PI TAU SIGMA - TEXAS KAPPA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT
Fall 2013 - Spring 2014

Initiates and Initiation

Selection 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 for 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 with the M.E. department 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. Once the list of eligible members is determined, PTS officers hand-deliver invitation letters from the department to all of the prospective members and send an invitation via email written by the current president. The letter and email explain the purpose of Pi Tau Sigma, describe some of the programs and events that the chapter participates in, and invite the prospective members to attend information sessions where they can learn more about the organization and the requirements for membership.

Initiation Requirements

In order to get the new initiates accustomed to carrying out the core values of Pi Tau Sigma and to make membership in our chapter meaningful, our chapter calls for the candidates to meet several requirements for initiation. A points system is in place to ensure candidates get involved in both social and service events. Candidates must have 15 points by the time of initiation. A maximum of 5 points must be earned by participating in social events, and a minimum of 5 points must be earned by participating in service events. Candidates can also earn 1 point for each of the six general meetings that they attend. Additional requirements for initiation include submitting a resume to the recording secretary; paying membership dues by the 2nd general meeting; passing a "PTS Constitution Quiz;" obtaining signatures from all officers, membership candidates, and the faculty advisor; and attending initiation.

Initiation Ceremony

Our chapter's initiation ceremony typically occurs two weeks before the end of each semester. For the 2013-2014 year, initiations were held on December 5, 2013 and April 29, 2014, and we initiated 10 and 8 new members in each of the ceremonies, respectively. We consider initiation to be a formal affair, and all in attendance are required to wear business formal attire. Our long standing tradition has been to conduct the initiation ceremony on the roof of our Mechanical Engineering building. Prior to going to the roof, our initiates each semester were given a tour of some of the most cutting edge labs in the mechanical engineering building. After the tour, the initiation ceremony was conducted following the guidelines as set forth in the rituals of Pi Tau Sigma. Once the initiation was completed, each pledge and officer signed their name in our Initiation Record Book that contains names from each pledge class and officer team since our chapter's charter year, 1931.

To celebrate the accomplishments of the new initiates, we held a banquet both semesters at the famous Salt Lick BBQ restaurant in Driftwood, TX, where top candidates were

recognized. Through fundraising, we were able to afford to pay for the meals of all members, both new and old, who elected to attend.

Chapter Activities

Fundraising

Each year our chapter raises money through several programs. Our most common fundraising event is PTS 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, sodas, and candy at an extremely low cost--about $1 per slice of Domino's pizza. We have also grilled burgers and sold those along with chips and a drink. We feel that, in addition to fundraising, our version of Cheap Lunch simultaneously serves our community by giving students the opportunity to enjoy an affordable lunch right outside of their classes with their peers. Labor from PTS members and candidates is procured on a volunteer basis, and therefore the lunches count as a service event for candidates to earn their required points.

This year, we hosted a total of five 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. Chapter recognition has been and will continue to be an important goal for us, so there is no doubt that we will continue this event moving forward. Furthermore, we also served lunch to middle and high school students 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 all the different programs its departments offer. We sold over $1,000 worth of food at this year's event. Finally, we continued our popular morning coffee sales from the chapter office. In addition to coffee, however, we began selling popular snacks (e.g., Sun Chips, Starbursts, and Snickers) throughout the day as well. The combined fundraising efforts raised over $2000 this year.

Service

Service events of this year for our candidates and actives included a slew of the longstanding Texas Kappa service events, as well as the addition of a few new ones. Our service events included our usual Peer Advising, Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, Explore UT, Austin Food Bank, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, Pease Park Cleanup, Austin Cap 10k, and Austin Pets Alive. The first three of the service events listed above were on-campus programs. ME Peer Advising is one of our chapter's signature service duties. During registration, we provide suggestions to underclassmen on scheduling, classes, and professors. We are the only group in Mechanical Engineering besides the Advising Office itself with the qualifications needed to properly advise students, so our schedule for registration weeks is always packed. Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day entailed providing labor to the on-campus day-long program for introducing young girls to the world of science and engineering, including providing food and concessions to the over 5000 elementary and high school girls who turned out. At Explore UT, in addition to the lunch fundraiser we ran, we also set up a booth to introduce visiting students of all ages to fundamental principles of Mechanical Engineering. We set up an exhibit of our 13-piece miniature steam engine collection and ran the engines using compressed air while describing each engine's principles of operation to the audience.

