

President Simonson Reports to the 2008 Convention

The Executive Council leads the Association under the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws and the Acts of the Convention. It provides leadership to guide national programs through Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer Jim Froula, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Roger E. Hawks, the Headquarters staff, District Directors, chapter advisors, and many additional outstanding volunteers. The Council receives guidance from and reports to the Convention. Therein lies your responsibility.

THE CONDITION OF THE ASSOCIATION

Tau Beta Pi chapters initiated 7,864 members last year, which is an increase of more than 200 from the previous year and represents the first increase in several years. Thank you to all who contributed to this successful outcome. The number of active members is most important to the health of the Association. I challenge you to allow me to report another increase in initiation numbers at next year's Convention in New Brunswick, NJ.

At the end of July 2008, the end of our fiscal year, the Tau Beta Pi trust value exceeded \$20 million, an increase of approximately \$2.5 million from the end of July 2007. The growth last year is due to a highly successful Alumnus Giving Program and several significant bequests, despite market losses. It is important to realize that most trust funds are restricted for fellowships, scholarships, life subscriptions, and Convention delegate support. Without the generous contributions from our alumni, we could not support the Headquarters operations, District Programs, Engineering Futures, scholarships, fellowships, the K-12 math and science initiative (MindSET), spring conferences, and other important programs.

The Association is even stronger this year than it was last year. Tau Beta Pi is performing well in every way. Our financial situation is solid despite the shared pain of recent and continuing financial turbulence; our staff is talented, loved by the Association, and efficient; we are supported by hundreds of volunteers and thousands of donors; and every year we are joined in our mission by thousands of top engineering students.

NEW CHAPTER INSTALLATIONS AND PETITIONS

With the installations of Ohio Xi at Miami University in Oxford, OH, and California Alpha Delta at the University of California, Santa Cruz, there are now 234 Tau Beta Pi collegiate chapters. There are no final petitions being considered by the 2008 Convention, but there will likely be two petitions to be considered at next year's Convention. The Executive Council is working with Executive Director Jim Froula to increase our efforts to explore opportunities for having additional Tau Beta Pi chapters.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS AMENDMENT

There was one Constitution amendment regarding eligibility of graduate students passed by the 2007 Convention and subsequently ratified by the chapters. That amendment ratification was the first to be ratified by chapters without Council action in several years.

SUBJECTS REFERRED BY THE 2007 CONVENTION

- The Committee on Chapter Advisors recommended that the Council investigate having all new advisors (one per chapter maximum) attend the 2008 Convention—with attention to financial implications—and develop an advisor program for spring conferences to be piloted in 2008.

Response: The Advisor Recruitment and Development Committee met twice during the past year and will have two training sessions at this Convention.

- Alumnus Chapters requested that the Council evaluate ways to keep alumni interested and connected to Tau Beta Pi. The recommendation was to have every member have an *xxx@tbp.org* email account after initiation that each will keep throughout his or her lifetime to facilitate communication among members and with the Society.

The Alumnus Chapter delegates discussed ways to encourage new alumnus chapters and to reactivate dormant chapters with a goal of establishing enough active alumnus chapters so that no matter where in the country a Tau Beta Pi resides, there will be an opportunity to establish new connections, network with other Tau Beta Pies, and continue to be active in the organization. The delegates recommended that the Headquarters create an interactive website for each alumnus chapter, with a TBP address, linked to *www.tbp.org*.

Response: The Council met with a representative of Affinity Circles and an online community called TBPCONNECT has been created and has been well used.

- The Convention recommended that the Executive Council assign the 2008 Rituals Committee the issue of studying a particular binding legal word in the Ritual.

Response: The issue has been given to the Rituals Committee for further analysis.

- The Convention recommended that the Council investigate a recent change in the Model Law for Professional Licensure as an Engineer, also known as the "body of knowledge" or "B.S.+30." It recommended that the Council investigate the proposed change and develop a stance that Tau Beta Pi and its members can use to guide politicians and leaders on how best to write laws regarding engineering licensure and professional careers.

Response: Tau Beta Pi does not want to take political stances, but does support discussing both sides of the issue with its membership. An article on licensure by Dr. Stuart Walesh was printed in the Spring issue of THE BENT.

- The Convention recommended that the Council investigate future use of an electronic voting system.

Response: The Council determined that the costs are not justified. An attempt was made to test a system at the 2007 Convention, but the system operated incorrectly and appeared to be more cumbersome than manual ballot voting. However, an electronic voting system has been made available by California Upsilon and will be tested at this Convention at no cost to the Association.

