

ASU Law grad finds purpose at the intersection of law and HR

By Elise Llamas Drinkwater, ASU News
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Editor's note: This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

Samuel Fruth's life has always been shaped by a commitment to social justice.

After graduating with an undergraduate degree in justice studies from Arizona State University, Fruth unexpectedly entered the human resources field, where he discovered a unique intersection of employee advocacy and organizational compliance. He quickly realized that HR is not simply a corporate function, but a space where meaningful change and advocacy can take place every day.

That realization inspired Fruth to pursue a Master of Human Resources and Employment Law at ASU's [Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law](#), where he'll graduate from in May. Through the program, he deepened his understanding of employment law, compliance and employee protections while also putting these lessons into practice in his current role as an HR manager.

In recognition of his accomplishments as a master's student, Fruth was named the recipient of the the program's Outstanding Student Award.

"Hard work is rewarding by itself, but being recognized for it makes it even more meaningful," he said.

Finding a particular interest in the legal side of employment relationships and workers' rights, Fruth is excited for the next step in his commitment to social justice: pursuing his Juris Doctor this fall.

For students still navigating their own paths, Fruth points to the power of continuous education.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," he said, quoting Nelson Mandela.

Below, Fruth shares more about his journey and lessons learned at ASU.

Note: Answers may have been lightly edited for length and/or clarity.

Question: What was your “aha” moment when you realized you wanted to study the field you majored in?

Answer: My “aha” moment came from recognizing how much influence and responsibility the role carries. Workplaces don’t exist in a vacuum; they reflect the same systemic inequities present in the rest of society. HR is the internal function positioned to both navigate and challenge these issues. Pursuing a Master of Human Resources and Employment Law was a natural next step, giving me a strong legal foundation to effectively contribute to compliant and equitable employment environments.

Question: What’s something you learned while at ASU — in the classroom or otherwise — that surprised you or changed your perspective?

Answer: Diving deeper into employment laws expanded my perspective on their role in practice. Engaging directly with these laws made it clear how intentionally they are designed to address workplace power dynamics and protect employees, especially those in protected classes. This study also highlighted how much of the guidance and expectations are already in place. The law does not just set expectations in theory; it provides clear frameworks for employers to implement and be held accountable for. Thus, the connection between compliance and equity became much more concrete in my mind, highlighting what still needs to be done with what can already be utilized.

Question: Why did you choose ASU?

Answer: Arizona State University has always been a natural fit for me. I completed my undergraduate degree in justice studies on the Tempe campus, where the program played a meaningful role in shaping my interests and values. Being from Tempe and coming from a family with ASU ties, the university has always been a part of my life. But what ultimately brought me back was the professors and staff who make this such a supportive learning environment.

Question: How has this degree helped you in your professional journey?

Answer: This degree has been invaluable to my work in human resources, allowing me to deepen my understanding of employment law and HR best practices while applying them in real time. Through this experience, I developed an even stronger interest in the legal side of the employment relationship — specifically in upholding workers' legal protections, which has ultimately led me to pursue my JD.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Samuel Fruth, recipient of the Master of Human Resources and Employment Law Outstanding Student Award. Courtesy photo