2017-2018
Virginia Delta Xi

A. Initiations

The Virginia Delta Xi chapter held one initiation this academic year at the start of fall semester 2017. A total of 22 bright mechanical engineers, including 16 third years and 8 fourth years, were initiated at the ceremony. At the start of the fall semester, all candidates meeting the GPA requirements were informed of their candidacy for membership via letters that were clandestinely posted in the mechanical engineering lounge overnight--a chapter tradition that always seems to provide a little bit of mystery and generate excitement among potential members. At the ceremony, the official Pi Tau Sigma induction script was read before the inductees, who then signed the rollbook. Afterwards, pizza was served and new members were able to mingle among themselves and meet the current PTS leadership team.

B. Chapter Activities

Our first major service event was the Habitat for Humanity Rake-a-thon. Eight PTS members raked three Charlottesville community members' yards to raise money for Habitat for Humanity. Our second major service event was Kid*Vention, an event focused on getting kids excited about science hosted by the Virginia Discovery Museum. At the event, PTS members managed an educational activity for young Charlottesville students. We chose to demonstrate buoyancy by having children make aluminum foil boats. In addition, many members independently volunteered at UVa's Madison house, which coordinates volunteering in a wide variety of activities. Other activities members volunteered at include the Rise Against Hunger care package packing event, and the Engineering Open House.

Third year member Sarah Bonde attended the PTS convention in Miami. A third year student was chosen so that what they learned at the convention could be used to grow and improve our chapter in the coming year. Sarah will be our incoming president for the next academic year.

Every year, our chapter facilitates the Pi Tau Sigma Outstanding Mechanical Engineering Faculty Award. All fourth year mechanical engineers were invited to nominate "a mechanical engineering faculty member that you believe deserves to be recognized for their contributions to students, the mechanical engineering department, and the university." Professor Rita Schnipke was deservingly chosen to receive the award, which was presented at the Mechanical Engineering Department Awards Dinner in April.

At the end of spring semester, a meeting was held to get input from members about the future directions for our chapter. Discussion and surveys decided almost unanimously in favor of changing our organizational priorities to focus more on service to mechanical engineering department, and less on community service. For instance, hosting tutoring sessions for young engineers and organizing professional development events. In addition, we considered the pros and cons of making the induction processes require more work, but also more engaging for new initiates.

Ultimately, it will be up to next year's leadership to shape the future of the chapter. Elections were held at the end of spring semester to fill the roles of president, membership, service, and treasurer. In addition, the chapter decided to create and fill the new position of

Professional and Networking Events Chair to accomplished the aforementioned goals of increased.

C. Other

We hosted several sessions to help fourth year members polish and paint their brass PTS keys as a group activity. Instead of polishing keys by hand, members would use a buffing wheel, sandpaper, and touching-up paint to personalize their keys. This added a mechanical engineering flare to the process that many members seemed to enjoy.