2019-2020

South Dakota State Tau Chi

A. Initiations

Initiation starts off each semester with our advisor making a list of potential members based on their academic performance. The list consists of juniors and seniors in the top 25% of their class with a GPA of at least 3.25/4.00. Invitations are sent to the selected members which includes a designated date and time for an informational session.

At the informational session, the President explains the benefits of joining and the activities implemented by the chapter. By the end of the session, a date and time is assigned for the initiation ceremony. Members are required to pay the membership fees, pick up the Pi Tau Sigma bent and board, polish the bent, and get signatures from the current student members and faculty members on the board. Once all dues are paid, the members are able to be initiated with membership lasting for a lifetime.

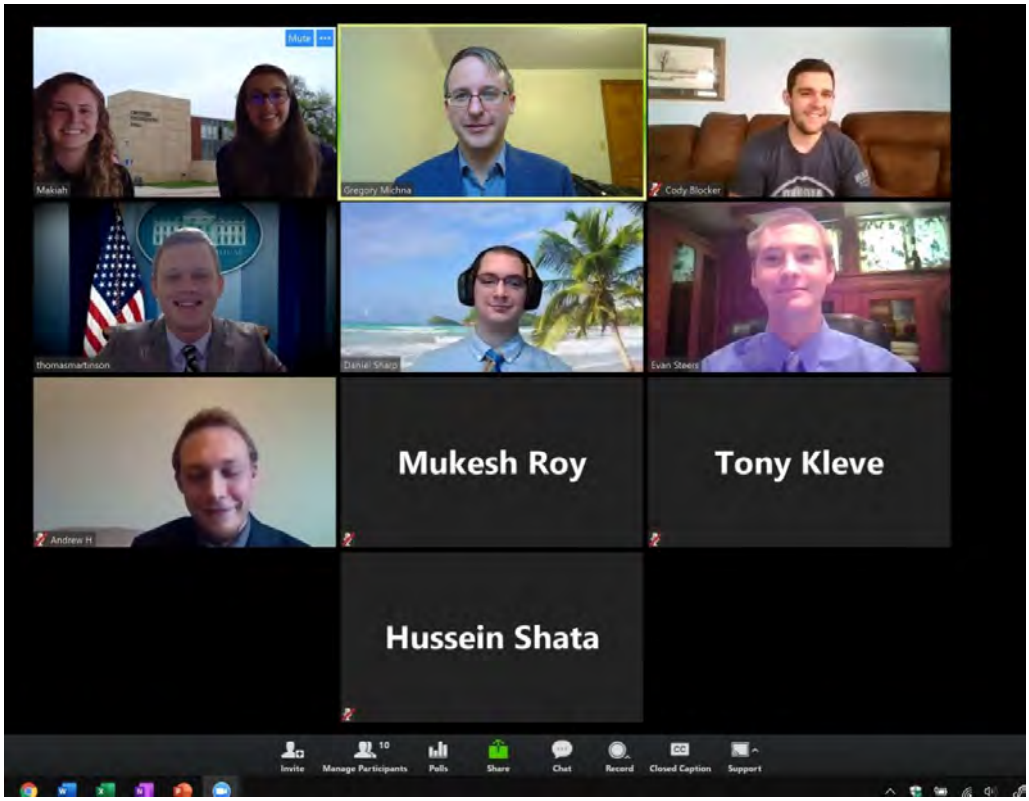
The initiation ceremony starts by welcoming all the new initiates and having them sit at front of the room facing the President and the Vice President in alphabetical order. The rituals start by turning off the lights and lighting three candles that are placed in the middle of the Pi Tau Sigma logos, the crest and key. The President and the Vice President begin welcoming the new members and reading the script from the rituals. Each student is required to listen carefully to what is being read and take the oath during the ceremony. Once initiated, a prize is given to the new initiate with the best polished bent – considering the number of signatures received. After the prize is given, all the attendees are asked to step outside and take a new initiate photo in front of the building. During the Fall 2019 semester, our chapter initiated 8 new members on September 26th, 2019.

A social hour is held right after the initiation and food is served. During the social hour, new members get to learn more about the society from the current members and contact information is exchanged. This social hour also establishes an initial bond between current and new members that will be important moving forward with chapter activities.

Another initiation ceremony is held in the Spring semester. This Spring 2020 semester brought about challenges regarding the initiation process due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Because of this outbreak, current and new members were unable to get together to hold an actual initiation. This resulted in a virtual initiation being conducted with the same initiation requirements being implemented.

The Spring 2020 initiation was held via Zoom on April 2nd and started by getting all new members and select current board members in the Zoom meeting. During this semester, we initiation 3 new members. The President and Vice President started by welcoming each new member and continued to read the script from the ritual. Same as an actual initiation, the new members were required to take the oath during the ceremony. The crest and key were displayed by the share screen application on Zoom. A Word document was made to obtain an electronic copy of the roll book. Also, a screenshot was taken of all new and current members present during this virtual initiation for record.

