities

During the 2009-2010 school year, member participation was increased through various service projects, including an engineering interest day and volunteering with our local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Pi Tau Sigma also had an intramural football and basketball team that members were invited to join.

During the college wide engineering interest day, members volunteered to help high school seniors learn more about our college of engineering. Members volunteered for such thing as giving tours of the college, demonstrating experiments, and setting up other activities. Members also volunteered to help our local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. During the service day, members helped with landscaping and cleaning up the jobsite. Pi Tau Sigma also started two intramural sports teams this year. Both our football and basketball teams had a large membership and both made it into the intramural playoffs.

The chapter held several meeting throughout the year. During these meetings, decisions were made among the group concerning service projects, group speakers, and chapter activities. Meetings were also held to approve candidates for membership and to elect officers for next year. Food and drink were provided during all official meetings. A meeting was also held to allow members to vote on several chapter awards, including outstanding junior, senior, and graduate student, as well as the Herbert Kuenzel Award, an award for any individual who has provided great service to the department of mechanical engineering. The chapter also held several social meetings at local restaurants/bars. The meeting places were decided through suggestions for meeting sites and then ultimately voted upon by members. These meetings provided us with some of our highest member turnout. A major goal of these social meetings was to foster brotherhood through a setting outside of academia.

The chapter hosted a guest speaker from the Rock Tenn Paper Mill in Demopolis. Mr. Byron Randall spoke on his responsibilities as a mechanical engineer at Rock Tenn, discussed the process of making paper, and also talked about some of the equipment that is used. Mr. Randall concluded his discussion the importance of post undergraduate education.

The chapter also organized the annual Purple Shaft competition. The goal is to raise money by students donating money to the teacher that may have slighted them during the year. Each year the most "unpopular" teacher is the recipient of the purple shaft, with the runner up receiving an award known as the blue screw. Members volunteered at the departmental picnic where the Purple Shaft and Blue Screw were awarded.

This year, the chapter sent four representatives to the national convention in Lubbock, Texas. With the help of the department, the chapter was able to pay for the expenses of each member. Representatives from our chapter voted on several issues and suggested allowing graduate students who had graduated with a BSME from a school with a chapter of Pi Tau Sigma be allowed to apply for graduate membership. The representatives indicated that attending the convention was a very rewarding experience.

C. Other

Transfer of Responsibilities

In order to sustain the integrity and reputation that the Pi Omicron chapter has strived to establish, several important steps were taken to transfer duties from the previous class of officers to the current class. A meeting consisting of all previous officers with the new officers was held to discuss chapter structure, responsibilities, and goals. Additionally, separate meetings between each newly elected officer and the previous incumbent were held to transfer position materials, knowledge, and responsibilities. Important chapter records and contact information are kept on file for any required circumstances. An officer's meeting was then held to discuss best practices, establish semester and yearlong goals, and arrange meeting times. With successful integration into the Pi Omicron chapter, each officer is now preparing to turn over their experience and knowledge to the next Pi Omicron class.

Plans for 2009-2010

In the next year, the Pi Omicron chapter plans to continue to increase involvement in departmental activities and to encourage community service.

Awards & Recognition

Dan Gerber– Outstanding Junior
Virginia Franco – Outstanding Senior
Michael Sealy – Outstanding Graduate Student
F. Lynn Hamric – Herbert Kuenzel Award

Graduates

Ralph Banks – Norfolk Southern; Indiana
Lauren Bialoskurski – Redstone Arsenal ArmyTesting and Evaluation; Huntsville, Alabama
Allison Copus – University of Alabama Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Chad Ethridge – Plans Unknown
Virginia Franco – Columbia University Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Daniel Free – University of Alabama Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Andrew Gilbert – University of Alabama at Huntsville Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Justin Hill – University of Alabama Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Tyler House – MTA; Huntsville, AL
Kenny Mahan – University of Maryland Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Justin Padinjaremury – Purdue University Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Andrew Saunders – Southern Nuclear Dothan, AL
Zach Smith – University of Alabama Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Will Warren – Texas A&M University Graduate School – Mechanical Engineering
Daniel Whitaker – University of Alabama Graduate School – MBA