A. Initiations

At the beginning of every semester, the Mechanical Engineering Department of the Watson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences supplies the chapter with names of students who have met the criteria for inductions. The criteria that are used to select eligible students are as follows: they must be in the top 35% of the mechanical engineering class, they must currently possess a 3.5 cumulative GPA and they must have at least a junior credit standing. Once the list of eligible students is obtained, an email is sent to each of them to schedule an individual professional interview with the current executive board of the chapter.

At the interviews, the candidates are expected to dress in business attire and present their resumes for consideration. After reviewing the resumes, candidates are asked questions about themselves to see if they reflect the ideals of Pi Tau Sigma. After the interviews, the executive board reviews each of the candidates to decide on whether to extend an invitation to become an inductee.

After all invitations are extended, an inductee meeting is held for the candidates that have accepted to discuss the induction requirements. The following is a list of the requirements each inductee is expected to meet prior to induction: they must pay an induction fee, polish a bent, tutor for at least four hours and attend at least one chapter sponsored event. The requirements for induction vary slightly each semester depending on the chapter activities that are scheduled.

Inductions are held as a business casual event at the end of each semester in a classroom on campus. All current undergraduate members are expected to attend inductions. Professors and graduate members of the society are invited to join in the ritual, but are not required to attend. The Vice-President of the chapter checks that each of the inductees present have fulfilled all their requirements prior to inductions. If all requirements are not met, the inductee’s induction is deferred to the following semester.

The specifics of the ritual are outlined below. Prior to the induction ritual inductees are alphabetically outside of the room by a current member. Lights are turned off and inductees file into a dark room lit by candles. The inductees are instructed to be seated in front of the current executive board members with all the current members looking on from the back. The executive board members read the induction rituals as outlined in the Pi Tau Sigma chapter guide with minor adjustments. After the ceremony is complete, inductees sign the chapters induction book and receive a pin containing the colors azure and murrey signifying their induction into the chapter. Afterwards a reception is held where all the new and old members may socialize.

At the end of each academic year after the spring induction ceremony, elections are held for the following year’s executive board.
For the 2009-2010 academic year, inductions were held on the following dates: Fall Induction, December 3, 2009 and Spring Induction, April 15, 2010.

B. Chapter Activities

Over the past academic year, the Binghamton University chapter of Pi Tau Sigma has become more involved in student and academic life. Overall, the chapter has held more general body meetings, more activities and more tutoring sessions than ever before.

In prior years, the Binghamton University chapter of Pi Tau Sigma would only convene once a semester for inductions. But this year, a couple of general body meetings were held during each semester to inform the members of activities and requirements and also to poll them about what they would like to do as a chapter.

The main event that was held this year was a research information session, in which over a dozen mechanical engineering faculty members came to speak to undergraduates about their research to try to get them involved with research on campus. This event was held in the Fall and was organized jointly with some help from the Associate Dean of Research, Professor Ronald Miles. Over 60 undergraduates attended the event. Hopefully this will become an event that is held annually as it was very successful. Other events were planned, but did not come to fruition due to lack of funding.

Improving tutoring for undergraduates was a big goal for this year. In past years, only a few tutoring sessions were offered and not many students attended. This year, tutoring was greatly improved in many ways. Firstly, tutoring was offered at least twice a week every week over each semester. Also, tutoring sessions became focused on particular subjects; this greatly increased attendance. Because of the success of the tutoring sessions, Professors began to ask for review sessions to be held prior to exams. These review sessions were always well attended. The chapter also provided students with the choice of group or private tutoring. Students could request to be put in touch with a member of the chapter to receive private tutoring in the subject they desired. The biggest accomplishments in terms of tutoring over the past year were the increased number of students that were helped and the addition of tutoring for the solid modeling class in which many students struggle.

This year, our chapter put in a lot of hard work trying to procure funds from several sources to go travel to the annual convention at Texas Tech. Sadly, the chapter could not attend due to inclement weather in the New York Tristate area on the weekend of the convention. Hopefully next year, the chapter will be represented in Chicago, Illinios.