



To: Student Outreach Award Committee Members

From: Payton Carnahan, Assistant Director of Operations, Louisiana Tech Recreation

Date: April 30, 2020

Re: Student Outreach Award Nomination

Ten years ago I was finishing up my freshman year as a Tech Bulldog, and in that one year I had already come to love this campus and the connections I had made. I realized that there was something special about the faculty and staff across campus, and I had come to know and love many of those staff members. I worked as a lifeguard for 3 years as a student, and learned more from my on campus job than I thought possible. I just needed a little extra money, but having that job gave me something so much more valuable. I was able to make connections with the Recreation professional staff, and learn more from following their direction than I did in some of my academic classes. A month before graduation, I was getting nervous as I did not have a job lined up, nor did I know what I wanted to do as a career! A part-time position was coming open in Aquatics, so I decided to interview for the position. I was given the job, and was ecstatic that I was now able to be a part of something that had given me so much as a student. I was able to help develop student workers. Since 2013 I have loved every minute of working with students. I had to jump quickly from student to supervisor (literally overnight), but the skills and direction I had been given by the staff before me made my journey much easier. I have been honored to start as a student employee and make my way to an assistant director position, where my primary job now is to help develop our student employees to be the best they can be. I believe my "climbing the ladder" has helped give me the experience I need to provide these students with what they need to succeed. I remember being where they are, and I can give them guidance from my past failures and successes, not just from a policies and procedures manual. I do my best to connect with each student in a way that shows them the respect they deserve, while guiding them to a more successful future. I realize I have been given one of the most important, yet humbling and satisfying jobs on this campus. I get to provide students with knowledge on how to be employable so they can be successful in their careers. I truly love my job and care for each student that joins our staff. Being a part of the Louisiana Tech family has been one of the greatest joys of my life. I am completely honored and touched to have been nominated for the Student Outreach Award. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Payton Carnahan
Assistant Director of Operations
Louisiana Tech Recreation

4/27/20

Dear Alicia,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Payton Carnahan for the Student Outreach Award. As a relatively new employee to Louisiana Tech myself (I became the director of Lambright Sports and Fitness Facility in January of 2019), my first goal was to simply spend some time watching our full-time professional staff to facilitate a re-organization. My first step in doing this was to evaluate the staff in their regular work environment, how they interacted with their staffs and co-workers and identify their strengths and weaknesses. At the time, Mrs. Carnahan was the Coordinator for Aquatics and her responsibilities mainly included anything that had to do with the pool and the lifeguards.

It became quickly apparent to me that Payton was a natural leader who really cared for her staff. At Lambright we run a customer service business although we are part of the campus community. We rely almost exclusively on student labor. When assessing employees, it became apparent to me that Mrs. Carnahan needed to be in a position where she could impact more employees than she currently was. Payton was really involved in her student's performance on the job but took that several steps farther by being aware of their "student lives" and their lives outside of campus. She used this information to individually motivate her staff members and to help them grow, both personally and professionally. She is affectionately known as "mom" by our professional staff because of the very personal role she takes in her employee's. She utilizes all of the tools within her disposal to make them better.

As a result of these great characteristics, Payton was promoted to Assistant Director to give her more responsibility and allow her influence over more students. I can't emphasize enough the fact that probably the main reason she was moved to this position was her ability to positively influence the lives of students. I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider this letter as a recommendation for Mrs. Payton Carnahan for the Student Outreach Award. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Jackson, Ph.D.
Director, Campus Recreation
Lambright Sports and Wellness Center
Graduate Faculty, Kinesiology
Louisiana Tech University
318.257.2609



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

RECREATIONAL SPORTS

May 1, 2020

University Senate Committee,

I write to you in recommendation on behalf of Payton Carnahan as a nominee for the 2020 Student Outreach Award. Payton has worked for Louisiana Tech Department of Recreation for approximately ten years now. During Payton's time she moved through the ranks, first as a student employee. She has seen several transitions over time and now holds the title as Assistant Director of Operations. Payton's work ethic speaks volumes as she is dedicated and shows determination through various avenues of life.

Payton is a true advocate for the student voice as she strives to accommodate all and always keeps our students' best interest at heart. She provides a strong support system and mentoring to student staff. In addition, she is always willing to offer advice and point individuals in the right direction if and when needed. Payton shows the utmost importance for student development as it relates to their individual and professional successes.

