

Sample Individual Leadership Award Application/Nomination Responses

sample responses below pulled from a combination of different applications with student and organization names changed for anonymity

[specific notes about why an answer is strong marked in bold face type with the notes and feedback in brackets]

Application: Please discuss the experience, involvement, or organization that has most impacted your first year at Ohio State, either on or off campus. Why was this impact significant for you and your approach to leadership? (500 words max) Nomination: Please discuss an experience, involvement, or organization that has made an impact on the student during their first year at Ohio State and share how they grew because of it. (500 words max):

Sample Application Response:

Buckeye Community Clinic - During my first week in the U.S, far from home, like anyone else, I felt the intense urge to be part of a community. But I was in an unfamiliar land, with unfamiliar people. I consider myself to be a highly spiritual person, so anytime I felt a little lonely, I visited the Buckeye Spiritual Center. One day, I met some students at the Spiritual Center from the Ohio State's Spiritual Students Association and that was the first club I joined. I began going to their events and ended up learning about a free clinic whose director was one of the oldest and most established members of our community. I reached out to them and introduced myself. Out of the kindness of their heart, they agreed to interview me so that I could volunteer in their clinic. I was raised with a lot of emphasis on giving freely for the sake of others. What I was taught about Americans before coming to the U.S. was that most Americans are very opportunistic; doing things that weren't of direct benefit to oneself was not a common practice here. Dr. Brutus proved those stereotypes to be baseless.

After successful rounds of screening, I went through volunteering training and was able to start volunteering at the Buckeye Community Clinic. [Response focuses on a specific experience/organization that had the biggest impact on their Buckeye experience.] I was trained to check in patients, take their temperatures, create charts, and scan them. Half a year later, Dr. Brutus said that they wanted to talk to me. My heart pounding, I picked up the phone call. They told me that they had been observing my work closely and liked the efficiency with which I completed my tasks so they would like to give me more important responsibilities: those usually given to medical students. **I almost got teary eyed; my intention was not to impress them or anyone else, I simply wanted to make sure I did what was assigned to me perfectly and to help others if there was anything I could do contribute. This interaction had significant impacts on my sense of confidence and belonging, as it empowered me to take on new challenges. [Response includes specifics in the significance of the experience.]** Though I wasn't assigned to 'lead' a certain group of people, I was given responsibilities and entrusted with the comments and concerns of patients. Most people seem to think that being a leader implies that something flashy and extraordinary must be done. **Yet, I have now learned that that is not the case. One does not need to be loud and command all the attention in the room to be a leader;**

rather, by simply doing well in what is expected of you, you are a leader in your own right. [Response explains the impact of the experience on their approach leadership.]

Sample Nomination Response:

The Early Leader Ambassador Program (ELAP) seeks to prepare those interested in leadership in Brutus Buckeye Fan Society (BBFS) for a Chair or Officer position. [Nomination is prefaced with how Student X's experience relates to their exemplary involvement in the organization.] This program is an in-depth and highly tailored exploration of personal leadership development. Each year, eight applicants are selected to participate in biweekly meetings where ambassadors have the opportunity to learn more about the organization's inner workings, delve into leadership development topics specific to them based on their results from BBFS's Leadership Competency Model, plan a BBFS event as a part of a team, and give a final program presentation to the executive officers at the end of the year. Ambassadors also attend an executive meeting each semester, hear presentations from each executive officer, and engage with officers to learn more about the organization's election process. Additionally, ambassadors attend the all-officer Spring Strategic Planning meeting, where they have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions to the organization. BBFS recognizes their leadership through selection into the program, a prize upon successful completion, and giving ambassadors the freedom to plan an event. This year, about 50 BBFS members applied for the Early Leader Ambassador Program. Since there are only eight ambassadors in the program, the competition was very high! **However, Student X's application stood out as they were well-spoken, enthusiastic about BBFS, and possessed lots of past leadership experiences. Student X is also involved in other extracurricular activities, making them a well-rounded applicant. [Nomination discusses student's experience/involvement in the organization and gives examples of their outstanding work.]**

