PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

Fall 2016 - Spring 2017

University of Texas Kappa

A. **Initiations**

Selections and Recruitment Process

To be eligible for membership in the Texas Kappa chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, Mechanical Engineering students at The University of Texas at Austin must have completed 60 or more credit hours towards a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, while maintaining an overall GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. At the start of each semester, the PTS faculty advisor works to identify those students from this group who are also in the top 25% of the junior class or the top 35% of the senior class as defined in the Pi Tau Sigma Constitution. The list is provided to our chapter who then delivers invitation letters via email to all of the prospective members. The invitation explain the purpose of Pi Tau Sigma, describes some of the programs and events that the chapter participates in, and invites the prospective members to attend information sessions where they may learn more about the organization and the requirements for membership.

Initiation Requirements

The requirements for initiation into active membership in the Texas Kappa chapter are created to empower candidates and instill in them the Pi Tau Sigma core values. Candidates must meet several point system based requirements for attending events as well as some general requirements. Candidates must meet the 5-5-5 point requirements, earning 5 points for social events, 5 points for service events, and 5 points for general meetings. In addition to the participation requirements the candidates are required to create a "selfie portfolio" to meet other members of the organization, pay membership dues, pass a "PTS Constitution Quiz", and attend initiation.

Initiation Ceremony

Our chapter's initiation ceremony typically occurs two weeks before the end of each semester. This academic year's initiations were held on December 3, 2016 and April 22, 2017. We consider initiation to be a formal affair, and everyone in attendance is required to wear business professional attire. The initiation ceremony is conducted following the guidelines as set forth in the rituals of Pi Tau Sigma within the Mechanical Engineering building at UT. Once the initiation is completed, each pledge and officer signs their name in our Initiation Record Book that contains names from each pledge class and officer team since our chapter's charter year, 1931. The tradition of the Kappa Chapter has been to take initiates to the roof of our Mechanical Engineering building, and we now have the initiates take a picture on the roof and share their memories of Pi Tau Sigma. To celebrate the accomplishments of the new initiates, we hold a banquet every semester at a nice restaurant, where we recognize the candidates and actives. This spring we even gave out a few awards at the banquet, like best candidate, etc.

B. **Chapter Activities**

Cords and Stoles

In the spring of 2017, we made a strong push to improve participation with our non-officer actives of the chapter and are still continuing our efforts in different ways. One of the ways we sought to improve participation was to provide graduating seniors with cords and stoles to wear them at the graduation ceremony if they were able to meet certain requirements. Specifically, non-officer members had to earn 5 semester points to be able to wear cords and stoles. This program has had a significant impact on member participation since its implementation and has now become a staple of our organization. We had at least ten members purchase/borrow stoles as graduating seniors that likely would not have been involved without this program.

Fundraising

Each year our chapter raises money through several programs. We help to host the Student Engineering Council's Cheap Lunch, where we serve food and drinks to students of all majors on the lawn between the engineering buildings. In general, we sell pizza, chips, and soda at an extremely low cost. We have also hosted Burger Burns where we grilled burgers and sold those along with chips and drinks. We feel that, in addition to fundraising, our Cheap Lunches and Burger Burns simultaneously serves our community by giving students the opportunity to enjoy an affordable lunch right outside of their classes with their peers. Candidates and Actives help to run these events and are able to earn service points by helping out. This year, we hosted a total of four fundraising lunches. Not only did this increase our success in raising funds, but it also improved our campus visibility and recognition amongst younger mechanical engineering students. We also served lunch to middle and high school students and parents from all across the country who attended the annual Explore UT day, an event where campus is open to visitors who want to learn more about the university and its different programs. Finally, we continued and improved our popular morning coffee sales from the chapter office and beginning a Pretty Tasty Sweets campaign where we sold cinnamon buns every Thursday as well. In the Spring our big fundraising success was selling pancakes every Friday during lunch time. One officer each Friday would volunteer to make the pancakes to order on the spot with a portable griddle. After about two hours of sales we typically made ~$40 from each pancake day we hosted.

Departmental Activities

One of Pi Tau Sigma's core duties is to encourage participation in departmental activities. This year our departmental activities included maintaining the department's miniature steam engine collection and creating a career gateway elective handbook. Three years ago, Don Foster (BSME 1948), one of our alumni members, donated his collection of hand built miniature gas and steam engines to our chapter. Since then we have been entrusted by the ME department with the responsibility of cleaning and maintaining the engines so we could proudly display them in the ME building and at outreach events. A 1916 Case Steam Tractor, a Corliss Steam Engine, and a Hit and Miss gasoline engine are just a few examples of the 13 different engines. We were able to take these engines out and display them for the visiting students during Explore UT. The display was interactive and engaging and was able to help increase interest for engineering in young students.