I highly recommend Payton for this award as she helps to build the foundation of our university, the students. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me by phone (318) 257-2726 or email kane@latech.edu.

Sincerely,

Kane Allen
Assistant Director of Programming, Recreation
Louisiana Tech University
(318) 257-2726
kane@latech.edu

To the evaluators of the Student Outreach Award,

My name is Paulina Guerra, and I will be graduating from Louisiana Tech at the end of this quarter. I have worked under Payton Carnahan for the past two years at Lambright: first as a lifeguard and more recently as her office worker. I have had the pleasure of having her as a supervisor while she was Coordinator of Aquatics and more recently as Assistant Director of Operations. I have also taken two of her classes that she teaches at Tech: Lifeguarding and Swimming for Fitness. Payton cultivates a positive environment for both her employees and her students to improve and excel. She embodies every single Tenet of Tech and develops those who are placed under her supervision.

I first met Payton while taking her lifeguarding class. My first impression of her was how engaged she was with all of the students. It was not a small class, yet she took the time to ask each student's preferred name and had everyone's name memorized within the first week. Payton wanted her students not only to learn, but to succeed, and this was apparent from her interactions. Patient with those who did not catch on immediately, she took the extra time to demonstrate how specific skills were done. If you needed extra attention or had fallen behind, she was willing to work with you. This empathy for her students is what I believe to be one of Payton's greatest assets, and I have seen her use it in a multitude of capacities. Her students feel valued and cared for which motivates us to work harder and succeed. These experiences I had with Payton show her loyalty to her students and their wellbeing, her enthusiasm for what she does, and her care for those placed in her stead.

Payton also exemplifies the tenets: pride, respect, and leadership. These are most clearly seen through her interactions with her student workers. Payton does a great job of guiding her employees without belittling them. As adults who aren't "fully formed," this kind of mutual respect is important. I have yet to come across a single employee who has worked under Payton and who has said a single bad thing about her. She is a servant leader; she never asks someone to do something she is not willing to do. She puts the needs of her employees first even though it often makes her job harder. She leads by example which makes her staff want to be better and work harder. Payton also takes pride in representing Tech. As Coordinator of Aquatics, she wanted our pool to be run as a top-notch facility regardless of the fact that, as the only public swimming pool in Ruston, we had no competition. Her pride for what she does, her respect for others, and her leadership style are all ways that she develops her student workers. We see how she operates, and we imitate it.

Payton's hope, knowledge, and confidence also equip her to advance those in her care. Once Payton accomplishes a goal and lauds her team, she finds a new task. I have yet to see her say, "That's good enough!" because she is constantly improving how she manages. She is hopeful for all of her goals and expresses confidence to her students and student workers that they will achieve them, and then they do. I believe this is why she was entrusted with the task of training the student facility supervisors at Lambright. Payton has high hopes, real confidence, and the knowledge to get her team where they need to be to accomplish these hopes. For

Payton, hope is not an abstract concept, but rather it is a concrete idea of what her team can accomplish.

The last remaining Tenets of Tech are integrity, excellence, and commitment, and Payton exemplifies these traits abundantly. She has a strong moral code and sticks to it, plain and simple. How else can I say she has integrity? Payton's excellence and commitment go hand in hand. As shown throughout this letter, she is constantly striving to improve and to help her students improve as well. This is an every day, renewing commitment. She does not falter in her commitment to bettering her students, and her standards of excellence do not change.

In my entire time at Louisiana Tech, I have not found another faculty member who so clearly displays all the Tenets of Tech. Payton has such a passion for what she does, and she never hesitates to do whatever she can to help improve her students and their lives. The students at Tech aren't another statistic for her; they are individuals that she wants to cultivate so that they will succeed. She wants them to reach their highest potential. I would not have had such a wonderful time at Tech if it was not for Payton. She went the extra mile to look out for me and to help me grow, and she did that for every single student worker she had and every student in her classes. When I read the criteria needed to be eligible for this award, I read a description of Payton Carnahan.

Thank you for seeing in Payton what I and my fellow colleagues get to see every day,
Paulina Guerra