2018-2019

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 for an informational session with a designated date and time.

At the informational session, the President explains the benefits of joining and the activities that are current in 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 department on the board. Membership lasts for lifetime.

The ceremony starts by welcoming all the new initiates and having them sit at front of the room facing the President and the Vice President. 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 start by 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. All of the attendees are asked to step outside and take a new intiate photo in front of the building.

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.

During the Fall 2018 semester, our chapter initiated 9 new members on October 18th , 2019. During the Spring 2019 semester, we initiated 8 new members on April 16th , 2019.

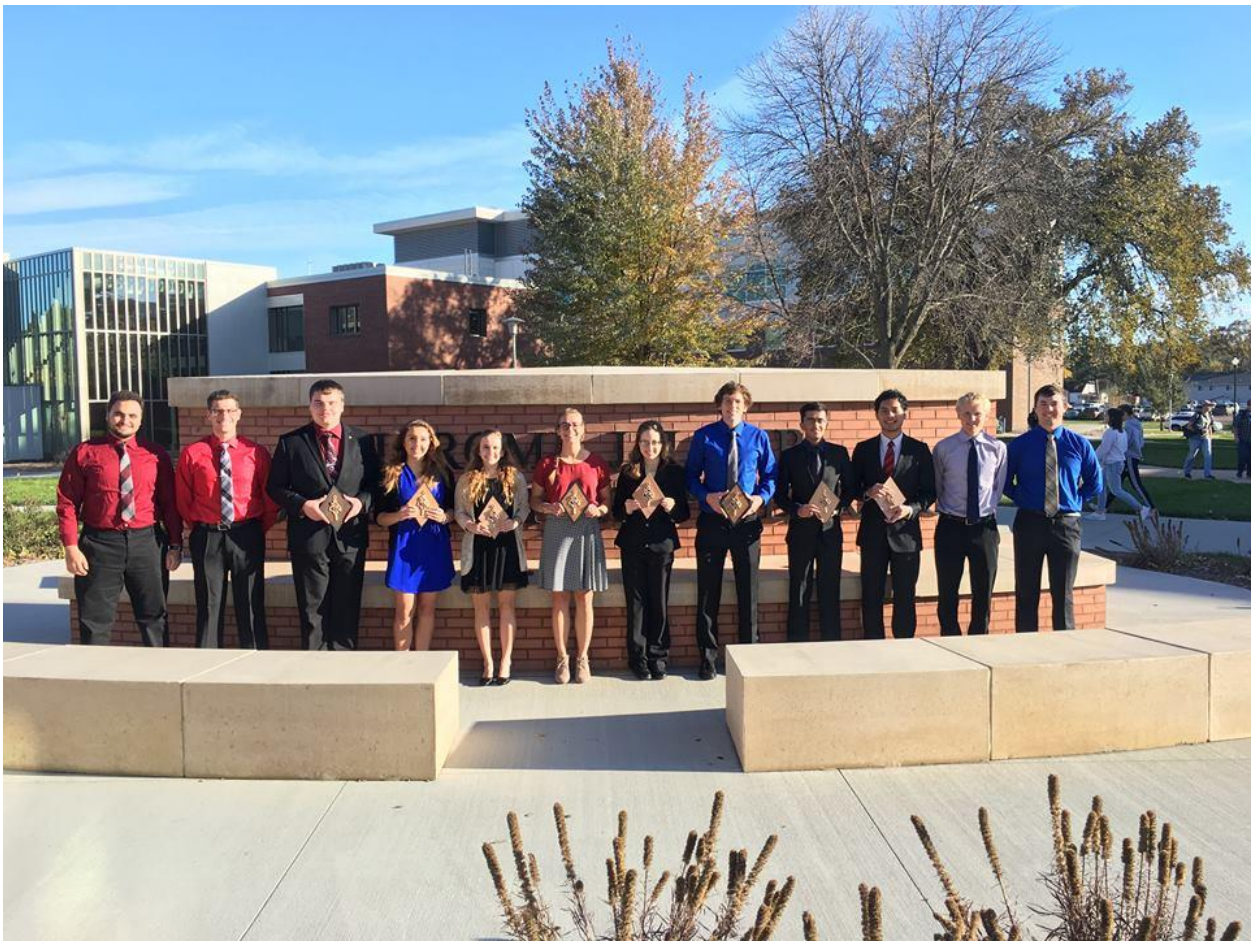

Figure 1: Fall 2018 initiation

Figure 2: Spring 2019 initiation

B. Chapter Activities

To start off the school year at SDSU, Pi Tau Sigma hosted a barbeque grill out located at one of the engineering buildings here on campus. This event included free food as well as an informational session about what PTS does on campus; thus, potential new members were encouraged to attend. At this event, 12 potential new members were present as well as 4 active members.

After initiation was held, Pi Tau Sigma joined the another engineering honor society on campus, Tau Beta Pi, to clean a local interstate in an annual event we hold called Interstate Cleanup. At this event, 3 new members were present as well as 2 active members. This event entailed members cleaning up four miles of I-29. This event was beneficial because it allowed new members to interact with active PTS members as well as get to know members of the other engineering honor society on campus.

Once the first initiation was held, a full chapter meeting was able to be held. There were 13 members present at this first meeting and of those members, 9 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 as well as a sign-up sheet for specific events such as the Statics tutoring session. After hearing about what PTS entails, the new members were able to run for officer positions. It was also at this meeting that the newly elected President and Vice President were informed of the national Pi Tau Sigma convention and the details associated with it.

Junior chapter members, Makiah Stukel and Brooklyn VanDerWolde, attended the national convention at the Colorado State University campus in Fort Collins, Colorado. At the national convention, they participated in an Autodesk competition for creating a mobile device that could be used in one of NASA's mission for a moon camp. They also got the chance to speak with the Keynote Speaker James E. Turner. His speech discussed the advances that NASA makes when it comes to the moon and Mars. 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. As the incoming President for the 2019-2020 academic year, Makiah will be able to take what she learned from the national convention and implement some of these ideas, activities into our chapter next year.

