PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT
2013-2014
Virginia Delta Xi

Initiations

The Virginia Delta Xi chapter of Pi Tau Sigma initiated students in the top 10% of the second year class, top 25% of the third year class, and top 35% of the fourth year class. Professor Gavin Garner, who fully took over advising duties this year, obtained the list of eligible students from the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and provided the names to our chapter president.

The candidates for initiation were sent an email inviting them to an information session to learn more about the history and requirements of our organization. At this information session, we also informed the candidates about the service requirements for initiation. The initiates could either participate in one of our Pi Tau Sigma sponsored events, or in a volunteer event of their choosing if they wrote an essay detailing the value of their contribution.

Towards the end of each semester, we went through the initiation rituals with our initiates. We followed the script set forth by the Pi Tau Sigma Constitution and Bylaws. To celebrate this occasion, we also provided a pizza party for new and existing members. Finally, we provided bents and instructed the new members on how to complete them.

On December 8, 2014, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter initiated 3 new active members for the fall. On April 23, 2014, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter added 5 new members.

Chapter Activities

In an effort to strengthen our chapter, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter hosted a variety of events this year, both new and old. Our first event was a fourth-year networking night that we sponsored along with the University of Virginia chapter of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. On September 18, 2014, we hosted representatives from National Instruments, the CIA, Deloitte, and Wiley Wilson. This event allowed our graduating mechanical engineers to interact and network with prospective employers. The event was well attended by our students, with approximately 70 of our 120-student class attending. Furthermore, several of these students received jobs with these companies for the following year. We got very positive feedback from both students and employers alike, and we look forward to continuing this event in the future.

Every semester, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter requires its initiates to perform at least one community service event. In both the fall and the spring, one of our service opportunities involved working with Camp Holiday Trails. This is a camp for mentally and physically disabled children, so that they can have the opportunity to attend a real summer camp. In the winter, we worked on clearing a pasture of brambles so that the horses could have a better grazing area. In the spring, we participated in their Spring Spruce-Up, where we prepared all of the cabins, trails, and activity sites for use after the winter. All in all, we had around 8 students attend each date and everyone had a great time and made a valuable contribution to our community.

New this year, we organized another volunteering event at the Richmond Science Museum. On February 23, 2014, four volunteers and our faculty advisor participated in a children's science day. We helped volunteer at an egg drop competition, and competed in a separate college category. One of our chapter members won the competition. We also assisted Professor Garner in manning the University of Virginia mechanical engineering booth. We had a variety of 3D printers and projects that we presented to children and adults alike. Our booth was one of the most visited and generated a lot of interest.

Our chapter organized some new social activities. On February 14, 2014, our chapter along with the UVA chapter of ASME went on a tour of the International Institute of Insurance Highway Safety, located in Ruckersville, Virginia. We were given an overview of all of their activities, and got to witness a frontal impact test of a Nissan SUV. We had about 20 students attend, and everyone had a great time. Following this activity, five of us went to a local elementary school and taught children about what we as mechanical engineers do. We also assisted them in a noodle racecar design competition. Several weeks later on March 29, 2014, our chapter went to Blue Mountain Brewery, a local brewery close to our campus. We ate lunch and socialized, and then got a tour of the brewery operations. We had about seven people attend, and again all had a good time.

As has been our tradition in the past few years, Virginia Delta Xi sent a representative to the Pi Tau Sigma National Convention. This year, our 3rd year representative attended the convention held at Texas A&M. He had a great time, thoroughly enjoyed the networking opportunities, and learned more about the duties and responsibilities of a Pi Tau Sigma executive board members. He came away with a new understanding of the club and ideas of how we can improve our own chapter.

Other

On May April 30, 2014, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter selected a student and faculty member to win our annual Pi Tau Sigma Student Award and Outstanding Mechanical Engineering Faculty Award. These individuals were selected based on academic performance, service to the department, and representation of Pi Tau Sigma ideals. These awards were presented at the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering department picnic.

As in the last few years, Virginia Delta Xi has continued to strengthen our bond with ASME. Our chapter advisor, Professor Garner, is also the advisor of ASME, so this bond has only grown stronger. We have worked together to organize volunteer events and social activities. Furthermore, we have used this bond to recruit and convince eligible members to join PTS.

It is noted that the officer who prepared this annual report was Allison Bacon, the 2013-2014 President of the Virginia Delta Xi Chapter. Responsibilities for the position of President in the chapter have been officially transferred to Esther Klinger (eek3cf@virginia.edu) for the 2014-2015 academic year. Gavin Garner (gtg7g@virginia.edu) will continue to be our faculty advisor for the coming year. Elections were held for all the other officer positions, and an additional 3 officers were appointed for the coming year.