PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT
2015-2016
South Dakota State University Tau Chi

A. Initiations

The selection process for new candidates started by obtaining a list of eligible Mechanical Engineering students; i.e. juniors within the top 25% and seniors within the top 35% of their class, having passed a minimum of 60 and 90 credits respectively. Further evaluation was performed for each candidate by the president of the chapter, Sara Moore, and the faculty advisor of the chapter, Dr. Michna, to ensure that all candidates were qualified for membership and letters of invitation were drafted and distributed to them accordingly. An "Introduction Meeting" was held with the prospective members, in which the president gave a brief presentation on the organization and its vision, goals, and mission(s) and the required activities for the new members. One of these required activities for each new member was to provide four hours of tutoring through our peer tutoring events. At the end of the meeting, bents and plaques were provided to those who would like to be initiated.

The initiation ceremony began in a classroom by dimming the lights, closing the blinds, and setting up the candles. Once this was completed, the current members joined the initiates waiting in another room, which was adjacent to where the ceremony took place. Then, the initiates presented their plaques to verify that they were of acceptable quality and were signed by ten active student members and two faculty members of the chapter, as well as our chapter's faculty advisor. When all plaques were accepted, the initiates were lined up single file and had blindfolds placed over their eyes. One current member led the initiates for a short walk around the building, while the other members gathered in the ceremony room. At this point, the standard ceremony was performed and all members signed a logbook for the organization to keep record of all initiations.

Finally, to end the night, the new members and current members went out to eat at a local restaurant, complements of the organization. This night allowed the new members to meet in a more social setting and get to know each other on a casual basis. This event has proved to be quite enjoyable as well as important for the vitality of our organization. New initiates become more eager to participate in activities once they have spent time with current members in this relaxed atmosphere.

For this academic year, the Fall and Spring initiation ceremonies were held on October 14, 2015 and April 4, 2016 respectively. We inducted six members in the Fall semester and five members in the Spring semester. At the Spring initiation, we also elected an a new President, Vice President, and Joint Engineering Council Representative. The 2016-2017 Secretary and Treasurer will be elected in the spring. The current president will be available to guide the new team as they figure out their roles in order to ensure a smooth transition.

B. Chapter Activities

As in previous years, the organization offered peer tutoring sessions to provide an additional resource for students. The Pi Tau Sigma group worked in conjunction with Tau Beta Pi and Eta Kappa Nu engineering honorary societies to provide tutoring services for students on Wednesday and Thursday evenings for two hours. Courses covered in these tutoring sessions ranged from basic introduction level physics courses to more advanced courses such as thermodynamics and fluid mechanics.

Our chapter maintains six miles of interstate highway I-29 with the Adopt-A-Highway program. Each semester we pick up all trash in the ditches near the highway. Although picking up trash may be somewhat repulsive, we have always had good results with the activity. Typically, there is a lot of discussion and joking-around, which allows students to have a little fun while still doing a service to the community. We held the cleanup event in the Fall semester, but were not able to do it in the Spring.

In addition, our chapter provides MC's for our department's annual banquet and also assists in some of the planning. At this event, each of the department's organizations, including Pi Tau Sigma, presents an overview of their group to inform others about their intent, participation, and membership opportunity.

Since last year the chapter has started hosting review sessions for the Fundamentals of Engineering exam, specifically tailored for mechanical engineering students. The officer team worked with ME faculty to organize review sessions throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. These efforts have led to a promising improvement in students' test results.

Finally, the chapter president attended the national convention at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, California, this Spring. The convention proved to be an invaluable experience by providing a great opportunity to meet students from all over the country, discuss chapter matters and activities, and gain a better sense of the organization on a national scale.

C. Concluding Remarks

In closing, we continue to make improvements to our chapter. The tutoring program and the FE review sessions make the organization visible within the college of engineering and the university itself. We have a fresh officer team for the next year who are all excited to be part of the organization and will take on the chapter responsibilities exuberantly. We strive to continue building the organization to the best of our ability.