PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2011-2012

Virginia Delta Xi

A. Initiations

The initiation procedure of the Virginia Delta Xi chapter follows the requirements and procedures set forth in the Pi Tau Sigma Constitution and Bylaws. Students in the top 10% of the sophomore class, top 25% of the junior class, and the top 33% of the senior class are eligible for membership in the organization. The chapter advisor, Professor Robert Ribando, obtains a list from the secretary of the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering that identifies students' GPAs and class rank. From this list, the advisor selects the top students and provides the chapter president with the names of these students.

Potential initiates are sent an email invitation to join the organization and those interested are required to attend a mandatory information session outlining the history of the organization, the community service requirement, and the dates of important events throughout the semester. In addition, eligible members must fulfill a 4-hour community service requirement to proceed to the initiation ceremony. These initiates can either complete the service project that is organized by the chapter or they can complete an independent, pre-approved service project through a number of service-oriented organizations at the school, such as Habitat for Humanity or Madison House.

Following the successful completion of the service requirement, initiates attend an induction ceremony held at the end of each semester. All facets of the induction ceremony follow the ritual procedure outlined in the Pi Tau Sigma Constitution and Bylaws. To celebrate the initiation of the new members, a pizza party is held during the ceremony while all the new members are gathered. As a part of the induction ceremony initiates are expected to polish the bents that they receive and are given emery cloth to assist the process. Additionally, all new members are given ribbons with Pi Tau Sigma's colors, azure and murrey. Last but not least, all initiates are taught the secret handshake as outlined in the 2011 Pi Tau Sigma National Convention.

On November 13th, 2011, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter initiated 13 new active members for the fall induction period. On April 22nd and May 1st, 2012, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter added a total of 9 more new active members.

B. Chapter Activities

To kick off the year, the chapter sold students FE reference manuals at a discounted cost in order to assist students with the required review class in the fall semester and to prepare them for the FE exam. The sale of these books also was used as a fundraiser for the Virginia Delta Xi chapter, accruing $130 for the chapter to use.

For the first time ever, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter hosted a networking night at the University of Virginia. On September 20th, 2011, the chapter hosted representatives from Rolls-Royce, Lockheed Martin, Defense Intelligence Agency, ExxonMobil, SAIC, General Dynamics Electric Boat, HDT Robotics, TASC, and Bechtel Marine Propulsion. This event served as an opportunity for all 4th year mechanical and aerospace engineers to meet employees from these well-known companies and potentially seek employment. The event was extremely well received by students, employers, and even faculty. It was hosted in the brand new design and lounge room with food and drinks provided through the engineering student council, and approximately 75 students of the 120 student class attended. Additionally, a number of students in our class ended up with jobs with companies that were represented at the networking night as a result of being in contact with the representatives that attended. Many companies expressed their satisfaction with the event stating that it was the best one they had been to at the school and reiterated their desire to attend in following years.

Each semester, initiates are required to fulfill a 4-hour community service requirement for membership in the organization. While eligible members are free to pursue pre-approved independent service projects, the majority of students fulfill their requirement at a service project organized by the chapter.

On October 23rd, 2011, the Virginia Delta Xi chapter volunteered at Camp Holiday Trails to assist with their process in closing down for the winter. This service included light trail maintenance, painting fences, and organizing supplies. Camp Holiday Trails is a non-profit organization that is committed to helping children with special needs. They run a summer camp for these children, allowing the kids to experience an overnight camp and many exciting outdoor activities.

The Virginia Delta Xi chapter offered a fun event for members in which they were able to attend a "Rotunda Dinner." The well-known event at the University of Virginia takes place in the Dome Room of the iconic Rotunda, with this dinner taking place on November 3rd, 2011. The chapter purchased a table at this event that was intended for engineering-related organizations at the school. This elegant event included a wonderful catered dinner and speeches by project managers from the area.

On November 19th, 2011, a group of Pi Tau Sigma members volunteered additional time toward the Rivanna Trail Clean Up in Charlottesville, VA. This service event was separate from induction criteria as an additional way for students to give back to the community. The members assisted in clearing a path for the Rivanna Trail that circles Charlottesville, VA by raking leaves, removing roots, clearing branches, etc.

For the first time, Pi Tau Sigma was included in the Engineering Leadership Dinner and Discussion, on February 27th, 2012. The President and 3rd Year Representative of Virginia Delta Xi attended the event and added their valuable input to the discussion. Additionally, both officers were able to communicate with various other engineering organizations to increase transparency and attempt to coordinate on future events. Events like this are a good sign that Pi Tau Sigma is gaining reputation and status as a noteworthy honor society at the University.

As in past years, Virginia Delta Xi sent a representative to the Pi Tau Sigma National Convention. This year San Jose State Phi Zeta hosted the convention from March 2nd – 4th. Despite being very expensive and time consuming to travel from the east coast, we were able to represent our chapter at the event. The 3rd Year Representative attended the convention so that he could better serve the organization as the likely President for the 2012-2013 year. He came away with many different ideas that he wishes to build upon in the upcoming year as our next President.

This trip was only possible due to additional work to obtain funding through the school. The President and 3rd Year Representative worked hard with members of the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering faculty and the overall engineering school to apply for travel funding. In the end, they were able to draft a comprehensive budget and funding request and were granted $250 from the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering department chair.

On March 31st, 2012, the chapter participated in the Annual Spring Spruce-Up event at Camp Holiday Trails. The goal of this event was to fully prepare the camp for the children that would be visiting in the coming months. This five hour event included cleaning all the cabins and ensuring that each cabin had all the items required on the checklist. Also, members were able to rake leaves and tidy up around the various camp areas as seen in the picture below.

C. Other

In April 2012, the 4th year class of mechanical engineers selected a student and a professor to receive the PTS Student Award and the Outstanding Mechanical Engineering Faculty Award, respectively. These individuals were selected based on their continual demonstration of the ideals of the organization and because they act in a professional manner in all their endeavors. These two awards were presented to the recipients at the annual Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering department picnic held at the end of the 2011-2012 school year for graduating seniors in those engineering disciplines.

Another point of note is that Virginia Delta Xi has formed a bond with the ASME chapter and plans to participate in events together in the future. Previously, there was no coordination between the two, but after efforts this past year, they are now working together. We expect to have extended cooperation and activities in the upcoming school year.

It is noted that the officer that prepared this annual report was Erik Schiminger, the 2011-2012 President of the Virginia Delta Xi chapter. Responsibilities for the position of President in the chapter have been officially transferred to the former 3rd Year Representative, and newly elected President, Stuart Diller (sbd4zz@virginia.edu), for the 2012-2013 academic year. The chapter advisor, Dr. Robert Ribando (rjr@virginia.edu), will remain the same for this upcoming year. Also, elections were held for all other available officer positions with 4 additional new officers for the upcoming year.