

Candidate Statements for NASCO Board Elections 2015

Candidate Name: Ali Zachritz

Nominated By: The Hive

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

My name is Ali Zachritz, I'm a recent graduate of University of Michigan, and I am an ICC Ann Arbor alumnus, having lived there for over 4 years. While with the ICC, I served as a board representative; was the chair of the Coop Solidarity Team (which connects the ICC to the greater cooperative movement); and spent two years on Coordinating Committee, first as VP of Education and next as VP of Recruitment.

I have many connections to the greater cooperative movement. I have attended a number of NASCO Institutes and will be leading two workshops in 2014. Through ICC Coop Spring Break trips and events I have visited SHC, UKSHA, ICC Austin, College Houses, GANAS in Staten Island, and a number of other housing coops, worker coops, and coop support organizations. Additionally, I am a credit union member, a food coop member, and have worked on a food coop startup.

I've had the opportunity to learn and work with some amazing cooperative members, staff, and enthusiasts. As I leave ICC Ann Arbor, I want to stay connected to the movement and continue to contribute to the community that has so fundamentally shaped me as a person.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

Whereas I originally moved into ICC Ann Arbor seeking community, the cooperatives ideas as well as its economic and political alternatives match my worldview and give me a place to be myself. I feel strongly about participatory democracy and love the ways in which cooperative systems encourage and empower members to make decisions and create change. Furthermore, using the power of community to share and decrease costs makes intuitive sense to me. I continue to want to be involved in cooperatives because they stand for my values and for that reason I want them to succeed.

2) What is your vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement? What is important for NASCO's long-term success in cooperative education?

I view NASCO as an organization that connects and supports its member cooperatives. It leverages institutional knowledge and its network to provide resources to cooperatives that are in need of guidance and education to members who want to learn more about creating a safe, open, just intentional community. To ensure its long-term success, I believe NASCO needs to be more consistently present and available to larger cooperatives while still maintaining a high level of service to smaller cooperatives, and I believe NASCO has to help drive excitement about the cooperative movement within its member community.

While smaller cooperatives may interface with the NASCO Family more regularly, larger cooperatives mostly interact with NASCO through Institute. However, if NASCO could help facilitate conversations

between larger coops over the course of the year (perhaps via conference calls, video chats, email threads, or other means), then they could help tighten the cooperative network while helping us support each other.

Many members of student housing cooperatives have few opportunities to see how the coop movement exists beyond their own homes. This results in members forgetting the importance of supporting other coops with their NASCO Education and NDS dues, as well as in coop alumni struggling to find ways to stay connected with the coop movement when they leave. By providing more and better information about NASCO and other cooperatives in more appealing and easy-to-consume formats, coopers can feel closer to the movement and learn how to be coopers far into the future.

3) Of the items listed in the Requirements of NASCO Directors (in the board member job description), in what areas do you think you can best aid NASCO in its mission? What skills will you bring to the board?

Many of my skills apply directly to the NASCO Director Responsibilities of Program Support and Representation. In my time as at ICC Ann Arbor, I worked hard to propose, develop, implement, and review new trainings for leadership in power, privilege, and oppression; social justice, diversity, and allyship; and safe space and inclusion. I also have significant experience with staff contracts, coop HR, and negotiations. Furthermore, I would draw upon my experience and interest in connecting cooperatives and cooperative outreach contribute perspectives regarding NASCO's role in furthering the cooperative movement.

4) How are you able to contribute to the organization outside Board meetings? How will your other commitments allow you to give time and energy to the Board over the next three years?

I have proven to myself through my time as a member leader at ICC Ann Arbor that I always have time for coops. Despite being a full-time student and working part-time, I was always able to contribute at least 15-hours every week to my responsibilities as a VP, and my coop responsibilities often seemed to be my top priority. I am currently on the hunt for jobs and am confident that I will be able to continue to commit to my coop-life as I did as a student. In fact, I feel as though I never stop being an active cooper; despite leaving the ICC and not having coop duties, I've found myself with a 2 page list of coop ideas-brainstorms for policy, educational programming, etc!

5) Are there specific issues you would like to work on as a board member?

As alluded to above, I would like to work on strengthening the NASCO member network and enabling member coops to support each other; creating safe, inclusive cooperative communities; and connecting members to a growing North American cooperative movement.

