# Nominations for SLSA Board of Trustees – AGM 2025

## Rachel Cahill-O'Callaghan

I have been a member of the SLSA from the start of my PhD. The association has been foundational in my career, providing a community of supportive and innovative scholars. I would be honoured to join the board to further develop the association and ensure that it remains then vibrant inclusive community that welcomed me.

I am a socio-legal scholar and co-director of the Centre of Law and Society at Cardiff. I am a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Law and Society. I am committed to supporting socio-legal scholarship nationally and internationally. In particular I am committed to building socio-legal networks beyond the UK, with a focus on early career scholars. I am a mentor and I am keen that we share and learn from scholars beyond our borders.

I have extensive administrative experience, and I am happy to undertake tasks for society. I am committed to inclusion. I have a particular interest in interdisciplinarity and teaching socio-legal methodology. I would be keen to contribute the grants and seminar group and the educational activities of the society which extend the boundaries of socio-legal scholarship.

## Dave Cowan

(A) Why you would like to serve as a trustee of the SLSA

As a former winner of the prize for contributions to the socio-legal community, former SLSA executive board member and vice-chair of the SLSA, and holder of the Journal of Law and Society chair at Cardiff University, I am keen to continue making a contribution to the SLSA community (a community which has fostered and enabled my own research) through this leadership role. I have been out of the SLSA loop for a while, and miss that level of engagement about the community. At a particular moment in the history of HE, the leadership of the SLSA in protecting the community of scholars is vital.

(B) Your commitment to socio-legal studies

I have a passionate, ongoing commitment to socio-legal studies, both in the UK and internationally, through various engagements, including as co-director of the Cardiff Centre for Law and Society and as editor of the Palgrave Socio-Legal Series.

(C) Your capacity and willingness to undertake tasks for the board.

I have capacity, and am willing, to carve out the requisite amount of time to serve in this role. That is the basis for this application – that I can undertake this role, and give to it the appropriate commitment.

## Joy Debski

My name is Joy Debski, and I am a law lecturer at Robert Gordon University, a chartered governance professional and solicitor. My PhD, which focuses on enhancing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through a multistakeholder strategy, has provided me with a strong foundation in this field.

Serving as a trustee would enable me to contribute to the SLSA's mission by leveraging my expertise and passion for socio-legal studies. I look forward to collaborating with fellow trustees to promote interdisciplinary research, support emerging scholars, and foster a diverse and inclusive network within the SLSA, particularly through my connections with the Aberdeen Nigeria Research Group.

I am dedicated to advancing socio-legal research and my commitment is reflected in my ongoing efforts to publish impactful blogs and mentor students as a dissertation and PhD supervisor. Additionally, I engage in policy advocacy as a board member and member of the policy and research committee at Aberdeen Citizens Advice.

I am fully committed to undertaking tasks for the Board with enthusiasm, especially within the international committee, impact committee, and open access working group of SLSA, ensuring that the organization thrives and continues to make meaningful contributions to the field of socio-legal studies.

## Jennifer Hough

I would be honoured to serve as a trustee for SLSA as since joining this organisation, it has helped me find a place for my research. The intersection between law, humanities and social sciences directly corresponds with my research interests and I would be able to provide a varied background linked to this (having studied, researched and taught in all three areas).

I can demonstrate commitment to socio-legal studies as I am the co-director of the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies at my institution as well as the pathway lead for Socio-Legal Studies for the North West Social Sciences Doctoral Training Programme. I am also committed to making tangible improvements in the justice system, particularly for those who are marginalised and/or vulnerable and work across different sectors, including police, courts and probation, from a sociolegal perspective.

I also have trustee experience, as both a former trustee (for a charity producing the only dedicated printed newspaper for a disabled audience) and as a current trustee (for a charity addressing young homelessness). For the latter, I am charity Secretary, so I am responsible for areas of compliance as well as organising and chairing meetings, so could bring this experience to the SLSA board.

## Arwen Joyce

My research, which straddles migration and labour law, is empirical, interdisciplinary and policy focused, and examines law as a social phenomenon. The SLSA Conference is a perfect fit for my research interests, and I have presented every year since 2019. I currently co-convene the Labour Law and Society Stream. I am grateful to the SLSA for giving me an outlet to share my research, and opportunities to apply for funding and collaborate with fellow researchers.