ARCHITECTURE, MATHEMATICS & ENGINEERING


Mute
Makiah
Gregory Michna
Cody Blocker
thomasmartinson
Daniel Sharp
Evan Steers
Andrew H
Mukesh Roy
Tony Kleve
Hussein Shata
Invite
Manage Participants
Polls
Share
Chat
Record
Closed Caption
Support

B. Chapter Activities

To start off the school year at SDSU, Pi Tau Sigma hosted an informational session for potential new members. This event was hosted directly after an ASME picnic which included all the engineering groups and societies on campus. Hosting the meeting after this allowed members to get food and socialize before learning about Pi Tau Sigma specifically. During this informational session, potential new members were able to learn what PTS does on campus and how they can be a part of this society. At this event, 10 potential new members were present as well as 6 active members

Once the first initiation was held, a full chapter meeting was able to be held. There were 8 members present at this first meeting and of those members, 4 of them had just been initiated. At this meeting, the new members were able to hear about the different positions that made up SDSU's Pi Tau Sigma chapter. While learning about the different roles, the new members were also given an overview of the future events that PTS would be hosting for the remainder of the semester. After hearing about what PTS entails, the new members were able to run for officer positions.

One activity our chapter hosted was our first Thanksgiving food drive. This event was held the week before students left for Thanksgiving break with all donations being given to the Brookings County Food Pantry. Thanksgiving is one of the busiest times of year for food pantries, so we encouraged anyone who passed through the engineering hall on campus to donate. In total, we were able to collect over 15 cans of soup and vegetables, various boxes of Mac N' Cheese, rice, pancake mix, Ramen Noodles, Pasta Sides, and mashed potatoes. Granola and applesauce were also collected and donated.

To keep PTS members connected, a social event we called the Holiday Ho-Ho-Hoedown was hosted to allow members to destress together before finals. This event included holiday Jeopardy and a holiday version of Family Feud and was held on “dead day” before finals. Cookies and hot chocolate were provided to encourage members to come and socialize. At last minute, the other engineering society on campus, Tau Beta Pi, was also invited. If we are to continue this event next year, we will make sure to invite them sooner to allow more members to participate. At this event, 9 members were present, three from TBP and six from PTS.

Junior chapter member Thomas Martinson attended the national convention at the Rochester Institute of Technology campus in Rochester, New York. The first day included a dinner and social event in which Thomas was able to engage in conversation with other members about running their chapters. The following day included the Autodesk seminar as well as lab tours, a career fair, speaker panels, and a social event. As always, the convention proved to be an invaluable experience. As the incoming President for the 2020-2021 academic year, Thomas will be able to take what he learned from the national convention and implement some of these ideas into our chapter next year.

To assist more early engineering students, the SDSU Pi Tau Sigma chapter hosts Statics review sessions before each of the Statics exams (three in total). Approximately 40-50 students attend each of these sessions. Due to the number of students that come to these review session, the largest room in the engineering building is utilized to ensure all students are able to sit and participate. At the review sessions, approximately 15 minutes is allotted for the students to work out a problem on their own. Then, a Pi Tau Sigma member works through the problem at the front of the room and talks about strategies and tips used to solve each problem. Students are encouraged to ask questions while working on the problems independently, while the members are going over the problem, and once the problem is worked out. When the review session is completed, PTS members stick around for as long as needed to answer any questions the students still have to ensure they feel prepared for their exam.

A current program that Pi Tau Sigma and Tau Beta Pi team up together on is free engineering tutoring sessions. These tutoring sessions cover most engineering classes on campus ranging from Statics to upper level classes such as Thermodynamics I and II. The sessions are held for two hours every Wednesday, and each active member is required to attend two sessions per semester unless a member assists with a Statics review session. If a member wants to assist with a Statics review session, they are omitted from assisting with a general tutoring session; however, they are able to help with as many tutoring/review sessions as they want. Typically, at these tutoring sessions only two or three students will come in allowing these students to have one-on-one sessions with the tutors available.

To recruit new members in the Spring semester, the current members of PTS hosted an informational session in which the current President, future President, and Vice President attended. At this informal meeting, the current President talked about what our chapter does such as the tutoring and review sessions. This event was beneficial in reaching out to potential new members as they were able to ask questions and interact with current PTS members.

C. Other

Before COVID-19, the lecturer of the Statics classes reached out to PTS about the positive feedback he was receiving on the Statics review sessions. He inquired about providing review sessions for the Mechanics of Materials exams. Mechanics of Materials, MOM, is the class students take after Statics and involves systems out of equilibrium rather than the equilibrium systems they saw in Statics. The plan before classes went online was to start hosting MOM review sessions for the Spring Semester starting with exam 2 because the lecturer reached out after the first exam. However, due to classes being moved online, these review sessions were unable to be implemented and will now be implemented starting in the Fall 2020 semester (assuming classes resume as planned for SDSU). These review sessions will be conducted the same as the Statics review sessions and will need about 2-3 members to lead the sessions.

One thing that our chapter started doing more of was meetings between the President, Vice President, eventually future President once he was elected, and our advisor, Dr. Michna. During these meetings we filled Dr. Michna in on ideas for future events and discussed ways to improve these events. These meetings were beneficial as it helped bridge the gap between the President and future President by allowing the future President to see the details involved in planning events and passing on this information to the other members. In the future, more board members can be included to keep them in the loop and get more feedback on events and ways to benefit the chapter as a whole.

Overall, it has been a good year for the Pi Tau Sigma chapter at South Dakota State University. There have been many ups such as implementing a new review session for Statics, having two successful initiations in the Fall and Spring, and finding new ways to strengthen our future chapter. While there are always improvements that can be made, we are hopeful that this coming school year will encompass positive changes and growth throughout our chapter.