



Chief Information Officer
Information Technology

April 24, 2024

Louisiana Tech University Senate Awards Committee,

I am incredibly honored to be nominated for the 2023-2024 Outstanding Service Award—Unclassified. Our campus is a cohesive community that fosters student excellence, and to be recognized for being a small part of it is humbling.

In September 2016, I began teaching at Louisiana Tech, starting an incredible journey. My dream is to positively impact students, and I found a new sense of joy in being in the classroom. These experiences opened up opportunities for me to network with faculty and staff across campus while mentoring future professionals. I also earned my Ed.D. and joined the Tech alumni family!

I became the Director of the Center for Instructional Technology in January 2023 and was able to share my love for technology with Louisiana Tech faculty and staff. I led the implementation of the Canvas learning management system. I have offered over 30 Canvas training sessions, both on-campus and online, to over 315 faculty and staff. I have also manually migrated over 675 courses to Canvas and assisted with the formal migration of over 1,500 courses. To better support faculty and students, I created a knowledge base of frequently asked questions. I also designed a Quality Matters-aligned course to assist faculty in meeting requirements for effective course design.

While I enjoy the responsibilities of my position, I experience great delight in being part of the larger Louisiana Tech community. For three years, I have worked with the 'ULS Bridging the Divide Summer Series,' serving as the Canvas Content Expert and working extensively with artificial intelligence, sharing what I learned with faculty and staff on the revamped CIT website. In the last year, I have been involved in the SACSCOC Quality Enhancement Plan process. I co-organized the '#EMPOWER Mini-Conference' and 'Canvas Con.' I have volunteered for Midnight Breakfast and Professors in the Plaza, served as a judge for the Lincoln Parish Teacher of the Year, been the scorekeeper for the Science Olympiad for several years, and never pass up a chance to judge the Louisiana Tech Undergraduate Research Symposium!

In summary, I am incredibly grateful to be nominated for this award. I appreciate your consideration and the opportunities I have been given as a Louisiana Tech University employee.

Sincerely,

Whitney Sivils-Sawyer, Ed.D.



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS,
RESEARCH, AND PLANNING

April 23, 2024

University Senate

Dear Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Dr. Whitney Sivils-Sawyer's nomination for the Outstanding Service Award- Unclassified. As a colleague who has worked closely with her on many projects, she has continuously provided innovative ideas that result in a more time-efficient method of accomplishing work responsibilities. For example, just in these last two weeks, Whitney suggested using our LMS encouraging students to help us identify ways to improve advising. This one suggestion resulted in the highest recorded survey response rate contributing to the success of the [Quality Enhancement Plan](#) (QEP) to date. This is only one of many examples of her outstanding service to Louisiana Tech University.

Whitney consistently demonstrates superior leadership skills, exceptional planning, and effective organization. Her ability to favorably represent the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS), Center for Instructional Technology (CIT), is truly commendable, both on and off campus. Recently, Whitney was awarded the Vanguard Award which honors an individual that has led by example both in and out of the workplace/organization to support gender equality. The Women's Symposium of 2024 awarded her this high honor because of her service in extending mentorship and guidance to emerging professionals and students, underscoring her belief in the transformative potential of individuals within our community.

One of Whitney's most remarkable qualities is her ability to foster an atmosphere of cooperation and creativity among her peers. Her positive influence contributes significantly to the efficiency and effectiveness of our team. She has a natural talent for building strong connections with others, making her an invaluable asset to our institution. She is truly a hidden gem on our campus because of her educational background and consistent ability to transform that knowledge into transformable experiences. Just today, CIT is hosting a vendor demonstration, Top Hat showcasing their student engagement platform and how this will enhance students' learning experiences, with lunch provided. Who doesn't enjoy free lunch and how to make work life better? Special thanks to Whitney for fostering a collaborative and innovative environment.

A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

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What sets her apart is her unwavering commitment to meeting the needs of students, faculty, and staff. She consistently goes above and beyond in her support for our institution, always prioritizing student success and ensuring that faculty have the necessary resources to provide quality education, including for our online students. Her dedication is evident in her prompt responses to emails, even after regular work hours. One example of this is her commitment to sharing Quality Matters and templates for online classrooms.

Whitney's passion for research and best practices is truly admirable as well. She takes the initiative to explore innovative approaches and streamline actions, ensuring that our institution remains at the forefront of educational excellence. Her caring nature and genuine concern for others are qualities that cannot be overstated. Our QEP Design Team has benefited significantly from her leadership. She has volunteered to co-lead the Assessment Team and taking the lead writing a portion of literature review, which are required components of the QEP. Our institution will benefit from her remarkable talents for many years past the implementation of the QEP.

