

Please Help us Build the KCC Board of Directors

The Board of Directors requests your help in recruiting new members of the Board to help us meet the great opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

The Board manages the “secular” side of KCC. It cooperates with the Resident Lama and Program Council who manage KCC’s spiritual life.

At present the Board has six members: John Jennings and Tracy Trefethen (Co-Presidents), Linda Besant (Secretary), Sandy Pollock (Treasurer), Phil Wallin, and Doug Dunlap. This is simply not enough hands to do the work that needs to be done and not a sufficient cross-section of KCC (especially since some will be leaving the Board in 2021). Ideally, we hope to elect five new members over the next year and eventually reach a full complement of eleven members.

We would like your help to identify and evaluate persons within the Sangha who would be willing to serve in this way and who would bring to the Board the qualities and skills that we need. This is an opportunity for all of us to practice the Dharma by building a KCC that can support the practice of our Sangha.

An Overview of the Board

KCC’s Bylaws say that “the affairs of the corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors.” While action is by majority vote (2/3 on certain structural issues), the Bylaws encourage the Board “to listen to each person’s statements and take them into account, honoring diversity of opinion.” In practice, consensus is sought and almost always achieved. The Resident Lama may attend any Board meeting; the entire Sangha may attend any meeting except for executive session (mainly dealing with HR issues).

Meetings are generally monthly (the third Sunday, 1:30-4:30) and are presided over by a President. Other officers are the Treasurer (Sandy Pollock) and Secretary (Linda Besant). Until recently, these four officers constituted an Executive Committee to deal with urgent matters between

Board meetings. Due to the small size of the Board the Executive Committee was recently abolished.

A few Board members work with others on an “SCOL Team” to respond to SCOL issues. Others (including the Treasurer) are on a Financial Committee. Other committees are established *ad hoc* from meeting to meeting to work on issues that arise and bring options back to the full Board for action. The yearly KCC budget is prepared and approved by the Board prior to each calendar year and is revised mid-year to take account of new circumstances. At each meeting, the Board looks at financial statements prepared by our bookkeeper Cynthia Irvine and our accountant Steve Unangst. Minutes are kept at each Board meeting and approved at the next meeting. There is a Board liaison to the Program Council.

In 2020 the Board established three-year terms for Board members. A member may be elected to two such terms in succession and then, after six years of service, must leave for a two-year “hiatus” before being eligible for election to additional terms. As per the Bylaws, a Board member may serve an unlimited number of terms. The terms of Board members will be staggered so roughly one-third complete a term each year.

At the end of Lama Eric’s “probationary year” this December, the Board will decide, with full input from the Sangha and Program Council, whether to confirm him as Resident Lama. If that occurs, the stage will be set for Strategic Planning in 2021, which will be overseen by the Board, Program Council and Resident Lama working together with the entire Sangha.

What We Need from New Members

First and foremost, a Board member should expect to attend each monthly meeting, absent a strong reason. Second, the member should expect to participate freely in discussion and decision-making at the meetings. Between meetings there is a good deal of email traffic, including review of the minutes and formation of the next agenda. Much of the work of the Board is done, not only by the standing committees, but also by small *ad hoc* groups who tackle particular issues between meetings. Board members also share the load of keeping the Sangha informed of what is being discussed and decided. In general, a rough estimate would be five to ten hours a week for Board service.

There are specific skills that are critical to the functioning of the Board. These are:

- *Finance*
- *Fund-raising*
- *Non-profit management*
- *Risk assessment*
- *Diversity and Inclusion*
- *Decision-making process*
- *Negotiations*
- *Conflict resolution*
- *Public relations*
- *Coaching & mentorship*
- *Communication*

A Board member should be able to bring at least one, preferably more, of the above skills to Board meetings and work. In addition, it is essential that a Board member have a strong background of practice in the Kagyu tradition, several years as a member of the KCC Sangha, a record of volunteer activity at KCC, and a collaborative spirit.

Typically there is a “learning curve” for new Board members as they search for their voice and their role on the Board. The Board is now committing itself to a policy of support and mentoring, so that new members will be oriented to Board service, be given a handbook of essential documents, and paired with a Board mentor to help clarify confusion.

How We Recruit Board Members

The Bylaws (Article VI Section 3) give us a general framework:

The Board of Directors shall adopt a process to identify and encourage potential candidates for Board positions, and to select the members of the Board. This process shall incorporate involvement by the Sangha. The process shall be implemented approximately annually, and not more than fifteen months from the previous implementation of the process. The process shall culminate in the Board making the final decision about the selection of the Board members. Selections shall require approval by the Resident Lama.

Based on this, the Board has adopted the following policy for Board recruitment:

Step 1: Establish the number of vacancies to fill. Determine gaps and needs of current Board. What qualities, skills or interests are needed.

Step 2: Announce to the Sangha that, as called for by KCC's Bylaws, the Board is seeking a specific number of new members with specific needed qualities to be recruited by a target date. Circulate a handout describing duties, time commitment, term, Board process. Invite the sangha to nominate people for the Board, either themselves or others. Provide a format that Sangha members can use to explain why the nominee would provide what is needed on the Board.

Step 3: Invite any and all who are nominated or interested to attend special Board meetings at which, in addition to ordinary business, there will be a chance for them to ask questions about the Board and Board service.

Step 4: Board review all nominations and present a proposed slate of new members to the Resident Lama for consideration and approval.

The Board has set a goal of having eleven members. While that is our long-term goal, we propose to recruit and elect new members organically, looking for people who are a good fit with our current needs. We will be losing several members at the end of 2021: our Treasurer, Sandy Pollock, so we definitely need financial expertise; Linda Besant, so we need someone with her level of energy and non-profit experience; Phil Wallin, so we need fund-raising experience. We will be taking on strategic planning in 2021, so we need skills in decision-making process and communication. We need young people on our Board and we need at least one “old hand” who knows our history. We need to elect at least five new members in this “round” of recruitment.

We invite all members of the Sangha to nominate individuals who meet the above criteria. This can be done by email, replying to the email from John and Tracy that sent you this Handout. If you know that someone has already been nominated, you can second the nomination. You may nominate yourself if you feel you would be a good fit. Be sure to explain, in

your email, what the nominee would bring to the Board and what they have done in the way of service to KCC.

As nominations come in, the Board will invite those who are nominated to attend a Board meeting (by Zoom for the foreseeable future) to get a feel for Board business and process, with opportunity to ask the Board questions. After the format has been open for a month, the Board will begin to consider nominations and talk with candidates. If there seems to be a good fit, the Board will schedule a mutual interview – the candidate interviewing the Board as much as vice versa. If the Board approves the candidate and the candidate accepts, the Board will forward the names of all those elected in this “round” of recruitment to the Resident Lama (or, in 2020, the Program Council) for approval.

Timeline for This Round of Board Recruitment

Early November: Announce recruitment goal and timeline to Sangha and send Handout.

November: Do Town Halls or other processes to answer Sangha questions about recruitment and Board service.

November-December: Take nominations for Board from Sangha.

January: Report back to Sangha on progress; new call for nominations if necessary. Gather and review nominations.

February: Board interview nominees/volunteers and prepare slate. Input from PC and RL.

March: Board vote on slate, forward to RL for approval. Report back to Sangha.