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BIOS and CAS Receive National Award

Baton Rouge—The LSU Biology Boot Camp (BIOS) and the Center for Academic Success (CAS) and have been selected to receive the 2013 Promising Practices Award from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). The award is in recognition of the successful collaboration between the Department of Biological Sciences and the CAS in the nationally successful BIOS Program. The Promising Practices award recognizes programs and services that contribute to collaborative and/or integration of student and academic affairs in a college or university setting.

The Center for Academic Success, nationally known for its academically transformative programs, helps students perform at their highest potential by delivering practical learning strategies through workshops, presentations, and individual consultations. While CAS works with many campus organizations and programs, the BIOS collaboration is a unique experience.

Sheri Wischusen, along with her husband William, associate chair in biological sciences, created the BIOS program in 2005 to give incoming first year science majors a realistic idea of college academic life. Many of these students may have been among the highest ranking students in their high schools, but to be successful in college these students needed to refine their strategies and time management tools, as well as develop coping mechanisms to meet the academic demands of college.

Academic Affairs and Student Life and Enrollment have developed a cooperative effort that gives students a holistic approach to meeting their developmental needs. As CAS teaches an array of learning strategies customized for science majors, faculty and staff reinforce these concepts in the academic arena. As a result, BIOS participants are more successful in their coursework, have higher retention rates, and usually graduate within four years. This transformation also has a positive impact on the departments and colleges through fewer students repeating courses and a greater number of students retained within the major.

“The BIOS program, in collaboration with the Center for Academic Success, has helped prepare hundreds of first-time freshmen to make a successful transition to college,” said Sheri Wischusen, BIOS co-director and director of undergraduate research. “We are honored that NASPA is recognizing our efforts to ensure that students are aware and equipped with the tools they need to succeed in college.”

NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. The organization serves a full range of professionals who provide programs, experiences, and services that cultivate student learning and success in concert with the mission of our colleges and universities. Founded in 1919, NASPA comprises more than 13,000 members in all 50 states, 29 countries, and 8 U.S. Territories. Through high-quality professional development, strong policy advocacy, and substantive research to inform practice, NASPA meets the diverse needs and invests in realizing the potential of all its members under the guiding principles of integrity, innovation, inclusion, and inquiry.

Melissa Brocato, CAS director, and Sheri Wischusen, BIOS co-director and CAS First Year Programs, have received notice of the award, which will be presented during the NASPA 2013 Annual Conference in Orlando, March 18.