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Monday, January 13, 2025,

Student Employee of the Year Selection Committee

Office of Financial Aid
Emory University
200 Dowman Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

It is my privilege to nominate Ella Akridge for the Emory University Undergraduate Student Employee of the Year Award. As the Lead Operations Coordinator for the Career Closet, Ella has demonstrated extraordinary dedication, leadership, and impact, fulfilling all the selection criteria of community service, diversity and inclusion, leadership, technology and innovation, and critical thinking. Therefore, I will be nominating Ella Akridge for all five categories.

Community Service

Ella has been instrumental in transforming the Career Closet into a vital resource for the Emory community. Her efforts led to a 56% increase in closet traffic this semester, enabling 219 students to access 403 professional attire rentals—a 572% increase in the number of items rented compared to previous semesters. Ella's work ensured students were equipped for interviews, presentations, and career fairs, directly contributing to their professional success.

Diversity and Inclusion

Recognizing Emory's diverse student body, Ella focused on creating an inclusive space. She championed calls for donations of sizes and styles that catered to underrepresented groups, addressing feedback regarding limited availability of smaller men's fit items and plus-sized women's attire. After our community partners shared the impact of having non-binary professional attire options, Ella created and shared an official inclusive statement on our Instagram page that encouraged the personalized navigation of our clothing inventory. Ella's commitment to inclusivity aligns with Emory's values and ensures all students feel supported.

Leadership

Ella's leadership has been exceptional. She implemented a volunteer training program and introduced operational guides, which streamlined services and prepared her team to deliver consistent support to students. Under her guidance, social media engagement surged by 39.3%, with over 7,492 account touchpoints and 2,598 direct interactions, significantly raising awareness about the Career Closet's offerings.

Technology and Innovation

Ella spearheaded the introduction of a 30-minute appointment-based consultation system, enhancing the student experience and reducing wait times. She also leveraged platforms like Instagram and TikTok to amplify outreach, collaborating with other campus organizations to promote Career Closet services. Her focus on video content drove significant growth, making the Career Closet a recognized name across Emory's campus. Ella also created the digital management system for the Career Closet that includes the physical labeling of clothing inventory that is tracked within the digital inventory and the rental form that identifies clients and client

experience. These systems improved the efficiency of the Pathways Center front desk and increased the awareness of the Career Closet across campus.

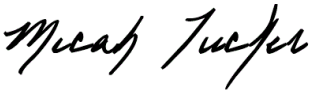
Critical Thinking

Ella's strategic approach has elevated the Career Closet's operations. By analyzing rental patterns and client feedback, she identified key inventory gaps and proposed targeted solutions to enhance future offerings. Her data-driven decisions saved the department valuable resources and informed long-term planning, including recommendations for improved financial tracking and partnerships with the Goizueta Business School.

Ella's performance evaluations consistently highlight her professionalism, initiative, and ability to adapt. Her work has left a lasting impact, transforming the Career Closet into a thriving resource that reflects Emory's commitment to equity and opportunity. Her transformative work with the Career Closet exemplifies the Pathways Center's mission to provide resources and experiences that help Emory students and alumni reach their full potential. Her initiatives in expanding access to professional attire and fostering an inclusive environment have directly contributed to student flourishing, a core theme of Emory's 2036 campaign. By empowering students to present themselves confidently in professional settings, Ella has played a pivotal role in preparing them for meaningful careers and post-graduate opportunities, aligning seamlessly with Emory's vision for the future.

I wholeheartedly endorse Ella Akridge for the Undergraduate Student Employee of the Year Award for all categories. Her exemplary service and leadership make her a standout candidate who truly embodies the spirit of this recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Micah Tucker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

It is my distinct honor to nominate Ella Akridge for the Undergraduate Student Employee of the Year Award in the category of Leadership. As the Lead Operations Coordinator for the Career Closet, Ella has displayed exemplary leadership that has transformed this vital resource, directly aligning with the Pathways Center's mission of equipping students with meaningful experiences that enhance their career trajectories. Her ability to build, innovate, and inspire has left a lasting impact on the Emory community and the students she serves.

Transformational Leadership

When Ella stepped into her leadership role, she saw the untapped potential of the Career Closet and took decisive action. She streamlined operations, implemented a volunteer training program, and established operational guides that made it easier for future student employees to manage and sustain the program. Her leadership resulted in a 56% increase in closet traffic and a 572% rise in the number of items rented—a direct outcome of her strategic planning and ability to mobilize resources effectively.

Empowering Others

Ella embodies the Pathways Center's commitment to fostering student success by creating inclusive, professional development opportunities. She not only managed day-to-day operations but also mentored and empowered her peers. She encouraged collaboration among student workers and implemented a modeling and ambassador initiative that connected students interested in fashion and branding with hands-on experiences. Under her guidance, the Career Closet became more than just a service—it became a community-driven initiative supporting student career readiness.

Visionary Leadership for Emory's Future

Ella's leadership is directly tied to Emory's 2036 campaign, particularly in its focus on student flourishing and career preparation. By instituting a consultation-based appointment system, she enhanced the accessibility and professionalism of the Career Closet, ensuring students had a structured, personalized experience when selecting attire for interviews, presentations, and career fairs. Her data-driven decision-making, as seen in her inventory tracking and targeted outreach to underserved student populations, showcases her ability to lead with strategy, equity, and long-term vision.

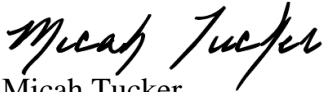
A Legacy of Leadership

Ella's impact extends beyond her current role—she has positioned the Career Closet for long-term sustainability and growth. Her work has laid the foundation for a more expansive and inclusive professional development initiative at Emory, ensuring that students of all backgrounds have the confidence and resources they need to

succeed in their careers. Her ability to identify needs, implement solutions, and inspire those around her makes her a standout leader whose work exemplifies excellence.

For these reasons, I strongly and wholeheartedly endorse Ella Akridge for the Undergraduate Student Employee of the Year Award in Leadership. Her visionary approach, strategic execution, and unwavering commitment to student success truly embody the best of Emory leadership.

Sincerely,

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