PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2012-2013

Texas A&M Sigma Delta

A. Initiations

1. Selection Process

The selection process each semester begins with our department sending us a list of students who are eligible to join. The eligibility requirements to join are two-fold. First is the credit hour requirement. Actually, for our chapter, we have chosen to make it more of a class specific credit hour requirement. Instead of saying a set number of hours must be completed, say 60, we require our pledges to have completed, or be currently registered for, MEEN 260 (Mechanical Measurements). MEEN 260 is generally taken the first semester of a student's junior year and therefore they normally do meet the 60 hour mark. The reason we have chosen to base eligibility off of a class instead of 60 hours is because there may be a case where a student is over 60 hours, but has yet to take any mechanical engineering classes. A student can surpass 60 credit hours by taking all their basic, university required classes and waiting on their MEEN classes. In this case, even though a student's GPA may meet the requirement, they have not proved themselves in the mechanical engineering curriculum and therefore should not be eligible for Pi Tau Sigma.

That brings about the second requirement for eligibility and that is GPA. To be eligible for acceptance into our chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, juniors must be in the top 25% of their class and seniors must be in the top 35%. Generally speaking, the GPA that normally meets these percentage requirements is a 3.5-3.6 on a 4.0 scale. One final topic that should be discussed concerning the selection process is graduate students and faculty. The eligibility requirements for graduate students that we induct are based off of the rules set forth in the National Constitution. The same is true for the induction of faculty. Starting Fall 2012, our chapter decided that we should start inducting two faculty members into Pi Tau Sigma each semester. This was decided because no faculty members have been inducted in years, while retirements and school transfers have reduced the number of member faculty in our department. The officers of our chapter realized the need for faculty involvement in our activities and this is what spurred our decision to elect more faculty into Pi Tau Sigma.

Once we get the names of eligible pledges, we send letters in the mail, one to their personal address and one to their parents. Secondly, we reach out to the eligible pledges through email inviting them to attend an informational session. We hold two such sessions in order to accommodate varying schedules. These sessions provide us a chance to tell prospective pledges more about our organization, why they should join and how they can benefit, and the requirements to join.

2. Requirements

The requirements for initiates to join our chapter of Pi Tau Sigma seem to be a hot topic that ends up getting discussed every semester. Our chapter is continually trying to increase its

pledge class, and through surveys, it is always determined that the number one reason for students passing up the chance to join our society is that they think it will be too much work. Although this is a valid argument, there is a flip side and that is, without requiring anything to pledge, membership in the society won't mean anything. Looking at one's GPA is enough to determine their intelligence and work ethic, but when someone goes through a lengthy process to join Pi Tau Sigma, it gives them a leg up on their peers. It shows they took initiative and are willing to go above and beyond to further their career. Our chapter is always trying to find that seemingly fine line between not having so many requirements that students get deterred, and having enough requirements so that it actually means something to be a member.

There are a host of requirements for pledges to complete and they are as follows. To pledge, students must pay their dues, pass a pledge quiz, attend two of our four corporate meetings, three of our five or six socials, make a pledge board and meet all of its requirements, participate in a pledge project, service project, and fundraising project, and lastly, attend the Initiation Banquet. For the pledge board, students are given a piece of plywood and must make at least one cut, one surface treatment, and then get signatures from all of the officers and pledges, and a certain number of signatures from active members and faculty members. The pledge project differs each semester but is intended to be a way in which the pledges can further our organization, generally through an increase in publicity. The service and fundraising projects require pledges to serve the community and raise money for our organization, respectively.

Figure 1. Initiates for Fall 2012 semester.

3. <u>Initiation Ceremony</u>

Our Induction Ceremony is held during dead week, the week before finals. It usually starts around 7PM and lasts until close to 9:30 or 10:00PM. The ceremony for the fall semester was held December 5th and 13 students and 2 faculty members were inducted. The ceremony for the spring semester was held on May 1st and 23 students and 1 faculty member were inducted. Our Induction Ceremony begins with dinner whereby a local catering company serves us a buffet offering and after dinner we have speaker give a presentation. In the fall semester, the speaker was a mechanical engineering professor giving a presentation over his research, and the speaker for the spring semester was Mr. Richard Rau giving a presentation over the business side of engineering. Mr. Rau graduated with a Bachelor's in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M in 1971, is a member of Pi Tau Sigma, and went on to start several engineering firms during his career. After the presentations, we go through a few other typical banquet activities such as introducing new pledges and recapping what our chapter accomplished

during that current semester, and then we officially end the banquet and ask all guests to leave. That leaves only the initiates and the officers so that we can proceed to the rituals and actual inductions. In this portion, the students are led outside so that the officers can prepare for the inductions. This includes turning off the lights and getting our lightboard ready. The lightboard contains the Pi Tau Sigma Crest and Insignia along with lights for each important part. These lights are turned on progressively as each part of the Crest and Insignia are introduced during the reading of the rituals. Once the officers are ready, one of them leads the pledges in, with their eyes closed, and they form a line facing the lightboard. At this point, they are asked to open their eyes and the President and Vice President read them the rituals, having them respond when required. Once this is finished, each pledge signs the 'Blackbook' and is officially a member of Pi Tau Sigma. This completes our Induction Ceremony.

