

Greater Interest in Government

Wyoming Alpha Focuses on Fifth Graders

THE WYOMING ALPHA CHAPTER of Tau Beta Pi recently completed its Greater Interest in Government project. Prior to receiving the grant and during spring 2000, Wyoming Alpha hosted a tour of the University of Wyoming's engineering college facilities for a local fifth-grade class.

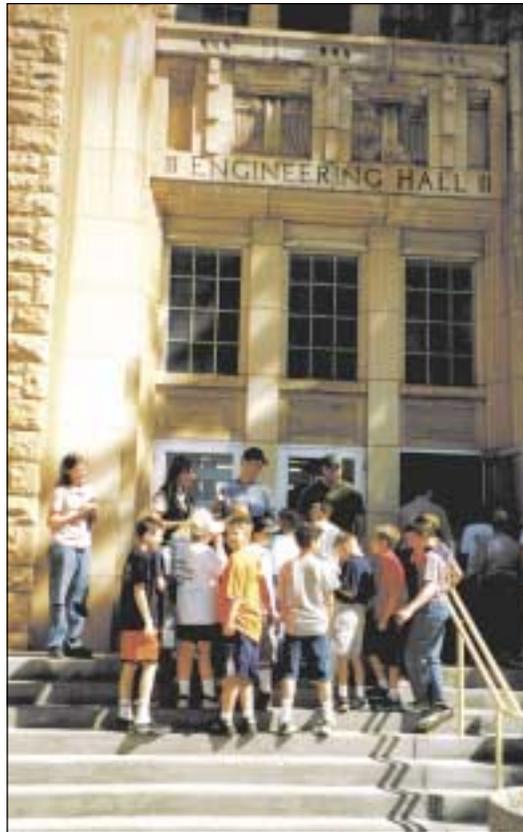
These students had an opportunity to visit with engineering students and faculty involved in the ASCE concrete canoe, the SAE formula car, an architectural design project, and an electrical engineering research project. After the children toured the design projects and departments, many of them talked about how they wanted to become engineers when they grew up! The tour was such a success that other Laramie teachers were asking to be involved. Wyoming Alpha applied for and received a GIG grant in order to continue arranging tours of the engineering college for grade-school children.

Last fall, the chapter decided to focus on fifth graders, because they are at an age when they are still excited about science and working on their own science projects. Our tours began in February and continued into April. Each tour lasted approximately one hour and consisted of a presentation from each discipline in the engineering college. For chemical engineering, the fluidized beds and the chemically powered car were demonstrated. The composite materials lab for mechanical engineering was shown, and students were taught how to make a carbon-fiber key chain. All students received key chains, which were thoroughly enjoyed. In civil engineering, the structures and hydraulics labs were visited. In the structures lab, the youngsters were able to determine the force required to break a wooden dowel. In

the hydraulics lab, they were shown a hydraulic jump. The hexapod was shown for the electrical engineering department. Finally, a senior student from architectural engineering demonstrated the process of designing a building.

Twenty chapter members and several other engineering students and faculty participated in this event. The children asked many engineering questions and were eager for the day when they too can become engineers! Three different schools visited the college, for a total of 122 fifth graders and eight teachers. Many students wrote thank-you notes, sharing with us what they learned while they were here and how much fun they had. We hope to start earlier on this project next year so that every fifth-grade class in Laramie will be able to see our college and learn about the exciting things that engineers do.

Kari Miller, WY A '02, Tour Chair



The purpose of the Greater Interest in Government Program, established in 1969 by Frederick A. Faville, Illinois Beta '19, is to stimulate interest in civic affairs and public-policy issues among student members of Tau Beta Pi. The Executive Council awards annual grants up to \$750 each for these activities from the investment earnings of the Greater Interest in Government Fund.

"Thank you for the spectacular field trip to the engineering department. My father used to work in the building we saw." — Kira