

2025 District 7 Conference – Tau Beta Pi

District 7 was in Kalamazoo, Michigan, at the Western Michigan University (WMU) engineering campus for their spring District Conference on April 5th. The planning began almost 7 months earlier in mid September of 2024, following the selection of Michigan Kappa (MI-K) as the host chapter by vote of the delegates to the 2024 District 7 Conference in Dayton, Ohio, earlier that year. It all came together starting on the evening of April 4th as most of the delegates arrived the night before to check in and enjoy an evening of games and social activities put on by MI-K. These were held in Floyd Hall, which also served as the location for the Conference proper the next day.



Figure 1 - Conference delegates from OH-Z (advisor) & SEMIAC check in with two of their District Directors at the registration table on Friday night. Volunteers from the host chapter, MI-K, can be seen in the background, and foreground (far left).

On Saturday, attendees received a warm welcome Dr. Steve Butt (MI-K '91), Dean of the College of Engineering & Applied Sciences at WMU. They were also greeted by Dr. Damon Miller

(KY-B '89), Chief Advisor to MI-K, and Renee Szostek (MI-A '87), President of the local West Michigan Alumni Chapter (WMIAC), both of whom assisted the District 7 Directors in planning the Conference.



Figure 2 - A nonplussed Executive Councillor Mike Hand (MI-G '11) is observed by two amused District Directors in the back row of the main meeting room for the Conference.

Throughout the course of the day, the student delegates learned about national programs like MindSET, SAB, Chapter Development, and NEST. They also created skits both educational and amusing to highlight typical events in the life of a chapter, such as initiation, officer elections, ratification ballot, candidate process, and several more. Awards were given by the DD's for the best performances.

Mike Hand was in attendance to share updates from HQ, and all four district directors were on deck leading activities. In particular, the DD's ran breakout sessions focusing on several key areas of concern for successful chapter operations: officer transitions, semester planning, and chapter reporting, with the delegates divided across sessions based on the needs of the chapter that sent them. The Conference was also well attended by alumni, with delegates from all 6 of District 7's Alumni Chapters! Several chapter advisors also showed up, and together with the alumni delegates they graciously volunteered to chair panels on different career paths available to students after graduation.



Figure 3 - The Icon, a monument on WMU's engineering campus just outside of Floyd Hall, and the site of group picture from the Conference.

A highlight of the conference was the model initiation; a first for District 7. Seeing an educational opportunity for the delegates, District Director Michael Ustes (MI-I '23) worked with the Chapter's Chief Advisor Dr. Damon Miller (KY-B '89) to initiate the 16 MI-K electees for the Spring term during the Conference proceedings. An additional electee from MI-I, who was in attendance as a member of the chapter's delegation was also initiated. This provided the perfect setting for the DD's to instruct the delegates and demonstrate the proper execution of the ceremony. It also had the benefit of lending an added significance to the event for the electees who thus became full members.



Figure 4 - New Tau Bates join the Michigan Kappa officers for a photo at the chapter's Bent.

The District 7 Directors extend their gratitude to all who made the event possible, especially the many volunteers from MI-K and WMIAC who lent a helping hand during the Conference. We also extend congratulations to the winner of the 2026 District Conference bid: OH-A, with Ohio's North Coast Alumni Chapter (ONCAC) supporting. We'll see you all next year in Cleveland, Ohio!



Figure 5 - Over 100 attendees, including student & alumni delegates, initiates (center), Association Officials, and MI-K volunteers gather at the Icon for a group photo. Additionally, one non-member is asleep in the foreground.