PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2011-2012

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Phi Psi

Initiations

Due to Cal Poly's rules regarding providing student information our initiation process has gone through many difficulties over the past year which we expect to be ironed out by next Fall. Because Cal Poly does not allow any student club to have access to other students grades our selection process is done by sending the Mechanical Engineering department a list of requirements, current club roster, and an initiation E-mail which is then processed through the department and sent to an undisclosed list of students. This provides the inconvenience of not knowing how many students receive the club invitation and not allowing us to filter out the 1st year and 2nd year juniors who would not be allowed to join the club due to them not being at least third years. In the initiation E-mail a date is provided for the first club meeting (for Fall 2011 the date was November 10th and for Spring 2012 the date was April 17th) where we go over what Pi Tau Sigma does, the initiation process, and get an interest list. This is also the first time we get to see exactly how many students received and choose to reply to the initiation E-mail and us to tell all of the students who were 1st and 2nd years that they will not be accepted into the club at this time and that if they keep their grades up they could gain access when they become 3rd years. We have been trying to find a way to solve this problem (all of the honor societies at Cal Poly have been having similar problems over the past 5 years) and after meeting with the department we have come up with a new way to filter out students who better fit the restrictions to get into Pi Tau Sigma so this problem does not happen in the future. After the first meetings we wait for any stragglers who could not make it to the initial meetings to contact us and give everyone about a week after the first meeting to pay the 60 dollar admission fee. Other than the fee we require a 5 hour community service requirement to get into the club. This is a good way for students to learn how to take advantage of the many community service opportunities offered at Cal Poly or to participate in the club community service events we held throughout the year. At the very end of each quarter we have a banquet for the initiates we accepted that quarter where we all dress up and celebrate. Along with a prepaid dinner we have a contest to see who made the best plaque design with a prize for the winner.

Chapter Activities

This year, our chapter of Pi Tau Sigma held a number of general meetings. We used these meetings as an opportunity for members of the club to get to know each other and socialize. Additionally, we used the meetings to keep the members up to date with club news such as upcoming events. At one such meeting, we received input from the members about what they would like to see from the club in the future. At another meeting, we held elections for next year's officers for the first time in a number of years. We were encouraged at the turnout at these

meetings; one meeting drew about 15 members. We hope to grow the size of these meeting even further next year.

We participated in a Cal Poly event called Building an Engineer Day. On this day, students from local middle schools come to the Cal Poly campus and visit labs hosted by various Cal Poly engineering clubs and organizations. Along with the Cal Poly's Tau Beta Pi chapter, we hosted a lab where the students built and tested balloon powered cars. We used this as an opportunity to teach them a little bit about physics and the engineering design process of trial and error. This event was a huge success; the kids seemed to really enjoy the lab and we got five of our initiates to participate as their required community service. We look forward to becoming annual participants in this event in the future.

Pictures from Building an Engineer Day

At the very end of the year we held the first ever Pi Tau Sigma officer elections where anyone who was a past or new member of the club could run for any of the positions we offered. We picked a day for voting and gave anyone who was running time to present a speech to the club body. After we had a secret ballot, we presented the winners at a later date. As the club grows we hope to increase the number of positions available as well as increase the awareness of the elections.

Other

We are proud to announce a new development for Pi Tau Sigma which will be taking place over the next school year, 2012-2013. Since the beginning of this year it has been difficult adjusting to all of the previous officers leaving at the same time and therefore it has been the goal of each officer to bring Pi Tau Sigma back into the full fronts of clubs at our school. We have concluded that on top of continuing to have activities with other clubs at our school and staying involved with the local high school and middle schools in the area the best way to build a strong relationship with the department, bring about a new generation of Pi Tau Sigma enthusiastic to make a change and already with a foot in the door, and provide our current members with an enriching experience is to start a mentoring program where Pi Tau Sigma members will be able to act as a big brother/sister to a Mechanical Engineering Freshman(s).

After talking to teachers in our department about this idea they told us about how they were trying to find a way to solve the problem of mechanical engineering seniors reporting that the biggest problem they had in school was not enough guidance. To solve this problem the Dean of Mechanical Engineering, Andrew Davol, has set about recreating the way the mechanical engineering first year is taught and taking a more block schedule approach. Ideally what they want to happen is to have all mechanical engineering incoming freshman take part in a 3 quarter mini-lab which will act as an almost simplified version of our current 3-quarter senior project. This will allow the freshman to learn how to perform in a group, gain valuable knowledge in the resources provided from Cal Poly, and immediately start to feel more comfortable with asking questions to their teachers and fellow peers. After sitting down with Davol and talking about these ideas it was decided that the best way to help both Cal Poly and Pi Tau Sigma was to allow members of Pi Tau Sigma to act as mentors for the freshman groups and besides providing them with guidance on the project also building a relationship with them where hopefully they will become comfortable enough to start asking any questions they may have regarding school, classes, teachers, and other matters.

It is our hope that this mentoring program will become a huge success and hopefully make its way into becoming a Pi Tau Sigma tradition. As the year progresses we will make sure to try and get as many bugs out of the system as possible and by next year report what we have learned.