

# Lay Trustee Role Profile and Brief

## **Brief**

KCLSU is looking for a new Lay Trustee to fill a vacancy on the Board. Our Lay Trustees serve for a four-year term of office, renewable for a further four years. They provide external expertise, skills and competencies to complement those of our majority Student Trustees, who serve only for one academic year (although they are able to stand for a further one year). Our members, who are the 34,000 students who are studying at King's College London, elect our Student Trustees. Six of the Student Trustees are also full-time paid Sabbatical Officers (Vice-Presidents (VP)), elected by the members to represent them. These trustees are elected to principal areas of student representation: the President of KCLSU is also the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The other elected officers are: VP Activities and Development; VP Education (Arts & Sciences); VP Education (Health); VP Welfare & Community; and VP Postgraduate.

This brief is in four parts, summarising: the expertise and skills we are looking for; Board responsibilities; Trustee skills and experience, diversity and time commitment; and finally what is in this for you – what KCLSU has to offer through the Lay Trustee experience.

## **Part A: Legal/governance expertise and skills**

We are looking for a Lay Trustee to join the KCLSU Board for the Spring 2021, and we are seeking the following skills:

### **Legal and Governance**

We are looking for a trustee with a legal background that will be able to provide support and advice to the Board. Our ideal candidate need not be a practising lawyer (although we are interested to hear from practising lawyers too) but someone that understands common legal challenges faced by organisations. Experience of working with not-for-profit organisations is not essential but would be desirable. While there are many different areas of the law, and KCLSU is able to seek specific legal opinion where needed, we are looking for a trustee who can apply legal critical thinking in their role on the Board.

The Lay Trustee will also Chair our Governance & Policy Sub-Committee, which provides support to the Board and the organisation with oversight of our Union's democratic and election processes. The Committee also oversees our governance processes, including our policies and procedures that apply to our members (students at King's College London).

## **Part B: Board responsibilities and Lay Trustees**

### **Purpose**

The Trustees are ultimately responsible, individually and collectively, for all activity within KCLSU. The KCLSU Trustee Board is responsible for setting the vision and values of the organisation and for ensuring the delivery of organisational purpose. The Trustees ensure development of and agree a long-term strategy. They approve and monitor plans to deliver the strategy.

## Key Responsibilities

Trustees are accountable for delivering the responsibilities detailed in the KCLSU Trustee Board Terms of Reference. Notwithstanding this, all Trustees have a duty to:

- Ensure that KCLSU acts in accordance with its charitable objects, constitution and other guiding documents and in particular remains true to its mission, vision and values.
- Facilitate KCLSU being a student-led organisation.
- Help KCLSU achieve its objectives and improve the lives of its members.
- Ensure that KCLSU complies with all relevant legislation and regulations, including relevant charity acts and education acts.
- Ensure that KCLSU does not undertake activities that put its financial stability, members or reputation at undue risk.
- Work with other Trustees, staff and volunteers in a constructive manner and for the greater good of KCLSU.
- Participate fully in Trustee Board meetings and chair one of the Trustee Board's Committees.
- Use their personal skills and experience to ensure KCLSU is well run and efficient.
- Seek external professional advice where there may be material risk to KCLSU or where the Trustees may be in breach of their duties or at any other appropriate moment.
- Add value to the Trustee Board and KCLSU through generating ideas, challenging the status quo, broadening thinking and supporting and promoting innovation and creativity.
- Abide by the KCLSU Trustee Code of Conduct.

**Lay Trustees** have a particular responsibility to:

- Use their particular knowledge, skills and experience to improve the decision making of the Trustee Board and its Committees.
- Support and empower the Student and Student Officer Trustees to act as student leaders for KCLSU.
- Act as mentors, as required, for new or less experienced Trustees.

