Pi Tau Sigma Annual Chapter Report

2019 - 2020

Georgia Tech Nu

A. Initiations

This year's initiations marked a departure from previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible initiates included the upper quarter of juniors and upper third of seniors by class rank. These students received notification of eligibility from the Vice-President of Memberships early in the semester and were invited to attend one of two information sessions in the following week. The information sessions conveyed the purpose and ideals of Pi Tau Sigma and also detailed chapter events and student involvement opportunities. The standard requirements for a normal semester are listed below:

1. **Complete at least two mechanical engineering courses**
    a. This requirement ensures that initiates have made appropriate progress toward completing core curriculum classes within mechanical engineering. It also serves to verify that eligible students have confirmed their interests and are unlikely to change majors.
2. **Attend information session**
    a. Eligible initiates receive important information regarding the initiation process at this meeting. Circumstantial exceptions are made if a student cannot attend; however, that student must schedule a meeting with an officer to receive this information.
3. **Obtain two mechanical engineering faculty recommendation signatures**
    a. No formal recommendation letters are required; however, initiates must receive faculty signatures as an endorsement of their academic excellence and integrity. An underlying function of this requirement is to promote faculty-student engagement and to connect initiates with mentors and possible research advisors.
4. **Obtain five Pi Tau Sigma member signatures**
    a. This item necessitates networking within the organization and promotes camaraderie that ultimately bolsters participation and visibility of the chapter on campus.
5. **Pay $70 lifetime dues**
    a. Initiate dues help to fulfill obligations to the national organization and also fund the initiation dinner and various chapter activities.
6. **Polish individual Pi Tau Sigma key**
    a. Initiates must polish individual keys to the satisfaction of the current executive board members. Initiates show commitment and dedication to the organization through several hours of detailed polishing. The chapter uses this requirement to

connect initiates with the student-run Invention Studio which provides all students access to top-of-the-line equipment found in a professional machine shop.

7. **Attend one Pi Tau Sigma social event**
    a. Social events include organized dinners, company sponsored top golf events, company sponsored bowling events, company information sessions, key polishing gatherings, and other various Pi Tau Sigma sponsored events. These events encourage the formation of fraternal bonds among initiates and current members.
8. **Attend one Pi Tau Sigma philanthropy event**
    a. Philanthropy events include sandwich making and donating to charity events, volunteering at the Pi Tau Sigma Research Fair, volunteering at our Pi Day Mental Health event, and attending 3D printing key chains and laser engraving coasters to give to faculty events.
9. **Attend two general meetings**
    a. Meetings are held on a biweekly basis throughout the semester. Initiates receive information on upcoming events and meet current members through their participation.
10. **Present a short self-introduction presentation at a weekly meeting**
    a. The presentation introduces new initiates to the membership through a discussion of personal interests and goals.
11. **Submit a paragraph regarding personal goals within Pi Tau Sigma**
    a. Initiates are required to think deeply about their involvement and contribution to the organization. Executive board members read the submissions and can identify areas for improvement in the initiation process and ideas for future events.
12. **Pass the initiation examination**
    a. The initiation exam consists of questions regarding the history of Pi Tau Sigma both on a national level and chapter level. Initiates are provided a brief history to study when they receive their initiation packets at the information session.
13. **Attend mandatory initiation ceremony and banquet**
    a. An initiation ceremony is held each semester during the final week of classes. Formal business attire is required of all participants. The ceremony is conducted by the president and vice-president and includes the reading of the rituals. Following the ceremony, a catered banquet dinner is provided to initiates and officers as well as a guest speaker who addresses all members upon the conclusion of dinner.

The initiation ceremony for the fall 2019 semester was held on November 11, 2019 and included the induction of 4 members. Our speaker was Dr. Jonathan Rodgers, a Georgia Tech Mechanical Engineering associate professor. Due to the pandemic, in an abundance of caution, some amendments were made to the above requirements for Spring 2020 initiates. Namely, requirements 3 (faculty signatures), 4 (member signatures), 7 (social events), 8 (philanthropy event), and 9 (general meetings) above were WAIVED for spring 2020 initiates. Additionally the short introduction (requirement 10) need only be created (as a single powerpoint slide) and emailed to the VP of Memberships if it hadn't already been presented, the initiation examination (requirement 12) was converted into a google forms format and taken online, and the initiation and banquet (requirement 13) was postponed to the beginning of fall 2020. Given the current

ambiguity about Georgia Tech's campus organization policies regarding the return to campus in the fall, the initiation will likely still be in an online format, but hopefully Georgia Tech will provide more guidance as the semester approaches. Even with the ambiguity of this semester, 18 initiates have taken expressed interest and have taken the necessary steps to be inducted in the fall. Because the banquet is an important bonding opportunity between newly initiated members, executive board members, and Georgia Tech's faculty, regardless of the initiation status we intend to hold the banquet for spring 2020's initiates as soon as it is allowed under Georgia Tech policy and deemed safe under sound moral and ethical judgement by the executive board.

