Warwick Students’ Union Student Trustee Pack

Dear Prospective Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Warwick Students’ Union.

We pride ourselves on being a dynamic charity that takes our mission, “positively impacting students’ lives at Warwick and beyond”, very seriously. Our Trustees play a crucial role in ensuring that we continue to innovate, that we keep a focus on the wider world, that we are well governed and that we never become complacent.

In 2020/21 we started work on our 5 year strategic review and so our plans for the next 5 years. This has enabled us to concentrate on a wide range of issues that have an impact on education, but to also identify where our focus should be. The last 12 months have had a profound impact on how we work as an organisation, whilst also highlighting some of the key educational priorities for Students. As we enter a new academic year we will be working with a clearer vision of our priorities and will need a strong Board of Trustees to ensure that we deliver against our strategic objectives, to provide challenge and to help steer us through a constantly changing Higher Education landscape, and a challenging national backdrop to the charity sector.

As a charity, Warwick Students’ Union needs to comply with charity law and work with the Charity Commission. As a membership organisation, the Union must always be responsive to its members; and as a trading organisation we must ensure that our finances are sound, our practices are ethical and that we are a good employer.

This mix of challenges is one of the reasons why the role of Student Trustee at Warwick SU is so rewarding and exciting, and why becoming a Trustee in general is a fantastic opportunity.

This pack has been designed to give you a flavour of the role and to answer some of your questions. I hope that you will find it useful and that you will be inspired to stand for election.

If you have questions or would like an informal conversation before submitting a nomination, please do get in touch.

Luke Mepham

President and Chair of the Board of Trustees

Warwick Students’ Union

**Trustee Role Description – Warwick Students’ Union**

**Main Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the financial matters and financial procedures of Warwick Students’ Union (WSU). It must accept ultimate responsibility for giving firm strategic direction to the Union, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-governed, and delivering the objectives for which it has been set up.

The key charitable objects of the Union are set out in the Governing Document – the Memorandum and Articles of Association and are the advancement of education of Students at the University of Warwick for the public benefit by:

1. Promoting the interests and welfare of our members during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising members
2. Being a recognised representative channel between our members and the University of Warwick.

The trustees will also annually review how the Union’s aims are to be achieved and include:

* Promoting the interests of our members as effectively as possible at institutional, local and national levels.
* Ensuring effective communication between our members, the University of Warwick and other bodies.
* Providing for the educational, cultural, recreational, sporting, social and welfare needs of our members to the best of our ability.
* Operating an effective equal opportunities policy while guaranteeing freedom of expression and minimising any adverse environmental impact, therefore providing a safe and enjoyable environment for all.

The Board of Trustees has a responsibility not to implement any democratically developed policy which has damaging financial implications or breaches the law, if it is passed without a realistic financial plan.

**Key Duties**

* To work collectively and with the Chief Executive and other senior staff to ensure that WSU has a clear vision that recognises its values and meets the needs of its members.
* To monitor and evaluate the performance of WSU against targets and to ensure that it is focussed on achieving its vision.
* To ensure that WSU complies with all legal and regulatory requirements, including its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
* To agree any delegated authority and ensure such delegated authority is clearly expressed.
* To safeguard the assets of WSU, taking due care over their security and proper usage, ensuring that they are used exclusively in the pursuit of the agreed objectives.
* To ensure that the governance of WSU is of the highest standard and that it follows guidance from any relevant bodies.
* To recommend the auditors and name the bankers of WSU.
* To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
* To annually approve and amend the finance regulations, annual budgets and strategic plans of WSU.
* To appoint and appraise the Chief Executive and to appoint the Board of Directors of any direct subsidiary companies of WSU.
* To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees, using any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions involving scrutinising board papers, focusing on key issues, providing guidance.
* Take or seek opportunities to enhance his or her effectiveness as a Trustee through participation in training and development programmes and by increasing his or her own knowledge of WSU.

**Person Specification – Student Trustees**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Trustees** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Experience and Background**  |  |  |
| Over 18 |  |  |
| A current student of Warwick University |  |  |
| Experience of working in a leadership or governance role (through work of voluntary experience)  |  |  |
| An awareness of the areas of work that influence and inform the activities of Warwick Students’ Union |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Knowledge** |  |  |
| Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship  |  |  |
| Awareness of the systems and structures in, and issues affecting Higher Education |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Skills and Abilities** |  |  |
| Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort (4 hours per month – largely in the evening) |  |  |
| Strategic vision and the ability to develop strategic thinking in others |  |  |
| Good, independent, objective judgement |  |  |
| Ability to think creatively and articulate ideas |  |  |
| Ability to work effectively as a member of a team |  |  |
| Must not have been dismissed from employment with the SU |  |  |

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| **Student Trustees** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Values, Attitudes and Personal Style** |  |  |
| Commitment to the organisation and its core values |  |  |
| Willingness to exercise leadership when required to do so  |  |  |
| Enthusiastic commitment to voluntary and community activity |  |  |
| Acceptance of the 7 Nolan principles of public life; selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.  |  |  |

 **Conditions of Appointment**

 **Remuneration**

The post is not remunerated i.e. it is a voluntary and unpaid position.