As members of Pi Tau Sigma, we also held volunteering within the community as a high priority. Volunteering for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure involved helping set up and tear

down all the equipment, scaffolding, and banners for the finish line area. Our candidates and actives served hundreds of homeless and impoverished Austin citizens when we volunteered with the Austin Food Bank. To help keep our local parks clean and beautiful, we helped pick up trash from our nearby Pease Park. During the Cap 10k, we manned the recycling stations and helped pick up trash at the end of the race. Lastly, we looked after the lost pets of our community we volunteered with two animal shelter events with Austin Pet's Alive by walking dogs and cleaning out cages and by helping setup for a special adopting session called the Dog Rescue.

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, conducting ME faculty interviews, constructing a Job Interview Question Database, and conducting formal peer advising for over 400 undergraduate students in the Mechanical Engineering department.

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. For both the fall and spring, our engines officer worked on creating documentation for each engine explaining how the engine worked and the history of its design. The ME faculty interviews entailed gathering a group of PTS members together to meet with some of the job candidates the ME department was considering hiring in the spring. The department invited us to have lunch with each of candidates, ask them about their interests and areas of research, and give feedback to the department about whether or not we liked the candidate and would enjoy having him or her as a professor. These interviews were a lot of fun and greatly helped the department gather some student input to help them make their hiring decisions.

One of the most important activities that we participated in last spring was formal peer advising. In years past, our peer advising consisted of an officer and a couple of candidates sitting at a table in the Mechanical Engineering building lobby and informally answering questions about different classes and professors. This year, however, we continued our new tradition of working with the advising department to officially incorporate us into the advising process, sending over 400 undergraduates to our office to be formally advised on prospective classes, different professors, and each student's plan to graduate in four or four and a half years. This program was particularly important for two reasons. First, formal peer advising gave officers an opportunity to directly give back to the Mechanical Engineering community and department at our school. Second, this program also greatly increased awareness of Pi Tau Sigma, especially among freshmen and sophomores that would have probably otherwise not have heard of us until their junior years. Since the students and department advisors thought that the first iteration of this program was so successful, the department allowed Pi Tau Sigma to advise more than 33% of the undergraduate students in the Fall and Spring semesters.

Special Events

During the spring semester, our chapter usually hosts the Carnot Class Golf Tournament, which involves a day of golf with students and corporate partners attending. This year we were

not able to host our golf tournament due mainly to a lack of corporate interest. However, we plan to tackle preparation for this event much more vigorously in the coming year so that we can begin hosting it again.

Social Events

Our chapter believes strongly in building relationships between our members and in the importance of team cohesion. To foster these ideals, we engaged in social happy hours, outings to different unique local attractions, and attending sports events. The happy hours each semester were held at local restaurants for the membership candidates to get their signatures for initiation and to have fun together with the members of their candidate class, as well as actives who want a break from studying. We also had a mini-golf event at Peter Pan Mini Golf, a local Austin attraction that allowed our candidate to familiarize themselves with the officers. Finally, after having a very successful year of fundraising, we were able to take our candidates and actives to a few very fun and special events, such as Blazer Tag, a huge indoor laser tag studio and the end of year banquet at Salt Lick BBQ in Driftwood, TX. We also had two very large and special social events for our members, one each semester. In the fall, we took a large group of people to K1 Speed, an indoor go kart racetrack that features high speed karts and timed race events. In the spring, we took a group to Top Golf, a very special experience for everyone who wanted to go and a great way to get our actives excited for future social events.

General Meetings

The Texas Kappa chapter held chapter meetings every other week each semester. As mentioned previously, membership candidates were required to attend all meetings unless they had a hard conflict such as a class or an exam. We held five general meetings each in the fall and spring semesters. Each general meeting included a presentation by the chapter president on chapter business and upcoming events, a free meal for PTS members and candidates sponsored by a corporate speaker, 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. In the fall, the companies that sponsored meetings included Chrysler, Cameron OneSubSea, Cinetics, Det Norske Veritas, and National Instruments. In the spring, the sponsors were Accenture, Anheuser Busch, Wood Group, Applied Research Laboratories, and Pinnacle AIS. All of these meetings went very smoothly. We especially enjoyed watching members and candidates talk with the representatives after the meetings to exchange information and business cards. We can happily report that several of our candidates established interviews as a direct result of talking to our sponsors during meetings as well.

Cords and Stoles

In the spring of 2012, we made a strong push to improve participation with our non-officer actives of the chapter. In order to do this, we bought cords and stoles at the beginning of the semester and required seniors to earn points in order to be eligible to wear them at the graduation ceremony. Specifically, non-officer members had to earn two and four semester points plus attend one service event to be able to wear cords and stoles, respectively. This program has had a significant impact on member participation - we have consistently had approximately ten actives per meeting, as opposed to approximately two before. Most impressive, however, is that this program also improved upon the actives' non-existent participation in service and social events to having them become driving factors at some of our

events. We look forward to seeing how much we can expand on their involvement to keep our chapter healthy and thriving.

