PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2009-2010

University of Southern California Tau Beta

A. Initiation

The Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma holds two initiations for new members every school year. Members are invited to join the USC chapter of Pi Tau Sigma by fulfilling the following academic requirements, calculated by cumulative GPA.

- Seniors must be in the top 30% of their class.
- Juniors must be in the top 25% of their class.

These class standings are determined by completed unit count, as determined by the University of Southern California:

- Juniors: 64-95 completed units
- Seniors: 96 or more completed units

The initiation ceremony itself consists of our faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Ronney, reading about the history and traditions of the Pi Tau Sigma organization, as well as asking prospective members if they will uphold the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Code of Ethics for Engineers. This ceremony is ended with official introduction into the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, and after these initiations our organization hosts an event to help new and existing members get to know each other better.

In the course of the past year, these initiations were held on September 25th, 2009, and January 29th, 2010. The initiation in September introduced 24 new students into the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, and the initiation in January introduced 6 new students.

B. Chapter Activities

From the outset of the 2009-2010 school year, the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma had several goals:

- Increase visibility on campus
- Increase member involvement
- Create a better and more organized infrastructure for a sustainable organization
- Become a chapter "in good standing" with regards to the national Pi Tau Sigma organization
- Become a recognized student organization on the USC campus
- Host at least:
    - One community service event
    - One industry related event
    - One social event
    - One initiation for both the fall and spring semesters

To help achieve these goals, a constitution was written to provide a framework for the chapter. This written record of how the organization was supposed to function kept the organization on track to progress and improve its visibility on campus.

To begin the school year, the Tau Beta chapter enlisted the help of a second faculty advisor, David Salter, to both find prospective members of our Pi Tau Sigma chapter as well as send out invitation emails. David Salter is the undergraduate advisor to the Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering department at USC, so not only does he have access to all of the academic files of the students, but also he meets with every mechanical engineering student that might have the ability to join this organization each semester. These emails, combined with written invitations delivered in envelopes to the classes of prospective members, spread information about the organization, and the first meeting was held on September 11th, 2009, during which the club's president, Erin Kampschroer, and the faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Ronney, were introduced. This meeting explained what Pi Tau Sigma was and the benefits of joining the organization as a student. The first initiation was held two weeks later, on September 25th, in which the new members officially joined the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, and new officers were elected for the 2009-2010 school year. The results of that election were as follows:

- President: Erin Kampschroer
    - This position was merely ratified by the group; Erin had previously served as secretary and been the student bringing the Tau Beta chapter back to prominence; it was more or less assumed that she held this role.
- Vice President: Dan Seal (Fall) & Jason Walker (Spring)
- Secretary: Felipe Figueroa
- Treasurer: David Anderson
- Funding Chair: Jason Walker
- Service Chair & Web Master: Nathan Pandian
- Social Chairs: Paul Birkner and Andrew Grace

During the fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year, the Tau Beta chapter had 24 new initiates, as well as 5 meetings during the year to update the club on events that the organization was participating in. The first of those events was a beach bonfire social held on October 29th. This was an opportunity for members of the organization to get to know each other better while enjoying a bonfire and s'mores at Dockweiler beach.

The next event that the Tau Beta participated in was a community service event in collaboration with another club on campus, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). The Halloween Fun Fair, held on October 30th, was a Halloween-themed fair for children attending nearby elementary schools to attend. Volunteers from Pi Tau Sigma and SWE manned booths for these kids to trick-or-treat, bob for apples, get their faces painted, and have costume contests. The neighborhoods surrounding the USC campus can be unsafe, so many parents are reluctant to let their children go trick-or-treating at night. This event was important because it helped increase the visibility of our organization; not only was it held with one of the most involved student organizations in the engineering school, but also the event was held in the engineering quad, so more and more people were seeing our influence on campus.

On October 31st, our organization held a bake sale to raise money for the chapter—this would provide for more meals at chapter meetings, Pi Tau Sigma stoles for graduating seniors to wear at the end of the year, and also any other miscellaneous purchases. The bake sale allowed members of the organization to socialize throughout the process of baking the cookies and brownies, thereby strengthening the friendship between members of the chapter. In addition, the event helped raise awareness of Pi Tau Sigma among the USC community, since many of the students who stopped by the bake sale were not necessarily in the engineering school.