**Expenses**

Out-of-pocket expenses can be reimbursed; this will include travel costs to meetings and all other reasonable costs incurred while carrying out the duties of a Warwick Students’ Union Trustee.

**Term of Office**

Student Trustees – 2 years initially with potential for a further term of 2 years dependent on attendance, conduct and continuing eligibility.

**Expected Time Commitment**

The expected time commitment for this post is approximately 4 hours per month (usually in the late afternoon/evening). All Trustees attend the 6 Board meetings per year which are usually held in October, December, February, May, June and July. Each trustee will be asked to become a member of 1 sub-committee and there will be a minimum of 1 Board Away Day per year.

**Training and Development**

Warwick Students’ Union is committed to providing comprehensive training to support its Trustees and their ongoing professional development. Warwick SU will provide a comprehensive induction programme for all new Trustees, as well as an opportunity to meet elected officers and staff of the Union. There will also be a minimum of 1 Trustee training day per year.

**Equality and Diversity**

Warwick Students’ Union is committed to the principle of equality and values diversity. We will endeavour to meet the needs of any candidate who fulfils the requirements of the person specification.

**Vision, Mission, Values and Priorities of Warwick Students’ Union**

Warwick Students’ Union is the voice for 27,000+ students that study at Warwick University and affiliated campuses around the world. It is a student led democratic organisation that registered as a charity in 2010 and is guided and governed by its Trustees.

It operates within a legal framework that includes the Education Act and the Charities Act. It provides support to over 300 student societies and sports clubs, provides face to face advice and support to students and shapes policy by representation on 88 Staff Student Liaison Committees and University consultative bodies. It is a fundamental part of the student experience at Warwick.

Warwick has aspirations to be a world leading University and it will only succeed in this aspiration if it has a vibrant and motivated student body. The Students’ Union has a critical role to play in providing students with experiences that will help them to reach their potential and ensure that they go on to shape the society around them.

Following extensive consultation and discussion, we have proposed a revised Vision, Mission and Values and a set of strategic priorities as follows;

**Vision:**The best experience for every student at Warwick

**Mission:**Positively impacting students’ lives at Warwick and beyond

**Values:**

* **Student Focussed** – We put students at the heart of everything we do
* **Democratic –** We are representative, transparent and accountable
* **Welcoming** – We are supportive, helpful, inclusive and value diversity
* **Enriching –** We nurture their aspirations and help them to develop
* **Independent –** We are the independent voice of Warwick students

**Strategic Priorities:**

1. To ensure students’ voice is central to University life
2. To improve students’ well-being
3. To develop a well-led and values-driven organisation
4. Creating great networks and communities
5. To ensure the SU is financially sustainable

The new strategy is entering into a final round of consultation and further information about that can be viewed at the following link at the SU website : <https://www.warwicksu.com/news/article/warwicksu/su-strategy-student-consultation/>

 **Governance and Management Arrangements**

**Legal Status**

Warwick SU is constituted under the Education Act 1994 as a charity with internal rules and regulations approved by University Council the governing body of the University of Warwick. The Union’s charitable objects under the Act, to advance the University’s educational purposes by providing representation and support for the students of the University of Warwick, are supplemented by the further object of helping members to develop their own charitable activities as participants in civil society.

**Democratic Structures**

Warwick Students’ Union is a membership organisation. All registered students of the University of Warwick are full members of the Union unless they have exercised their right not to be a member under clause 22(c) of the Education Act 1994. The membership provides strategic and political direction through the Union’s democratic structures including All Student Meetings, Union Council and Executive Committees.

**Trustee Board**

The Trustee Board is the governing body of the Charity.

The Trustees are responsible for making sure that the Students' Union is run effectively, complies with the law, has a strong strategic plan based on members' needs and is financially secure.

Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to manage the day to day operations and it is the role of the Chief Executive to enact the strategy determined by the Trustees. The SU is run on a day to day basis by its staff, officers and volunteers directed by its members' needs.

The Trustee Board is accountable to Warwick Students' Union members, to the Charity Commission and to the public in general.

According to the Charity Commission: "Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of the Charity, ensuring it is solvent, well run, delivering the charitable outcomes set out in its governing document".

**Board Structure**

The Trustee Board is made up of:

* Sabbatical Officer Trustees – each of the 7 Sabbatical Officers, (FTO’s - Full Time Officers) are Trustees of Warwick Students' Union
* Student Trustees – there are up to 6 Trustees of the SU who are Warwick students (not Sabbatical Officers, student staff or members of Elections Group). These are appointed by the Board and Student Union Council
* Lay Trustees - there are up to 5 external non-student members of the Board. These are also appointed by the Board and Student Union Council

The President of Warwick SU is the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The Board is supported by 3 sub committees:

**People & Remuneration**

This examines issues relating to finance. It scrutinises the management and annual accounts, financial plans and annual budgets. It also monitors issues relating to staff including the staff survey results, pay changes, training and development as well as staff policies.

