PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2011-2012

University of Wisconsin- Madison Alpha

A. Initiations

Each semester, we begin the initiation process in the first couple weeks of the semester in order to fully integrate the new initiates prior to the end of the semester. During the fall semester 2011, we initiated 24 new members to the organization as well as 14 new members for the spring semester 2012. The selection process is strictly based off of class rank and GPA. Each semester, the top 20%, 25%, and 30% of sophomores, juniors, and seniors, respectively, were sent a formal invitation to join Pi Tau Sigma. The selection criterion for the WI Alpha chapter differs from that of the National Pi Tau Sigma Constitution and Bylaws. This discrepancy in initiation protocol can be credited to a lack of communication between graduating officers and leaders taking on new roles. WI Alpha believes strongly in the importance of having young members that remain active in the chapter for longer than one to two years, which is not possible for most junior and senior initiates. The National PTS process of having sophomores as honorary initiates serves as an issue for because a new officer team is selected each semester at WI Alpha. This fast turn-over of officers leads issues with information getting lost between the transitions of officers. We will be working on the officer transition process throughout the fall semester 2012 to ensure new officers are aware of and understand the Pi Tau Sigma constitution and bylaws. If necessary, a committee will be formed to determine how to best transition the initiation process so WI Alpha is complying with the National Bylaws, yet sophomores can still get involved and feel as if they are strong members of the PTS community.

For each of the previous two semesters, the Pi Tau Sigma WI Alpha chapter held initiations in the Mechanical Engineering Building on campus. With the exception of a few, all new initiates and current officers were in attendance. The ceremony began with an introduction of the current officers and announcements of upcoming events throughout the semester. The ceremony continued as the President and Vice President read the Pi Tau Sigma Rituals following the initiation procedure. After initiation, the new members and officers enjoyed a catered meal provide by the WI Alpha chapter and enjoyed an entertaining and engaging speech from a member of the UW faculty. For the fall of 2011, we invited Professor Tim Osswald, and for the spring of 2012, we invited Professor Kim Manner to speak in front of the new initiates.

B. Chapter Activities

Throughout the past academic year, we organized five speaker events, two occurring during the fall semester 2011 and three occurring the spring semester 2012. Our speaker events are open to any active WI Alpha Pi Tau Sigma member, though we have also invited new recruits who were interested in PTS and wanted to find out a little more about the organization. For each speaker event we cater food for the attendees, whether it be Madison famous Ian's Pizza, Qdoba, or Noodles.

For our speaker events, we target companies in the Wisconsin and Midwest area that recruit mechanical engineers from the University of Wisconsin- Madison. These companies generally send UW mechanical engineering alumni as a representative from the company. During the fall semester 2011, we were able to schedule guest speakers from Mortenson Construction and BP. During the spring semester 2012, we were fortunate enough to schedule guest speakers from Epic Systems, Rockline Industries, and Integrys Energy Group. This gave Pi Tau Sigma members a chance to listen to industry speakers from a broad range of engineering fields, mainly software development, manufacturing, and energy. WI Alpha also organized a plant tour with MPC, a plastics manufacturing company based out of Walworth, WI. Unfortunately, the plant tour had to be cancelled due to member availability issues.

In addition to our general member meetings, we also held our yearly spring banquet on Wednesday, April 25th, 2012. The banquet included Pi Tau Sigma members, UW mechanical engineering professors and TA's that were selected by WI Alpha PTS members, our faculty advisor, Professor Roxann Engelstad, the banquet sponsor, Professor John Uecker, and the presenter of the 2012 F.M. Young award, Fred Young Jr. The banquet took place at the Brickhouse Barbecue, a restaurant near campus. We began with a social gathering, followed by a catered dinner. After dinner, we proceeded with the evening program as we presented awards for the most distinguished instructor

and the most distinguished TA. This year, the mechanical engineering department granted both the instructor and TA with $1000 in discretionary funding. The top five instructors were also awarded $500 in discretionary funding. The banquet finally concluded with the presentation of the 2012 F.M. Young award, presented to the most outstanding graduating member of Pi Tau Sigma.

During the spring semester 2012, we also implemented mandatory office hours for leaders within the organization. Each member who held an office position was required to spend one-to-two scheduled hours per week outside of our PTS office in the Engineering Centers Building. These scheduled office hours we initiated in order to provide fellow PTS members with tutoring help or form weekly study groups. This also gave members access to our old exam file located in the PTS office.

In addition to storing hard copies of exams in the PTS office, this spring semester PTS began creating an electronic database of former exams and homework sets for classes taken by PTS members at UW-Madison. This database will only be accessible to UW-Madison PTS members. This database will serve as a tool to help assist officers when tutoring fellow members, as well as an important study aid to current members.

We also began to emphasize a larger community involvement this past semester. Two of our members participated in the Madison Middle School Science Symposium. Each member was assigned as a mentor to a middle school student or group of middle school students in the Madison school district. As a mentor, these PTS members offered the students support and guidance in their science project and acted as a role model for aspiring engineers.

This year, Madison East High School (HS) held an event called Math Week. Throughout Math Week, Madison East had several guest lecturers from academia and industry talk about how math is used after high school. One of the WI Alpha PTS members volunteered to give a 50 minute speech to an introduction to engineering class at Madison East HS. During the lecture, the PTS member gave the students a perspective of what it was like to be an engineering student at UW-Madison. In addition, the PTS member discussed two of the research projects she had been involved with that were cross-disciplinary to emphasize to the students how mechanical engineering provides a vast array of opportunities.

The only activities WI Alpha had conducted over the past several years were monthly industry speakers and a yearly banquet. The WI Alpha officer team made it a priority this year to help increase the involvement of the organization within the Madison community and within itself. In an effort to find new ideas to increase chapter participation, learn more about PTS on the national level, and help regain WI Alpha's active chapter status, WI Alpha sent spring semester President, Joe Levene, and Vice President, Sarah Siverling, to the National Convention in March of 2012. The officers returned from the convention with an increased motivation to help WI Alpha return as an active chapter of PTS, and the officers have begun to plan for the upcoming academic year to ensure that WI Alpha continues to improve as a chapter.

C. Other

In summary, the WI Alpha Pi Tau Sigma chapter is continuing to take strides towards improving our community involvement and the service to our active members. Much of our time last semester was spent tying loose ends with unregistered PTS members from previous semesters. This mistake is inexcusable, and we are currently working to improve our office turnover process to prevent confusion or unawareness in the future.

Towards the end the spring semester, as we welcome on five new officers as PTS officers, we outlined goals we would like to achieve during the following fall semester. These goals and activity include: maintain three general member guest speaker meetings, schedule at least one PTS social event, encourage academic assistance to members through tutoring and old exam files, serve our community through a charitable or fund-raising event, and recognize fellow mechanical engineering students outside of PTS.

We are hopeful that these events will give members a sense of pride to be part of the WI Alpha chapter and will expose PTS to the Department of Mechanical Engineering. This will require a commitment from current PTS members, but will offer a rewarding experience as we move to restore WI Alpha as a exemplary, good standing chapter.