Candidate Name: Lana Wong

Nominated By: Nick Harvey, Layla Oghabian, Arthur Smith, Mingwi Huang, and Alex Green

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

My involvement with co-ops started when I lived at Waterloo Co-operative Residence Inc (WCRI) while studying Math/Finance at the University of Waterloo. Since 2011, I had been serving on the Board and I was involved in every aspect of governance, including strategic planning, policy development, monitoring, and succession planning. I am knowledgeable in Carver Policy Governance, finance, human resource management, and co-operatives and employment legislation. Through WCRI, I linked with other student housing co-ops, other local co-ops, and sector co-ops including COCHF, On Co-op, OSCA, and NASCO.

At the 2013 NASCO board election, I was elected for a 2-year term. I served on Exec Committee as the Treasurer, Member Engagement Committee, Financial Sustainability Committee, and Negotiations Committee. I took part in major discussion, including elections structure, dues structure, staff collective contract, strategic plan and budget approval.

In the past few years, NASCO experienced changes and dysfunction. Through the support of NASCO board, staff, and friends, we are re-building operational capacity. Last year, we conducted two studies to examine our performance and to identify areas to improve. Next step is to take these results, to formulate and implement changes. I believe that my knowledge about NASCO will be an asset on the board, and it is the reason I am running for the board.

Part II: Questions

1) *Why are you involved in co-ops?*

Shared values and principles.

2) *What is your vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement? What is important for NASCO's long-term success in cooperative education?*

I see NASCO continue to play a role in co-op education and anti-oppression training. Furthermore, I see NASCO taking a more active role in connecting co-ops together and facilitating collaboration between co-ops and between co-ops.

For long-term success in co-operative education, I think it is important to be familiar with the needs of our members. We need to be proactive in identifying challenges that are commonly faced by our member co-ops, and doing research and seeking solutions to counter the challenges. We should also be prepared to provide support to member co-ops should they have urgent or critical needs. For long-term success, not in co-operative education, I think that NASCO has a few organization structural and high level directional topics that we need to think about. These topics include relationship with NASCO Family, governance-management structure, and geographical focus. Hopefully as we re-gain organizational momentum, we will have the capacity to think big picture and long term.

3) *Of the items listed in the Requirements of NASCO Directors (in the board member job description), in what areas do you think you can best aid NASCO in its mission? What skills will you bring to the board?*

As mentioned above, I have knowledge in board governance, strategic planning, finance, Carver Policy Governance, and planning of events. Adding to my institutional knowledge, I think I can best aid NASCO in designing sustainable structures and processes. On the board, I will be analytical and prudent in making organizational decisions. As one of the few Canadians on the board, I also hope to contribute in helping NASCO think about Canada, and do legwork in Canada.

4) How are you able to contribute to the organization outside Board meetings? How will your other commitments allow you to give time and energy to the Board over the next three years?

During my term on the NASCO board, I mostly contribute in committee work. I would also want to participate in local (Canada) co-op network for NASCO, once we know how we want to proceed.

I currently work full time, and the rest of my time is spent with the co-operative movement. As I reduce my involvement on the WCRI board to more of a support role, I will free up more energy for NASCO than what I have given so far. Should any of my commitments change, I will still continue to place NASCO and co-op movement on a high priority.

5) Are there specific issues you would like to work on as a board member?

Bylaws and policies revision, Canada, and structural discussions.

Candidate Name: Dan Newton

Nominated By: MSU Student Housing Cooperative

Hello!

My name is Daniel Newton and though my time in the SHC has been relatively brief (settling into my second year as a resident of East Lansing's House of Apollo), more than enough time has passed for me to fall in love with this movement and take steps to ensure a long career working for and with cooperatives.

I'm a member of the Michigan State University Student Housing Cooperative (MSU-SHC), and wish to pursue my passion and increase my involvement with the cooperative movement by joining the ranks of the NASCO Board of Directors. To that end, I have joined the SHC's Executive Committee as the Vice President of Maintenance and chair sub-committee meetings on a bi-weekly basis. I am extremely excited to receive a nomination to join and learn with other NASCO members from around the nation.