When the Precarity Representative role was advertised in 2021, I saw it as a chance to become more involved and give back. I have enjoyed serving in this capacity and am proud of what I accomplished. I also lead the EDI Committee as Co-Chair, serve on the Book Prize Committee, and have volunteered to assist with other ad hoc projects and initiatives during the last three years. While my term as Precarity Representative is ending, I want to continue to serve on the SLSA Board and am therefore seeking to become a Trustee. I understand the time commitment involved and I am willing and able to prepare for and attend Board meetings, serve on committees, and assist the Board in other ways.

## Caer Smyth

I would like to serve as a trustee of the SLSA to support the development of the socio-legal research community, in particular early career scholars.

I am deeply committed to socio-legal studies. My research employs socio-legal methods to explore public participation in environmental decision-making. I am a board member of the Centre of Law and Society (CLS) at Cardiff, and a member of the Journal of Law and Society (JLS) editorial board. My colleague and I have initiated methodologies sessions where PGR students share their expertise in methods/methodologies, thus building methods confidence across the School.

I am a pro-active member of my research community. I have helped organise CLS events and am organising a workshop on innovation in devolved jurisdictions. This demonstrative my willingness to undertake tasks for the Board. I believe my experience underlines my capacity to undertake tasks for the Board. I am an ESRC/AHRC review panel member and so can contribute effectively to the grants subcommittee. As a member of the JLS editorial board, I can contribute to the book prize subcommittee and article prize reviewing. As an empirical researcher, I am deeply engaged in questions of research ethics and can contribute to the research ethics subcommittee.

## Simon Sneddon

I have been teaching and researching in Higher Education since 1998, initially as a researcher at the Department of Land Economy at the University of Cambridge, but for the past 25 years at the University of Northampton, where I am currently the Deputy Head of Law and an Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching.

I have considered myself as part of the sociolegal community for the past decade or so, since joining the SLSA. My research and publications focuses on environmental injustice, technological injustice and legal education (particularly linked to the appropriate use of technology and Artificial Intelligence).

At Northampton, I made the case for the creation of an LLM in Law and Social Justice, breaking away from our traditional International Commercial and Criminal law split, and subsequently led the team in the design of the programme. The programme focuses on social justice, and incorporates sociolegal aspects of environmental law, health, race, domestic criminal procedure, international firearms crime and human rights, among others.

I feel that sitting on the SLSA board would allow me to become more deeply involved with the sociolegal community, and to contribute to the ongoing success of the Association which has bene so supportive of me.

## Clare Williams

As a lecturer at Kent Law School researching areas of Law and Political Economy and Disability, I am a passionate advocate for equality and inclusion in all SLSA events and activities. This includes a firm belief in hybrid access wherever possible, not only for the inclusion of colleagues with disabilities and caring responsibilities, but to enable the SLSA to continue including socio-legal scholars around the world.

Serving on the SLSA Board previously (2020-2023) was a privilege and pleasure, and while standing down in 2023 on health grounds was unavoidable, I have missed engaging with and supporting outstanding socio-legal research through the SLSA’s funding and prize committees. I am now in a position to resume Trusteeship, and my commitment to members is to oversee the continued excellence of the SLSA in modelling the behaviour that it aspires to see in the world based on its core values of equality, diversity and inclusion. This also extends to the support of PGR and ECR colleagues and those on precarious contracts, especially in the context of wider pressures within the sector. As Trustee, I would be seeking to promote and advance socio-legal research and the reputation of the SLSA, both within the UK and worldwide.

## Ting Xu

I am standing for election as an SLSA trustee, driven by my deep commitment to socio-legal studies and fostering an inclusive, dynamic research community. The financial crisis in UK higher education has significantly impacted socio-legal research, particularly projects reliant on interviews, international collaboration, and archival research. Personal commitments, such as caring for young children, have further limited many colleagues’ (including my own) ability to attend conferences and travel. Yet, these challenges have strengthened my resolve to seek innovative ways to support collaboration, mentorship, and engagement. I am committed to working with the SLSA to explore creative solutions—whether through digital engagement, new funding strategies, or stronger support networks for early and mid-career researchers.

My interdisciplinary research examines the socio-legal dimensions of property law, development, governance, and political economy. At the University of Essex, I have held leadership roles supporting early and mid-career researchers, including Pathway to Permanency Coordinator and a member of the Academic Staffing Committee, mentoring colleagues, providing career development support, and helping shape the academic environment.

If elected, I will bring my leadership experience and commitment to socio-legal research to the Board, helping the SLSA navigate challenges with resilience and innovation.