B. Chapter Activities

The following chapter activities are presented in chronological order for the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters.

Fall 2019

Executive Meetings- 9/16, 10/28, /11/4

Meetings held with the Fall 2019 executive team to discuss logistics and plan for events throughout the semester.

Initiate Info Sessions- 9/3 and 9/4

Students meeting the minimum requirements for induction into Pi Tau Sigma were invited to an informational meeting about the organization. Past chapter activities and plans for the current semester were discussed so that eligible students could learn more about our organization on a campus and national level. Current exec members were present to talk about what they were planning for the semester and to tell interested students why they chose to join Pi Tau Sigma. Initiation requirements were also discussed and students were able to begin getting their initiation packet signed by current members at this meeting. This meeting was held twice to accommodate for different scheduling conflicts.

Philanthropy: Resume Critique- 9/5

Current members volunteered at this event, held in the ME building on campus, where ME students could get advice on their resume and prepare for the upcoming campus career fair.

General Meeting I- 9/9

This was the first general body meeting of the semester. Jarrett Wilbanks from Shell was our speaker. He shared with members what he does at Shell as well as how to apply for current opportunities at Shell. Food and prizes for the meeting were provided by Shell.

Pratt and Whitney Info Session- 9/10

This event was hosted jointly with the Aerospace engineering honor society. Pratt and Whitney talked about current opportunities within their company and answered questions/took resumes from interested students.

Social: Top Golf with Shell- 9/12

This was a social event sponsored by Shell where members were able to enjoy some free food, Top Golf, and conversation with other members and our speaker from the General Meeting, Jarett Wilbanks. It was a great event that allowed our members to connect not only with each other but also someone in industry. This was a highly requested event that we hosted in the past that Shell was willing to do with us again.

Social: Rocky Mountain Trivia Night- 9/19

Members and initiates were invited to a trivia night at a local pizza restaurant. The club purchased food and non-alcoholic drinks for those in attendance. Our team came in 3rd place at the trivia event.

Initiate Event: Bent Polishing 9/23

Initiates were invited to an event where exec provided donuts and supplies to polish their bent (an initiation requirement).

Philanthropy: LaAmistad Tutoring 9/26

This was a new philanthropy event that we introduced this semester. LaAmistad is an after-school program for kids in the Atlanta area. Our members volunteered to help with tutoring in subjects such as math and reading.

Parents Weekend Tabling- 10/5

Pi Tau Sigma was invited to host a table in the ME building during Parents Weekend. We displayed a poster with past semester activities and were available to answer questions about our organization as well as Georgia Tech to students as well as parents.

General Meeting II- 10/7

The speaker for this meeting was GT Off-Road. GT Off-Road is a student organization that builds an off road vehicle and brings it to competitions throughout the semester. GT Off-Road presented on what their club does as well as how our members could get involved.

General Meeting III- 10/21

The speaker for this meeting was Dr. Garimella, a heat transfer professor at Georgia Tech. He spoke about his research as well as what he has learned during his time as a Mechanical Engineer.

Philanthropy: Team Buzz- 10/26

Team Buzz is an annual philanthropy event hosted by Georgia Tech. Any student can sign up and then they are assigned a project to participate in. We signed up as a club and our members were assigned to help out with various outdoor tasks in Grant Park such as planting and mulching.

Philanthropy: Class Advising- 10/28

Members volunteered to staff a table in the Mechanical Engineering building where fellow ME students could stop by for advice about class scheduling for next year. Questions ranged from what classes to take, which professors to take it with, and other general advice that students may have requested.

Social: Ray's Trivia Night- 10/30

Similar to the Rocky Mountain social event, we invited members and initiates to participate in Trivia Night at a local pizza restaurant. The club provided food and non-alcoholic drinks.

Philanthropy: Blood Drive- 11/4

Members and initiates volunteered to staff the check-in table at a blood drive hosted by the Red Cross on Georgia Tech's campus. Duties included signing in participants to the drive, handing out t-shirts, and thanking them for their donation.

Research Fair- 11/5

Each semester, Pi Tau Sigma hosts a research fair on campus. Various labs on campus that are recruiting ME students display posters and props to show ME students what their labs are currently researching. Our club provides food for the volunteers and attendees. This semester we had 10 labs participate in our event.

Social: Bowling Night- 11/7

Members and initiates were invited to a bowling event at the bowling alley on Georgia Tech's campus. Pizza and soda was also provided. This event was hosted jointly with Tau Beta Pi (General Engineering Honor Society) so members were able to socialize with not only members of our club, but other top engineers on Georgia Tech's campus.

Philanthropy: LaAmistad Tutoring- 11/13

This was a new philanthropy event that we introduced this semester. LaAmistad is an after-school program for kids in the Atlanta area. Our members volunteered to help with tutoring in subjects such as math and reading. In this specific session, we volunteered with a representative from Shell as well.

