



## Caleb Scholars Essay Response Guide

The Caleb Scholars Program fellowship is highly competitive, and strong essays help us better understand each applicant's experiences, goals, and commitment to our program mission. These examples show the level of detail and reflection expected in strong responses. Your responses should reflect your own personal experiences, goals, and voice. There is no single "right" answer. Below are two examples:

[Example Applicant 1: One Health Master's Student](#)

[Example Applicant 2: Mechanical Engineering Student](#)

When answering essay questions, take time to understand what the prompt is asking both directly and indirectly. Many prompts have multiple parts and are designed to show your understanding, goals, and fit for the opportunity.

### ***Tips for strong responses:***

- Read each prompt carefully and highlight what is specifically being asked.
- Consider the bigger purpose behind the question and what the program or organization wants to learn about you.
- Make sure your response answers all parts of the prompt.
- Use language from the prompt to help frame your answer.
- Include specific examples to support your points.
- Proofread carefully and respect all word limits and instructions.

For the Caleb Scholars Program, essay responses should demonstrate how your academic and professional goals connect to Inuit-led conservation advocacy and how you plan to support your community through your current and future goals.



## Example Applicant 1: One Health Master's Student

### Short Answer Questions (up to 100 words):

- 1. Are you tribally enrolled or a direct descendant of a tribal member from the Caleb Scholars Program service area (Norton Sound, Northwest Arctic, or Arctic Slope regions of Alaska)?**

*"I am a direct descendant of tribal members from the Norton Sound region. While I am enrolled as a tribal member of Algaaciq Tribal Government, my mother, Jane (Sura) Smith, grandmother, Alice (Qalla) Smith, and great-grandparents, John (Qulliq) and June (Iqun) Smith, are/were enrolled members of Sitnasuak Native Corporation." (50 Words)*

- 2. What is your connection to an Alaskan Arctic Inuit community in the Caleb Scholars Program service area?**

*"I am Iñupiaq and Yup'ik, with family roots in Nome in the Norton Sound region. My mother was born there and raised me with our Iñupiaq culture while living outside of Alaska. She brought me home for fishing, berry picking, and holidays so I could stay connected to our family and community. I learned some Iñupiatun from my aana and grew up with our traditional foods and stories. These experiences have grounded my identity and connection to my Iñupiaq heritage, and I have a strong drive to stay connected and advocate for my community through my work and education." (99 Words)*

### Essay Questions (100 - 300 words):

- 1. What does Inuit-led conservation advocacy mean to you? How will your education and degree program prepare you to contribute to this work?**

*Inuit-led conservation advocacy means that Inuit, as the original stewards of our lands, lead decision-making about how conservation is defined and practiced in our regions. Our communities hold the knowledge, relationships, and responsibility to protect our environments in ways that are grounded in culture, lived experience, and long-standing stewardship. It is about ensuring that our voices guide the solutions that impact our lands, bodies, and futures.*

*I am in the One Health program at UAF, which is deeply connected to conservation advocacy. Our well-being is inseparable from the health of our lands, waters, and food systems. I grew up*



*learning from my aana about the importance of traditional practices, foods, and ways of living that sustain both our physical and emotional health. These teachings show that caring for the land is also caring for ourselves and our communities.*

*Through my studies, I am learning approaches to wellness that center balance, prevention, and connection. I am especially interested in how Indigenous knowledge systems support healing through relationships, to land, to culture, and to one another. This perspective is critical as many of our communities continue to navigate the impacts of climate change, food insecurity, and disruptions to traditional ways of life.*

*Inuit-led approaches to conservation must also include healing. As access to traditional foods and practices changes, so does our well-being. Supporting conservation means supporting the conditions that allow our communities to thrive, physically, emotionally, and culturally.*

*Through my work in the One Health program, I aim to support Inuit communities by advancing culturally grounded, community-led approaches to health that recognize the connection between people, animals, and the environment, while strengthening intergenerational knowledge and long-term resilience.” (275 Words)*

**2. Caleb Scholars Fellows have access to supplemental funding to support travel, conferences, cultural activities, equipment for classes or research, and other program-related activities. How might you use this funding if selected as a Caleb Scholars Fellow?**

*As a Caleb Scholar, I would use supplemental funding to support opportunities that strengthen both my education and my connection to my community. I am especially interested in using funding to attend conferences and gatherings that center Indigenous approaches to healing, wellness, and land-based practices. These spaces would allow me to learn from Indigenous practitioners, elders, and leaders who are already doing this work in their communities.*

*I would also use funding to support travel back to my home community to participate in subsistence activities and cultural practices. Being on the land, harvesting traditional foods, and learning directly from family and community members are essential to my understanding of holistic wellness. These experiences are not separate from my education, they are a foundation for it.*

*Additionally, I would seek opportunities for internships or community-based work that focus on wellness programming. This could include supporting youth programs, helping organize*