Figure 2. Initiates for Spring 2013 semester.

B. Chapter Activities

1. Corporate Meetings

Corporate meetings consist of someone from industry giving us their time in the evenings and making a presentation either about their company or another subject that will help to guide our initiates in their future career. These meetings give the initiates a chance to not only network with representatives from some of the largest engineering firms, but also to learn more about these companies and what they are doing in terms of research, new technology, and the like.

In the fall semester we had speakers from Boeing, Sandia

Figure 3. Corporate meeting hosted by Boeing Company.

National Labs, and John Crane. We also had a meeting presented by Dr. Richard Malak of our department to discuss his area of research and the pros and cons of gong to graduate school. In the spring semester we had speakers from 2H Offshore, Boeing, ExxonMobil, and Chevron Phillips.

2. Socials

Each semester we have socials where our initiates are able to let loose, have a little fun, and network among themselves. In the fall semester we had a social in which we barbequed and played volleyball, we had a picture scavenger hunt, a pizza party with the faculty from our department, a social where initiates began work on their pledge boards, and a company sponsored social. In the spring semester we again did the barbeque/volleyball social, the board making social, the faculty pizza lunch social, and we also played ultimate frisbee. Pictures of these events can be seen below.

Figure 4. Various socials including: pool with DNV, board making, frisbee, and faculty pizza lunch.

3. Projects

Each semester, initiates are expected to take part in a pledge project, fundraising project, and service project. The fundraising project usually consists of selling t-shirts that have been sponsored by an engineering company. The pledge project differs every semester and is geared towards either helping our initiates in some way or our chapter as a whole. In the fall semester, the pledges built a computer. With the world becoming so dependent on computers, we had our initiates undertake this project with the hope that they would not only learn more about computers, but also gain a more long-term interest in them. For the spring semester, we had them make a light board. The lightboard has a keyboard attached and messages can instantly be typed and displayed. This board will sit in the widow of our office and relevant messages will scroll through. Pictures of the board can be seen below. For the service project, this is a chance for the initiates to give back to the community. Unfortunately, we did not do such a project in the fall semester. Our Project Chair showed up to the officer meeting the first day of class and informed us that he recently took a co-op offer and would be leaving for California in a few days. After that we did a bad job of delegating his duties to another officer and long story short, we did not get the service project done. In the spring semester, our initiates participated in Big Event. Big Event, the nation's largest one-day, student run service project, gives Aggies a chance to say thank you to the community by going to the homes of residents and serving them through chores such as raking, tree trimming, painting, mulching, moving heavy objects, and much more. Pictures of this event can also be seen below.

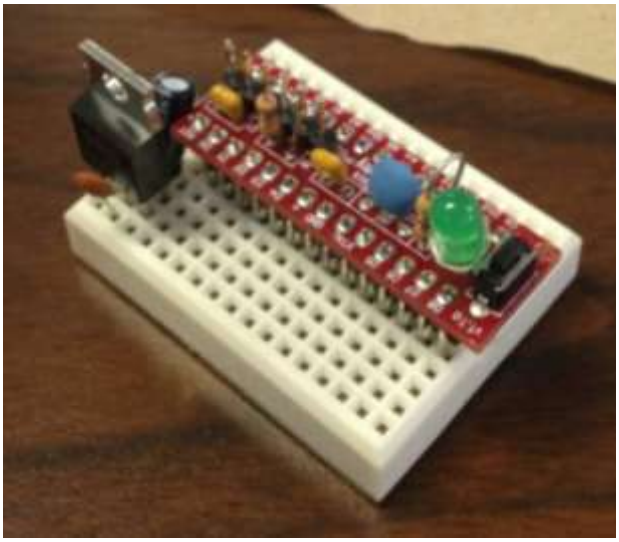

Figure 5. Lightboard built as a part of Pledge Project.

Figure 6. Pictures from Big Event in Spring 2013.

C. Other

For more information, please see our website.

http://pitausigma.tamu.edu