



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & SCIENCE

University Senate
Louisiana Tech University

Carly Spinazzola
Student Success Specialist
College of Engineering and Science

May 3, 2024

Dear University Senate,

Thank you for your consideration for the Student Outreach Award: Unclassified. Serving as a Student Success Specialist in the College of Engineering and Sciences (COES), I am devoted to our student's academic, social, and emotional well-being and am honored to be recognized as a leader in our University's student success initiative.

Since arriving at Louisiana Tech University (LA Tech) in 2021, I have acted as the main academic advisor for over 2,000 first-year COES students, maintaining consistent communication, advice, and support throughout the academic year. In my student-facing role, I help finalize student course schedules, meet with students on academic probation to create plans for success, and provide a listening ear for both triumphs and setbacks. In my faculty-facing role, I address faculty concerns regarding class attendance, grades, and personal issues by actively engaging with faculty members, providing support to students, and facilitating communication between both parties.

Outside of my traditional job expectations, I have organized and promoted subject-specific study nights, while creating an updated list of student tutors across a range of COES subjects. In addition, I have served as the lead for multiple sizeable COES events, including the Freshman Enrichment Program (FREP), TECHniques for Success, and the COES Outstanding Junior and Senior Awards. And though student academics are always my primary concern, I am lucky to work in a college that prides itself on a fun and welcoming culture that recognizes students as more than their educational profile. This has allowed me to be an active member of previously established COES events, including Gumbo Fest, Spring Release, football tailgates, and etiquette dinners.

Before LA Tech, I worked as a special education/elementary education teacher for seven years. This past fall, I returned to the classroom, teaching multiple COES FYE courses. I also worked with instructors to create and implement college-specific standards and assessments for all COES FYE sections. My experience in elementary education has aided in the planning of events for

COES students (e.g. *Pancakes and Planning*, *Welcome to Workday Waffles*, *Nacho Average Advising*, etc.). Fully recognizing the humor and silliness of these initiatives in a higher education setting, I have found that by combining student awareness, responsibility, and conscientiousness with socialness, culture, and fun, we can provide a safe and open environment for students to grow in all aspects of their young adult lives.

Importantly, my commitment to the LA Tech community goes beyond only that of our students, as I take great pride in being a trusted resource to the COES faculty and staff. I frequently handle faculty concerns, questions, and needs. I see faculty and staff as the backbone of our University, and believe their happiness and retention is as crucial to our overall culture and success as that of our students. This year alone, I arranged back to school gifts, brown bag lunches, an appreciation breakfast, several raffles, and sent student-written words of appreciation to over 70 faculty members. I hope to continue to grow these initiatives in the future.

Outside of COES, I strive to stay informed and involved in other parts of campus. Knowing the latest happenings in places like the BARC, Counseling Center, Career Center, and BCC ensures that I can connect students with relevant resources. I serve on the Career Center Campus Networking Group and as a co-PI on the Noyce Cyber Teach – LA grant in collaboration with College of Education and Human Sciences faculty. Both memberships have broadened my understanding of campus-wide initiatives and allow me to provide students with up-to-date and accurate information.

Moving forward, I will continue to give my all to the students, faculty, and staff of LA Tech. I will also work to expand my ability to keep up with the ever-evolving nature of higher education. To this end, I graduated with an MA degree in Counseling and Guidance: Human Services in March of this year. I pursued this program to enhance my knowledge and skills in advising, counseling, and mentoring students. Ultimately, I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the LA Tech community and hope to continue to make our workplace one everyone can be proud of and enjoy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carly Spinazzola". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carly Spinazzola
Student Success Specialist
College of Engineering and Science



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

May 3, 2024

Dear Award Committee,

It is my honor to recommend Carly Spinazzola for the Student Outreach Award. It has been my pleasure to get to know her for the last 2-1/2 years both as a supervisor, colleague, and friend. I hired her as a Student Success Specialist for the College of Engineering and Science. Her background is more closely related to teaching in the K12 system, but it was obvious to see that she would be a fantastic addition to our team, and would easily relate to college level students. As a Student Success Specialist, she is one of the primary contacts for undergraduate students. This includes advising and counseling of students on both academic and personal matters. I have seen first-hand how she personally connects with and helps students.

Shortly after her coming to our college we had a transition where she immediately took on a much bigger scope and role to her position. The typical Student Success Specialist would have around 300 students assigned to her as an advisor. For close to half of the time that she has been here, she has had over 1000 students. She has taken on this responsibility and found ways of creating efficiencies so that each student is able to still feel appreciated. She has also trained multiple other Specialists so that more attention can be given to all students.

