



LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

University Senate
Louisiana Tech University

Ashley Osborne
*Project-Based Learning Specialist
Admin Coord, INEN & ICET*

May 12, 2023

Dear University Senate,

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination for the Student Outreach Award (Unclassified). I am honored and humbled by this recognition.

Since beginning this position in July 2017, I have been the primary contact for all COES students to receive the parts and pieces that they require for their projects. The Engineering program in the College of Engineering & Science is heavily project based – physical projects that the students complete over the course of a quarter. An engineering student in their first year alone will work on six (6) projects - a programmable robot that uses a microcontroller, a water pump system, a temperature-controlled canister oven, a miniature linear actuator, an aluminum & acrylic laser cut nameplate, and a student-designed original prototype of a workable product. All these projects are distributed through my office. If students need additional parts, assistance with lab access, information regarding our department's services, picking up completed prototyping projects, borrowing more expensive sensors, requesting the use of our lab equipment or facilities, etc., I handle all these requests. In an average day, I usually interact with over 100 students.

At the beginning of fall quarter, I interact with every first-year engineering student when they pick up their project kits for the quarter – this is typically over 450 students in two days. Our office has also expanded operations to include providing kits and materials for several sophomore ENGR/ENGT courses and for the entire Instrumentation & Control Systems Engineering Technology (ICET) program. During the first three class days of the fall quarter alone, I estimate I interact with more than 700 students. In total I oversee the distribution of kits and materials for twenty-four (24) different classes in an academic year, and I estimate I interact with over 1000 individual students during that time.

Among other services, my office maintains the lab spaces for the first floor of the Integrated Engineering & Science Building, offers a walk-up service desk and two vending machines for students to procure the aforementioned project parts, and handles 3D printing and laser cutting projects out of the prototyping lab near our office. Often our prototyping lab also assists with student research projects and other departments across campus such as Architecture.

In addition to offering support for students' academic projects, sometimes I am an unofficial counselor for students who just need someone to listen. There are always students who need encouragement, advice, troubleshooting assistance, direction on where to go for something, or a listening ear for what they are going through. Over the years I have heard personal stories, offered compassionate counsel, and

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celebrated victories. I see myself as a cheerleader for students – one of the best parts of my job is the last few weeks of spring quarter, where I get to see and hear the accomplishments of our students with whom I've worked and talked over the year. "Hey, Mrs. Ashley, come see how it came together, it works now!" is one of my favorite things to hear. Even when things don't work out as well and the students come to me for advice, I love being a sounding board for them and trying to help them feel heard, cared for, and significant.

I also have consistent contact with a team of over twenty (20) student workers as their direct supervisor. This year I have six student workers with whom I work daily in the office and our prototyping lab; I am the supervisor for fifteen in-class student mentors and graders for all our freshman classes; and I manage the student worker staff for two different student helpdesk sessions each weekday for engineering students to get help with homework or extra time in the labs. I manage student graders for two other academic programs. These interactions are meaningful to me as these students come to me for direction and counsel; often by the time they graduate I consider them to be personal friends.

My other job responsibilities include administrative assistance to the Industrial Engineering and the ICET program, which often involves helping senior design students with their projects or unofficial counseling when they just need someone to listen. Every fall I look forward to teaching a section of FYE 100, as I feel strongly that this is one of the best avenues to help new students gain awareness of their resources here and the importance of being invested on our campus. My class evaluations always reflect my passion for getting students connected in the Tech community and making sure they feel valued and welcome.

My position is entirely dependent upon personal interaction with students, and often this extends past working hours. I love my job and what I do, and the best part of it is being able to work hand-to-hand with students. To me, offering a positive and fun atmosphere while being as efficient and helpful as possible is my daily goal; I feel most fulfilled and satisfied when I know I have been an instrumental part of a student's journey in our college. I am deeply thankful for a supportive administrative staff that gives me the freedom and independence to fully occupy my role to the best of my abilities. I am passionate about helping our students in a potentially difficult and extremely rewarding season of their academic career, and I love cheerleading for them as they grow and develop into incredible students and engineers.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I wish you all the best as you continue serving our University and our faculty.

