PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2009-2010

MIT Pi Kappa

A. Initiations

Only students of Mechanical Engineering who meet the minimum GPA requirements are eligible for membership in Pi Tau Sigma, however this does no necessarily guarantee eligibility. The opinions of faculty and of current PTS members may also be weighed in the decision. For this year, we invited the top 25% of juniors and top 35% of seniors to join PTS. This list was compiled by the Registrar and then evaluated by our Faculty Advisor, Professor Peacock. Students were notified by e-mail about their invitation to join.

The requirements for membership included: a minimum of 8 hours of community service (of which 4 must have been for PTS), attendance at a minimum of 3 meetings, attendance at the initiation ceremony, and payment of the $50 lifetime membership fee.

Unfortunately, we were not able to hold an initiation in the fall. This was due to scheduling conflict with final projects, exams and presentations that was not identified until it was too late.

We held our spring initiation on the afternoon of May 15, 2010, during which 14 students were initiated into the Pi Kappa chapter of PTS. PTS held an end-of-year banquet to celebrate the initiation of the new members and to conclude the activities of this year.

Names of New Members
Spring 2010 Pledges

Omar Abudayyeh
John Boghossian
Stephanie Brown
Mindy Eng
Tanya Goldhaver
Lauren Hernley
Vu Hong
Evan Lampe
Zacahry Rose
Ian Rust
Amrita Saigal
Katrina Schoen
Will Vega-Brown
Kent Willis

B. Chapter Activities

Our chapter got off to a great start in the fall, with a visit from Georgia Tech Professor Paul Neitzel who spoke to the group about the graduate programs offered at Georgia Tech. He started his talk with a general overview of what a graduate degree in mechanical engineering would provide, which students greatly appreciated. A number of students followed up with him when they visited the school later in the year.

In October we hosted a Graduate Fellowship Panel together with GAME, the Graduate Association of Mechanical Engineering. The panel featured an overview of the possible fellowships, with particular emphasis on NSF, NDSEG, and Hertz. Students who are recipients of those awards gave firsthand advice, and an MIT faculty member who serves on the selection board for one of them gave tips for the application.

In the Spring we hosted events to better foster student-faculty relations. We sponsored a student-faculty breakfast in which both students and faculty of the mechanical engineering department were encouraged to stop by and share some light breakfast and informal conversation. We also hosted a sushi study break half way through the semester to help students relax amidst midterms.

We have several ongoing projects that were continued this year, including student tutoring and sales of mechanical engineering t-shirts. Another ongoing project is to help students become better informed about MIT's flexible mechanical engineering program, Course 2-A, through the use of its own dedicated website, student blogs, and faculty input. Recently our initiative to provide a better student common area made some headway as the faculty began to allocate more space for our mechanical engineering students. Our chapter continues to strive for visibility as a student organization and improvement of both student life and the community as a whole. We have some initial plans for next year's projects including the installation of a semi-annual mechanical engineering newsletter.

C. Other

We are currently evaluating our plans for PTS participation for the upcoming academic year. We would definitely like to continue with our chapter, but realize that we must take steps to improve our participation. We struggle to differentiate ourselves from the other honors societies on campus, and also have a hard time building an executive board at a time when students have already made large commitments to other groups on campus. Two members of our executive board are rising seniors and are committed to working with PTS in the upcoming year. This is the first time we can remember that executive board members were able to serve for more than 1 year, and we hope this continuity will help us improve our PTS chapter.

On that note, our new President for the 2010-2011 academic year will be Linda Liu lindaliu@mit.edu. Sun Kim will serve as Vice-President. They will work together over the summer to fill other spots on the executive board.