



Student Employee of the Year 2025 Nomination Letter

February 3, 2025

Nominator

Andrea Hill

Nominee

Caleb Nelson

Office of General Counsel - Office Assts.

Project Assistant

Communication

Caleb Nelson was hired in December 2023 to assist our senior paralegal in her responsibilities with record retention. She unexpectedly resigned this past summer and at the time Caleb was the only student employee in the office working full time. Our lead litigation attorney, David Andersen, said this about Caleb, *“At first, we were unsure how to replace such a key position in our office (speaking of the senior paralegal). I was especially concerned because of the many litigation, trademark, and corporate functions that this senior paralegal heavily supported and the difficulty of hiring a new paralegal any time soon. It was during this time that I became especially familiar with Caleb’s communication abilities, as he stepped to fill the enormous gap left by our senior paralegal.*

Caleb jumped into this new assignment with enthusiasm, persistence, and efficiency. Because our senior paralegal had not documented or communicated much of the work she regularly performed, in many ways we were at a loss in knowing all of the tasks that needed to be completed in her absence. With detailed scrutiny, Caleb dug through emails, digital documents, and handwritten notes to learn and document numerous processes, key contacts, and internal (previously unwritten) policies. He then made sure that each of the necessary tasks performed by our senior paralegal were being completed. He even composed a 36-page handbook to outline the many procedures that he was discovering and performing, and he made many improvements. Such a performance would have been incredible even for a trained legal mind with years of experience. I was amazed that Caleb was able to accomplish what he did (and continues to do) as an undergraduate student.”

Digital Technology

Last summer, when Caleb took on the paralegal responsibilities, we needed to find a way to communicate and delegate the office responsibilities effectively. Caleb researched and learned a new task management software, Trello, and used it to divide the office responsibilities and manage the office projects, tasks, checklists, and deadlines. He mastered the project management software, which has been an invaluable resource for our student employees.



Digital Technology Cont.

Caleb also learned how to manage the registrations and renewals for all of BYU's various corporate entities. He created a system for document production in response to subpoenas and record requests (of which BYU receives many), which complies with relevant law and court rules. He became familiar with BYU's internal payment systems and budgeting, and he managed the payment of invoices and fees. The remarkable thing is that Caleb did this without formal training and little supervision. We were short-staffed and he saw the need to learn the processes and he mastered them.

Professionalism

Before taking on the paralegal responsibilities, Caleb tackled the tedious task of reviewing old records for digital archiving—a role many would find monotonous. Caleb approached it with enthusiasm, setting personal goals and maintaining a positive attitude throughout. This same resilience and proactive mindset shone through when he took over the paralegal's duties, treating the challenge as an opportunity to grow rather than an obstacle.

Christian Fox, the OGC's deputy general counsel, said this about Caleb, *“Caleb takes the lead like no other student employee we've had. Last summer, we wouldn't have been able to function without Caleb. He was invaluable, we would have really been hurting if he hadn't taken the initiative to learn all our office processes.”*

Christian spoke to Caleb's work ethic, *“Caleb is a hard worker. He takes the time to figure things out and then he does them really well. He is trustworthy and he managed the load of a full time senior paralegal as an undergraduate. He continues to complete amazing projects and tasks even as he is working part-time with a full load of classes this school year.”*

Rachel Edwards, our new paralegal said this about Caleb: *“Caleb Nelson is an absolute standout in his role as a Legal Project Assistant at BYU Office of General Counsel. He takes incredible initiative, especially when it comes to diving into new areas of the law. When he took on trademark registration procedures, he quickly became the go-to person for the attorneys, learning every step inside and out. He has a rare ability to break down complicated processes into clear, manageable steps, making everything run more smoothly. He's always thinking ahead, anticipating what's needed before anyone has to ask, and his work is consistently top-notch. On top of all that, he's kind, trustworthy, and always working behind the scenes to make the whole team look good. His contributions make a real difference, and he is more than deserving of this recognition.”*

Problem Solving

Caleb is a proactive problem solver. Steve Sandberg, General Counsel and assistant to the president, said this about Caleb's problem-solving skills, *“I have observed many of Caleb's skills that I believe make him an excellent candidate for the student employee of the year. He is an extraordinarily quick study on new projects and new platforms, which he showed in so many ways as he figured out all our paralegal's responsibilities. Caleb took ownership of those responsibilities in a way I've never seen an undergraduate do before.”*



Problem Solving Cont.