My involvement with cooperative student housing began at age 22 (a little over one year ago) when I was embroiled in the timeless student struggle of trying to find a place to call home. I had a reasonably good idea of what co-ops were; my father and his brother each called one of East Lansing's co-ops home for a number of years in the mid-1970's. By chance, I stumbled onto a housing ad for an open room and knew that the opportunity wasn't one I could pass up. In the time since, moving cooperative principles forward has become a passion and an obligation I cannot ignore. For this to happen, I'd love to see NASCO's reach extended into more cities and campus communities around the nation; particularly in areas that could benefit the most from affordable housing options in which the Rochdale principles can inspire a motivated member population to seek ways of improving the communities from whence they came. With these goals in mind, I hope to use organizational skills, procedural experience, and passion I've gained from my time working with the MSU Student Housing Cooperative. Advocating for the necessity and desirability of cooperative housing is a skill that I wish to improve upon and share with all those willing to listen. In addition to goals pertaining to the long-term, my contributions can take many shapes in the organizing of and working in NASCO events or projects. Regarding other commitments: I will be dividing my time between holding an Executive Committee position for the MSU-SHC, beginning a graduate program (beginning in the Fall of 2016), and whichever assigned duties fall to me if elected to a position with NASCO. My particular set of obligations is convenient in that it exists almost entirely within the cooperative sphere, allowing for optimal time and energy to be devoted to new projects as they arise. Though I cannot say, initially, that any one particular issue holds sway above all others, I am confident that after becoming acclimated to my position, I will be able to zero in on a campaign in which I can best offer my services.

Candidate Name: Sneha Narayan

Nominated By: MOSAIC

Part I: Personal Data and Statement

For seven years, I have lived and breathed co-operative life. In 2006, I became a member of the Oberlin Student Co-operative Association, where I spent a total of four years. During my time there I held a number of leadership positions that gave me the opportunity to help draw up OSCA's multimillion dollar budget, facilitate consensus-based decision-making amongst a hundred people, and serve on the board of directors. Serving on the OSCA board was a transformative experience that strengthened my commitment to the co-operative movement, and made me resolve to continue my involvement even after I graduated college.

In 2012, I joined MOSAIC, a 20 person co-op in Evanston, IL. For two years, I represented MOSAIC at the NASCO AGM, and organized our delegation to NASCO Institute. During Institute 2013, I successfully ran in the Active Member Representative election, and have spent the last year on the NASCO Education board. Being a NASCO board member has been a challenging and fulfilling experience, and I would like to extend my commitment to the Board by running for a three year position.

Part II: Questions

I'm involved in co-ops due to the deep-seated hope I have in their transformative potential. While on one level, student housing co-ops are simply a way of organizing the way we eat and sleep, the implications of our model of organization are far reaching. We're empowering ourselves to take an active role in making decisions that affect our lives, by recognizing the political, social and environmental implications of these decisions. We recognize that organizations that perform even the most mundane tasks can still be intentional in the way they organize work. We're educating people on how to participate in political processes. We're prefiguring a way of life that listens to minority voices, sees anti-oppression and sustainability as central to the way we operate, and working to create new leaders who look and think differently from those who've historically held the reins. We're actively resisting the societal norm that tells us that we must live separate, alienated lives where we amass private property and privilege our biological families over all others.

Right now, NASCO plays an important role in providing organizational guidance, crisis support and anti-oppression training to its members. It also serves as a hub that helps different co-ops connect with one another, thus facilitating the crucial Rochdale principle of creating co-operation amongst co-operatives. My vision for NASCO is that it grows into an organization that looks toward the future and helps pave the way for new co-ops to form by identifying even more sources for start up capital, and getting involved in lobbying against legislation that privileges single family homes. To do this, NASCO must effectively engage its members and facilitate stronger bonds of support with (and amongst) member co-ops, and create the sense that each co-op is part of a broader national movement.

Due to my years of experience in both large and small co-ops, familiarity with NASCO's board process, and commitment to the future of co-operatives, I believe I would be a strong candidate for the NASCO board. My prior board experience and leadership roles have prepared me to aid NASCO in envisioning long term plans and brainstorming ideas for our voting process and dues structure. I'd also like to continue to serve on the Member Engagement Committee (which I did as Active Member Representative) and work towards strengthening links between NASCO and the member co-ops, and discussing policy changes and proposals that happen at the board level with member co-ops and explaining how they might be affected.

I am currently a PhD student, and although it is a busy job, it is also relatively flexible and allows me to plan around travel to board meetings and doing committee work. I am also done with coursework, and this gives me further flexibility to spend time on board duties. Outside of board meetings, I hope to continue my work with the Member Engagement Committee, and train the incoming Active Member Representative to take over my duties after my term ends this March. I also wish to maintain and strengthen ties that I have with a number of Chicago co-ops, and help work towards more regional meet ups between co-ops in the Midwest.

