PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2014-2015

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 consists of the Tau Beta chapter faculty advisor, Dr. Paul Ronney, reading about the history and traditions of the Pi Tau Sigma organization. Members who are being initiated recite a phrase stating that they will uphold the American Society of Mechanical Engineers Code of Ethics for Engineers. This ceremony is ended with an official introduction into the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma. Immediately after each initiation, the Tau Beta chapter hosts a social event with food to help new and existing members get to know each other better and talk about the organization.

Since Spring 2014, a new requirement of the initiates was introduced. Each initiate had to approach a mechanical engineering professor and initiate conversation with him or her, whether it be about a class, research, career advice, etc. They had to get the professor to sign the form stating what they discussed and present it at the initiation. The initiates reported that they enjoyed their conversations when they would not have otherwise had a specific reason to approach a professor. We plan on keeping this tradition in future semesters.

In the course of the past year, Fall initiation was held on September 26th, 2014. The initiation in September introduced just 3 new students into the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma. The Spring initiation was held on March 6th, 2015, where 6 new students were initiated.

B. Chapter Activities

The USC Tau Beta chapter remained active, while the USC Sigma Gamma Tau (aerospace engineering honors society) chapter was mostly inactive this year, which forces us to host a lot more purely PTS events. The first event of the year was our Welcome Back Beach Bonfire held at Dockweiler beach, near Hawthorne, CA. Held directly after the initiation proceedings, this gave the group the opportunity to get to meet each other in a more relaxed setting and form new bonds between members. Activities included engineering the most effective marshmallow roaster and singing the Pi Tau Sigma "Glory Dear Ol' Thermo" song.

Our next event was an "Evening with Dr. Ronney," one of the professors in the mechanical engineering department and our advisor for USC Tau Beta. The event was a great opportunity to hear Dr. Ronney talk about his academic history, astronaut training, and where thermal and combustion research is heading. We also had a great catered dinner and everyone in attendance really enjoyed the event.

Our chapter continued our relationship with Kevin Swenson, one of our PTS alums who now works for the Boeing Company and does recruiting for them. Kevin relayed information about Boeing events and opportunities to our members and also worked with our president to set up industry events for Pi Tau Sigma.

The first event was a resume workshop with Kevin on September 23, 2013. Snacks were provided while Kevin gave a short presentation on resumes and cover letters, as well as talking specifically about applying to Boeing. He then met with each of the 9 attendees individually to go over their resumes.

In September, invitations to join Pi Tau Sigma were sent out to potential new members. The fall initiation was held on September 26th, in which the new members officially joined the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma. Food was provided and more background about our organization was given to the initiates. Immediately after initiation, executive board elections for the 2013-2014 school year were held. The results of that election were as follows:

- President: Rachel Glazer (senior)
- Vice President: Traci Chang (senior)
- Secretary: Aaron Harris (junior)
- Treasurer: Andrew Ezarik (senior)
- Service Chair: Samantha Kaplan (junior)
- Industry Chair: Ethan Sox (junior)
- Social Chair: Adam Devine (senior)

Continuing our relationship with Boeing, Kevin Swenson organized a Boeing facility tour on October 24, 2014. This was an opportunity not open to the public for our members to tour the facilities. This event was held in partnership with SC Racing, the Formula SAE team. Our members toured the Boeing Satellite Systems plant in El Segundo, where we learned about how satellites go from "silicon to satellite" all within the same facility. The event was a resounding success.

This year we participated in a service event through the USC Volunteer Center. We signed up as a group for Friends and Neighbors Day, an event that pairs student volunteers with a half-day service experience in Los Angeles. The first one we did was on October 25th, where we packaged food at the LA Food Bank, and the second was on February 13th, where we helped younger students with arts and crafts projects. We had a solid turnout from our board and plan to do more of these events next year.

We had three members attend the national convention at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champign from February 27th through March 1st this year: Aaron Harris, the president, and Shveta Venkatram, the treasurer. This was the seventh straight year the Tau Beta chapter attended the national convention, and it was very helpful to learn about events and rituals done by other chapters. We enjoyed gathering ideas from other chapters on ways to engage our members more and plan to implement them in the coming year. We also enjoyed listening to the thoughtful and relevant advice given by the keynote speakers and panels. The convention attendees from our chapter also participated in the break-out session discussing the conventions for the following years and were able to add useful insight into the discussion.

Aaron Harris, Ashlie Reott (Phi Psi), and Shveta Venkatram at the Centennial Pi Tau Sigma National Convention at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2015.

Our off-campus event of the semester was a tour of the LAX Control Tower on April 17, 2015. This opportunity is VERY rare. We meet some of the control tower operators, an air traffic controller, and several other high-level personnel within the LAX workforce. We got to both enter the actual control room as well as watch trainees use the live simulator. Attendees also learned about the qualifications to become an air traffic controller and many of the

behind-the-scenes work that goes on to make air travel safe and effective. Everyone on the tour enjoyed it greatly.

The final two events of the semester were the spring initiation and our final meeting. Both included food for the attending members. At the final meeting, cords and stoles for seniors to wear at graduation were distributed. In addition, we held a brainstorming session to get ideas for next year.

C. Other

The Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma is proud of the improvements that have been made to the organization throughout the last couple years. During the entire 2008-2009 school year, the Tau Beta chapter only held three meetings and did not have a single initiation. The following year, the 2009-2010 school year, the chapter began to organize events, schedule regular meetings, and have an initiation in both the spring and the fall. However, the member involvement throughout that year was considerably low. Finally, during the 2010-2011 school year, the Tau Beta chapter became "In Good Standing" with the national organization and officially became a student organization registered with USC. Currently, the roster has increased to over 40 members, and many of the members actively attended the organized events. We have maintained contact with many of our alumni to provide students a connection with those already working in industry.

In the past three years, we have developed an internship database for our members. Current and past members can submit information about their internships and current members can view it. This is valuable information because it goes beyond what is in a typical job description, and provides students another resource when considering their future career goals.

While we feel like we have improved significantly over the past year, the Tau Beta chapter still strives to provide even more opportunities for members. A few goals for the upcoming school year are as follows:

- Continue increasing Pi Tau Sigma's visibility on campus, especially with incoming engineering freshmen
- Continue building relationships with other organizations on campus as well as company contacts
- Organize more events that bring in members of different industries to speak about their field
- Continue to provide methods of connecting members with industry contacts and recruiters
- Increase visibility and relations with the Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering Department
- Host the 2016 national convention
- Host at least:
    - One "Freshmen Welcome" event
    - Two community service events
    - Two industry related events
    - Two social events
    - Two events involving faculty
    - An initiation in both the fall and spring semesters