In the BBFS program, Student X has consistently been excited to learn, attentive to the content, and incredibly engaged with their team. They have formed strong relationships with others in the program and did not hesitate to use ELAP to create a deeper community within BES. **They set themselves apart through their love for BES and passion for the mission of this organization. Since starting ELAP, I have witnessed Student X's confidence in their self-growth. They have handled the transition from high school to college, a small town to the capital of the state, and being a solo leader to working on a team incredibly well. Student X approaches any new situation with curiosity, passion, and the goal of connecting with others. [Nomination demonstrates how the experience/involvement has attributed to Student X's growth.]** In past years, ELAP events have all been social based and centered around a crafting activity. However, Student X has encouraged their team to go outside their comfort zone and plan a professional development event. Additionally, as part of ELAP, ambassadors are encouraged to write at least three SMART goals. During each meeting, each attendee shares a goal and any progress they have made or an actionable step they can take in the next two weeks. Verbalizing one's goals to other people incites a sense of accountability and allows others to celebrate your successes. While nobody is pestering or nagging ambassadors to make progress on these goals, it is a low-pressure reminder of how far they have come. **Student X has set, and met, ambitious goals relating to their GPA, securing a research position, and maintaining their personal wellness. They seize every opportunity to grow as a leader. [Nomination gives specific instances of Student X's outstanding achievements as a result of their leadership experience.]**

Application: How do you define "leadership"? Based on your definition, provide an example of what you consider to be your best example of "leadership" during your first year. In what ways did this experience teach you to become a better leader? Nomination: Tell us about your personal definition of "leadership." Based on that definition, provide an example of what you consider to be the best example of the student's leadership during their first year. Did you find that the student grew from this experience, and in what ways?:

Sample Application Response:

Throughout my first year at Ohio State, my definition of leadership has evolved from one focused only on education and introspection to one that includes social and relationship building. I also believe that learning is a necessity for heightened leadership. **[Response details the student's personal definition of leadership and how it has evolved during their time at Ohio State.]** In accordance, leadership consists of confidence, authentic listening to self, and listening to others. From an internal and introspective approach, it is to examine and identify natural practices, personal strengths and weaknesses, and areas and avenues to grow. The introspective element is significant because self-reflection is a foundation for evolution. Strong leadership is resilient and flexible with changes for correction. It is authentic, resisting the portrayal of a persona, and denounces comparison. This embrace of personal strengths, reality, and continual growth allows peers to understand that the greatest performance, development, and application begins with the authentic self. With maturation, leadership encompasses responsibility, accountability, integrity, and persistence. Leadership continues amongst difficult and indistinct situations, learning to find different avenues of solutions through people, ideas, experienced mentors, and partners.

My experience through Ohio State's DEI Action Cohort exposed me to the power of passion in leadership. [Response shares a specific example of exemplary leadership according to their given definition.] Winning a competition with a team of three driven intellectuals, with devotion encompassing a shared goal, I learned that practicing communication and discipline within leadership leads to holistic execution. **From applying myself through a competitive selection process, to executing during the preparation to presenting through my voice, the first step to my leadership was initiative and self-belief. As I worked with a team of equally dedicated intellectuals of various perspectives to brainstorm, explain, and present solutions to a diversity-based problem within the workplace, I experienced first-hand the truth that vocalization of individual thought is necessary within the group setting. Through communication, I learned how to respectfully advocate for my ideas, ultimately contributing to my self-confidence and the group's success. [Response details the specific ways how the student developed their personal leadership from the experience.]** Dual responsibility with effects on myself and team members propelled my dedication to presenting the best version of our solutions. Furthermore, I gained persistence, discipline, and determination through working under a week-long time constraint and presenting in a competitive atmosphere. Finally, pursuing active initiative in speaking through my nerves, taking feedback peacefully and necessarily, and applying correction to create adjustments built my professional self-assurance, advocacy for voicing views and assertions, and holistic consideration for individual voices within group and individual leadership settings.

Sample Nomination Response:

My personal definition of leadership has grown and evolved during my different leadership experiences. Currently, I think the most important aspects of being a leader are passion about what

they do, working well on a team, and leading by example. [Nomination explains the nominator's personal definition of leadership.] Student X has consistently demonstrated all these qualities throughout their time in the Early Leader Ambassador Program and in Buckeye Engineering Scholars. This consistency is vital, as it can be hard to do so when you've had a stressful week or aren't feeling your best. However, being consistent in the way you treat others and conduct yourself as a leader is of the utmost importance. Conversely, sometimes you can have a good moment or two, but if you do not usually treat people well, then you are not necessarily a leader. Ever since I met Student X at the Spring Involvement Fair, they have had a positive, outgoing, and passionate attitude. They extend this to everyone they are around, and their energy brightens up every room they are in. Even if we are going over budgeting in ELAP, Student X makes the environment fun without detracting from the seriousness of a topic. All of the other ambassadors benefit from and appreciate their intentional efforts to make ELAP an even more positive and fun experience.

