PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2013-2014

University of Illinois at Chicago Alpha Sigma

A. Initiations

As a widely recognized, well-reputed, and active honor society within the university's College of Engineering, UIC Alpha Sigma continues to grow as a prestigious organization. The chapter leadership strives each semester to recruit and induct only the most upstanding and motivated new members from among the many qualified candidates. As the chapter's reputation has grown, the initiation requirements have become more competitive and the initiation process itself more interactive.

While invitations to the initiation process are administered according to the standards required by the national Pi Tau Sigma leadership, the UIC Alpha Sigma chapter strives to recruit members who will participate actively – not only within the society, but also in the university and professional communities. Toward that end, chapter-specific initiation requirements in previous years have included attendance at Pi Tau Sigma general body meetings during the semester prior to initiation and a minimum number of hours of participation in chapter activities each subsequent semester in order to maintain active status.

In addition to the requirements from previous years and those issued by the national Pi Tau Sigma leadership, the UIC Alpha Sigma chapter initiated an important change in the process this year by adding a candidate interview to the initiate selection. Qualified students received an invitation to schedule an interview with one or more chapter officers. The interviews were conducted relatively informally and served to acquaint the candidate with the chapter and its leadership and vice versa. After completing interviews for all interested candidates and reviewing attendance records for candidates at general body meetings, the chapter leadership formally invited the initiates from the final round of selection to become members of Pi Tau Sigma.

The initiation ceremony conforms to the process used to initiate new chapters at the national convention. After lining up in alphabetical order outside of the meeting location – in this case, a classroom – the initiates were brought into the dark room and seated in two rows in front of the chapter officers, seated opposite at a dimly-lit table. After the chapter president and vice president had reviewed the expectations, mission, values, and history of Pi Tau Sigma, the candidates repeated the initiation vow individually and shook hands with each officer.

The post initiation celebration was held at a local pizza restaurant and was open to all newly initiated, active-status members, and Pi Tau Sigma alumni. A bent-polishing and plaque-staining day was held after initiation in the spring ceremony for all new initiates and members from the year as a chapter bonding exercise.

Fall 2013 semester
Initiation date: November 22, 2013 Members inducted: ***21***
Spring 2014 semester
Initiation date: April 18, 2014 Members inducted: ***14***

B. Chapter Activities

Fall Semester 2013

Over the past few years, the recognition and reputation of UIC Alpha Sigma has greatly increased within the University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Engineering and beyond. This year, the chapter put this forward momentum to great effect and strove to build upon the success and experience from the previous year.

The chapter held four general body meetings open to all members and initiate candidates throughout the fall semester, which were well attended by active-status members. The chapter officers met weekly between general body meetings to organize and coordinate activities and duties throughout the year.

As an active engineering honor society on campus, UIC Alpha Sigma coordinates activities alone as well as organizing events with other professional and honor societies within the college such as UIC's ASME Student section. One event coordinated this fall semester with ASME was a tour of Argonne National Labs. This event gave students the opportunity to see state of the art facilities as well as an opportunity to meet students from another engineering organization and network.

Another activity hosted by the chapter was our well-known tradition the Carnot Classic, a bowling event open to all university students and hosted exclusively by Pi Tau Sigma. This event brings students and chapter members of all disciplines together for a fun social event to kick off the fall semester. The Carnot Classic is also the principal fall semester fundraising event for the chapter.

The UIC Alpha Sigma chapter is also very active academically, with tutoring sessions staffed by members offered weekly throughout the year. While a majority of students attend for help in upper-level engineering and applied science courses, the sessions are open to students from any department for assistance with physical sciences, math, and engineering courses. The tutoring sessions also offer an opportunity for Alpha Sigma members to complete their ten-hour semester participation requirement for active status. The tutoring offerings are an excellent chance for younger students to get to know the chapter and learn about Pi Tau Sigma in general, and also help promote academic achievement and future membership demand. Many students are introduced to Pi Tau Sigma through the tutoring program and later become members and tutors themselves.

As part of a new high-school outreach program, Pi Tau Sigma partnered with educators at Whitney M. Young Magnet High to introduce students in physics courses to education and career opportunities in mechanical engineering.

The UIC Alpha Sigma chapter also hosted a campus wide bar crawl. The bar crawl was advertised throughout the entire college of engineering and open to all students to attend. The bar crawl gave many students the opportunity to interact with peers outside of the classroom environment and expanded interest significantly in Pi Tau Sigma. The bar crawl became the most lucrative fundraiser for our chapter.

The wrap-up events for the semester were the new member initiation ceremony and celebration for all new and currently active members. The UIC Alpha Sigma chapter added another rank of outstanding members to its roster and prepared for the start of another new semester.

Spring Semester 2014

The spring of 2013 was another very busy time for UIC Alpha Sigma. The tutoring program continued on an expanded schedule during the spring in order to accommodate increasing attendance and scheduling conflicts. The chapter officers continued to meet weekly and general body meetings were also held three times throughout the semester.

The spring was an excellent time for fundraising and publicity opportunities, as the chapter partnered with LifeSource and hosted a campus wide blood drive. Alpha Sigma members coordinated, promoted, and volunteered to work the even bringing in a large amount of donors and exceeding the goal put before them by LifeSource.

The UIC Alpha Sigma Chapter continued the high school outreach program in the spring semester, this time partnering with educators at Benito Juarez Community Academy. Alpha Sigma members introduced students in physics courses to education and career opportunities in mechanical engineering.

Because of the success of the bar crawl the previous semester we decided to make it more than just an annual event and host one again in the spring semester. Hosting the bar crawl once again interact with peers outside of the classroom environment and expanded interest significantly in Pi Tau Sigma. The bar crawl was once again the most lucrative fundraiser for our chapter.

The UIC Alpha Sigma chapter was able send 12 student members to represent the chapter at the 2014 National Convention at Texas A&M University. Pursuing avenues of fundraising within UIC proved to be the most beneficial for our chapter. The challenge came with helping the various contributors to understand the significant benefits our society gives to the college. This required multiple meetings with our department head, a multitude of email exchanges with the Engineering Council student org, and meetings with Chicago Organization Funding org to give presentations about our society. In the end, our contributions to the college on a volunteer basis and our commitment to improving the educational value of our school gave our benefactors every reason to want to be involved with our great society. Our successful fundraising opened up the opportunity to all members to attend the national convention. We were proud to have such a strong presence. The convention was a great time to catch up with friends and partners from chapters around the country, network with industry professionals and to continue growing relationships from the previous year's convention. As a result, the increased appreciation of Pi Tau Sigma gave even some of our newest members' interest in pursuing and achieving officer positions.

In April, the chapter inducted its second round of new initiates after completing the required application, interview, and selection process. The chapter officers were happy to welcome another generation of academically rigorous and professionally motivated members to the ranks of Pi Tau Sigma. The traditional pizza dinner celebration was held after the ceremony at a local restaurant, as in the fall semester.