PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT
2010-2011
South Dakota State Tau Chi

A. Initiations

The selection process for new candidates started by obtaining a list of eligible Mechanical Engineering students based on a minimum of around 60 credits and is within the top 25% or so of their respective class. Once a list was generated by the department secretary, the president and advisor met to discuss the candidates in order to ensure each was worthy of invitation. At which point, letters of invitation were drafted, and a meeting for current and prospective members was scheduled. This serves as an "informative meeting" to which we invite the candidates for their first introduction to the organization. The informative meeting begins with the president giving a brief presentation to summarize the goals, requirements, and activities of the organization. Towards the end of this meeting, bents and plaques are provided to those candidates that would like to be initiated. Finally, an initiation date is set, and also a mandatory night is scheduled to have our student workshop open so that initiates can gather to work on their bents together and become more well acquainted. We also require them to participate in our highway cleanup each semester before they are initiated in order to demonstrate their dedication to the organization.

The initiation procedure begins by preparing either our department meeting room or a room in the Student Union by dimming the lights, closing the blinds, and setting up the candles, etc. Once this is completed, the current members join the waiting initiates in another room adjacent to where the ceremony will take place. Then the initiates must present their plaques to verify they are of accepted quality and are signed my all active members of the chapter. When all plaques are accepted, the initiates are lined up single file in alphabetical order and have blindfolds placed over their eyes. One current member leads the initiates for a short walk around the building while the other members gather in the ceremony room. At this point the standard ceremony is performed and all members sign a log book for the organization to keep record of all initiations.

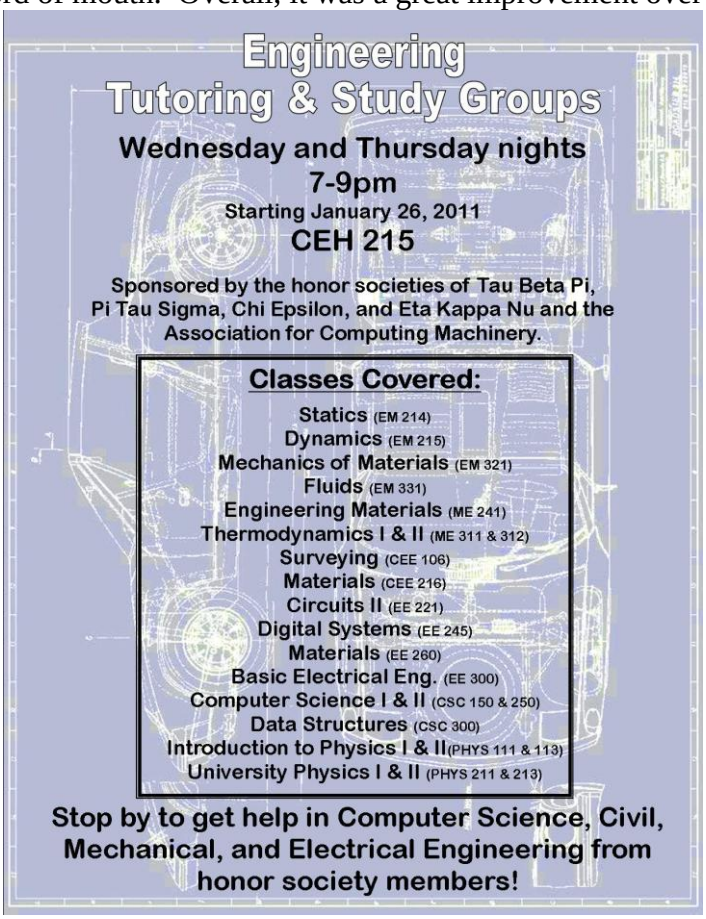
Finally, our celebration comes in the form of a "game night". The organization provides some money for games and appetizers at a local establishment. This night allows the new members to meet in a social setting and get to know each other on a more casual basis. This event has proved to be quite valuable and more importantly, fun. It seems that initiates are more likely to continue their participation once the pressure of a new organization is removed and a more relaxed atmosphere is presented.

This academic year, initiations were held on November 10th for one new active member, 2010 and on April 18th, 2011 for seven new active members and two new honorary members.

B. Chapter Activities

As in previous years, a peer tutoring schedule was organized so that members could provide a valuable service to other students. This semester, however, our chapter initiated a new formatting for the program that involved various other honor societies in the College of Engineering. Two nights a week, for two hours each, members from four engineering honor societies gathered in a classroom in our engineering hall in order to offer tutoring in 20 different subjects. We offered snacks at various meetings for students who participated and advertised

through posters, emails, professors, secretaries, the Student Help Center, the Learning Communities and word of mouth. Overall, it was a great improvement over past years.



Poster used to advertise the new tutoring program

Another major activity that we initiated this semester was a fundraiser involving a 26-ft long teeter totter. Members of our chapter build a teeter totter that is 26 feet long and goes about 8 feet in the air. We asked local companies for sponsorship and painted the teeter totter with their logos in exchange. We held a penny war between faculty members in order to pick four professors to ride the teeter totter for fifteen minutes each in public. Students, faculty, and alumnae all donated in order to see the professors look so ridiculous. From there, we placed the teeter totter outside of our Student Union for 12 hours straight, offering rides on the teeter totter for $1.00 each. We also had the teeter totter at the annual Engineering Expo later that week for high school students to ride. This activity not only reaped a profit of over $300, but also earned publicity for our chapter in multiple news papers and established a tradition that can easily be followed year after year.

Pi Tau Sigma advisors Chris Jerred (left) and Dr. Alex Moutsoglou (right) ride the teeter totter

Our chapter also maintained four miles of interstate highway (I-29) with the Adopt-A-Highway program. Each semester we gather and walk four miles while picking up all trash in the ditches near the highway. Although members aren't overly excited about picking up trash, we have always had good results with the activity. Typically there is a lot of discussion and joking around that allows students to have a little fun, while still doing a service to the community.

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.

Finally, both the chapter secretary and chapter advisor attended the national convention in Chicago, IL this spring. The convention was a phenomenally good time and also a valuable experience. It provided a great opportunity to meet students from all over the country, discuss chapter matters, and gain a better sense of the organization on a national scale.

C. Other

In closing, we made great strides this year in various areas. The newly created tutoring program offers a wider variety of assistance to more students. The teeter totter fundraised a good amount of money to send members to next year's convention and hold future events. Through this event, we also became more visible on campus and in the community and offered a unique event for our members to bond. We have multiple officers carrying over to next year in order to continue this momentum and further our improvements. The new officers are excited to add ideas and energy to the chapter as well. Overall, our future is bright!