



Alumni Notes



Volume 1, Issue 2

03/31/2013

MI-Gamma

Inside this issue:

New TBP Officer Structure Enacted	1-2
Tutoring Updates	3
Honors Brunch 2013	3
Engineering Family Night	4

New TBP Officer Structure Enacted

This month saw the final approval of a new structure for the TBP Officer Corps, and with it a number of other changes. Some of the more recent grads may remember the some of this process, which started back in November 2011. Dan Kiefer, the President at the time, pitched the idea to re-form the officer corps in a manner that would distribute some of the presidential oversight. A first pass at this idea was formulated over the next few months and discussed by the membership, but ultimately wasn't approved. Though the proposal wasn't approved, and the debate had, at times, been less than constructive, the process served as a valuable learning experience for the officers, especially the sponsors of the proposal.

Over the Fall 2012 semester, a lot of thought was given to the intent, details, and ramifications of the original proposal. Initially, the proposal was intended to increase efficiency of the officer corps, in particular as concerned officer meetings. "Twenty-one officers is a lot," was the argument, "and we need to have fewer people at the meetings to be productive." Seeing that this argument was not broadly accepted, one of the first things I implemented during my term as President was a new format for officer meetings. This format helped to steer the meetings to allow productive discussion, even with a large number of people present. With this goal of the proposal accomplished, attention turned to determining what opportunities existed for a similar proposal.

A number of the original goals, as well as additional opportunities, remained: reducing the demand on the President, creating more ways for actives to get involved, fostering leadership growth within the officer corps, creating an officer corps that was more approachable for newer or less experienced members, and allowing for greater flexibility. Since efficiency was no longer an explicit goal, the rigidly defined structure, which segmented the officer corps into reasonably discrete sub-units, was no longer needed. Reducing the demand on the President, however, still required that a structure that had at least some concept of levels be introduced. A hybrid model between the ex-

New TBP Officer Structure Enacted (Cont.)

isting flat structure and a rigid tree structure was needed, and subsequently found, in the concept of Officer Teams.

Officer Teams are a concept new to the TBP officer corps, and relatively unprecedented in other groups on campus. The goal is to distribute the oversight responsibility while maintaining the individual autonomy of each officer position. Under the old model, it was the President's responsibility to ensure that each officer completed his or her duties in a timely and effective manner. Under the new model, for example, the President is only directly responsible for a little under half of the officers. This includes the Secretary, Treasurer, External Vice Presidents, and the Team Leads. Each Team Lead is, in turn, responsible for ensuring that the responsibilities of their Team members are accomplished. Unlike in a more rigid structure, each individual officer maintains the autonomy to make decisions regarding how to accomplish their responsibilities. An additional benefit to the implemented Teams is that it creates a more approachable mentor in the Team Lead. Under the old model, each officer was able to go to the president for advice and feedback. The President, however, is fairly busy and, while aware of the high-level impact of each position, not necessarily familiar with all of the intricacies of each position. Under the new model, each officer would still be able to go to the President, but they'd also have an additional resource who would be at least a little more familiar with the types of experiences they might expect in their new position. This should help ease the transition for new officers as well as provide useful oversight and mentoring experience to officers that may wish to be President in the future.

One of the recurring problems for TBP has been in getting actives that aren't officers more involved. This new structure seeks to address that by providing a new type of involvement—committees. Committees allow a flexible way for members to get involved in more facets of chapter activity. Previously, if you were an active that wanted to be involved in leadership outside of the officer corps, your options were limited to being a group leader or a service project leader. There is much more to our chapter than just these two categories of activities, however, and our opportunities for involvement should reflect that. One of the new committees that has started up is the Professional Development Committee. This committee combines the responsibilities of the Corporate Relations and Diversity & Leadership Officers, under the direction of the Corporate Relations Officer. Committee members would help organize activities such as Engineering Futures sessions, company information sessions, professional development workshops, and the MLK Luncheons. The Corporate Relations Officer would be in charge company correspondence, MLK topic planning, and steering the committee. The new structure also allows for flexibility to create committees when needed, so if, for instance, K-12 Outreach could benefit from having a small committee to assist the officers, there is a process for starting that up.

These changes are an exciting, if somewhat challenging, undertaking for the chapter and will help us to grow and to provide ever improved resources and opportunities to our members and to the College.

Mike Hand
Chapter Advisor

Tutoring Updates

As the semester comes to a close, it is time to reflect on the progress made in our new tutoring system. Earlier this semester, the officer corps decided that it would be more efficient to switch from pre-arranged group tutoring efforts to one-on-one tutoring for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons was to increase the efficiency with which our tutors volunteered their time. In past semesters, a maximum of 40 hours of the pre-set 112 hours were actually spent tutoring students, assuming that every student was tutored for the full two hour period. This semester, we have tutored a total of 58.75 hours and counting! Additionally, in Fall 2011, only 20 students utilized our tutoring system while this semester we have had twice as many requests. On top of all of this, many students have been keeping in correspondence with their tutors and arranging to meet with them again. We feel that this has improved TBP's image on campus as both a reliable and trustworthy organization and helped us build rapport with the engineering community.

We have also begun partnering with HKN (the EECS Honor Society), for tutoring in EECS courses because they have seen the improvements of our new tutoring system. There is still work to be done to improve our tutoring program but I am very happy to have been a part of such a meaningful project on campus!

Laura Kruger

Campus Outreach Chair

Honors Brunch 2013

The College of Engineering hosts an annual event in March called Honors Brunch where it recognizes the recipients of the College's Leaders and Honors Awards. The External Vice Presidents of Tau Beta Pi, working together with Epeians (the Engineering Leadership Honor Society), were heavily involved in the planning of this award reception.

They contributed by coordinating the interviews for the nominees of the TBP Thomas S. Rice Award. The EVPs also organized a panel of interviewers for many of the awards given out by the College of Engineering. The panels, each consisting of one undergraduate student, one graduate student, and one faculty member, are designed so that they represent a range of majors and backgrounds. Once the panels have been chosen, the nominees for each award must be interviewed by their corresponding panel. Coordinating the schedules of the interviewers and nominees was a daunting but rewarding task. The award recipients that were ultimately chosen by the interview panels were certainly a deserving group of individuals.

Every award recipients submitted a personal bio for presentation at Honors Brunch. Their academic and extra-curricular achievements were humbling and awe-inspiring. After the event, the officer corps has begun discussing ways to publicize the recipients' accomplishments, so as to spread recognition of these incredible students and the inspiration their stories bring.

Mike Boyd & Natalie Eyke

External Vice-Presidents

Family Engineering Night

This year, we were lucky to have a Tau Bate from Michigan Tech join our chapter as a first year graduate student. He was very interested in starting up Family Engineering Night with the Michigan Gamma Chapter of TBP.

Family Engineering (familyengineering.org) is an event that takes place at the local elementary schools where both the children and their parents work together on various engineering challenges. The goals of Family Engineering are to introduce the children and parents to the wide variety of engineering fields, as well as to increase the parent's interest and ability to encourage their children to pursue STEM careers.

The first Family Engineering Night was held at Abott Elementary School in February. Approximately 35 participants came, and everyone (including the volunteers) had a great time! The night began with opener activities, followed by two engineering challenges. The kids and their parents worked to build a pen "assembly line", as well as to build "prosthetic hands" that could pick up a wide variety of objects.

Hopefully next semester's K-12 Outreach Officers can continue Family Engineering, and broaden the impact it has!

Marissa Lafata
K-12 Outreach Officer

