PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2019-2020

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. To be eligible for acceptance into our chapter of Pi Tau Sigma, students must be in the top quarter of the junior class or in the top third of the senior class. Generally speaking, the GPA that normally meets these requirements is a 3.5-3.6 on a 4.0 scale.

Once we get the names of eligible pledges, we schedule an information session and invite eligible pledges by email. We hold two or three sessions each semester in order to accommodate varying schedules. These sessions provide us a chance to tell prospective pledges more about our organization, why they should join, how they can benefit, and the requirements to join. In future semesters, we are looking to send letters in the mail at the beginning of August and mid-December in order to get support from family members and increase membership.

2. Requirements

The requirements for initiates to join our chapter of Pi Tau Sigma are discussed at the beginning of each semester and adjusted based on the feedback of pledges from the previous semester. Our chapter is working to increase its pledge class every semester, and a popular reason that students pass up the opportunity to join our society is that they think it will be too much work on top of their rigorous coursework. Although this argument is valid and we work to accommodate our pledges and their schedules, membership in the society would have little significance if they don't have requirements to satisfy. 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 continually trying to find that 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. Pledges must pay their dues, pass a pledge quiz, make a pledge board, earn at least 4 points by attending events throughout the semester, and attend the Initiation Banquet. For the pledge board, students are given a piece of plywood and must make at least one cut, apply one surface treatment, and then get signatures from all of the officers and pledges, five active members, and five faculty members. Pledges can earn their points by going to socials, participating in service projects, and attending corporate speaker meetings, but we require that at least one of those points

comes from attending a corporate speaker meeting and one comes from participating in a service project.

Because of COVID-19, we were forced to make some changes to the requirements for the spring semester. Since we were unable to hold the pledge board social or any corporate speaker meetings prior to spring break, we had to remove these requirements for the semester. Due to the limited number of socials we were able to hold prior to the campus closing, we also had to reduce the number of required points. For the spring semester, pledges were allowed to be initiated if they had already earned two points by attending events prior to campus closure, paid their dues, passed the pledge quiz, and attended the virtual Initiation Banquet. These pledges were encouraged to create a pledge board during the Fall 2020 semester so that they would be able to gain the full pledge experience. All other potential pledges were encouraged to join during the Fall 2020 semester and were promised that their attendance from the spring semester would carry over to the fall term.

3. Initiation Ceremony

Our Initiation Ceremony is typically held on the last day of classes, which is a couple of days before finals begin. It usually starts around 7:00 pm and lasts until about 8:30 pm. The ceremony for the fall semester was held Wednesday, December 4th and 10 pledges were inducted. Typically, our banquet begins with dinner catered by a local restaurant. In the fall semester, dinner was catered by Olive Garden. After dinner, pledges submit their pledge boards and are led outside so that the officers can prepare for the inductions and all officer and actives can vote on their favorite pledge board. The winner of the pledge board contest earns a cord and stole, purchased by the chapter, to wear at their graduation ceremony. In preparing for the ceremony, the pledges are asked to arrange themselves in reverse alphabetical order without talking and the officers rearrange the furniture in the room, prepare the lightboard, and turn off the lights. 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, the pledges are led in with their eyes closed, and navigated through the maze formed by the room's furniture before finally lining up to face 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 roll book and is officially a member of Pi Tau Sigma. At this point, the Initiation Ceremony is completed.

Figure 1: Fall 2019 Pledge Class

Figure 2: Fall 2019 Officers

Because of COVID-19, our spring initiation was conducted virtually through Zoom. It was held on Tuesday, April 28th and 4 pledges were inducted. The banquet began by completing the pledge quiz through Kahoot. After all pledges were confirmed to pass the pledge quiz, the initiation ceremony began. Since the ceremony could not be conducted in person and the lightboard could not be used, we instead displayed pictures of the insignia and crest throughout the ceremony. After the initiation was completed, the pledges and officers conducting the ceremony signed the virtual roll book that will be pasted into the official roll book once classes resume in person. Because officer elections could not be held in person as they typically are, the Fall 2020 officer elections were held at the conclusion of the ceremony. At this point, all present were dismissed, but everyone was encouraged to stay after and play Jackbox games.

