



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

University Communications

April 25, 2021

Dear Award Committee Members:

It is a great honor to be nominated as a candidate for the 2021 Outstanding Service Award by the University Senate and the faculty and staff. I have worked for Louisiana Tech University for almost seventeen years and served the community as a captain with Lincoln Parish Fire Department.

In 2004, I began my career at Louisiana Tech working in the Special Collections, Manuscripts, and Archives. There I created the first website for SCMA and digitized the finding aids so others could learn more about our collections. This led to me accepting a position as assistant webmaster for the university in January 2007 and eventually my current role as digital communication manager.

To me, outstanding service means going above and beyond what is expected to move the university forward. It's fighting for accessibility so that our information is available to all. Over the years, I have served on committees for accessibility, traditions, and academic convocation.

In 2009, I saw the importance of social media and expanded my skill set by creating and managing our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Combined, we now have over 80,000 followers and reach millions of people each year informing them about our academics, research, and student life. Over the years, I have assisted with photography as needed and learned to produce videos and podcasts in order to lead students and staff in the production of digital media.

Two years ago, I awoke to a tornado hitting campus and the community. I set up communications at my kitchen table and then at the Academic Success Center in Bossier City. Mid-morning, I made it to campus and Dr. Guice asked me to take on logistics with first responders, businesses, and individuals trying to assist on campus. We set up a communications and entertainment trailer from AT&T on campus and fed hundreds of volunteers at Argent Pavilion. While I initially wanted to assist in the disaster zone as a firefighter, it was an honor to take on a different role within incident command to help the university and community.

Whether on campus, at conferences, or on vacation, I always represent what it means to be a member of the Louisiana Tech family. I'm a loyal Bulldog and I thank you for considering me for this award.

Sincerely,

Tom Soto



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY®

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT
FOR ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

Dear Award Committee Members:

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of Tom Soto for the 2021 Outstanding Service Award. As a colleague for almost four years, Tom has time and time again shown his commitment to Tech and work well-done. There are several key instances where Tom has exhibited efforts that go above and beyond his typical duties.

Most recently, Tom has taken on the task of supporting the launch of a new degree audit system called Bulldog Path. This project has required Tom to transform the look and feel of the system to Tech standards. His expertise and timely work were necessary to the project's success. Without his support for this project, it would not have been possible.

Another positive example of Tom's commitment to the University is his recent acceptance of additional duties for providing courier service between the Shreveport/Bossier locations and the Ruston campus. These added responsibilities provide a nimbler and more dependable content transport option between the locations. He did not have to take on this responsibility, yet he has done so with dependability and punctuality.

These are but two shining examples of Tom's efforts and abilities that exemplify his worthiness of the Outstanding Service Award. Professionals like Tom make Tech a great place to work and learn. He is truly an asset to the entire Tech family and is an exceptional professional worthy of recognition.

Sincerely,

Donna Johnson
Assistant Vice President for Academic Advancement and Partnership
Louisiana Tech University



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

Dean of Student Services and Academic Support

May 1, 2021

Selection Committee,

I take great pleasure in the opportunity to recommend Tom Soto for the Louisiana Tech Outstanding Service Award. Mr. Soto's strong work ethic, which is evident to all who know him, as well as his years of experience as an employee, makes him a great choice for this award.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Soto for many years. I have had the opportunity work with him professionally through his involvement with the Accessibility Committee, through the promotion of FYE programs like Convocation, as well as his role in University Communications. Mr. Soto maintains regular communication with Disability Services to maintain fidelity in the web accessibility for all persons. Mr. Soto's professionalism and experience are to be commended. I have personally witnessed his innovation with technology and electronic delivery of information to current processes with which he has oversight. I have also had the opportunity to watch him interact with students that he supervises and make referrals to resources as appropriate. His compassion and concern for student success is admirable, as well as essential for a career in higher education.

It is without question; Mr. Soto is deserving of this award. Mr. Soto is most certainly a wonderful representative of our University. Again, it is a great honor to recommend Mr. Tom Soto for this award and I recommend him without reservation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can further assist this process (stacyc@latech.edu/318.257.2445).

Sincerely,

Stacy C. Gilbert
Dean of Student Services and Academic Support



LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

University Communications

Louisiana Tech University
University Senate

University Senate members:

I write this letter in support of the nomination for Tom Soto for the Louisiana Tech University Outstanding Service Award for Unclassified Employees.

Our University has gone through many challenges in the past few years. Beginning with the April 2019 tornado, we've faced a global pandemic, social unrest, a hurricane, harsh winter weather, and normal daily challenges. Each of these crises has created a need for more communication at Louisiana Tech, and the services offered through the Office of University Communications have been in high demand. In particular, more digital communication is necessary in an environment where we cannot gather or communicate face to face.

As our University's Digital Communication Manager, Tom has always showed exceptional leadership for our office – particularly for our younger staff members. In the past two years, he has stepped forward and met every challenge posed:

- He helped determine and execute logistics for donations and volunteers following the tornado, ensuring our community received food and other necessities in a timely manner.
- He has worked countless hours to ensure our website delivers the content and customized website needed to apprise our community of health and safety guidelines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- He has mentored staff who are tasked with creating digital, video, and social media content for our University's channels.
- He has delivered presentations to state, national, and international audiences that serve to position Louisiana Tech as a leader in higher education communication and marketing.

- He has staffed the University's emergency notification system when other staff members were occupied with urgent tasks related to the current emergency.
- He has provided expert counsel on the culture of Louisiana Tech University and the context with which communication will be received.
- He has fought tirelessly to ensure that the University's requirements for web and social media accessibility are current, accurate, and in compliance with best practices in the industry and legal requirements.
- He has consistently represented the best of Louisiana Tech, personified our Tenets, and served as a champion and shepherd of the Tech brand.

Tom Soto deserves the recognition and honor that accompanies the University Senate's Outstanding Service Award. His commitment to Louisiana Tech and its students, faculty, and staff is unwavering, and I urge you to select him as recipient of this distinguished award.

Forever Loyal,
Tonya Oaks Smith
Executive Director of University Communications and Marketing