2018-2019
Virginia Delta Xi

A. Initiations

The Virginia Delta Xi chapter held one initiation this academic year at the start of the Fall 2018 semester. A total of 16 students were initiated, including 13 third years and 3 fourth years. In September, all candidates meeting the top 25% GPA requirement were notified of their invitation to join via letters from the Executive Board, posted in the student lounge overnight. Those interested attended an interest meeting and then those who wished to proceed attended our initiation ceremony. At the ceremony, the official Pi Tau Sigma induction script was read before the inductees, and once they agreed to the terms of membership, the initiation roll-book was signed by all new members. We served dinner and snacks afterwards to congratulate our new members on their achievements and welcome them into our fraternity.

B. Chapter Activities

Our first major event was an internship review, hosted in late August, in order to educate our peers about opportunities available to them professionally. A number of Mechanical Engineering students, both Pi Tau members and not, prepared mini talks about their internship experiences from the summer and delivered them to a room full of engaged engineering students. The event helped third years start to consider what kind of internships they might want to apply for, and provided a chance for fourth years to reflect on their experiences and consider what kind of jobs they may want moving forward. Another major event of the year occurred second semester, in which we had a booth at Alpha Omega Epsilon's (female engineering sorority) annual philanthropy event, Ladies in the Lab. This event brought grade-school aged girls to our university to learn about opportunities available for them in STEM. Many different engineering majors, organizations, and employers hosted tables with hands on activities for the girls to participate in. At our table, Pi Tau Sigma members spoke about getting a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and demonstrated physics and fluids concepts using a bottle rocket experiment. Pi Tau volunteers worked along A.O.E. volunteers at our table to help girls construct a car with provided supplied to fill up with air and water to see who could get it to go the furthest. The event was a great success, with coverage of our table by the local news team present. Our members especially enjoyed getting to share their love of engineering with potential future students. (For the news article see: https://www.nbc29.com/story/40304506/ladies-in-the-lab-event-inspires-young-girls-to-look-into-stem-fields)

Third year member Emily Davenport attended the PTS convention in Fort Collins, Colorado this past year. Our chapter always chooses to send a third-year student so they may bring their knowledge gained back to UVA, and take their new ideas to help shape our chapter the following year. Emily will be serving as the President of our chapter in 2019-2020.

Every year, our chapter facilitates the Pi Tau Sigma Outstanding Mechanical Engineering Faculty Award. All fourth-year mechanical engineers and third year Pi Tau Sigma members 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 Natasha Smith, a relative newcomer in the department, deservingly won the award this year for her unwavering dedication to students, no matter how big or small their concerns or questions. Pi Tau Sigma was proud to honor her with this award at the annual Mechanical Engineering Department banquet dinner and awards ceremony.

In meetings held in the spring semester, we placed emphasis on gathering feedback from the chapter at large to determine the direction of the group for future years. We saw an increased desire for more intra-chapter social events, as well as more freeform ways of service to the mechanical engineering department (for example, many of our members are already involved in clubs like SWE or 3D printing club, and those groups already host their own established service events.) As the new Exec board takes lead of our chapter, it will be up to them and their peers to determine how service requirements will work moving forward, and what the best forms of giving back to our mechanical engineering community look like. The incoming Executive Board has already begun to come up with great ideas to increase the chapter's involvement in the Department and community beyond in the coming academic year.

C. Other

As an initiation requirement, we host key polishing and painting sessions in the lab of the mechanical engineering building, where members use buffing and polishing wheels to get their keys up to a respectable standard. These events are always attended by multiple members, and doing these sessions all together are a fun way to build camaraderie while fulfilling a duty of being in Pi Tau Sigma.