

Penn State Nondiscrimination Statement

Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or protected veteran status.

Student Trustee Position Description

The student trustee is the member of Penn State's Board of Trustees selected from the student body. This student is responsible for helping guide the university's leadership. This student should be actively engaged in and well-informed on the issues of the entire student body and feel comfortable speaking on them to university administrators and the Board of Trustees. The student must be committed to seeking out student opinion on any important issues including but not limited to academics, athletics, research, and student life.

Any applicant should be able to fulfill the time commitment required to serve as an effective trustee. The selected student can expect at least two hours per week of off-cycle Board meetings, and another hour of preparing for those meetings. During months where the full Board meets, the student can expect back-to-back 8 to 10 hour days of public Board meetings, committee meetings, and social events, which will prevent the student from attending that day's classes. Again, additional time will be required to prepare for these meetings. Further time commitments will include meeting with administrators as necessary, as well as occasionally attending organizational meetings such as Penn State's various student governments and multicultural groups. This is not a position that can be or should be treated as a secondary extracurricular obligation.

This student should be dedicated to understanding and providing their perspective as a member of the student body while appreciating the nuance of being responsible for the welfare of the entire University. This student should act and conduct themselves professionally and always exercise their own personal good judgment. Full qualifications for membership are outlined in the Bylaws of the Pennsylvania State University Board of Trustees:

“Section 2.02 Qualifications for Membership: (a) Members of the Board of Trustees shall be natural persons of full age who need not be residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania...(b) The Student Trustee shall be a full-time undergraduate, graduate or professional student, in good academic standing and in a degree seeking program at the University”

Once in the role, the student trustee will assume the same responsibilities as any other member of the Board of Trustees. This includes a fiduciary responsibility that is described in Article 8, Section 7 of the Bylaws of the Pennsylvania State University Board of Trustees:

“Section 8.07 Fiduciary Duty: Members of the Board of Trustees stand in a fiduciary relationship to the University which reposes special confidence in each member. Members of the Board of Trustees shall act in good faith, with due regard to the interests of the University, and shall comply with the fiduciary principles of conduct in addition to any other state or federal requirements. ***Trustees bring to their roles varied backgrounds and expertise, and they are selected in different ways, but they must keep the welfare of the entire University, not just a particular constituency, at all times paramount***”

The full expectations of membership are outlined in the Standing Orders of the Pennsylvania State University Board of Trustees:

“Expectations of Membership: In exercising the responsibilities of trusteeship, the Board of Trustees is guided by the expectations of membership, each of which is equally important. It is expected that each Trustee will:

- (i) Understand and support the University’s mission, vision, and values;
- (ii) Act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the University, maintain independence from external stakeholders and act without regard to the manner in which such Trustee was appointed or elected to the Board of Trustees;
- (iii) Make the University a top philanthropic priority to the very best of one’s personal ability and fulfill on a timely basis all financial obligations and pledges of support to the University;
- (iv) Prepare diligently, attend faithfully, and participate constructively in all Board of Trustees meetings and related activities by reading the agenda and supporting materials;
- (v) Speak openly, freely and candidly within the Board, while being mindful that any public dissent from Board decisions must be done in the context of being trusted stewards of a public institution. Because a University is a free marketplace of competing ideas and opinions, its governance mandates open communication as well as principled, civil and respectful debate. At the same time, trustees must always protect and act in the best interest of the University, being cognizant that the tone and substance of their words reflect on the University that they are dedicated to serve and have consequences on its overall wellbeing.

(vi) Make decisions and instruct the administration collectively as the governing body of the University; it being recognized and understood that unless specifically authorized by the Board or the Chair, no individual trustee has the authority to direct administrators with respect to the performance of their duties for the University or to otherwise act on behalf of the University or the Board; 9/18/20 S-13

(vii) Participate regularly in events that are integral parts of the life of the University community;

(viii) Disclose promptly and fully any potential or actual conflicts of interest in accordance with the Board's conflict of interest policies, and personally maintain exemplary ethical standards;

(ix) Refrain from requests of the President or staff for special consideration or personal prerogatives, including admissions, employment, and contracts for business;

(x) Maintain the confidentiality of confidential information without exception; it being recognized and understood that for this purpose "confidential information" includes nonpublic information concerning the University, including its finances, operations and personnel, as well as nonpublic information about internal Board discussions and dynamics;

(xi) Advocate the University's interests, but speak for the Board or the University only when authorized to do so by the Board or the Chair; it being recognized and understood that it is important for the Board of Trustees to convey a consistent message and that the Chair of the Board of Trustees or his or her designee serves as the spokesperson for the Board;

(xii) Respect University policies relating to the acquisition of information and communication; it being recognized and understood that all such information should be used only for purpose consistent with such Trustee's duties and responsibilities to the University; and

(xiii) Extend goodwill to one another and to all members of the University community."

If you have any questions about these expectations and requirements for fulfilling the position, please feel free to reach out to current Student Trustee Janiyah Davis at jjd6104@psu.edu.