PI TAU SIGMA ANNUAL CHAPTER REPORT

2009-2010

University of Florida Sigma Omicron

A. Initiations

We choose out initiates from the top 35% of the third year students in the mechanical and aerospace department at Florida. Our chapter receives the list of eligible candidates from Salena Robinson, the Undergraduate Student Program Assistant, about a third of the way into the semester. Our vice president of initiates contacts the students on this list via email and invites them to join Pi Tau Sigma.

After attending an introductory meeting, initiates are required to complete a series of tasks before joining. Initiates need to complete five hours of community service and fundraising each. Additionally, candidates need to interview five mechanical engineering faculty members. Initiates are required to attend a number of events: a biannual student faculty softball game, our initiates social, and initiation held on the Sunday before exams. We ask that our initiates write a short one page letter outlining what they would like to see done with the Sigma Omicron Chapter. Finally, initiates need to polish their Pi Tau Sigma keys and pay dues before initiation.

At the initiation ceremony we lead the candidates into the dimly lit room. The current officers sit behind a table in the middle of the room adorned with candles and the Pi Tau Sigma coat of arms. The president and vice president of initiates describe the symbolism of the coat of arms as well as the values of Pi Tau Sigma in accordance with the Pi Tau Sigma initiation handbook. After pledging to uphold the ASME code of ethics the initiates are taught our chapter's secret handshake. The officers then proceed to shake hands and congratulate each of the new members. At the conclusion of initiation we hold officer elections. All members, including newly initiated members, can run for an officer position, however only officers can run for the presidency or vice-presidency. Initiations and officer elections are held in December and May.

B. Chapter Activities

Our chapter participates in activities that focus on promoting the ideals of Pi Tau Sigma to the students of the engineering department and the Gainesville community. To keep our streets clean on the weekend we organized cigarette cleanups in downtown Gainesville. We also routinely partnered with the Florida chapter of Tau Beta Pi and Santa Fe Community College to assist with GatorTRAX. GatorTRAX is a program that helps teach middle and high school students math and science skills related to engineering. Our members help set up demos, such as water rockets, for the middle school students and assist the high school students with preparation for the FCAT, the state standardized test.

The highest profile event we participate in at the University of Florida is the annual E-fair, an event where clubs from around the college of engineering hold demonstrations for elementary and middle school students as well as visiting alumni and faculty. At the Pi Tau Sigma booth this year we demonstrated our golfing robot. The rig consists of an aluminum extrude frame the holds a driver. The main goal of the golfing robot is to demonstrate the various aspects of mechanical

engineering working together. Pneumatic “muscles,” charged by a portable compressor, swing the club. The position of the pneumatic tubes controls how the robot swings.

In addition, we volunteer our members to help out in inter-department activities. For example, this year some of our members presented alumni awards at the annual department banquet. We also try to provide information and services for the students within the department. We organized three research symposiums over the past year. At the first two symposiums professors presented their research allowing students to get a better feeling for the types of research preformed in the department. The third symposium, which coincided with the alumni dinner, allowed undergraduate students to present their own research to their peers, faculty, and the department alumni. The alumni and department chair then chose their favorite project.

The Sigma Omicron chapter holds meetings every other week in the fall and spring semester. This past year we sent one voting delegate and three other representatives to the Texas Tech convention. Our vice president of members, Matthew Goff, chaired and co-chaired four committees. The key issue voted on by one of those committees was to allow graduate students to be inducted into the society.