They also show their passion for Brutus Buckeye Fan Society through their levels of involvement. Besides being in the Early Leader Ambassador Program, Student X has joined the BBFS Mentorship Program, is going to the Columbus Engineering Conference, and will be running for an officer position during elections. Their commitment to BBFS is admirable and very clear. Additionally, Student X always goes out of her way to include and appreciate others. [Nomination includes how student meets the nominator's definition of leadership.] Whether through talking to someone sitting by themselves at a monthly meeting, eliminating awkwardness in a group conversation, or expressing their gratitude often and without embarrassment, they make those around them feel loved. Student X takes it upon herself to talk to new members and make everyone in BBFS feel welcome. This trait is highly important for a leader in BBFS! Lastly, Student X leads by example by putting work into their ELAP team, instead of simply telling everyone else what to do. They contribute ideas, time, and energy to communicate and bring their event to life. **Since coming to college, they have realized the importance of being a leader while working on a team, instead of just doing everything yourself. Student X puts time and effort into getting to know their teammates and understanding their strengths and weaknesses to best leverage those within the group dynamic. Student X has carried these practices into their classwork and other student organizations as well. [Nomination states how the student has grown as a leader from their experiences in the organization.]**

Application: What else are you planning to do during your time at Ohio State that will help you develop as a student and a leader? Nomination: How does the student plan to continue developing as a student and a leader at OSU in the years to come?:

Sample Application Response:

As I am developing throughout my academic career, I am currently working to pursue a global education experience this May. Having been accepted to study, learn, and experience international perspectives and histories in Spain and Morocco as a first-year student, I discovered that I could reach beyond the unknown regardless of my experience, noting that self-limitations are conceptual and perceptual, rather than reality. **Through global education, I hope to more deeply understand my pursuit to further my experiences abroad in the future, as I am interested in traveling to other African countries for international perspective expansion. Moreover, through my experiences learning French and African culture through family, coupled with my international pursuits, I can complete a French minor, build**

my intercultural competency, as well as attain academic, intellectual, and interpersonal enrichment.

[Response explains detailed plans for future student development while at Ohio State] In terms of academic and social enrichment, I plan to reassess what clubs and organizations will best serve my goals in my second year. Although I have enjoyed most of my extracurricular activities, I have also learned the vitality of learning how to pivot and shift when necessary, especially in a leadership scenario. As a member of Ohio State’s Buckeye International Club, I plan to continue to grow my individual and interpersonal role by adding to my cultural pursuits and diversifying my perspectives.

Furthermore, as a creative person who has developed and presented artwork throughout my life, I am passionate and ecstatic about pursuing further academic enrichment through the pursuit of an Art minor at Ohio State. I will continue being an authentic learner, applying my learning to my life, as well as building my academic, internal, and professional expression through writing. [Response details not specific experiences but how those experiences will apply to their student/leadership journey.] To expand my leadership development, I am working to pursue a position as part of Ohio State’s new **Undergraduate Leadership Cohort. Working to become one of fifty students to receive in-depth, consistent leadership training, networking opportunities, mental and internal health education, community, and career possibilities, I will refine, deepen, and enlarge my leadership and further prepare to lead during and after my undergraduate career. [Response gives detailed information on student's plan to continue their leadership development.]** As a holistic purpose and passion of my life that encompasses my diverse pursuits is to serve others, ultimately, I will work to do my best, to continuously contribute to my growth in self-efficacy and holistic service.

Sample Nomination Response:

From what I have seen so far, I truly believe Student X will always strive to grow as a leader, no matter what stage of life they are in. **Within Brutus Buckeye Fan Society (BBFS), Student X will be running for an officer position in our next elections. It is not uncommon for freshmen to run, but it takes a confident, inspiring leader to get elected to an officer position: I believe that Student X has a pretty good chance. Additionally, Student X has expressed interest in running for an executive officer position in the future. [Nomination describes student's specific aspirations for their leadership development with the organization.]** After they attended their first weekly executive meeting, Student X messaged me expressing how much they loved the organization and seeing what goes into making BBFS run! Student X also holds a leadership position in the Brutus Buckeye Engineering Institute and plans to continue serving with that student organization. As for academics, **Student X is a Buckeye Scholar and is a part of a research lab here on campus, both of which they will continue until they graduate. Student X has learned a lot about leadership since coming to college, joining student organizations, and being in the Early Leader Ambassador Program. Student X will continuously, intentionally learn from her peers, her leaders, and those she leads in turn. [Nomination gives detailed information as to how student will continue their academic development at Ohio State.]**

Please discuss the experience, involvement, or organization that has most impacted you while at Ohio State, either on or off campus. Why was this impact significant for you and how did it contribute to your development as a leader and preparation for the future? (500 words max):

Sample Application Response:

