

Dear selection committee,

I am writing to you to recommend Caleb Thome for the Dr. Becky J. Smith Scholarship. Caleb is a member of the Blackburn Institute Class of 2021, and I have had the privilege of working with him once I began my current role in August 2021. Caleb is an engaged member of the Blackburn community and the broader University of Alabama community, and I highly recommend him for this award.


In his first year as a Blackburn student, Caleb completed an immersive leadership development and civic engagement curriculum focused on the state of Alabama. He traveled to communities across the state to learn about how policy is made in Montgomery and how it affects citizens in places like Russellville, Courtland, and so many more. He was attentive and thoughtful as we learned about a variety of issues from healthcare to education to infrastructure, and his public health background provided an invaluable perspective, especially as we learned in the context of the pandemic. In collaboration with other Blackburn students and community partners, Caleb contributed to a grant proposal to support youth mental health services in Tuscaloosa County.

As an office assistant, Caleb made significant contributions to program planning, specifically for our Annual Symposium. He developed and designed content for *Annual Connections*, a print magazine for students, Fellows, Advisory Board members, and other stakeholders that shares stories of our community. He also assisted with day-to-day operations of the office through communications and other administrative tasks. Caleb's work helped the office through a season of transition as multiple staff members took on new roles and responsibilities.

Outside of Blackburn, Caleb is an accomplished and respected leader on campus. He just began his third year on the Student Judiciary, now in the role of Chief Justice. Through his work with the Student Judiciary, the Homecoming Task Force, and other organizations, Caleb has real responsibility developing, implementing, and enforcing policy that supports the health the University of Alabama community. This experience will serve him well in your office and beyond

Caleb has a bright future in public health. I have no reservations about recommending him for this award. If you have any questions about his consideration, please contact me at cfthompson@ua.edu or (205) 348-3277.

Sincerely,



Cokie Thompson

Assistant Director, Blackburn Institute