2019-2020
San José State Phi Zeta

A. Initiations

Both of the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 initiation procedures had the same requirements. In order for candidates to be invited to be a member of Pi Tau Sigma - Phi Zeta, the candidate had to be in the top 25% of their mechanical engineering class. Around the third week of the respective semester, students who met this requirement received an email from the president of the chapter via the SJSU mechanical engineering department chair. The invitation granted them an invitation to attend an information session. The candidates who were interested in learning more about the PTS Phi Zeta chapter were given the option to attend an info session that was convenient for them. Two separate time slots on two different days were set to be as accommodating as possible for the different candidate's schedules. The candidates would then RSVP to their respective info session via a google form and the chapter officers would prepare a presentation to give during both info sessions. This presentation summarized the history of Pi Tau Sigma as a whole, the history of the Phi Zeta chapter, notable alumni, industry and social events from prior semesters, the rough schedule of events for the respective semester, the requirements for the entire initiation process and contact information for the different officers. At the end of the info session, the candidates could ask any questions that they had and they were also given the opportunity to fill out the membership application, pay their membership fee and acquire their PTS key. For both the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 info sessions, there was an average of around ten people in attendance.

The requirements in order for the candidates to become PTS members were to fill out their membership application, pay their membership fee, attend at least two industry or social events throughout the semester, polish and frame their key prior to the initiation ceremony, and finally to attend the initiation ceremony. The initiation ceremony consisted of several steps. First, the candidates would line up outside the venue in alphabetical order about five minutes before starting the ceremony (a few extra minutes were given to people that may have been running late). Next, the vice president would check to make sure that the candidate's keys were polished and framed as instructed. Once this was done, the candidates were walked into the venue and sat down in isles in the same alphabetical order. The president and vice prescient would then commence the ceremony and read their respective parts from the ceremony handbook. Once the ceremony guidebook steps were complete, the candidates would go up one by one to where the president and vice president were located and would sign the chapter role book, again in alphabetical order. As the candidates went up one by one, a picture would be taken of each candidate with the fellow officers. After all of the candidates had completed this step, a group picture would be taken. The final activity of the initiation ceremony was for the officers and new initiates to mingle while drinking coffee and eating some donuts.

The image below depicts the Fall 2019 initiation in which a total of seven candidates were initiated into the Phi Zeta Chapter. The officers can be seen behind the wooden table and they are Julio de Pereda (Treasurer), Marcus Freitas (President), and Hugh Pham (Vice President), from left to right respectively. Unfortunately, our advisor was not able to attend the Fall 2019 initiation, but he was able to attend the Spring 2020 initiation.

Given the 2020 pandemic, the Spring 2020 initiation was held via video conference on Zoom. Due to the circumstances, there were only four initiates in the Spring. The image of the virtual initiation can be seen below.

The officers can be seen in the top row of the image, Marcus Freitas (President), Julio de Pereda (Treasurer), and Hugh Pham (Vice President), from left to right respectively. The chapter advisor

Fred Barez is pictured in the middle of the third row. The initiates can be seen in the middle row and the leftmost rectangle of the third row. The last person on the third row is Haadi Elahi and he will be the new treasurer for the 2020-2021 academic year. Another image of the online initiation can be seen below.

B. Chapter Activities

In order to better organize the chapter activities, they will be split up into the fall and spring semesters. For both semesters the following structure applies: as the semesters progressed, the officers would plan several industry and social events that the candidates could attend. On several occasions, there were events in which the Phi Zeta chapter collaborated with SJSU's chapters of Tau Beta Pi, ASME, and several other clubs. This allowed for the candidates and officers to interact and network with engineers from all disciplines.

Fall 2019

The Fall semester was a busy one in terms of chapter activities. There were several exciting industry and social events that members and initiates benefited from. Many of the industry and social events were not photographed as everyone mainly focused on getting to know each other. The future officers have been instructed to take more pictures for the following reports. Some social events are as follows: bowling at the SJSU student union, Boba hang out, indoor soccer at the Spartan Rec Center, Engineering Olympics with Tau Beta Pi. Industry events are as follows: Company Tours of Tesla, Facebook, Carbon 3D, Lunch and learn with PSC Biotech, and Lockheed Martin, and a Job Hunting Workshop hosted by the SHRM club at SJSU.

Spring 2020

The Spring semester was an unusual one for the entire global population. This was no different for PTS. The semester started off as any other normal semester, four of the Phi Zeta officers even attended the Spring 2020 National Convention in Rochester, New York. It was a great experience overall not only for networking with the top mechanical engineers from around the world but also for building a stronger bond between the officers that attended. It was a memorable experience overall, and one that created memories for a lifetime.

Once the convention was over, there were still a few weeks of normality in which the info sessions were held. The two info sessions were the last in-person events of the semester due to classes being moved fully online and the shelter in place being enforced in the San Francisco Bay Area. As soon as the officers found out that in-person events would no longer be allowed, quick adjustments had to be made in order to begin fully shifting to online events. The officers wanted to ensure that candidates still had an opportunity to enjoy as normal of an experience as possible. Thus, an effort was made to plan several online social and industry events. To increase the number of events possible for the candidates, collaborations were planned between Tau Beta

Pi and Pi Tau Sigma. Netflix watch parties were planned between the two honor societies on three different occasions. Another social event called Coffee with PTS Officers was organized in which the candidates and officers all had coffee or tea via Zoom. The candidates had a chance to ask questions and just socialize overall. This event replaced the coffee/boba nights that would have otherwise taken place in person. In terms of industry events, a talk via Zoom was organized with a Stanford mechanical engineer named James Bui. The talk was organized such that he would go over his engineering journey and give advice to the candidates about the learning experience that he has had as a student and as an engineer. The event was successful with an attendance of 25 people via Zoom. It was an insightful and refreshing experience overall and one which the candidates, active members, and officers enjoyed. Given the restrictive circumstances, the Phi Zeta chapter adapted quickly and responded in an appropriate manner which allowed candidates to still have as enjoyable an initiation experience as possible.

C. Other

Aside from the chapter activities, another component that the officers gained a learning experience from was presenting to the Board of Associated Students for National Convention travel funding. Julio de Pereda (Treasurer) and Marcus Freitas (President) put together a presentation that included an itinerary for the convention, cost of the convention tickets, cost of flight tickets, and presented that to the board. Additionally, a part of the presentation was to explain how SJSU would benefit from our experience. The presenting officers explained that there was much knowledge to be gained from the other chapters present that would then be used to strengthen the San Jose State Phi Zeta Chapter. In the end, the 2020 PTS National Convention funding request was approved, and the officers had a great time.