- The Convention recommended that stoles and honor cords not be sold to individuals unless a chapter advisor or president approves the purchase.

Response: The Council approved a policy that requires chapters wishing to restrict the purchase of stoles or cords by its members to contact Headquarters in writing. The policy was communicated in a spring mailing to all chapters.

- The Convention recommended that the Headquarters review the Wikipedia definition of Tau Beta Pi because candidates do read it. It was also noted that Tau Beta Pi might be considered by Wikipedia to have a conflict of interest if it made changes.

Response: Wikipedia is an independent website and has the right to post and alter its definitions as it sees fit. Tau Beta Pi will not take action to correct misrepresentations if discrepancies are found.

- The Convention recommended that the Council prepare specific wording on the issue of bachelor of arts in engineering programs and charge the 2008 Convention to resolve it.

Response: The issue has been given to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for further analysis.

- The Convention recommended that the Council review the academic eligibility of alumni under Constitution Article VIII, Sections 4 and 5, in cases where academic eligibility cannot be certified and is unattainable.

Response: The Executive Council feels that Constitution Article VIII, Section 6, addresses this issue and recommends no further action be taken.

OTHER ACTIONS SINCE THE 2007 CONVENTION

The number of \$2,000 scholarship awards will increase significantly for 2009-10. Thanks to a transformational endowment gift in June 2008 of \$3.52 million from the Vincent A. Stabile Foundation, there will be an additional 89 scholarships for 2009-10, increasing the number of scholarships this year from 145 to 234, which is exactly equal to the number of chapters. Thank you to those who were involved in this exciting process. There were 366 scholarship applications submitted last spring, and, when students perform the statistical analysis, we expect to receive a larger number of applications next spring.

The number of Tau Beta Pi Fellows remains about constant with 35 being named last year. Twenty-six of the Tau Beta Pi Fellows are receiving \$10,000 awards. The remaining nine have other extensive financial aid to support their graduate studies.

Tau Beta Pi has awarded more than \$6 million in fellowships and scholarships since 1929, the first year fellowships were awarded. The Scholarship Program was started 70 years later in 1999 and has grown rapidly.

CONVENTION BIDS

Chapters have opportunities to prepare bids to host Tau Beta Pi Conventions, which are reviewed three years in advance of a Convention. This Convention would normally be responsible for reviewing bids to host the 2011 Convention, but no bid was submitted. Chapters are encouraged to work with their advisors and District Directors to prepare bids for hosting the 2011 and 2012 Conventions and submit their proposals by June 1, 2009. I expect the 2009 Site Selection Committee to be busy. [*Bids for 2011 were allowed to be submitted by Nov. 21, 2008.*]

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOMINATION

Chapters have opportunities to nominate Executive Council Slates every four years. This Executive Council is completing the second year of its four-year term. The 2009 Convention will elect the Council to serve in 2010-14. Nominations are due April 1, 2009.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR

- The Council met five times since the last Convention.
- Pat McDaniel, Director of Development, will be working to build relationships with alumni interested in reconnecting with Tau Beta Pi. Dylan Lane has been hired as a Communications Specialist to take over many of Pat McDaniel's former duties.

- The Council initiated actions to continue to meet with alumni across the U.S. Spring meetings were hosted in Phoenix, AZ; Arlington, VA; Manhattan Beach, CA; and Stanford, CA. In August, Pat McDaniel and I visited several wonderful alumni in central Florida. This week, Sherry Jennings-King and I met more alumni in Novato, Palo Alto, and Cupertino. Many alumni accepted invitations to spring conferences. More than 200 alumni were reconnected with Tau Beta Pi during the year.

- A new Engineering Futures module on "Effective Presentation Skills" has been presented to a few chapters and is ready to be fully integrated into the EF Program.

- Vice President Solange Dao has been actively involved with the Advisor Recruitment and Development Committee.

- Councillor Norman Pih works closely with the Trust Advisory Committee to oversee the investments of Tau Beta Pi's trust funds.

- Councillor Jason Huggins continues to lead Tau Beta Pi's District Program Planning Committee.

- Councillor Jonathan Earle continues to lead the Tau Beta Pi National K-12 MindSET Program. The organizational structure is in place, and there is a lot of enthusiasm among chapter members as they eagerly plan to become actively involved.

- TBPCONNECT was established to provide Tau Beta Pi members with online social networking opportunities.

Let's have a great Tau Beta Pi year. I challenge you to convert the energy that many Tau Bates have for the K-12 MindSET Program into productive projects to benefit your chapter members and to impact the future of the engineering profession.