## Person Specification

**Trustees should be:**

- Committed to the purpose, charity objects and values of KCLSU.
- Committed to facilitating student leadership both within and through the Trustee Board and through the wider democratic structures of KCLSU.
- Constructive about other Trustees' opinions in discussions and in response to staff members' contributions at meetings.
- Able to act reasonably and responsibly when undertaking Trustee Board responsibilities.
- Able to maintain strict confidentiality.
- Understand the importance and purpose of Trustee Board and Committee meetings and be committed to preparing for them adequately and attending them regularly.
- Able to analyse information and when necessary challenge constructively.
- Able to make collective decisions and stand by them.
- Able to respect boundaries between management and governance functions.
- Excellent role models who promote the highest standards of probity and integrity.
- Firm supporters of equality of opportunity and committed to promoting diversity.

## Part C: skills and experience, diversity and time commitment

### Skills and Experience:

It would be desirable if you have:

- Some knowledge and experience of not-for-profit/charity organisations.
- Experience of boards and governance processes.
- Experience in advising boards on exposure to risk.
- HR legal expertise.
- The ability to horizon scan for legal challenges / relevant external influences.
- Critical thinking skills and the ability to ask questions to stretch discussions and assist with finding solutions to problems at board level.
- Able to apply a level of legal scrutiny and challenge to decision making and strategy discussions.
- Experience providing guidance on conflicts of interests.

### Specific skills for this role:

We are looking for someone with Board-level/Director level experience who shares our values and will enjoy the challenge of ensuring we deliver the best possible experience to students at King's.

The person we are looking for will have the experience and expertise in their field of business/work to be a role model to our student members, and to support the effective decision-making of the Board. While all the above skills are desirable, we are happy to consider candidates who particularly excel in one or more of the skills as described in Part A.

## Part D: What KCLSU has to offer our Lay Trustees?

So, what do we in return have to offer our Lay Trustees? Being a Trustee at KCLSU would provide you with a very different type of trustee experience from most charities, or from any non-executive board role. Our Trustee roles provide a unique learning and enriching experience. This does not just provide you with a feel-good factor for those who want to support and empower our future generation. Being a Trustee with us will provide you with a challenging and rewarding role working with an inter-generational Board. It provides an opportunity for you to challenge your own perceptions.

### Diversity and inclusion:

To have the trust and confidence of the student body at King's College London, as well as our staff team, KCLSU's Board believes and follows the Charity Commission's guidance on Board diversity:

"Diversity, in the widest sense, is essential for boards to stay informed and responsive and to navigate the fast-paced and complex changes facing the voluntary sector. Boards whose trustees have different backgrounds and experience are more likely to encourage debate and to make better decisions. The term 'diversity' includes the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 as well as different backgrounds, life experiences, career paths and diversity of thought. Boards should try to recruit people who think in different ways, as well as those who have different backgrounds."



## Time commitment

We anticipate that the time commitment for the role is as follows:

- Four Trustee Board meetings (usually three hours, held in the evenings).
- One Away day (normally in February or March).
- Chairing of our Governance & Policy Sub-Committee, which will meet three times each year for up to two hours.
- You might also be asked to support with occasional ad hoc matters e.g., senior recruitment matters.
- Monthly 30 minute 1-2-1s with our Chief Executive.
- 30 minutes “reverse buddy” time with one or two of our Sabbatical Officers each term (elected Officer student staff who are student representatives and also Trustees).
- The time commitment is likely to average about one day per month.
- Term of office for Lay Trustees: four years from their date of appointment, renewable for one further four-year term.

## Proposed starting date and Induction plans

### Induction and key dates

Subject to availability and other commitments, we will arrange a Trustee induction process to help our new Lay Trustee to understand KCLSU and our work. We would plan for our new Lay Trustee to attend their first full Board meeting on **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**.

### **Key dates for the remaining academic year 2020/21 are:**

- Trustee Board meeting – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (approval of 2021/22 budget and strategy review; impact reports from outgoing 2020/21 Officer Trustees and welcome to incoming 2021/22 Officer Trustees).