



Dear Recipient,

The North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) Board of Directors is issuing this letter in cooperation with NASCO's former Executive Director Emily Lippold Cheney. NASCO strives to uphold a high moral standard in relationship to our members and employees in furtherance of our cooperative mission to demonstrate concern and support for our community. Over the past year, the NASCO Board and Emily have been in conversation regarding harm that Emily experienced during her tenure as a NASCO staff member. To participate in Emily's healing process, and in accordance with our moral principles and cooperative values, we share this letter. Emily deserves control over her narrative, and we support her in that pursuit.

Emily Lippold Cheney served as NASCO's Executive Director from 2011–2012. During this time, Emily reported an instance of personal trauma to members of the NASCO Board. Emily has expressed to us that the Board's response to her disclosure was harmful, caused her to experience additional trauma, and left her feeling ostracized from the community. Ultimately, Emily was dismissed from NASCO. Emily felt silenced and disempowered by the Board's prior response and felt she received insufficient support or care from NASCO following her disclosure.

NASCO's cooperative values include a deep concern for our community. To live up to that concern, treat Emily with the compassion she deserves, and hold NASCO accountable, we have engaged with Emily in a transformative healing process. Emily has chosen to pursue this process specifically because it lies outside of the adversarial legal system. This process has not occurred overnight, but rather has been ongoing and carefully considered in hopes that it will serve as an example for future problem solving.

A key part of this process is NASCO's acknowledgement that, in 2012, it failed to handle Emily's trauma with the compassion and respect she deserves as member of our community. NASCO's reaction to Emily's experience did not live up to its own standards of community; rather, it made Emily's healing process more painful, and caused Emily to feel alienated from the cooperative movement. This, in turn, impacted Emily's ability to obtain employment and her economic security.

Another part of this process includes recognizing Emily's numerous accomplishments as a part of NASCO and the cooperative movement. These include developing a strategic plan for NASCO during her time as Executive Director and initiating the collectivization and unionization of NASCO's staff. NASCO also views Emily as a leader in the cooperative movement, and we further recognize Emily's important work in founding the USA Cooperative Youth Council (USACYC), a cooperative education and movement building organization for American youth that supports the success and the sustainability of the cooperative movement. NASCO encourages the cooperative community to recognize the leadership, creativity, and determination that Emily brings to her work.

The cooperative movement is fortunate to have members like Emily who, even in moments of intense personal vulnerability, seek justice and growth for both themselves and the institutions they care about. We thank Emily for encouraging us to participate in her healing alongside her.

Sincerely,
The NASCO Board