PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT
2014-2015
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. We initiated 13 new members this year with 10 in the Fall and 3 in the Spring. Spring initiation was low, likely due to the rushed process we had to make sure members could be initiated at the convention. 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 us because a new officer team is selected each semester at WI Alpha. This fast turn-over of officers leads to many issues with information getting lost between the transitions of officers. We will be working on the officer transition process next fall to ensure that 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 the Fall, 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 provided by the WI Alpha chapter and enjoyed an entertaining and engaging speech from a member of the UW faculty. For the Spring, initiations were held at the National Convention to honor the 100th year of our WI Alpha chapter.

B. Chapter Activities

Throughout the past academic year, we organized five speaker events, three occurring during the fall semester and two more occurring in the spring. 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's famous Ian's Pizza, Qdoba, Silver Mine Subs 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 2014, we were able to schedule guest speakers from Nexant. During the Spring semester 2015, we were fortunate enough to schedule guest speakers from the Campus Utilities and Therma-Stor. We also had Mechanical Engineering Department Chair and our advisor Professor Jaal Ghandhi speak about the department and the future of Engineering at the UW, and his research. This gave Pi Tau

Sigma members a chance to listen to industry speakers from a broad range of engineering fields and also a look into using an engineering degree to pursue other fields. Our members also gained some insight regarding the grad school opportunities that a great university like the UW provides.
In addition to our general member meetings, we also held our yearly spring banquet on Wednesday, April 29th, 2015. 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 Jaal Ghandhi, the banquet sponsor, Professor John Uecker, and the presenter of the 2015 F.M. Young award, Fred Young Jr. The banquet took place at the Old Fashioned, a restaurant near the Wisconsin Capital. 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 instructors and the most distinguished TAs. This year, the Mechanical Engineering department granted 1 Professor and 3 Teaching Assistants with monetary awards for their hard work and dedication in the department. The banquet finally concluded with the presentation of the 2015 F.M. Young award, presented to the most outstanding graduating member of Pi Tau Sigma.

We also mentioned that we wanted to "rekindle" our exam file at our meetings so we started 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. So far we have begun collection of old exams, and are working on making them available electronically.

We were also trying to lay the groundwork for a larger community involvement this past semester. One of our current officers is also an officer for ASME and we are working toward teaming up with their organization volunteering at a local food pantry. Many of our members expressed interest in helping out so this is something we will work on for the future.
The only activities WI Alpha had conducted over the past several years were monthly industry speakers and an end of the year banquet. The WI Alpha officer team will make it a priority this upcoming 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 President, Keith Dahl, Vice President Matthew Koeppel, and Tresurer Abhi Soni to the National Convention in February to Champagne, Illinois. The officers returned from the convention with an increased motivation to help WI Alpha remain 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. We hope to celebrate our 100th anniversary in the Fall, and are working on planning the event this summer.

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. Also, to prevent confusion with the turnover of officers and the overall organization of our chapter, we started making a guidebook that explains the expectations of everyone in the org.

Towards the end of the summer, we will be working to welcome new officers as PTS officers as a number of our officers are graduated. During these meetings, we will outline our goals and devise what we would like to achieve during the fall semester. These goals and activities will likely include: maintaining three general member guest speaker meetings, scheduling at least one PTS social event,

taking a company tour, encouraging academic assistance to members through tutoring and old exam files, serving our community through a charitable or fund-raising event, and recognizing fellow Mechanical Engineering students outside of PTS.

The department has made an effort to improve involvement at WI Alpha, by helping aide in officer transition, a major problem at our chapter. Many times new officers have no idea what is required of them, and by what date due to old officers leaving before proper training can be done. The department hopes to collect a list of all the required events and help the new officers learn what needs to be done so they spend less time learning the ropes, and more time organizing events and spreading 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 an exemplary, good standing chapter.