On November 13th, the Tau Beta chapter went to the University of California Irvine campus to learn about the school's alternative energy research lab and the opportunities their graduate engineering program offers. Their lab focuses on fuel cells and hydrogen vehicles, and the tour involved large-scale fuel cells with capacities up to 250 megawatts, as well as experimental vehicles from Toyota and GM running entirely off of hydrogen fuel. It was an excellent way to get members a unique experience about the possibilities that graduate school could afford, as well as introducing USC students to how graduate programs at other schools worked.

This was followed by another community service event on November 21st, titled MESA Madness. This event was carried out by Pi Tau Sigma members and the MESA organization on campus, which is an organization that encourages local middle and high school students to go to college and pursue engineering and science degrees. This specific event was held in the engineering quad on the USC campus, and it was catered to nearly 200 middle school students. Pi Tau Sigma members manned booths that helped these visiting children to experience hands-on science projects, like building mousetrap cars or constructing electrical circuits to turn on a light bulb. This event furthered the visibility of our organization on campus, helping to cement our status as a student organization, as our chapter had never participated in events like these in the recent past.

The beginning of the spring semester for our chapter allowed us to introduce more students into our chapter, and we held a second initiation on January 29th. This initiation introduced six new students to the Tau Beta chapter, and the rest of the semester had four more meetings to keep members up to date on our chapter's events.

Like in the fall semester, after the initiation in January we held a potluck barbeque to welcome the new members to our chapter on February 20th. It was a great way for the new members to get to know the other members in the organization in a relaxed dinner atmosphere.

We had three members attend the national convention in Lubbock, Texas, this year: Erin Kampschroer, the president, Jason Walker, the funding chair who took over vice-presidential duties after Dan Seal could no longer make the commitment during the second half of the school year, and Nathan Pandian, the service chair. This was the second straight year the Tau Beta chapter attended the national convention, and it was very helpful to see how other chapters increased their visibility on campus and involved their members with their activities. It was also a good place to discuss the hosting chapter in 2012 for the national convention to get a better idea of the preparation necessary to host successfully. Many chapters in the break-out session wanted to come out to California for the convention because the weather is so much nicer than

other parts of the country in February, and being in this situation gave our newly reinstated chapter an idea of when we could make that kind of commitment.

Another social event was held when our organization invited its members to play paintball on March 6th. This was another event where people that were acquaintances could meet in an informal atmosphere to learn more about each other. These events serve to help our chapter bond, and as a result, collaborate with each other more so that meetings are more productive.

Another goal our chapter had this past year was to participate in Relay for Life to benefit the American Cancer Society. In order to make our participation in this event as successful as possible, we held a fundraiser two weeks before Relay for Life. On March 27th, our chapter hosted a benefit concert for the American Cancer Society that was held outdoors in the engineering quad on campus. It featured six bands, including outside groups comprised of USC alumni as well as current A Cappella groups on campus. This event was technically free to the public, though there was a suggested donation of $10. While this suggestion was not strictly followed, the event did manage to raise nearly $200 for our club's donation to Relay for Life, which took place on April 10th and 11th. The Relay for Life event was another opportunity for our chapter to get involved with community service, and because the event drew so many different students from USC, having our club there also helped with the recognition of Pi Tau Sigma on our campus.

C. Other

The important thing to realize about our chapter of Pi Tau Sigma was the improvement from last year to this year. During the entire 2008-2009 school year, the Tau Beta chapter only held three meetings and did not have a single initiation. That year was the first year after several years of absence that the Tau Beta Chapter was present at the National Convention. After that year, a concerted effort was made to have a more significant impact on campus, and to do this, a constitution was written, a faculty advisor was gained with the addition of David Salter, the undergraduate Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering school advisor, and additional officer positions were added so that our chapter would be more organized.

We also created a website for our chapter, which can be found here: http://ame-www.usc.edu/students/pitausigma/USC_Pi_Tau_Sigma/Home.html. The website itself had not been updated since 2005, so it had to be completely redesigned. We also forged new relationships with other organizations to get more involved on campus, namely the Society of Women Engineers, which is the best-known club in the engineering school, and MESA, which organizes community service events with grade school students from the surrounding Los Angeles community.

While we feel like we have improved significantly since last year, the Tau Beta chapter still feels there is room for improvement, and has a few goals for the upcoming school year:

- Continue increasing Pi Tau Sigma visibility on campus
- Continue increasing member involvement
- Continue building relationships with other organizations on campus
- Become a chapter "In good standing"

    - This will be complete during the 2010-2011 year, for this will be our second consecutive year holding both Fall and Spring initiations.
- Attain industry sponsors for the chapter
- Host at least:
    - One community service event
    - One industry related event
    - One social event
    - One field trip
    - One faculty mixer
    - An initiation in both the fall and spring semesters