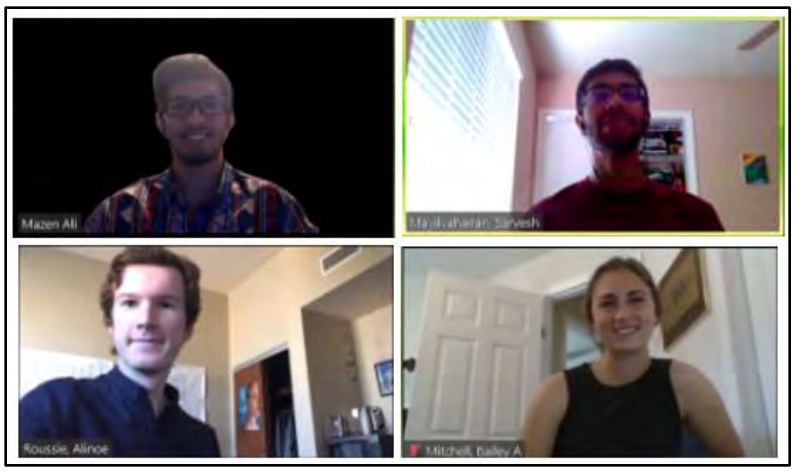

Figure 3: Spring 2020 Pledge Class

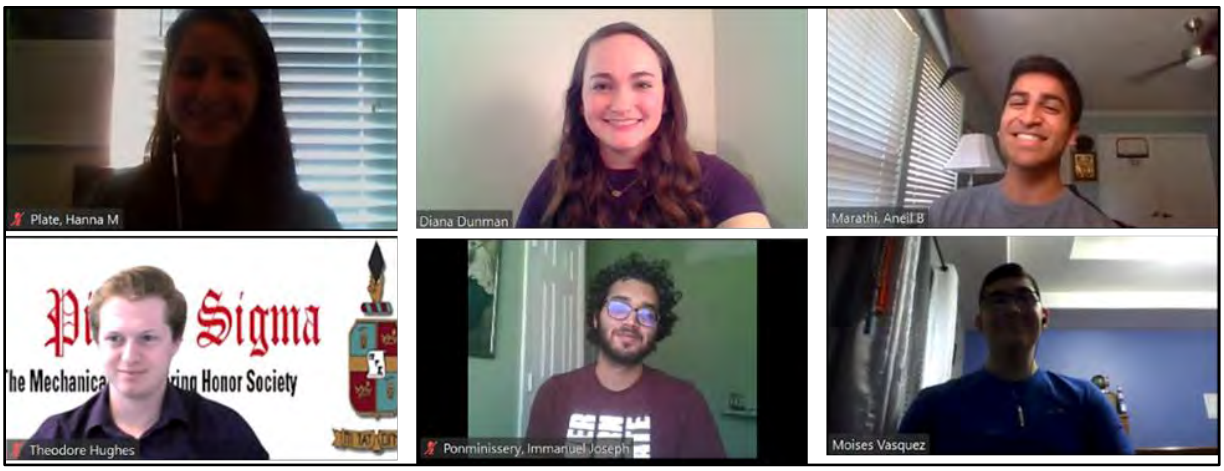

Figure 4: Spring 2020 Officers

B. Chapter Activities

1. Socials

Each semester we have socials where our initiates are able to have a little fun and network among themselves and with the officers and active members. In the fall semester, our first social was at Yesterdays Bar and Grill where members could mingle and play pool. We also held a Pledge Board Social where our pledges could begin working on their pledge boards. We finished out the semester with a "Pizza with Pi Tau Sigma" social in which we invited all Pi Tau Sigma actives, faculty members, and pledges to enjoy lunch and conversation, as well as provide an opportunity for pledges to get signatures for their boards. Although the spring semester was cut short due to COVID-19, we were still able to host a couple of events before campus was closed after Spring Break. We hosted a social at Gumby's Pizza where actives and officers were able to reconnect after Winter Break and network with the new pledges. We also held a Game Night on campus to give members a fun break from studying for midterms. After Spring Break, we had planned on holding another Pledge Board Social, attending a baseball or basketball game as an organization, and hosting a Study Social near

finals to allow our members to gain more points and enjoy more time together. We look forward to adding these social events to future semesters to provide more opportunities for our members.

Figure 5: Spring 2020 Gumby's Social

2. 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 and actives in their future career. These meetings give our members 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 and new technology. In the fall semester we had speakers come from ExxonMobil. We were hoping to host a couple of companies during the spring semester, but because our semester was cut short, we were unable to hold any corporate meetings in the spring.

3. Service Projects

Each semester, initiates are expected to take part in a service project. This gives pledges an easy opportunity to give back to the community. In both the fall and spring semesters, our chapter continued our tradition of picking up trash at Lemon Tree Park. Another big service event we take part in every year is the Big Event. The Big Event is the nation's largest one-day, student run service project, which gives Texas A&M students a chance to say thank you to their community. Students go to homes of residents and serve them through chores such as raking, tree trimming, painting, mulching, moving heavy objects, and much more. While our organization was set to participate this spring, this event was unfortunately canceled due to COVID-19, but we look forward to participating again when the next event is held.

4. National Convention

Thanks to a generous donation from a sponsor arranged through the Texas A&M Mechanical Engineering Department, our chapter was able to send four officers to the 2020 Pi Tau Sigma National Convention at RIT in Rochester, NY. Our officers really enjoyed the opportunity to connect with other members from across the country, see the facilities at RIT, and learn from

the experiences of engineers through keynote speakers and career panels. We look forward to sending another team of officers to the next National Convention.

Figure 6: Officers Attending National Convention

Figure 7: Officers and Other Attendees at Friday Dinner

C. Other

1. Officers

Advisor: Dr. Timothy Jacobs

Fall 2019
President: Diana Dunman
Vice President: Joanna Ringhofer
Treasurer: Immanuel Ponminissery
Secretary: Hanna Plate
Social/Service: Aneil Marathi
Corporate Relations: Naomi Trevino
Public Relations: Theodore Hughes

Spring 2020
President: Diana Dunman
Vice President: Aneil Marathi
Treasurer: Immanuel Ponminissery
Secretary: Hanna Plate
Social/Service: Moises Vasquez
Corporate Relations: Naomi Trevino
Public Relations: Theodore Hughes

2. Additional Information

For more information, please see our website.

https://pitausigmatamu.wixsite.com/tamu