Candidate Name: Maya Menlo

Nominated By: Inter-Cooperative Council, Ann Arbor

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

Maya Menlo is the proud President of Ann Arbor's Inter-Cooperative Council (ICC), and one of Benjamin Linder Cooperative House's queer and quirky residents. In the past, she has served as the ICC's Vice President for Membership (2013-2014) and a Board Representative (2012-2013). In her leadership of the ICC over the past three years, Maya has emphasized inclusion and affordability as primary goals.

While at ICC-Ann Arbor, she has:

- Chaired the ICC's Board of Directors, Coordinating Committee, and Membership Committee
- Planned and executed two Board of Directors trainings and one Coordinating Committee training
- Successfully re-negotiated both ICC Administrative Staff Employment Contract and ICC General Manager Contract
- Re-envisioned the ICC's planning process; spearheaded a Strategic Planning effort that resulted in the creation of a robust four-year plan
- Spearheaded the creation of a Key Performance Indicator system for ICC house operations
- Built a relationship with a special summer program to help fill houses during the spring/summer semesters
- Served on the Emergency House Operations Team and the Contract Release Committee, which address sensitive and urgent issues involving ICC membership
- Presented twice at Cooperative Leadership Training (ICC's social justice education program)
- Planned and presented three workshops at NASCO Institute 2014
- Addressed both Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners and Ann Arbor City Council regarding co-op month and received proclamations of recognition from each
- Conducted comprehensive performance evaluation of the ICC's General Manager
- Visited Kalamazoo Co-op Housing; Michigan State Student Housing Co-ops; ICC Austin's House of Commons; Grand Rapids James Russell Cooperative House
- Attended NASCO 2013; Equitable Pioneers Summit 2014

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

I am involved in coops because they are an avenue through which I can bring active change to my communities based on my values. To my knowledge, housing cooperatives are the only type of organization that provide affordable, quality and sustainable living; emphasize community and social equality; value shared work and resources; and operate based on the cooperative principles.

My experience at the ICC has inspired me to expand my knowledge of cooperatives. For example, over the summer of 2013, I interned at a Detroit non-profit called Replanting Roots where I researched worker cooperative structures.

Overall, I view cooperatives as a method of subverting consumer capitalism, hyper-individualism and institutional oppression, which I believe are damaging to humanity.

2) What is your vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement? What is important for NASCO's long-term success in cooperative education?

I view NASCO as site for co-ops to collaborate for the benefit the cooperative community. I also see NASCO as source of institutional memory, and of assistance to cooperatives that wish to start up or expand. NASCO's long-term success is dependent upon retaining current member co-ops and attracting and developing new ones; maintaining fiscal viability; upholding high standards of excellence in programming; creating robust long-term plans with the support of members and staff; upholding the cooperative principles; and demonstrating dedication to social justice.

3) Of the items listed in the Requirements of NASCO Directors (in the board member job description), in what areas do you think you can best aid NASCO in its mission? What skills will you bring to the board?

My skills and experience make me well-suited to fulfilling the Board Member responsibility of Program Support and Representation. For example, I would be interested in developing and providing workshops similar to the three that I will be leading at NASCO Institute 2014 regarding Strategic Planning, Staff Contracts and Key Performance Indicators. I am also interested and willing to use my experience to provide support for social justice education programming. In addition, I would bring my knowledge of strategic planning to assist with the fulfillment of effective Planning and Stewardship. Regarding the Board Member duty of Financial Assistance: over my three years on the ICC's Board of Directors, I have learned to understand and interpret financial statements, and have developed an eye for opportunities that might benefit the organization financially. Finally, my experience in evaluating the ICC's General Manager will be helpful in fulfilling the role of Guidance and Oversight for NASCO.

4) How are you able to contribute to the organization outside Board meetings? How will your other commitments allow you to give time and energy to the Board over the next three years?

Three months after the new NASCO Board Member term begins, my term as ICC President will end; I will therefore be required to spend far less of my time on ICC-related work. Participating on the NASCO Board will be a new and exciting opportunity for me to channel my passion for cooperation into an organization with fabulous ideals and programs. My performance as ICC President demonstrates that I am willing and able to commit time and energy to co-ops, even as a student with no shortage of school-related and extracurricular obligations. My track record shows that, no matter what responsibilities I take on, I always make time for the cooperative movement.