*community wellness gatherings, or assisting with initiatives that promote access to traditional foods and healing practices. Supplemental funding would make it possible for me to participate in these opportunities without financial barriers.*

*I am also interested in using funding to develop and share what I learn. This could look like creating community presentations or workshops that bring together holistic wellness and Inuit knowledge, making information more accessible to others.*

*I would use supplemental funding in ways that allow me to learn, return, and give back, ensuring my education remains grounded in community, culture, and the long-term health and resilience of our people. (250 Words)*

## Example Applicant 2: Mechanical Engineering Student

### Short Answer Questions (up to 100 words):

- 1. Are you tribally enrolled or a direct descendant of a tribal member from the Caleb Scholars Program service area (Norton Sound, Northwest Arctic, or Arctic Slope regions of Alaska)? Please specify tribe and enrollment status.**

*"I am an enrolled tribal member of the Native Village of Kivalina in the Northwest Arctic region. My family has long-standing ties to the community, and I maintain an active connection through family, cultural practices, and time spent at home." (40 words)*

- 2. What is your connection to an Alaskan Arctic Inuit community in the Caleb Scholars Program service area?**

*"I am Iñupiaq, with strong ties to the Native Village of Kivalina. I was raised between my home community and school, and I return regularly to spend time with family and participate in subsistence activities. Growing up, I learned from my family about our values, traditional foods, and ways of life. These experiences have shaped my identity and continue to guide my commitment to staying connected to my community and supporting it through my future work. They also inspire my goals to give back in ways that reflect our values and strengthen our community." (94 Words)*

### Essay Questions (100 - 300 words):



**1. What does Inuit-led conservation advocacy mean to you? How will your education and degree program prepare you to contribute to this work?**

*“Inuit-led conservation advocacy means that Inuit are leading decisions about how our lands and waters are cared for, based on our knowledge, values, and lived experiences. It ensures that conservation efforts reflect the priorities of our communities and support our long-term relationship with the land. It also means recognizing that our knowledge systems are not separate from science, but are essential to understanding and responding to environmental change in the Arctic.*

*As a mechanical engineering student, I see my education as directly connected to this work. Engineering shapes the infrastructure and technologies that Arctic communities depend on, from energy systems to housing and transportation. Too often, these systems are designed without meaningful input from the communities they serve, which can lead to solutions that are inefficient, unsustainable, or disconnected from daily life. Inuit-led conservation advocacy creates space for our voices to guide these decisions and ensures that development aligns with our values.*

*Through my studies, I am learning how to design systems that are efficient, durable, and responsive to environmental conditions. I am especially interested in developing technologies that reduce environmental impact while supporting the needs of Arctic communities, such as renewable energy systems and climate-resilient infrastructure. I want to approach engineering in a way that prioritizes long-term sustainability and respects the relationship between people and place.*

*In communities like Kivalina, where climate change is already affecting daily life, these solutions must be both practical and culturally grounded. As a mechanical engineer, I hope to contribute to projects that are informed by community knowledge, support adaptation to environmental changes, and strengthen the long-term well-being of our communities. I also hope to advocate for design processes that center Inuit leadership, ensuring that solutions are created with, by, and for our communities.” (290 Words)*

**2. Caleb Scholars Fellows have access to supplemental funding to support travel, conferences, cultural activities, equipment for classes or research, and other program-related activities. How might you use this funding if selected as a Caleb Scholars Fellow?**



*“As a Caleb Scholar, I would use supplemental funding to support opportunities that strengthen both my education in mechanical engineering and my connection to my community. I am especially interested in attending conferences and trainings focused on sustainable engineering, renewable energy, and infrastructure in Arctic environments. These opportunities would allow me to learn from professionals working on challenges that directly impact communities like mine.*

*I would also use funding to support travel back to my home community to stay connected and learn from local knowledge holders. Understanding the lived experiences of my community is essential to designing engineering solutions that are both practical and meaningful.*

*Additionally, I would seek internships or hands-on learning opportunities focused on engineering in rural and Arctic settings, particularly those related to energy systems and climate adaptation. I would also use funding to share what I learn by supporting presentations and conversations with youth in my community. I want to help make engineering more accessible and show how it can be used to support our communities. Through these opportunities, I would build skills and experiences that allow me to give back in ways that are grounded in community needs and values.*

*I am also interested in using funding to support access to tools, software, and materials that will strengthen my technical skills and allow me to fully engage in my coursework and projects. Having access to these resources would help me build a strong foundation as an engineer. In the future, I hope to apply these skills to projects that improve infrastructure and energy systems in Arctic communities, ensuring they are sustainable, reliable, and informed by the people who live there, and responsive to the long-term environmental changes our communities are experiencing, while continuing to learn from and work alongside my community.” (296 Words)*