Ever Loyal Be,

Ashley J.H. Osborne
Project-Based Learning Specialist
Administrative Coordinator, INEN & ICET Programs
College of Engineering & Science

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May 9, 2023

Dear University Senate:

I'm honored to write a letter supporting Ms. Ashley Osborne as she is considered for the Student Outreach Award. Ashley and I have worked together closely over the past six academic years to support the project-based learning efforts in the College of Engineering and Science. We are housed in the Project-Based Learning Office on the first floor of the new Integrated Engineering and Science Building (IESB).

Ashley is the person responsible for packing the tool kits that you see engineering students holding as they walk across campus. In fact, if you see an engineering student carrying anything that has wires or that looks like something technical, Ashley probably gave it to them. She answers all sorts of questions and helps students figure out problems with their robots and design prototypes. She is our local expert when students have installation issues with SolidWorks and Mathcad, two of the main software programs used by engineering students.

Ashley supervises over 20 students who staff the after-hours engineering HelpDesk in the IESB and who serve as mentors in first-year engineering courses. She has regular meetings with the student workers to set expectations in terms of assisting and mentoring students. She is positive but firm as she explains the professionalism, care, and kindness with which our workers are expected to interact with beginning students. She trains these students on effective outreach, thereby multiplying her efforts and impact.

Ashley routinely stays after hours to make sure critical activities are completed. She schedules rooms for all of the first-year engineering evening exams and roams the halls of the IESB to support faculty during the testing process. She arrives early and stays late when students need to have parts 3D printed or laser cut for last-minute project modifications. She routinely provides this level of support to our students. They know that she is somebody they can rely on when something goes wrong.

Ashley literally does the work of two people while cheerfully greeting students and faculty at our service counter (she also serves as an admin for the ICET and INEN academic programs where she assists a different cohort of students). Ashley has a positive impact on large numbers of students. She is smart, cheerful, accurate, adventurous, and kind as she interacts with students. She makes our end of the building a happy place to visit. She is a perfect candidate for

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this award, and it is my pleasure to recommend her for your consideration.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Hall". The signature is stylized and cursive.

David Hall, Ph.D.

James F. Naylor, Jr. Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Director of Project-Based Learning, Industrial Engineering, and Instrumentation & Control
Systems Engineering Technology



5/8/2023

Student Outreach Award Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to recommend Ms. Ashley Osborne for the University Senate Student Outreach Award. She has loyally served as the Project-Based Learning Specialist in the Project-Based Learning (PBL) Office in the College of Engineering and Science (COES) since 2017. Throughout these years, I have worked closely with Ms. Osborne and rely heavily on the services she provides to the students. I can attest to her dedication, commitment, and service to students in the COES.

When I reflect on the time Ms. Osborne has spent in the PBL Office, the main word that comes to mind is **transformative**. She has helped transform the capabilities of the office through the services she provided to the students and faculty. She thinks outside of the box to provide more and more resources to students. She not only focuses on the technical side of her job but has a passion for students and has transformed the culture of her office into a place where the students are welcomed, encouraged, and supported.

As the Project-Based Learning Specialist, Ms. Osborne interacts with many students. On a given day she might help 100-250 students. I cannot adequately express how critical her role is in the PBL Office. She has gone above and beyond our expectations and has molded her position into one of mentorship and service to undergraduate students. The students learn early in their studies that she is the go-to person for assistance with course materials and resources. Beyond the resources from the PBL Office, students continue to visit Ms. Ashley for the encouragement and support she provides. She welcomes all students to her office and is a sounding board for their many projects and ideas. She has an innate ability to make students feel empowered to accomplish their project goals. She is a true cheerleader for the students, always making them feel supported and that they can accomplish anything.