5) Are there specific issues you would like to work on as a board member?

I am somewhat familiar with NASCO's MONDO convention and PlanCo's role in setting it up, but I hope to learn more about NASCO's planning structures. As a Board member, it would be my responsibility to help orient NASCO in a direction of progress and position the organization for long-term success. I have developed an appreciation and passion for planning, and would be happy to work with NASCO's Board, staff and members to help make the organization's plans as effective as possible.

I would also love for NASCO to develop and maintain a forum for co-ops to exchange ideas about conflict management practices within their systems. Conflict management is often one of the most difficult challenges for a co-op system, but it is also something that all groups share. As a result, each co-op has valuable experience, insight, and questions related to conflict. I believe it would be highly beneficial for cooperatives to support one another in this arena. NASCO could serve as a vehicle for this exchange both during NASCO Institute, and year-round.

Please contact me at mmenlo@umich.edu or (248) 760 3655 if you have any questions about my statement, interests or experience, or if you just want to chat.

Candidate Name: Scarlett McIntosh
Nominated By: Life Center Association (LCA)

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

I have been involved with the Berkeley Student Cooperative for the past two and a half years holding various positions from Workshift Manager to Central Food & Supplies Office Assistant. I have attended Institute for the past two years and completed a NASCO internship working with three co-ops in Philadelphia this past Summer. Towards the end of my time with the BSC, I became very interested in Board and attended meetings to stay informed on some of the larger issues our organization was facing. Now that I am no longer a student in the BSC, I am running for Board so that I stay connected with the cooperative movement, gain skills necessary to be a successful director, and support an organization that has given me great opportunities thus far. I would like to gain a deeper understanding of NASCO's current efforts and use my problem-solving skills to help with any issues. Additionally, I am interested in co-op development and the skills I gain as a board member would help me in starting a co-op dedicated to reproductive justice work.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

Co-ops are a tool to undermine and resist the capitalist system that we live in. Co-ops can instill a sense of empowerment in the way that you live or work. Having a sense of control or impact in the decision making of your life on a larger scale such as in a workplace or in a communal home or in your city makes for a better world to live in. I am involved in co-ops, particularly housing co-ops, because of the way it builds community in my life. I envision co-ops in all sectors, in diverse forms, working together to give people power so that decision-making can come from people rather than from corporations operating on the self-interest of only a few. As a doula invested in reproductive justice, I see a need for a full-spectrum birth co-op and I want to create one with other women.

2) What is your vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement? What is important for NASCO's long-term success in cooperative education?

Whenever I have explained NASCO to friends in co-ops or outside, I have described it as an umbrella. It helps connect communities along a common way of life and share institutional knowledge useful to withstand forces that can bring them down. I think NASCO in particular taps into young people in the cooperative movement, which is a powerful site for education and creating a sustainable yet growing movement. NASCO's long term success can be found in reaching those students early on and also helping bridge the gap between being a recent graduate (no longer a student) and connecting student co-operators with cooperative work.

3) Of the items listed in the Requirements of NASCO Directors (in the board member job description), in what areas do you think you can best aid NASCO in its mission? What skills will you bring to the board?

As someone coming from a coop organization with affordable housing also in their mission statement, I have seen how supporting low-income folks but staying afloat as an organization can be at odds. I bring a low-income student perspective to the Board. Having participated in house councils for a little over

two years, I am attentive and engaged in well-facilitated meetings. Additionally, I have been using the skills from house council to facilitate meetings for the group I am starting a co-op with.

4) How are you able to contribute to the organization outside Board meetings? How will your other commitments allow you to give time and energy to the Board over the next three years?

Outside of Board meetings I expect to be available for projects, activities, events, anything that may need an extra hand. My job and other commitments are flexible at the moment and I expect, for the next three years.

5) Are there specific issues you would like to work on as a board member?

I am most interested in the Program Support and Representation aspect of Board responsibilities. Additionally, I am interested in supporting the Cooperative Jobs & Internships program and Anti-Oppression Education services of NASCO. Overall, I am looking forward to learning more about current issues and how I can assist.