Mock Interview Night with CAT- 11/14

This was another new event this semester where Caterpillar facilitated mock interviews with our members. They explained in detail about the STAR method (common interview method) and how to answer STAR questions effectively. Then, they asked each person in attendance a few sample interview questions and critiqued their answer. By the end of the event, everyone was answering questions much better than when the event started.

Elections- 11/18

This was our last general meeting of the semester where we also held elections for our Spring 2020 executive board.

Turnover Meeting- 12/7

At this meeting, Fall 2019 exec turned over their positions and duties to the incoming, Spring 2020 exec board.

Spring 2020

Executive Meetings - 1/13/2020, 2/10, 2/24, 3/09

An executive meeting with this semester's executive team was held to discuss the logistics of events for the semester.

Initiate Meeting Session – 1/22 and 1/28

Eligible students for initiation were invited to attend an information session about Pi Tau Sigma. Chapter activities were discussed by current officers so that interested students could learn about the organization on a national and chapter level. Initiation packets were distributed to interested students and food was served to all in attendance. Two meetings were held to accommodate students with conflicting schedules.

General Body Meeting I – 1/28

Current Pi Tau Sigma Members were introduced to this semester's Executive board and the activities planned out for the semester. Dr. David Hu, a Georgia Tech professor in the schools of biology and mechanical engineering, presented his research on biomechanics.

Social: Rocky Mountain Pizza Night – 1/30

Members and initiates went to Rocky Mountain Pizza for dinner and participated in trivia night. This counted as a social event. The organization paid for food and non-alcoholic drinks for initiates and members.

PTS National Convention – 1/31 to 2/2

Georgia Tech Nu sent two executive members to the national convention at Rochester Institute of Technology.

General Body Meeting II – 2/3

Upcoming events and reminders were highlighted at this time. Initiates also could make their self introduction presentation to complete an initiation requirement. Clorox presented on their internship and full-time opportunities worldwide.

Philanthropy: LaAmistad School Tutoring – 2/11

This is a philanthropy event where members and initiates visited LaAmistad school in northern Atlanta and tutored elementary aged students in math and science subjects.

General Body Meeting III – 2/17

Upcoming events and reminders were highlighted at this time. Initiates also could make their self introduction presentation to complete an initiation requirement. Graduating members could also pick up their stoles and cords. GM presented their electric vehicle lineup including a hand-on walk-through of their BEV drivetrain.

Social: Bowling with GM – 2/28

In this social event, members and initiates had a chance to meet GM recruiters in an informal setting while bowling at GT's Tech Rec.

General Body Meeting IV – 3/2

Upcoming events and reminders were highlighted at this time. Initiates also could make their self introduction presentation to complete an initiation requirement. Graduating members could also pick up their stoles and cords. Former Georgia Tech president and mechanical engineering professor Dr. Bud Peterson presented on the state of the institute and the future of engineering education.

Philanthropy: Brittain Food Packing – 3/3

Members and initiates volunteered in the kitchens of Georgia Tech's Brittain dining hall to sort and pack donated food to be distributed to students in need.

Social: Bent Polishing and Ice Cream – 3/11

Initiates had an opportunity to polish their bents (keys) as a group with provided sandpaper and ice cream.

All Future Events Canceled for the Remainder of the Semester – Announced 3/24

Planned events that were canceled include an ME Research Fair, a general meeting with Shell recruiters, a social event at TopGolf with Shell recruiters,

C. Other

Beyond the activities for the initiates and general members listed above, the 2019-2020 executive boards put an emphasis on improving PTS's image online and across Georgia Tech's campus.

Registering Previous Initiates with PTS Nationals

It came to our attention that the previous years' initiations had not been properly notated and submitted to nationals. With the assistance of Dr. Moutsoglou and GT finance, we have successfully registered the previous initiations and received the relevant certificates. They are currently being stored by the current president and will be distributed at the first general meeting after the pandemic. There is still some ambiguity about the state of the payment. We will continue to communicate with finance and the national board over the summer to ensure that the payment is submitted properly.

Website Housekeeping

It came to our attention that our chapter's website had been offline for at least a year. With the assistance of GT's tech services, we successfully deleted the widgets that were causing the failure and began the process of updating the mothballed site. This proved to be a daunting task which will have to be continued by the next executive board.

The current website can be viewed at: http://pts.gtorg.gatech.edu/.

Improving Executive Board Transitions

One of the difficulties leadership in Georgia Tech Nu was the lack of written turnover documents. In previous years, the only source of turnover information was an informal meeting for the outgoing officers to explain their roles to incoming officers. While this is a good policy that will be continued, it lacked the completeness of a written turnover document. Additionally, the lack of a documented list of responsibilities made general members wary of running for office given the ambiguity of the role. This year's executive board revived an old policy of writing a formally typed turnover document listing the responsibilities, timelines, and contacts for each

role. We hope that this will set the Georgia Tech Nu chapter back on a path toward continuous improvement across executive boards and give rise to multi-year goals such as long-term company partnerships, alumni groups, and even potentially hosting a convention in the distant future.