National Convention

This year, our recording secretary, Rudy Torres, had an enjoyable and productive experience at the Pi Tau Sigma National Convention hosted by the Texas A&M's chapter. Rudy networked with several members from other chapters, learned about national goals and priorities, and applied advice that he received from other chapters' presidents to improve our organization in the spring. Due to financial constraints, we were unable to send as many members to the national convention that we wanted to. We hope to send at least two people to this coming year's convention.

Scholarships

In the 2013-2014 year, we made a change to our relatively new tradition of awarding scholarships to outstanding members of our society. In the Fall semester, we maintained our tradition of monetary scholarship. We believe that scholarships are a great way to recognize members and candidates who have shown a lot of dedication and effort to our society. Therefore, we set aside $250 for the Most Outstanding Membership Candidate, which was given to the winners at our celebration dinner for new members at Salt Lick BBQ. The selection criteria for the scholarship was heavily weighted on points (the number of social events attended and service hours recorded by each candidate/member), but financial need and leadership were also considered. However, in the Spring semester, we decided that having a plaque dedicated to the Best Candidate and Best Active would be more meaningful than providing a one-time monetary payment. We purchased plaques, named them after the first winners for each category, and have them permanently mounted in the office.

Society Organization

We have witnessed a lot of growth in our organization from both new candidates joining our organization to the participation of actives during the last year. We also saw growth in turnout from the new programs run by our chapter over the last two years. From these awesome additions, our officer group has had to adjust by reorganizing our officer positions. The officer positions carrying from last year include President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corporate Liaison (formerly Corresponding Secretary), Parliamentarian, two Service Chairs, two Social Chairs, Engines Officer, Student Engineering Council (SEC) Representative, Special Events Coordinator, Fundraising Director, Actives Chair, and Historian. To assist with maintaining an up-to-date website, we have also added a webmaster as one of our officer positions. This addition was successfully implemented during both semesters this year. Our elections are held per semester immediately following the initiation ceremony, allowing only fully-initiated PTS members will be elected to officer positions. Each candidate for a position gives a short speech on why they believe they can serve well in the position, followed by questions from the other members. Then the nominees leave the room while the other members cast their votes on written ballots. The officer group is run by the President, who runs the biweekly general meetings and officer meetings on off-weeks. Only actives who have previously held another officer position are eligible for president. The Vice President assists the President and keeps track of the progress of membership candidates. The Treasurer creates a budget for the year and handles reimbursements for members. The Recording Secretary is in charge of keeping

track of attendance at general meetings and other events, up-keeping our email account, and sending out weekly emails. The Corporate Liaisons are responsible for finding speakers for general meetings. Our Webmaster updates our website and creates any event sign-ups that we need, and our Historian documents events by taking pictures. Our Service Chairs, Social Chairs, and Fundraising Director are in charge of planning events that accomplish the objectives of their respective positions. The Special Events Coordinator is in charge of planning the annual Carnot Classic Engineering Golf Tournament, advertising it to companies and student organizations, and procuring sponsorships. The Actives Chair creates new incentives for initiated non-officer members to stay involved, and organizes events for active members only. The Parliamentarian is in charge of learning Robert's Rules and facilitating their use during chapter meetings. In the Fall 2012 semester, we purchased polos for the officers to add a level of poise and professionalism to our positions. We decided that they should be worn on campus each Tuesday that we had a general meeting. We decided to do this for a few reasons. First, some of the most popular engineering organizations on UT's campus (e.g., ASME and TBP) had bought polos the year before and proclaimed the success the polos had in reminding members that they were hosting meetings that night when e-mails did not suffice. Increasing participation on the part of active members was one of the most important goals for our chapter in the 2013-2014 year, so we felt that this would help. Second, by having our officers wear the polos every other Tuesday to their classes, we hoped to increase general awareness of our organization, which was another important goal that we are constantly trying to achieve. Finally, having all of the officers wear the same polos definitely increased the perception that our chapter was organized and professional, which said to prospective candidates that joining the Texas Kappa chapter would not be a waste of their time or money.

Not too long ago we were an underperforming society with very few events. Now, we have doubled the number events that we host and have greatly increased interest and membership in our chapter. We have built a strong house on a strong foundation, and now hope to continue building our chapter's prominence in upholding the Pi Tau Sigma core values of integrity, leadership, and service for years to come.