It is easy to see that she carries a significant amount of workload, but she additionally has been a foundational component to pushing the culture within the college. Culture is more than events, or popcorn, or tailgates. It is about making sure that all the events and the environment are welcoming to all students. Just in the last couple of months she has been the driving force behind creating “Pancakes and Planning” so that students are well aware of when advising is and that they are ready to be successful. “Waffles and Workday” has been used to make sure students are prepared with what to expect with new changes. She coordinates smaller study groups and puts together tutoring resources.

She has always been a tremendous resource for students, but after being here a short time she recognized that she would like to continue her education even further by pursuing a graduate degree in counseling. She has since completed this masters program so that she can further assist students in their academic and personal journey.

She has a way of being able to communicate with students that seems to break down any barriers or concerns that they have while also making sure they understand their own personal accountability. She is able to determine what the student really needs to hear or who they need to meet with. Carly has made great connections throughout the university, and is able to make a call or send an email and quickly get the student whatever help they need. She regularly works closely with the Louisiana Tech Counseling Center, Career Center, and many other resource offices on the campus.

When it comes to student outreach, she is definitely out front. I believe she would be a great choice for this award, and will say that it would be a mistake to not select her. If you have any further questions with regard to her background or qualifications, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Heath Tims, PhD
Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies, COES
Professor, Mechanical Engineering



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

May 3, 2024

RE: Carly Spinazzola – Student Outreach Award

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing to wholeheartedly recommend Carly Spinazzola for the Student Outreach Award. Having had the pleasure of working closely with Carly for almost three years, I can attest to her exceptional dedication, leadership, and commitment to student success and retention.

As the primary freshmen advisor at our institution, Carly has consistently gone above and beyond in her efforts to support and guide our students. Her passion for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment has been instrumental in not only helping students navigate the challenges of their first year but also in ensuring their long-term success and retention.

Carly's innovative approach to student outreach and support has resulted in tangible improvements in both student and faculty retention rates. Through her tireless efforts, she has developed streamlined processes that have made it easier for students to access the resources they need, resulting in a more efficient and effective support system.

One of Carly's greatest strengths is her ability to plan and execute key events that engage students and create a sense of belonging within our community. Whether it's organizing study nights for students, appreciation breakfasts for faculty, or social events for the entire college, Carly consistently demonstrates her creativity, attention to detail, and dedication to creating a caring culture where every student feels valued and supported.

Beyond her role as a freshmen advisor, Carly is widely respected as a leader and a go-to person for both students and faculty alike. Her approachable nature, genuine empathy, and willingness to listen make her someone that students feel comfortable turning to for guidance and support. Similarly, her collaborative spirit and proactive approach have made her an invaluable resource for faculty seeking to improve student outcomes.

Carly Spinazzola is an exemplary colleague who embodies the qualities of a true leader in student outreach and support. Her unwavering dedication to student success, coupled with her ability to create a caring and inclusive culture, make her highly deserving of the Student Outreach Award. I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination and am confident that she will continue to make significant contributions to our institution for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Wilkerson

A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM

P.O. BOX 10348 • RUSTON, LA 71272-0046 • TEL: (318) 257-4647 • FAX: (318) 257-2562 • www.latech.edu/tech/engr

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIVERSITY



Dear University Senate and Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Carly Spinazzola's nomination for the Student Outreach Award. As a faculty member, I have had the privilege of witnessing Carly's remarkable dedication and unwavering commitment to enhancing not only the student experience but that of faculty, as well.

In her role as Student Success Specialist, Carly consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the well-being and success of our students. Her efforts extend far beyond her standard responsibilities, as she continually seeks out innovative ways to deliver quality service and support to our student body. Through her firsthand experiences as an advisor, she recognized a need for communicating COES specific information to our incoming freshman. She enthusiastically designed and incorporated supplemental material into several FYE sections based on conversations she had with students and faculty. Each quarter, she curates the days, times, and locations of all of the study sessions offered in COES as well as a current list of private tutors. This information has been invaluable to me as an instructor of freshman and sophomore level math classes. I have been better able to point my students in the right direction thanks to Carly's initiative.

Furthermore, Carly has been instrumental in spearheading faculty appreciation initiatives that have significantly contributed to building a sense of community and improving morale among our staff. Her leadership in these endeavors has not only strengthened relationships within our academic community but has also underscored her commitment to meeting the needs of students, faculty, and staff alike. Just at that point in the quarter when that feeling of exhaustion (despair?) started to creep in, Carly swept in with an email containing "notes of thankfulness" submitted by students. It is meaningful gestures like these that demonstrate Carly's willingness to go above and beyond her standard responsibilities to improve the lives of those around her.

Affectionately referred to as "Mrs. Carly" by many of our students, it is evident that Carly's passion for student success and her exceptional ability to connect with others make her a truly deserving candidate for this award. Due to her ability to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes understanding and encouragement, I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination and believe that she embodies the spirit of excellence and dedication that the Student Outreach award seeks to honor.

Sincerely,

Ann W. Clifton