 **Audit and Risk**

This monitors the Union’s framework for accountability, financial control, risk profile and other aspects which could impact on Warwick Student Union’s organisational health as well as ensuring that the Union is complying with relevant legislation. The committee is responsible for ensuring that there is a framework of effective internal and external audit coverage.

**Governance and Appointments**

This committee ensures that new trustees are recruited, inducted and developed properly. They also have responsibility for the recruitment of the Chief Executive.

**Trustee Responsibilities**

**Compliance – Trustees must:**

* Ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.
* Ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.
* Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the charity.
* Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

**Duty of prudence – Trustees must:**

* Ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent
* Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity’s objects.
* Avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity’s endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
* Take special care when investing the funds of the charity, or borrowing funds for the charity to use.

**Duty of care – Trustees must:**

* Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.
* Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be a material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

**Meeting Arrangements**

The Board of Trustees currently meets 6 times per year in the late afternoon. These meetings take place in the Students’ Union. In addition there is at least one Away Day per year and at least one

* Training Day per year. These may be held off site, but will be close to campus.
* The People & Remuneration sub committee meets 4 times per year.
* The Audit and Risk sub committee meets 4 times per year.
* The Governance & Appointments committee meets 4 times per year.

**Staff and Management Structure**

Warwick Students’ Union employs c90 permanent staff and 350 student staff across our various operations and outlets. The day to day management of the Union is handled by the Chief Executive, supported by a senior management team of five.

The main activities of the organisation are determined by the priorities in the strategic plan. The Students’ Union supports an enormous range of activities that add breadth and depth to the student experience. This includes supporting:

* 250 student societies
* 65 Sports Clubs
* 80 Staff/Student Liaison Committees
* Organising 32 Club and Society Balls, over 100 trips and tours and 16 student conferences.

The Students’ Union facilitates the campaign priorities of the sabbatical officers and works with them to achieve change, including running elections, training representatives and encouraging debate. The Advice Centre provides a service to c6,500 students each year on issues ranging from transport and accommodation to academic appeals. In addition the Union runs six food and drink outlets, a catering service and a music venue.

**The Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life**

 **Selflessness**

* Trustees have a general duty to act with probity and prudence in the best interest of the Students’ Union as a whole.

**Integrity**

* Trustees should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of the Students’ Union, or its staff.

**Objectivity**

* In carrying out their role, including making appointments, awarding contracts,

recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, the Trustees should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit. In arriving at decisions in areas where they do not have expertise themselves Trustees should consider appropriate professional advice.

**Accountability**

* Trustees have a duty to comply with constitutional and legal requirements and to adhere to best practice in such a way as to preserve confidence in the Students’ Union.
* Trustees are accountable to the Students’ Union’s members and other stakeholders for their decisions, the effectiveness of the Board and the performance of the organisation.

**Openness**

* Trustees should ensure that confidential information and material, including material

about individuals is handled appropriately; so that it remains confidential. In addition they should be as open as possible about their decisions and the actions that they take. As far as possible they should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands.

**Honesty**

* The Trustees have a duty to avoid any conflict of interest so far as is reasonably

practicable. In particular, they must make known any interest in any matter under discussion which:
- creates either a real danger of bias;
- might reasonably cause others to think it could influence the decision.

**Leadership**

* Promote and support the principles of leadership by example:
- striving to attend all meetings regularly, ensuring they prepare for and contribute
appropriately and effectively;
- bringing fair and open minded view to all discussions of the Board and ensuring

 that all decisions are made in the Students’ Union’s best interests.

**Expressions of Interest**

Students who are interested in becoming a Student Trustee are invited to register their expression of interest by completing the expression of interest form on the website. Secondly, this is followed by a campus-wide election by the Student body. Elections will take place in Term 3.

Stage 1 – Expressions of Interest

Students who have expressed an interest will be contacted by a member of SU staff to discuss the role in more detail before deciding if they would like to stand for election for the role. As the role of a Trustee is governed by law, the Union will need to check that you will be able to carry out the role if elected. Therefore, candidates are also required to read and sign the Trustee Declaration Form.

Stage 2 - Elections

The election timetable is listed below:

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| --- | --- |
| Event | Date/s |
| Nominations Open | 26th April 2021 |
| Nominations Close | 7th May 2021 |
| Deadline for final online submission of manifesto | 10th May 2021 |
| Voting Opens  | 10th May 2021 |
| Voting Closes | 14th May 2021 |
| Results announced | 14th May 2021 |

**Your Manifesto**

As you will be running for election, you will be asked to write a manifesto. This will be published on the SU website and will help voters to decide why they should vote for you. It will be your opportunity to tell voters what you are all about, how you meet the Student Trustee Specification and what skills you will bring to the governance of the SU. Further information and guidance on how to create a manifesto will be provided.

**References**

All candidates are required to provide 2 satisfactory references.

**Expressions of Interest**

These should be sent in confidence to: trustees@warwicksu.com

**Further Information and Questions**

For an informal conversation, further information or any questions about this opportunity, please contact Marie Claire Churchill (MarieClaire.Churchill@warwicksu.com) in the first instance or Luke Mepham Union President (Luke.mepham@warwicksu.com) or Rob Parkinson, Chief Executive (Rob.Parkinson@warwicksu.com).