I have had the privilege of collaborating with her on various projects, including designing all aspects of our QEP, and in addition to migrating courses to our new Learning Management System, Canvas. Throughout these endeavors, she has consistently demonstrated her expertise, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to the success of our institution. No one understands the tremendous lift that she is undertaking, all while providing a welcoming atmosphere to all that she serves.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly believe that there is no one more deserving of the Outstanding Service Award- Unclassified than Dr. Whitney Sivils-Sawyer. She meets and exceeds all the criteria outlined by the Senate, and her contributions are truly remarkable. It is an honor to work alongside such a dedicated and compassionate individual.

Thank you for considering Dr. Whitney Sivils-Sawyer for this prestigious award. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keri Marie King".

Keri Marie King

Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Document Management



LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY®

Chief Information Officer
Information Technology

April 30, 2024

Dear Awards Committee,

I wholeheartedly endorse Dr. Whitney Sivils-Sawyer for the University Senate Outstanding Service Award at Louisiana Tech University. Dr. Sivils-Sawyer's exceptional leadership and service in implementing the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) have significantly enhanced the educational experience for students, faculty, and staff.

In the past year, Dr. Sivils-Sawyer has demonstrated exemplary dedication and expertise in rolling out the Canvas LMS across our campus. Her visionary leadership, meticulous planning, and effective communication have ensured the successful integration of this vital educational technology. Through her efforts, she has facilitated a seamless transition, minimizing disruptions and maximizing the system's benefits for all stakeholders.

Dr. Sivils-Sawyer's commitment to student success and faculty support has been outstanding. She has gone above and beyond to provide comprehensive training and resources, empowering users to leverage the full capabilities of the Canvas platform. Her inclusive approach and collaborative spirit have fostered a culture of innovation and collaboration, driving widespread adoption and positive outcomes.

Moreover, Dr. Sivils-Sawyer's impact extends beyond the technical aspects of the Canvas rollout. She has actively engaged stakeholders, solicited feedback, and addressed concerns, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and user-centric design. Her dedication to accessibility, inclusivity, and user-friendliness has significantly enriched the teaching and learning environment at Louisiana Tech University.

Dr. Whitney Sivils-Sawyer's exceptional service and leadership exemplify the qualities celebrated by the University Senate Outstanding Service Award. Her contributions have left an indelible mark on our institution, enhancing the educational experience and fostering a sense of community and collaboration among faculty, staff, and students.

I urge the selection committee to recognize Dr. Sivils-Sawyer's outstanding achievements and leadership by honoring her with the University Senate Outstanding Service Award. She is exceptionally deserving of this recognition and embodies the spirit of service and excellence that are integral to our university's mission and values.

Best,

Dr. Thomas Hoover



LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY®

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

May 2, 2024

Louisiana Tech University Senate Members,

It is my absolute pleasure to write this letter of support for Dr. Whitney Sivils-Sawyer! When Whitney mentioned to me in passing that she was nominated for this award I immediately jumped at the chance to write a letter for her so I can brag about her! I cannot imagine an employee more deserving of the Outstanding Service Award - Unclassified at this time than Whitney. She truly embodies the Tenets of Tech in every aspect of her work.

It is rare to find someone who prioritizes the needs and goals of those around them over personal recognition or advancement but Whitney does just that.

I cannot thank Whitney enough for everything she has taught me. Her mentorship and willingness to help have enabled me to excel in my role in Human Resources. She shares her knowledge generously and inspires me to strive for excellence. Whitney's talent and care in breaking down technical concepts into layman's terms has been instrumental in my development, allowing me to grasp complex ideas with ease. Without Whitney, the University annual training course in Canvas would not exist, as I couldn't have constructed the course without her invaluable guidance. I daresay, that without Whitney, the University as a whole would not have navigated the transition to Canvas as smoothly as we did.

Whitney displayed exemplary leadership during the transition from Moodle to Canvas, where she served as the team lead for our entire University. This monumental task impacted roughly 12,000 students and 1,400 faculty and staff members. Despite the scale of the project, she ensured a smooth transition for everyone involved. Her meticulous planning, effective communication, and unwavering commitment to excellence were instrumental in making this transition a success.

In addition to her technical expertise, Whitney possesses an innate ability to infuse humor into her work environment, making even the most challenging tasks enjoyable to tackle together! Her positivity is infectious and she consistently brings out the best in those around her. Whitney is always available for assistance and responds to telephone calls and emails with lightning speed! No matter how busy she is, she always makes the time to help anyone who reaches out to her with patience and kindness.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Whitney and I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination for the Outstanding Service Award - Unclassified. Her contributions to our University are invaluable, and she is truly deserving of this recognition. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,

Vanessa Mullins

Training & Development Manager, Office of Human Resources

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