Websites

For more information about our chapter, please visit our website:

www.ptstexaskappa.com

For additional information on some of the events we participated in, please see the following websites:

Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure: http://www.komenaustin.org/komen-race-for-the-cure/
Austin Food Bank: http://www.austinfoodbank.org/
Austin Pets Alive: http://www.austinpetsalive.org/
Explore UT: http://www.utexas.edu/events/exploreut
Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day: http://www.engr.utexas.edu/wep/k12/girlday
K1 Speed: http://www.k1speed.com/austin-location.html

The Texas Kappa officers for the 2013-2014 academic year were:

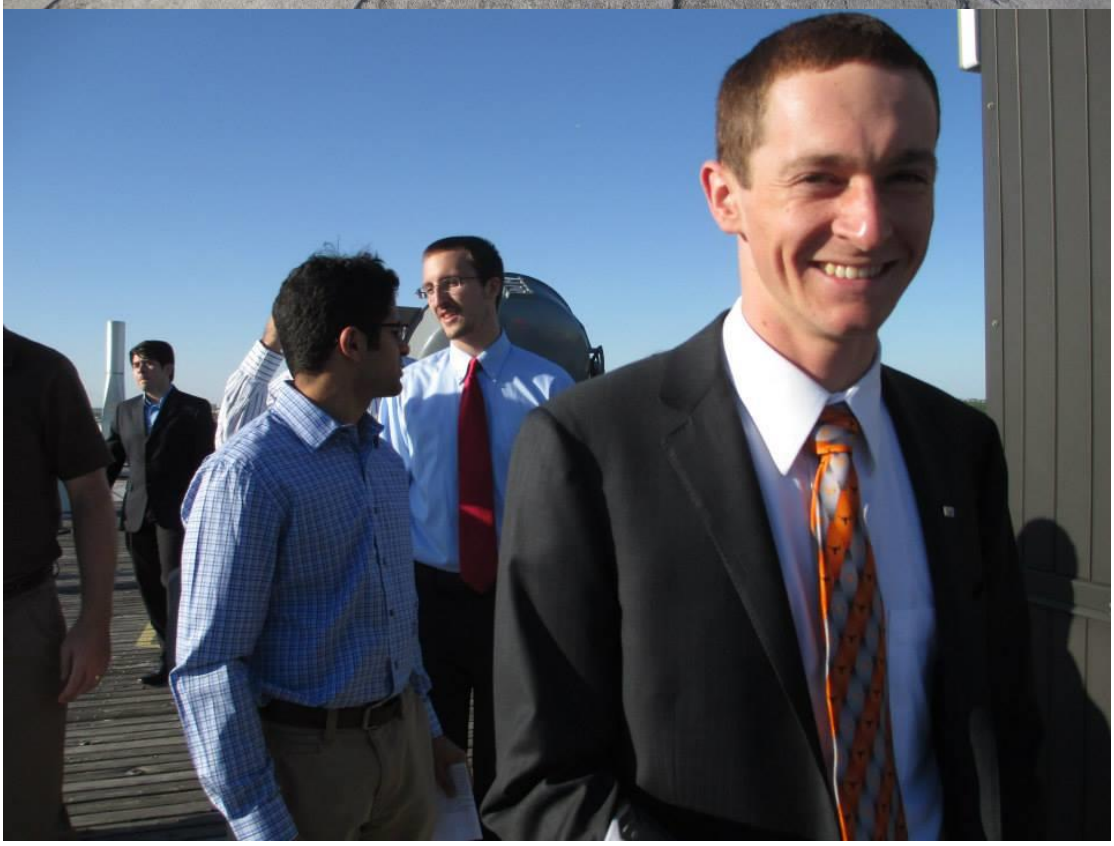
Fall 2013

President	Jeremy Carlson
Vice President	Paul Tyger
Treasurer	Kristen Bateman
Recording Secretary	Ryan Sisak
Corresponding Secretary	Nick Meriwether
Service Chairs	Jill Bartlett & Davis Ballew
Social Chairs	James Kendrick & Josh Joachim
Active Chair	Jeremy Poast
Fundraising Director	Jennifer Lin
Engines Officer	Kevin Reedy
Parliamentarian	Kevin Reedy
Webmaster	Davis Ballew
Historian	Albert Phan
Special Events Coordinator	Nick Meriwether
SEC Chair	Michael Lowder

Spring 2014

President	Nick Meriwether
Vice President	James Kendrick
Treasurer	Austin Baker
Recording Secretary	Rudy Torres
Corresponding Secretary	Jill Barlett
Service Chairs	Albert Phan & Wendy Siu
Social Chairs	Jeremy Poast & Kristen Bateman
Fundraising Director	Jennifer Lin
Engines Officer	Terrell Saltarelli
Webmaster	Davis Ballew
Historian	Jenna Foale
Special Events Coordinator	Josh Rester
Parliamentarian	Daniel Smallwood
SEC Representative	Joshua Joachim
Actives Chair	Kristina Robinson

Report Written By: Terrell Saltarelli and Wendy Siu

Pictures:

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