



EDITORIAL

Endowing our Future

Sixty years ago our initiation fee was \$20 per new member. While that seems small today, adjusted for inflation, it is a whopping \$177! It has been raised over the years to its current level of \$45 which provides a membership certificate, key, four-year subscription to *The Bent*, support for the annual Convention, and new member orientation materials—the same items covered in 1955. Around \$8.50 of each new member's fee remains to finance the activities of the Association. The initiation fee covered 80 percent of our expenses in 1955; now it covers just over 10 percent.

The Alumni Giving Program started in 1963 and has allowed us to shift the responsibility of running TBPI from the students to the alumni, and it will continue to be our number one funding priority. The support of our alumni ensures that we can keep the Association initiation fee low and allows the chapters to keep a majority of the fee they charge to fund their own activities and projects. At the same time, we realize that there are areas we would like to expand (increasing the number and amount of our fellowships, for example) but do not have the resources to tackle.

With that in mind, we are launching the Chapter Endowment Initiative to provide permanent financing for some of the activities that directly benefit our student members and the collegiate chapters. This initiative will fund the same programs as the Alumni Giving Program, but the goal of the Chapter Endowment Initiative is to provide a permanent, rather than annual, revenue stream for the Association. You can read more about this effort in our feature article on pages 12-20. I have included information about the Association programs that will benefit from this initiative.

Convention

Our Convention is one of the most popular and beneficial activities that our students participate in each year. Tau Beta Pi pays for one student from each collegiate chapter to attend the three-day meeting which provides students the opportunity to meet their peers from around the country, conduct the business of the Association (it is, in essence, the annual shareholders meeting), receive professional development training, and learn how to lead their chapters. The Convention is funded through \$10 from each new member's initiation fee, corporate sponsorships, a portion of the TBPI endowment, and the Alumni Giving Program. The Chapter Endowment Initiative will provide funding so we no longer need to

use annual giving for Convention. We can then consider lowering the initiation fee or using it to fund other activities that benefit our students.

District Program

The District Program was created nearly 40 years ago to provide in-person contact by Association Officials to chapter members. With 242 chapters, it is impractical for our 5-member Executive Council and our small Headquarters staff to personally work with and visit each chapter. Our 45 volunteer District Directors fill that gap by visiting chapters annually, providing local problem solving and advice, and conducting leadership training at District Conferences each winter and spring.



These day-long regional conferences provide training and practical tools for our student officers to effectively lead and operate their collegiate chapters. This program is the envy of our colleagues in the Association of College Honor Societies as it provides additional structure and continuity on top of what is provided by our volunteer chapter advisors. Unlike some of our peer honor societies, we can proudly say that we have not lost a collegiate chapter due to lack of interest or inactivity.

Engineering Futures

For over 25 years, Engineering Futures has provided training in the “soft skills,” the non-technical skills necessary for success in the workplace but rarely included in engineering curricula. Modules address areas such as communicating and resolving interpersonal problems, working in teams, planning and managing effective meetings, solving problems in a team environment, and the latest addition, public speaking and formal presentation preparation. Last year our 42 volunteer facilitators led 233 sessions around the United States and in Qatar. Sessions are provided at no cost to our chapters, as TBPI covers the expenses to bring a facilitator to campus.

MindSET

MindSET is the Association's program to address the need to encourage more students to pursue education in the STEM disciplines. Dozens of our chapters are

actively engaged in providing hands-on activities in school districts across the country. A sample of current activities can be found on page 21, and a project by New Jersey Alpha at Stevens Institute was recently featured in *The Bulletin*, www.tbp.org/pubs/recentIssues.cfm. Tau Beta Pi provides grants up to \$1,000 per semester per chapter for groups interested in conducting MindSET activities. However, we cannot realistically fund every chapter at \$1,000 per year or grow the program to that level without additional resources.

Project Grants

A concern we frequently hear from our student officers is the challenge in obtaining funding for a project that the chapter would like to undertake at the local level. These range from recognizing outstanding freshmen or sophomores with a scholarship to financing a community service project or sponsoring an activity within their college. We plan to address this concern through the Chapter Endowment Initiative by providing grants of up to \$1,000 per endowed chapter per year for projects the chapter is interested in undertaking.

Headquarters

The final component in the success of the Chapter Endowment Initiative is ensuring that the Association has the staff necessary to make the aforementioned programs available to our students. A maximum of 20 percent will be used to provide the staffing for these programs; it will not be used for fundraising activities, publication of *The Bent*, or other overhead costs. We have a dedicated group in Knoxville who work to help student officers in their efforts as chapter leaders, match interested chapters to available Engineering Futures Facilitators, assist delegates in making travel arrangements to and experiencing Convention, and work with chapters to conduct successful MindSET sessions. The Headquarters staff is critical in making these programs a reality.

I hope this provides some insight into the programs already funded through our Alumni Giving Program that we hope to fund in perpetuity through the Chapter Endowment Initiative. I know not everyone can consider the minimum \$5,000 gift for this initiative, but all gifts for our Alumni Giving Program help us to “mark in a fitting manner” and ensure we are more than just an honor society. Thank you for your support!

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