The career gateway elective handbook is created each semester by our chapter. Our Vice-President compiles the handbook from the feedback from students who have taken the electives. This handbook provides a easy and helpful view of what each elective is like and how the class is taught making it easy for students to figure out which classes to take before registration.

Our final large departmental event was to host a joint registration prep night with the UT ASME chapter in order to help prepare all mechanical engineering students for the upcoming registration session. This was a huge success we gave away pancakes, donuts and lots of great registration advice hopefully the tradition will continue in future semesters.

General Meetings

The Texas Kappa chapter held chapter meetings every other Tuesday during the semester. We held six general meetings each in the fall and spring semesters. Each general meeting included a presentation by the officer team on chapter business and upcoming events, free dinner for members, a message from the corporate speaker, and a chance for students to network with the corporate reps and ask them questions about their presentation or about employment opportunities. We can happily report that several of our candidates established interviews as a direct result of talking to our sponsors during meetings as well.

Service

This was a successful year for our organization being involved in Service events including, Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, Explore UT, Student Panels, Food Drives, Clean ups, and other events. The first three of the service events listed above were on-campus programs where we were able to give back to our school. The other events are all off campus events where we were able to give back to our community and city. Introduce a girl to engineering day we were able to host and help out with activities to engage girls in school in engineering and hopefully increase their interest in the STEM field. Explore UT was a great opportunity to display the Don Foster Engine Collection to young students and their families and help to engage them in engineering. The student panels were recurring events where our members would sit on a panel to help answer the questions of prospective students. We also helped to participate in canned food drives during the semester where we were able to gather a large donation of canned food to give to the local area food bank. Several Clean ups were hosted during the year, ranging from helping out with the sustainability squad helping to recycle trash at the stadiums to helping clean a sustainable garden that UT has. Our chapter also helped to volunteer for other service events including volunteering as mentors at the TAME Capital Area STEM competition.

Social

Our chapter believes strongly in building relationships between our members. To foster these relationships, we engaged in the usual social happy hours and outings to different unique local attractions, and began having more unique social opportunities. The happy hours each semester were held at local restaurants for the members to have fun together and grab drinks and food with friends. We also hosted multiple game nights and Bowling nights as well as study nights with snacks. These were more informal easy to attend social events where members could come and go and meet people, have snacks, and enjoy themselves. We started having picnics as well where we would stop by local restaurants and then head over to the nearby park to eat and play

around outdoors for a while. There were also many social opportunities available during E- week this year as our organization participated in the engineering wide org competition and was able to win 6th place. There were many different types of events at E-week that were fun and engaging and allowed members to bond together and meet members of other organizations. We also began hosting more joint socials this year to encourage members of our society to be reach out and meet members of other organizations such as a joint karaoke event with the Society of Women Engineers. Moving forward we will continue to provide fun and engaging social opportunities and increase participation and continue moving forward with the joint socials.

Convention Participation

For the first time in recent history we had a small group attend the national convention in February there was a total of three officers who attended for the weekend. The convention was very eye opening as it was our first time directly participating in something hosted by the national PTS chapter. Highly recommend attending the convention yearly as a way to stay connected.

Interest Groups

In the Spring we tried hosting an internal interest group system for our members. Each officer paired up with another officer to host events related to their interest topic. For example, one group was the dancing interest group so that group would occasionally go to dance outings together like country dancing. The officers greatly enjoyed the program but it needs a little refinement to engage members more.

C. **Other**

Organization Performance

The Texas Kappa chapter has had an amazing year for growth especially the fall semester of this year. In the past our organization has been less known and not very visible even among the mechanical engineers. In the past several years our organization has been working to improve itself and our members participation. The fall semester of this year we had a very large class of initiates who were participating in events, this intake of new members helped to boost our organization's numbers and open up more opportunities for us. The spring semester we really helped to further improve the organization. We established consistency with how corporate supporters should be contacted and continuously improved our organization. Officer meetings allowed us to make progress and we plan to continue them in order for every officer team to maintain positive movement. Overall we had a lot of great ideas and made a lot of progress as a chapter and will be using that to move forward and continue to improve our organization in the future.

Website: For more information about our chapter, please visit our website: www.ptstexaskappa.com

Report compiled by: Robin Stewart, President Spring 2017