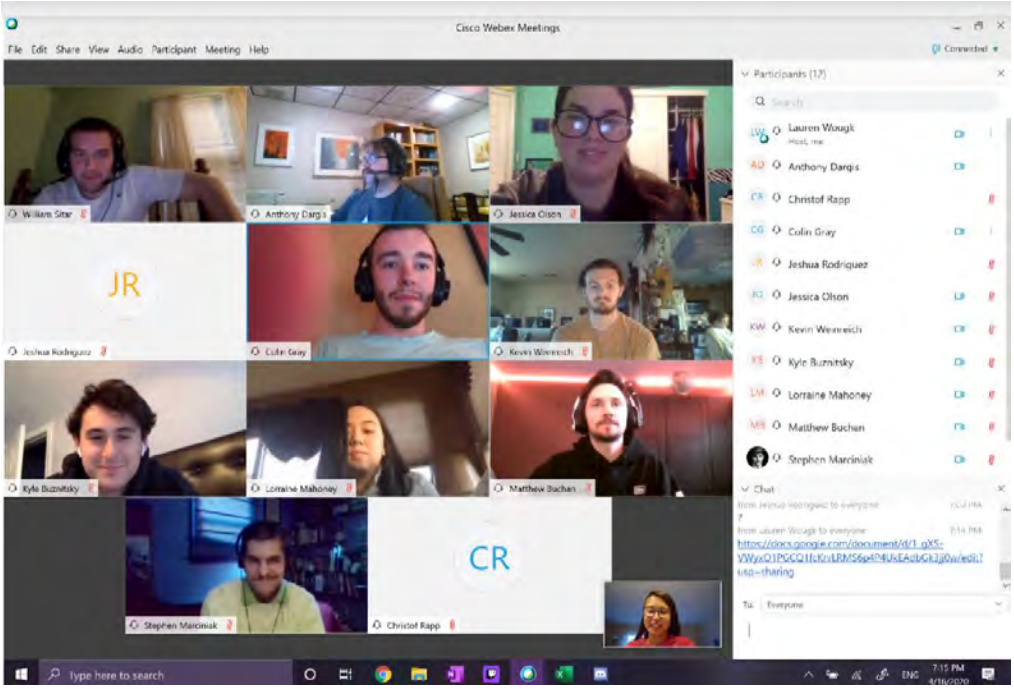
FULL ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT
2019-2020
Rutgers Tau Iota

Lauren Wougk, President, reporting
A. Initiations
In this segment indicate your initiation procedure including selection process, requirements from initiates, initiation ceremony and rituals, and celebration.

I would love to write a long report about how honors societies and clubs are somehow different at Rutgers University. I was an officer for two engineering honors societies and a community service organization and all three of these organizations struggled with getting new members and member involvement. Even Tau Beta Pi, the all-encompassing engineering honors society which I was secretary of, struggled to induct new members and struggled to hold activities that people want to attend. I believe there to be two main reasons – college students do not like paying for anything, and at the junior and senior level, students at Rutgers have already made their friends, and do not care about meeting anyone else. It sounds silly, but it's true. This was a long-winded explanation to say Rutgers Pi Tau Iota is a very small chapter that does not or cannot manage to do much. We require the initiation fee and that each member attend each member meeting to be inducted. If we had more requirements, our numbers would be somehow even lower. For initiation, we do not do anything special, we just reserve a small room in the library and go through the initiation while we show a PowerPoint presentation. Afterwards, we usually just have a pizza. However, this fall, the initiation fell on the same night as a networking event that was exclusive to seniors enrolled in the mechanical engineering senior design course. And of course they told us just a week before the networking event when initiation was planned for months. As we were all mechanical engineering seniors in senior design, we could not arrange to pick up any food. In the future, if the club has grown, which it already has, I would like to expand on the initiations and the celebrations. I will be pursuing graduate studies at Rutgers University, so I will be able to stick around and help.

November 7, 2020, Fall Initiation, 5 new members



Thursday, April 16, 2020, Spring 2020 Initiation, 5 new members

As everyone knows, most spring plans were tossed to the side due to the global pandemic, COVID-19. Thus, all activities were canceled, including an in-person spring initiation. We conducted our initiation via Webex conferencing. It was held in a similar manner, I shared my screen with everyone showing the same PowerPoint we present at the in-person initiation while the appropriate officers read their parts. I took a picture of the Webex screen with everyone's camera on to get an initiation picture and shared a google doc for everyone to sign – which was a little tricky despite my thorough instructions with pictures.

2020-2021 Officers and Advisor

B. Chapter Activities

In the fall, three of our members attended the Pi Tau Sigma National Convention in Rochester, New York. All members had a great time getting to meet other members of Pi Tau Sigma from all over the country. Some of us have even maintained contact and friendship with people we have met. This event helped us a lot to think of ideas and activities for our own chapter.

Two of the big events that we conduct happen in the spring, and of course with COVID, nothing happened in the spring. Usually, we visit a company in the area (which is funny because there are no big mechanical engineering companies in the area so we go 2 hours away to Philadelphia). In the past, we've gone to Boeing, but they also had a good amount of controversy in the news, so we were unable to visit them. We also participate in Rutgers Day, which is a huge event on all campuses that the public is invited to. Each organization has a table with some activity. Last year, we did slingshot rockets that are a big hit with the kids. Of course, we were unable to do this this year.

President and friends made

In the fall, we held several informal study sessions complete with snacks. Seniors were able to help junior members with some of their courses. This was a good small event that was very easy to plan and helped us get to know each other better.

C. Other

I tried to do certain things differently or hold other activities more pertinent to Pi Tau Sigma members. For example, for the second orientation meeting, I asked people to fill out an interest survey – that they could make the meeting. Then I emailed them individually and asked if they would like something from a college favorite Mexican food place, on the chapter. I had hoped that this would gain more interest, as most food offered at any college event is pizza, and it gets real old, real fast.

Another "event" that I held, that I thought was successful was a senior design Q&A. This was during the spring for any junior members and conducted over Webex. The senior design course here at Rutgers is very unorganized, and it feels like you are just being thrown into a fire. A few other senior officers and I answered any questions that the juniors had. We discussed the process of finding a group, finding a professor, and finding a project. We also answered questions about strategies to keep members of your team involved, and leadership skills. Overall, the session lasted over an hour, and I think it was very successful.

I also created a LinkedIn group for the Rutgers Tau Iota chapter. I did this because I want to build an alumni network, as right now there is none. I also did this for my other honors society, Tau Beta Pi, so hopefully as the network grows, alumni can post job openings or other opportunities for members.

It is hard for a club of four officers and four members that do not want to do anything to be successful. But the club is already growing, and with more activities/events that could be helpful to members, I think the Rutgers Tau Iota chapter is on a more successful road.