



Student Employee of the Year 2025 Nomination Letter

February 3, 2025

Nominator

Ryan Bradshaw

Nominee

Maya Langford
CE FSY Region 18
Project Assistant

Communication

Maya Langford is a master communicator, seamlessly bridging the gap between students, administrators, and IT developers. One of the most significant examples of her communication skills came when she recognized that Office Coordinators were struggling with FSY's custom-built software. Instead of simply relaying frustrations, Maya took it upon herself to gather feedback from students, document their concerns in detail, and communicate these issues directly to FSY's IT developers. She then sat in meetings alongside her supervisor to ensure that the developers fully understood the real-world challenges, and she helped workshop solutions. Thanks to her efforts, numerous software updates were implemented, making the system more efficient for both employees and the 120,000+ FSY participants.

Beyond digital communication, Maya excels at writing and public speaking. She personally designed and presented training sessions for over 40 student employees, ensuring that they fully understood their roles. Her ability to explain complex logistical concepts clearly has led to a significant improvement in the efficiency and morale of the FSY team. Her written work, including the documentation she created for lost and found policies and materials distribution, has become the gold standard for future FSY operations.

Digital Technology

Maya has completely reshaped how FSY uses technology, not because she was asked to, but because she saw inefficiencies and took it upon herself to solve them. In 2024, she pioneered an initiative to overhaul FSY's Office Coordinator training by developing a Canvas-based online training program—an unprecedented step in FSY history. This wasn't a simple PowerPoint; it was a fully integrated, interactive system that onboarded new employees, ensured consistency in training, and improved competency across the board. Her program was so effective that it has now been adopted to train FSY administrators as well.



Digital Technology Cont.

Maya also took the initiative to troubleshoot software issues that had been frustrating student employees for years. Instead of waiting for someone else to fix the problem, she systematically tracked errors, provided IT with documented reports, and even tested solutions herself. Her ability to understand both the employee experience and the technical side of FSY's operations has led to measurable improvements in system performance.

Problem Solving

Few students have transformed an organization like Maya has. Every major initiative she has pioneered started with her identifying a problem no one else was addressing and proactively seeking a solution. In 2023, she recognized that FSY's lost and found system was incredibly inefficient, with thousands of items going unclaimed and unnecessary confusion for staff. She personally designed a streamlined policy that reduced lost item backlogs and improved tracking, making it easier for youth participants to reclaim their belongings.

In 2024, she noticed that field staff were receiving shipments of materials that were poorly organized, leading to delays and frustration. She took it upon herself to survey field staff, hold focus groups, and create a standardized packing template that drastically improved the process. As a result, materials arrived in a more accessible format, allowing field staff to focus on their responsibilities instead of sorting through poorly packaged boxes.

Her problem-solving doesn't just impact the present—it lays a foundation for the future. Despite knowing she would graduate in 2025, she created a detailed proposal for a long-term training solution to help future Office Coordinators succeed. She built this system not for her own benefit, but because she knew it would make FSY stronger in the years to come.

Professionalism

Maya's work ethic is unmatched. When she first started as an Office Coordinator in 2022, the program was in a state of flux—no one fully understood the scale of the work required. Many employees struggled to keep up. Rather than being discouraged, Maya pushed forward, ensuring that not only her work was completed but that her peers were successful as well.

Her professionalism has only grown. She consistently works far beyond expectations without being asked. During the 2024 season, when she was promoted to FSY's first-ever Student Instructor, she mentored struggling employees individually, sitting beside them for hours to guide them through difficult housing and logistics tasks.



Professionalism Cont.

Even in difficult situations, Maya handles everything with grace and maturity. When concerns arose about inappropriate conversations in the workplace, Maya took action—not by reprimanding employees, but by working with management to restructure supervision and training, ensuring a safe and professional environment for everyone.

Intercultural Fluency

FSY is a massive program, bringing together youth and employees from diverse backgrounds across the United States and Canada. Maya has consistently championed inclusivity, ensuring that every employee feels valued and respected.

One notable example of her cultural awareness came when she designed FSY’s first-ever standardized training materials for Office Coordinators. Recognizing that many student employees come from different experiences and knowledge levels, she made sure the training was clear, accessible, and adaptable to different learning styles.

Additionally, Maya has actively sought feedback from underrepresented voices in FSY. When working on materials distribution improvements, she made a conscious effort to include perspectives from employees who had been previously overlooked in decision-making processes. Her commitment to inclusivity has strengthened the program as a whole.

Career Management

Maya embodies career self-advocacy—not in a way that seeks personal recognition, but in a way that drives meaningful change. When she saw that Office Coordinator training was severely lacking, she didn’t wait for someone else to step in. She built the program herself, presented it to leadership, and secured the first-ever Student Instructor position at FSY.

She has also taken initiative in networking and skill-building, working closely with FSY’s IT department and professional staff in Continuing Education. Through this, she has developed real-world experience in project management, training development, and operations—skills that will serve her well beyond FSY.

Maya doesn’t just complete tasks; she sees the bigger picture of how her work impacts the organization and her own future. She is constantly seeking out growth opportunities—not just for herself, but for everyone around her.



Leadership

Maya's leadership at FSY has been transformational. She doesn't just manage tasks—she inspires those around her. One of her greatest leadership achievements was building FSY's first-ever structured training system for Office Coordinators. She wasn't just assigned this task; she saw a glaring need, proposed a solution, and executed it flawlessly.

She also leads by example. In 2024, while mentoring student employees, she worked side by side with them, helping them with difficult housing and logistics assignments. Rather than simply telling them what to do, she took the time to teach and empower them, ensuring they gained confidence and independence in their roles.

Her ability to recognize the strengths of others has also made a profound impact. She has actively worked to delegate responsibilities in a way that maximizes efficiency and builds team morale. Thanks to her leadership, FSY's student employees have reported feeling more supported and capable than ever before.

Teamwork

Maya is not only a team player—she elevates everyone around her. From day one, she has built strong relationships with both her peers and FSY's full-time staff. She fosters an environment where collaboration and mutual respect are the norm.

In the summer of ²⁰²⁴, when ¹⁰ students opted to stay on for the off-season (compared to only ¹⁻³ in past years), it was largely due to the supportive and well-structured environment that Maya helped create. Many of her coworkers have praised her for making their jobs more manageable and fulfilling.

Even in difficult situations, she handles conflict professionally and proactively. When employees struggled with workload balance, she took the lead in advocating for schedule adjustments and workflow improvements, ensuring that everyone could work effectively without burnout.

Her teamwork mindset has truly strengthened FSY—not just for the employees she works with, but for the thousands of youth who benefit from the program's success.