A current program that Pi Tau Sigma has in place at SDSU 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 Thursday and each active member is required to attend two sessions per semester. 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 assist more early engineering students, the SDSU Pi Tau Sigma chapter hosted Statics review sessions before each of the Statics exams. In the Fall 2018 semester, Pi Tau Sigma hosted two review sessions. Due to the feedback received about the value of these sessions, in the Spring 2019 semester, the chapter hosted four exam review sessions: one before each of the three primary exams, and one more before the final exam. Approximately 40-60 students attended each of these sessions. This was a pleasant surprise that resulted in the sessions needing to be held in larger classrooms than originally planned for, as we could not accommodate all the attendees in the classroom in which we originally planned to host the reviews. At the review sessions, approximately 15 minutes was allotted for the students to work out a problem on their own, and then a Pi Tau Sigma member would work and talk through the problem at the front of the room. This process was repeated for each of the three review problems. Students were encouraged to ask questions while working on the problems independently, while the members were going over the problem, once the problem was worked out, or at the end of the review session.

In order to recruit new members in the Spring semester, the current members of PTS hosted an informational session in which the current President and future President, Vice President, and Secretary attended. To appeal to potential new members, Pizza Hut was also provided at this informational session. At this informal meeting, the current President talked about what our chapter does such as the tutoring and review sessions. Also, the future President and Vice President were able to discuss to the new members ideas that they took away from the national convention on how they can better our PTS chapter at SDSU. 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

Once finals were over, the current President and future President and Vice President met to discuss future events and projects that could be implemented next school year. One thing that lacked during this last semester was communication among PTS members. Something that was brought up to alleviate this problem is having monthly meetings between board members to discuss what has gone well and what can improve the following month. By having these meetings, we believe that it will strengthen the bonds between members and that will in turn effect the participation levels for future PTS events.

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.