Brutus Buckeye Fan Society (BBFS) tremendously impacted my student experience and leadership growth at Ohio State. This organization was one of the first places on campus that gave me a sense of community, leading me to some of my closest friends and peers who challenged my ideas and possessed diverse perspectives. Being surrounded by other passionate and highly motivated students enabled me to develop strong interpersonal skills and understand how to navigate group dynamics. [Response explicitly mentions the impact that the organization had on the student's experience.] I aspire to foster a community similar to BBFS in my future endeavors and believe my interpersonal and leadership capabilities from the organization will help me navigate new environments. Furthermore, I leave BBFS with a firm belief in the power of people working towards a common goal: through four years of fundraising and advocating for the kids at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, we have made a positive change in the lives of others. I have raised over \$5,000 during my time in BBFS. By asking for donations, I discovered how to share my passion with others and get them involved in the cause. My work in BBFS spread beyond campus and brought many people together to end the fight towards ending pediatric cancer. I learned the importance of continued commitment and dedication to a cause larger than yourself. Furthermore, turning my passion into monetary impact added another skill to my leadership ability. This experience transformed me into an action-oriented leader.

Serving on the BBFS Leadership Team in two different capacities expanded my leadership development. I learned how to lead my peers and how to resolve conflict. As Vice President of Programming, I gained invaluable event planning experience and developed meaningful relationships throughout the university. Furthermore, serving as Executive Vice President illustrated the significance of support. [Response includes mentions of the leadership experiences within the organization and the competencies acquired from them.] Outside of ensuring the organization was running smoothly, I supported ideas that started as a comment in a meeting into full-fledged initiatives. **Supporting people through that process is incredibly rewarding and contributed to my desire to become an attorney. BBFS also revealed my core values and encouraged me to speak up. During 2020, I led efforts to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion within BBFS. Although that time came with many difficult conversations, I reaffirmed my belief that philanthropy must be more equitable and attainable for all students. [Response explains the impact of the organization on the student's future preparations.]** I co-led the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force and ultimately created an Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion position. While there is a long way to go, I gained experience in making a space more inclusive and learning how to turn my frustration into action. I could not be more grateful for my time in BBFS, as I’ve grown into a passionate and supportive leader ready to take on the world. I will continue to work in philanthropy and actively champion diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Discuss your plans and goals for after graduation. How has your time at Ohio State helped you discover and prepare for these plans? (500 words max):

Sample Application Response:

Upon graduating, I will be starting my desired career as a Systems Engineer at the Brutus Buckeye Engineering Company (BBEC) here in Columbus, where I have interned for three summers and part-time during my 5th year at OSU. **The opportunity to intern with BBEC came as a result of my involvement with Buckeye Engineering Scholars, specifically from attending the Columbus Engineering Conference. Networking at this conference helped me make many professional connections, which led to an interview with BBEC that eventually landed me an offer for my first internship. [Response demonstrates how the student's experiences at OSU has helped her discover/prepare for future career objectives.]** I will be working in BBEC's Mechanical Engineering Sector doing software analysis for aircraft used by the U.S. Navy. In this role, I will be utilizing what I have learned from the Computer Science & Engineering program and the soft skills that I have developed from my time with OSU's Buckeye Engineering Scholars and Engineering Career Services to find my place within the company. I will be the only member of my team with a computer science background, so I am excited to bring a unique perspective to the projects within the program. **I particularly aspire to use this knowledge of computer science to prove myself in this subject matter and to improve the software requirements produced by my department to benefit other teams on the program. I hope to progress within the role and move up within the program, hopefully finding myself as an engineering manager or in another leadership role over time. [Response includes both short- and long-term goals.]**

I also plan to move forward academically as I aspire to obtain my Master in Systems Engineering and allow myself to grow within my field and qualify for future leadership positions. This plan has been developed largely thanks to the connections I've made with Buckeye Engineering Scholars. Alumni events thrown by BES have enabled me to meet people currently in managerial roles. These connections have demonstrated the importance of technical leadership roles and that I can pursue a position that emphasizes both of my passions: leadership and engineering. This is something that has been further supported by my time working at BBEC. I have learned that strong soft skills are just as important on a resume as engineering skills, and that furthering development in these areas are crucial for getting to the roles I want to be in. **I also hope to develop professionally by joining multiple professional organizations. I plan to join OSU's Alumni Club as well as multiple employee resource groups at the Brutus Buckeye Engineering Company, such as their Pride in Diversity Alliance (PrIDA). By getting involved with these organizations, I can make more professional connections, make myself a resource to future OSU students, further develop my leadership skills, and assist with outreach. [Response demonstrates an expressed desire to continue utilizing Buckeye resources and experiences for future professional development.]**