In addition to the masses that come to her office daily, Ms. Osborne manages a team of 20+ student workers whom she mentors as they learn about the PBL Office and how to provide support for faculty. Ms. Osborne goes above a typical supervisor and plans extra events and treats for the student workers to encourage them and thank them for their hard work. Because of her approach to managing the students, she has a waitlist of students who want to work under her.

She has designed and implemented procedures to help make the office more accessible to students and has increased efficiency to serve more students consistently. She manages approximately 3,200 project kits for over 20 project-based classes which are essential components of each course. This service directly impacts over 1,000 students. The faculty of these courses rely heavily on Ms. Osborne to provide these resources to the students, which enables them to learn content at a deeper level. Ms. Osborne plans out the kits, orders supplies, and leads a staff of student workers who organize and sort the kits for each class. Students will come to her office to purchase and retrieve the kits. Through her exceptional ability to set processes and procedures, the PBL Office has been able to impact more students and support more faculty through projects kits.

Ms. Osborne is continuously improving the students' ability to access resources. She took it upon herself to apply for a Lagniappe Ladies Grant where she requested funds for vending machines that would distribute small electronics parts for student projects. She was awarded the grant and has spearheaded the purchasing and stocking of the vending machines. This resource greatly increases the afterhours accessibility of parts for the students which helps enable their academic success.

I strongly believe that Ms. Ashley Osborne is one of the most deserving nominees for the University Senate Student Outreach Award. She has a true passion for students and daily goes above and beyond her typically job duties to help them. Her many acts of service through the PBL Office are far reaching. She has made major impacts on many students. I, without hesitation, enthusiastically support her nomination for the University Senate Student Outreach Award. If you should need any further information, I am happy to speak with you through email (cruse@latech.edu) or phone (318-257-2422).

Sincerely,



Krystal Corbett Cruse, PhD

First Engineering Programs Coordinator

Co-Director of the Office for Women in Science and Engineering

Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering

College of Engineering and Science

Louisiana Tech University

Joshua Bass

Senior ICET student

May 5th, 2023

Letter of Recommendation

Dear University Faculty and Staff Senate:

I'm writing this letter to ask you to consider Mrs. Osborne for the student outreach award. To preface, I worked with Mrs. Osborne for 2 years and gone to her for counselling (and to vent) regarding school matters for and additional two. On the surface she appears a glowing ball of light and joy, eager to help however she can, but I'd like to say she's much more than that. Working for her showed me how she eagerly greeted any challenge or problem that she encountered and to be completely honest, I think her not being a traditional stem major plays a big part.

One of the many key things I remember from working alongside her was how she always made attempts to make everyone feel welcome. This included making little "thank you" gifts for holidays, or simply the standard greeting of "hello" and "good morning/afternoon" whenever she would see you. She wouldn't think twice before dropping what she was doing if you asked for help and often looked for ways to improve the atmosphere of the work environment. Being a Liberal Arts major working in a mostly engineering environment I will say have shown their advantages through her as well. Being as she hasn't been through the classes and such, she has a vast imagination and can often think of creative ways to fix situations as she encounters. This ay of thinking has worn off on me as it has helped me not think as linearly about situations because often the answer is there, it just takes a creative mind to find it. She frequently looks for ways to make things more fun for others and also ways to include everyone and every major so that people don't feel left out. I frequently have been on campus at 6 or 7 and seen her working tirelessly to try and make sure projects and other things get done. For example, this year she partnered up with Casey Kid to create a new award for the freshman design expo. The award was for students who actually used creative designs that didn't reinvent the wheel, but instead effectively used it for a different purpose. This is one of many times where she went out of her way to better others around her and encourage them.

I could continue on, but anyone and I mean *anyone* who's met Mrs. Osborne will say that she not only meets but exceeds the criteria for the student outreach award as she is one of the people who have helped make the College of Engineering and Science what it is today. And it is with that being said that I humbly ask you to deeply consider her for this award.