Of all the undergraduate students we've hired over the years, Caleb has picked up on things the most quickly, with near-immediate proficiency and reliability in areas as diverse as handling subpoenas, responding to records requests, renewing corporations and companies, paying invoices, and keep trademark registrations current.

His work went beyond typical helpfulness or reliability; it was as if he personally were responsible for things in our office to work out well, and he put in the work and effort to ensure that happened."

Career Management

Caleb plans to attend law school and become an attorney. He researched the BYU website and found a records retention job in the BYU Office of General Counsel. He was hired to review old records and determine which ones needed to be kept. This was not a glamorous job, but he did it because he knew it could open doors for a career in the law. He plowed through hundreds of boxes of court documents and evidence. Even though it was tedious, he learned legal acumen and became familiar with legal processes. The pay wasn't high, and it was tedious, but he did it because it would prepare him for his future career.

Later when he assumed the paralegal role he decided he was interested in trademark law. Our trademark attorney said this about Caleb, *"I have also had the opportunity to appreciate Caleb's abilities as he has assisted my work with BYU's trademark portfolio. Based on his interest in trademarks, I provided him with a copy of a lengthy article on trademark registration that I wrote for the International Trademark Association. For several weeks, Caleb diligently studied it every day, acquiring the knowledge base needed to support my trademark work.*

While prosecuting a trademark application, Caleb drafted a legal research memo and corresponding office action response, which we filed with the USPTO, and which resulted in the successful issuance of the registration for that mark. I was extremely impressed with his research, writing, and editing skills. His work product required little to no editing. He also demonstrated an ability to work ahead of deadlines and organize his time for long projects. He is pursuing his interest in trademarks outside of work and is currently working on a paper for the BYU Pre-law Review about a very interesting issue in international trademark law. This is just one example of many times when I have been blessed to work closely with Caleb."

Intercultural Fluency

The OGC is responsible for helping manage requests for records on campus. Caleb has communicated with office managers and record supervisors in all different departments. He's created positive interactions in tricky situations. Our office also helps with immigration documents for international professors and employees. Caleb shows respect and understanding as he helps them get the correct documents in our office and communicate their needs to our attorney assigned to immigration.



Intercultural Fluency Cont.

Kindness is what sets Caleb apart. Caleb managed to build a positive working relationship with a previous supervisor who had a challenging personality by focusing on the positives and recognizing her strengths. He took the time to ask her about her hobbies and family. He asked her how her weekends were and his genuine interest endeared her to him and helped elevate the whole office environment. Caleb is consistently patient, supportive, and respectful toward his colleagues and supervisors. His positive, service-oriented attitude makes him a joy to work with.

Leadership

When our senior paralegal left in the summer Caleb was working full-time. I was the office manager but did not have the time to manage my own job and learn the responsibilities of our paralegal. Caleb showed leadership by taking on the management of the senior paralegal's email and he reconstructed her processes. Caleb showed leadership when he went a step further and trained the other student employees on these processes. He introduced a bimonthly student meeting, complete with an agenda and tailored training sessions. He saw the different talents and abilities of the students in the office and mentored them so they could be the lead on that topic. He noticed our accounting student's knack for finance and taught him how to manage the payment of invoices. He saw our future law student's ability to keep track of records and communicate, and he taught her how to manage subpoenas.

Caleb is highly intelligent and very quick, but he is patient and kind with everyone in the office. Our general counsel, Steve Sandberg, said this about Caleb, *“Caleb is a true pleasure to work with. He has a soft-spoken and friendly disposition, which makes it really pleasant to work with him. He does a great job at helping everyone in our office feel welcomed and cared about. Caleb strives to do the right things every day. He has a deeply held conviction of his religious faith that manifests itself through his gentleness and calmness. He’s observant and thoughtful.”*

Teamwork

Caleb is the natural leader in our office. He's a team player and well-respected. He figures things out quickly, but he lets the other students learn and shine. One of his co-workers Abby told me, *“Caleb is my favorite student to work with. He takes time to get to know you, but he does it in a professional way and it's not distracting, When I work with Caleb I feel like he really cares about me and my success. When we have team meetings, he can do things himself, but he gives everyone else the opportunity to do important tasks and be successful.”*

Another attorney in our office said this about Caleb, *“In every instance, I have been impressed by Caleb’s ability to perform high-quality work. He is a critical thinker who can understand nuanced concepts and systems. He effectively analyzes complicated problems and finds effective solutions. He is driven, self-motivated, and intellectually and emotionally intelligent. Most importantly, Caleb is a genuinely good person. He cares about other people and is respectful and kind. He is honest and upright, and a man of faith.”*