Candidate Name: Katie Leader

Nominated By: Oberlin Student Cooperative Association

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

Hello! My name is Katie Leader, and I like the pronouns she, her, and hers. I am a queer cis white femme with learning disabilities, and I identify as a survivor of sexualized violence. I realize that while I who I am makes it impossible for me to say everything that needs to be said about the cooperative movement, but I am committed to combating systems of oppression both in my personal life and in our co-ops.

I've been a member of the Oberlin Student Cooperative Association since fall of last year. During my first semester in OSCA, I was in charge of planning and cooking dinner for 80+ people each week. This past year, I have been one of OSCA's Sexual Offence Policy Advocates. As a SOPA, I'm on call 24/7 to provide support for survivors of sexualized violence on campus, I write and teach workshops about consent, survivor support, and intersectionality, and I train "peacekeepers" (sober, responsible students) for co-op parties. I spent this summer co-designing an antisexualized violence workshop that's now being given to all incoming students at Oberlin College. I've also helped several other student organizations create anti harassment policies and trainings for their memberships. I've recently been learning more about anti oppressive mental health paradigms, and have facilitated "Mad Map" workshops inspired by the Icarus Project to members of my co-op. I will be facilitating two workshops at the NASCO institute this year: "Survivor Support" and "Teaching Consent".

Prior to my time at Oberlin, I spent a year living and working on cooperative permaculture farms: Quail Springs in Southern California, and Molino de Guadalmesi in Cadiz, Spain. These experiences gave me a strong background in communal living.

Part II: Questions

I'm involved in co-ops because they feed me, body, mind, and soul. I have discovered over the years that I am happiest when I live in a community that's been brought together for a common purpose, be it feeding creating an anti oppressive space, growing food, resisting capitalism, or just cooking for each other. Learning how to work provide for each other without help from outside systems is one of the best tools for resisting effed up systems of power.

I have no illusion that my participation in a college cooperative is changing the systems that be, but I've learned so much already about how to do that when I leave. I've learned about how to create community: both what works and what doesn't. I've learned to facilitate discussions, and how to effectively be a support person. I've learned how to push my communities to have conversations they don't want to have, and how to advocate for people who don't feel comfortable making their voices heard.

I think it's important for NASCO to network individual student cooperatives so that we can learn from each other and be more effective in what we do, and to help preserve institutional memory, which is a big deficit in cooperatives that have near-complete turnover every 4-6 years. I also see NASCO as a means to push student cooperatives--many of which have largely rich, white membership--to be more anti oppressive, and to see what they are doing in a larger political context. This ties nicely into NASCO as a source of institutional memory: going to NASCO institute last year reminded me both how radical

cooperatives have been in the past, and how some of them fail completely to live up to their egalitarian, anti oppressive goals.

My ideal scene would be to provide workshops and consultations to other student cooperatives, especially around sexualized violence, harassment, and mental health. My positionality makes it difficult for me to be a perfect resource for all conversations about privilege and oppression, but I feel that I have a solid framework and am comfortable facilitating discussions around them.

Also, given the unsubsidized cost of both bringing trainers to our co-op and the unsubsidized cost of the institute I don't think that NASCO is financially accessible to low income folks. I would be interested in figuring out creative ways to make ends meet for the organization.

I am currently a busy full time student, but NASCO is important to me and I feel like I can commit to finding time for it. I will likely be abroad for at least one semester in the next three years, but I would like to continue helping NASCO from afar, whether that looks like managing the shared resource library or helping to organize the institute. I will finish my degree before my term on the board is up.

Candidate Name: Tristan Laing

Nominated By: Cooperative Housing University of Maryland (CHUM)

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

Since I first moved to Toronto, and into one of Campus Co-op's student houses in 2005, I have been deeply involved with all aspects of democratic co-operative organizing and governance. I have served five years with the board of directors, holding the positions of treasurer, president, division representative, and 3 years as chair. I also spent a year leading the Membership committee, initiating a policy change that brought a 12 month lease option to CCRI to help with summer Vacancy loss. I've seen the co-op from the staff perspective as well, having been employed by CCRI as a division manager where I was responsible for inspecting house cleanliness as well as dealing with after-hours emergencies.

