

## Candidate Statement for 2026

For those who don't know me, I'm Maria Lisak, and I'm honored to stand again as a candidate for leadership in KOTESOL. My relationship with KOTESOL goes back many years—as a chapter member, presenter, workshop facilitator, committee volunteer, and advocate for more inclusive, reflective, and pedagogically grounded professional development. Across Jeollanamdo, Gwangju, and the national organization, I've always tried to bring people together around meaningful learning and community care.

### 2025: A Brief Report Card

This past year was one of recalibration and rebuilding. While 2025 was intentionally lighter in programming, it served as an essential year of consolidation and listening.

#### What went well:

- Continued support for regional teachers through curated resources and social connections
- Development of new workshop formats grounded in reflective practice
- Better continuity across chapter activities

#### Where we can grow:

- More consistent monthly events
- Expanded officer engagement and shared leadership
- Greater visibility for Gwangju- Jeonnam voices within KOTESOL's national conversations
- Better outreach to new teachers, rural teachers, and members in transition

I see 2025 as a solid “B+” year—steady, intentional, and preparing the ground for a more energized 2026.

### Vision for 2026: A Year of Connection, Care, and Creative Pedagogy

In 2026, I hope to bring back the vibrant monthly rhythm that used to define our region—while keeping things doable, human-centered, and grounded in our shared values.

#### Monthly Events (Proposed 2026 Schedule):

- **January:** Online workshops
- **February:** Coffee Connection (Gwangju)
- **March, April, June:** Monthly *double* workshops in accessible community spaces
- **May:** May 18 Museum Meet-Up

- **July & August:** Jeollanamdo Coffee Tour (Damyang, Yeosu, Suncheon, Mokpo, Boseong, depending on interest)
- **September, October, November, December:** Monthly *double* workshops to close the year with momentum and depth

These sessions will center two main themes:

1. **Holistic Student Development**
2. **Innovative Pedagogies for Changing Classrooms**

Across workshops, we'll explore reflective teaching, community-responsive curriculum, multimodal literacy, well-being practices, and the intersections of equity and pedagogy.

## **Strengthening Our Team and Infrastructure**

To support this expanded program, I plan to:

- **Appoint two new officer roles:**
  - *Membership Coordinator* to welcome, retain, and re-engage members
  - *HAN Writer* to amplify our regional stories and teacher voices
- **Hold quarterly officer meetings** for improved planning, communication, and shared leadership
- Develop clearer workflows and archives to support sustainability and leadership transitions

## **Why I'm Running**

Gwangju and Jeollanamdo are important to me. I believe that we need to invest in our community as a key component of professional development as educators. KOTESOL has given me community, colleagues, and a space to grow as both a teacher and a researcher. I'm running for 2026 because I believe in our capacity to build something warm, accessible, and intellectually alive—especially here in Jeollanamdo, where our teaching stories often emerge from the margins but shape the heart of the profession.

I'm excited to continue this work with all of you. Thank you for your trust, your creativity, and the care you bring to your classrooms and our shared community.

Thank you for this opportunity, should you vote for me, to serve our community.

Dr. Maria Lisak  
 Chosun University  
 KOTESOL Lifetime Member  
 Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter President 2004-2006 and 2023-2025.

**To the esteemed members of the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter of KOTESOL,**

It is my honor to endorse Professor Maria Lisak for the position of Chapter President for the year 2026. Having known Professor Lisak for twenty-two years, I have long admired her professionalism, dedication, and sustained commitment to our academic community.

Throughout 2025, Professor Lisak demonstrated exemplary leadership as she organized and coordinated our chapter's workshops. Her decision to hold monthly workshops—while pausing during the harsh winter, scorching summer and busy (inter)national conferences—allowed members to participate meaningfully without too much burden. She invited an impressive array of presenters representing diverse areas of expertise: Bryan Hale and Ian Moodie (March); Ide O'Connell and Courtney McLaren (April); Yeo-seong Park and Valencia Epps (June); Enhee Yu (September); Ingrid Zwaal, Jocelyn Page, and Jocelyn Wright (November); and Anjee Disanto and Kyeong-a Lee (December). Through her efforts, our chapter was enriched by a carnival of intellect.

Although one of her goals—doubling chapter membership—was not fully realized, this aim was understandably ambitious in a post-pandemic era. What stands out far more is Professor Lisak's exceptional dedication, organizational precision, and unwavering service to our chapter. She oversaw every aspect of our meetings with care, from announcing schedules on our Facebook group to providing clear and timely reports of chapter activities.

I have full confidence that Dr. Lisak's steady and thoughtful leadership will continue to guide the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter toward growth and academic vitality in 2026.

Respectfully yours,

Yeon-seong Park, Ph.D.  
English Scholar and Writer  
Author of *Creative English Practice* (2009)  
and *The Story of Sol Go Yang* (2025)

18 November 2025

To: Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Members c/o Chapter Elections Officer

Re: Endorsement of Maria Lisak for the Office of President, Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL Chapter

Dear Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter members,

Maria Lisak, a passionate and committed lifetime member of KOTESOL, has actively and joyfully served both the Gwangju community and organization over many years. Beyond being an exceptional chapter member, dynamic presenter and workshop facilitator, and committee volunteer, she has successfully carried the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter as President, and she maintains the desire to continue with a vision to promote connection, care, and creative pedagogy. Given her past achievements and present ambition to further strengthen the professional development of the chapter in a more inclusive, reflective, and pedagogically grounded direction, I nominate Maria Lisak for the same role in 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jocelyn Wright', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jocelyn Wright  
Mokpo National University  
Lifetime Member of KOTESOL  
Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Member