PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2013-2014

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.

For the Spring 2014 initiation, 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 October 7th, 2013. The initiation in October introduced 8 new students into the Tau Beta chapter of Pi Tau Sigma. The Spring initiation was held on April 11th, 2014, where 11 new students were initiated.

B. Chapter Activities

The USC Tau Beta chapter kept up their relationship with the USC Sigma Gamma Tau (aerospace engineering honors society) chapter this year. The first event of the year was cohosted with Sigma Gamma Tau on September 4, 2013. It was an "Evening with Dr. Eliasson," one of the professors in the mechanical engineering department. We had more than 20 members in attendance who ate dinner, listened to Dr. Eliasson talk about her life growing up in Sweden, her background into fluid dynamics, and her research into shock wave dynamics, and then got to tour her shock tube lab.

Our chapter also began the year by developing a 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 October 7th, 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)

The next event was another collaboration with Sigma Gamma Tau. It was a dinner with three representatives from the Boeing Company who are also USC PTS and SGT alumni. It was held on October 9th, 2013. It was a great way for 12 of our members to talk informally with the Boeing recruiters.

Continuing our relationship with Boeing, Kevin Swenson organized a Boeing facility tour on October 25. This was an opportunity not open to the public for our members to tour the facilities.

Another evening with a professor was held on October 29th, again co-hosted with Sigma Gamma Tau. The evening's professor was with Dr. Franke, a mechanical engineering faculty who teaches Mechoptronics and Meterials Science, and 10 of our members got to hear his life in Europe, and his interest and research in materials science. The night included a dinner from his home country of Germany, and overall the event was very popular.

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 February 8th, where we packaged food at the LA Food Bank, and the second was on April 19th, 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 Texas A&M University from February 21st through February 23rd this year: Rachel Glazer, the president, Andrew Ezarik, the treasurer, and Aaron Harris, the secretary. This was the sixth 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. 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.

Andrew Ezarik, Rachel Glazer, and Aaron Harris at the Pi Tau Sigma National Convention at Texas A&M University, 2014.

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. Finally, we elected our new executive board for the 2013-2014 year. They are:

- President: Aaron Harris
- Vice President: Ethan Sox
- Secretary: Brooke Seegan
- Treasurer: Shveta Venkatram
- Service Chair: Samantha Kaplan
- Industry Chair: Jon Chin

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 50 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 two 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
- Work on our bid to 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