My main goal in running for the NASCO board is to find ways that NASCO can help revitalize the levels of consciousness in Ontario student co-ops, as well as strengthen ties between co-ops in Ontario, Quebec, and the Northeastern USA. Having attended 3 Ontario Student Co-op Association (OSCA) conferences, I feel that the intellectual climate of student co-operatives in Ontario has stagnated and could be enriched by improving cross-regional co-op interaction, especially between co-ops that are materially and contextually similar, but organizationally different.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

We all live in a world where far too great a share of productive life is organized through top-down accountability structures, where unhealthy relationships of domination between manager and employee are the norm. In my personal attempts to respond to this, I've come up against what seems to be a fashionable trend amongst folks who are critical of Power to reject nearly all involvement in institution building. And who can blame them when most NGOs are little more than the playthings of philanthropic foundations exploiting the 501(c)(3) tax loophole to protect the earnings of the 1% from taxation. Co-ops on the other hand are self sustaining institutions committed to the democratization of capital. The question is really, why is anyone committed to building a just society not involved in co-ops?

2) What is your vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement? What is important for NASCO's long-term success in cooperative education?

My vision is for the strong analysis and vibrant energy of the NASCO institute to increase the quality and number of relationships between co-ops. NASCO should recognize that the co-operative movement is a political movement, that democratically controlled capital is an alternative to corporate control of share capital. Long term success of NASCO's education initiatives requires developing an effective response to the challenges that the increasing individualization of our society creates for co-operatives.

3) Of the items listed in the Requirements of NASCO Directors (in the board member job description), in what areas do you think you can best aid NASCO in its mission? What skills will you bring to the board?

I feel I can aid particularly in the areas of guidance and oversight. My many years of service on the board of directors of Campus Co-operative Residences Inc. (CCRI), including as president, has given me significant experience with board-staff relations and staff oversight in a co-operative context. I'm also

familiar with hiring practices, having served on several hiring committees at CCRI including the hiring of a general manager. I also have strong facilitation skills, having served for 3 years as chair of the board. As for program support and representation, I'm excited about the opportunity to represent NASCO to other student co-ops and the broader co-op community in Ontario.

4) How are you able to contribute to the organization outside Board meetings? How will your other commitments allow you to give time and energy to the Board over the next three years?

I currently serve on the board of directors at CCRI, and I am the appointed board representative to the Co-op housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT), and the Ontario Student Co-operative Association (OSCA). I also volunteer with the Harvest Noon student food co-operative on U of T campus. I am currently taking a one year break from studies, intending to return next fall to pursue a masters in Adult Education - a choice motivated by, and intended to serve and support, my interest in supporting co-operative education.

5) Are there specific issues you would like to work on as a board member?

As someone who has been lucky enough to attend a NASCO institute and three OSCA conference, I've always found the most useful aspect of these gatherings the opportunity to discuss between different co-operatives how we problem solve similar challenges. As a NASCO board member I would like to work towards developing precise descriptions of the challenges that are impacting North American co-operatives, indexed in such a way that co-operatives experiencing similar problems could be put in touch with each other, even across great geographical distances, to work together.

Candidate Name: Brad Hunt

Nominated By: Berkeley Student Cooperative

Greetings!

My name is Brad Hunt, and I am presently a member of the BSC Board of Directors from the Hillegass-Parker House cooperative (HiP). In the past I have served as House President of HiP, and the Maintenance Manager of both the Stebbins Hall and Cloyne Court BSC cooperatives. I was also previously the Facilities Manager at Cloyne.

From my vantage point, an ideal member of the NASCO Board of Directors needs to possess three crucial qualities: (1) an ability to hit the ground running, (2) a fresh perspective that would be both unique and productive on the NASCO Board, and (3) a likelihood the s/he would take the role seriously and follow through on its obligations intently for the full course of the elected term.

I am no stranger to the parliamentary processes of cooperative-democratic organizations. As an active member, frequent manager, former house president and current board rep, I would find myself comfortable, unintimidated and--I imagine--rather effective in the NASCO Board context

The BSC is my home, and--for my of my 20s--has been one of my unwavering passions; a member of any Board of Directors has a fiduciary obligation to serve the interests of that organization itself. However, I cannot help but view things through the lens of my experiences, and that perspective will allow me to bring both a unique angle and a NASCO-interested focus to my work.

And, finally, I've taken every opportunity available to me in my time as a BSC member to help the organization and my individual units through leadership positions and a dogged devotion to cooperative principles.

It would be a sincere honor to have the opportunity to bring that same degree of proven zeal to the NASCO Board of Directors, and I would be thrilled and honored at the opportunity to try if I were elected to the NASCO board of directors.

Best,

Brad Hunt
BSC Board Member
Hillegass-Parker Cooperative