

Candidate Name: Charles Spencer

Nominated By: Life Center Association (Philadelphia, PA)

Namaste!! Charles Spencer, I'm a board member with the Renaissance community co-op in Greensboro North Carolina. We're ending a food desert in Northeast Greensboro(one of many we will end). If I get the opportunity I will come to the nasco board as a humanitarian to the highest order. I have mentoring program I've started 4yrs ago because I'm a big believer in building a village /Communiversities /self education. I've only been in the co-op world for 2 years and it's a long story how it happened, I will tell you when I meet you. Even though I'm still young in the Game I want to be a part of the board to continue to learn and grow in this cooperative world we live in today. And Nasco can help elevate me even more, give me the opportunity to show you what I can bring to the table. Family is very important and big to me so hopefully I'll have more family to add to my village.

www.renaissancecoop.com

Candidate Name: Ellie Benedict

Nominated By: Inter Cooperative Council (Ann Arbor, MI)

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

I'm a senior at the University of Michigan, on track to graduate in Spring 2016 with my undergraduate degree in History of Art and Museum Studies. I've been with the Inter-Cooperative Council ("ICC") Ann Arbor for the past three years, living at Linder House with 19 other students. At the house level, I've held the positions of Work Manager and Interim House Manager. At the board level, I've been board representative for my house and a volunteer member of the Education Committee, until I was elected to serve as Vice President for Education and serve as the Chair of the Education Committee. I'm applying to NASCO's Board because I am passionate about the cooperative movement at the local level and want to continue my work after leaving ICC Ann Arbor, as I am ready to participate in the broader cooperative movement.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

I moved into cooperative housing because I was unsatisfied with the community of my dormitory during my first year of college. I joined the cooperative having little idea of what it truly meant to be a cooperator. After a year of enjoying the community, affordability and good food that my house had to offer, I became involved with the ICC Board as my house's Board representative. While training for this position, I learned about my organization's history and felt some ownership of it for the first time. After my term ended, I continued to sit on the Education Committee as a volunteer - receiving no compensation or work credit - because I was excited to be part of the organization as a leader. That Spring I won the Cooperator of the Year award, and was elected as VP for Education shortly thereafter. I quickly fell in love with the policy aspects of leading this organization, and have become more and more involved as the VP. I've stayed involved in co-ops because I see them as a much-needed alternative to the capitalistic and competitive system of the rest of the country. I believe that the cooperative movement can empower individuals and groups in this world through self-sufficiency and consensus-style self-governance.

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

NASCO is in a unique position among the cooperative movement because of its youthful membership. I believe we can use that characteristic to effectively grow the movement for the future by sending these young people into the world with an understanding of how to live and work cooperatively; empowering today's youth to take action to create the change they want to see in the world. The most important thing that NASCO could do to further this cooperative education is reach out and participate more with its own membership. Expansion is an exciting concept and could help new cooperatives with the sharing of NASCO's resources, but NASCO also has a majorly untouched membership of young individuals who could be positively affected by the sharing of NASCO's knowledge as an organization.

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?

The greatest skills I have to offer are my organization and leadership. I will shine in committee work on the Board because I have a strong work ethic that keeps me motivated about a project without direct supervision. My organizational skills keep me on top of things and make me a valuable resource to my co-workers. I've also been practicing my facilitation and leadership skills while serving as VP for the ICC, and am becoming more confident and skilled in those areas.

The area in which I could see myself best engaging in the Board work is in Planning and Stewardship. I've been very involved in the ICC's strategic planning this year, developing project plans for both large annual objectives and smaller in-objective projects and events. I also have experience representing Board material to membership here in Ann Arbor, and navigating that relationship.

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 plan to spend a few hours each month on committee work for the Board - something I'm passionate about. I can contribute my experience with guidance of others through mental health and environmental hardship. I have the ability to empathize with others and open my mind to their perspectives, which has been valuable in my committee leadership to navigate diverse personalities in decision making processes.

My other commitments primarily consist of self-work like exploring and applying to graduate schools and jobs in the short term. I plan to take a year to pursue career and community leadership after graduation, then attend graduate school to further my education in Art History. My schedule will remain flexible with weekends off and I can opt in or out of other obligations so as not to over-book myself. After graduation, I will be studying abroad until mid-June; after which time I will be in the U.S. for the next few years, applying to graduate schools and looking for museum work. This leaves me with some flexibility for NASCO Board work and travel.

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

Education of the membership on safe spaces and inclusivity, education of membership and myself on the organizational goals of NASCO, furtherance of the organizational goals, and creating more community involvement at the local level of our member co-ops.

Candidate Name: Henrik Tucker

Nominated by: College Houses (Austin, TX)

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

I have lived at 21st Street Cooperative since August 2013. Since then, I have held the house positions of Education Coordinator for a semester, Interim House Manager for a winter break, Social Coordinator for a semester, a house meeting facilitator for a year, and committee representative for Membership, Education, and Marketing Committee (MEM) as well as Anti-Oppression Alliance (AOA) for a year and counting. Along with these positions, I have had other positions within College Houses. I have been the Social Coordinator Committee Chair for a semester, AOA chair for a semester, and MEM chair for a semester. I have been the College Houses' Membership and Development Intern for over a year and currently still am. I am also a Math and Rhetoric and Writing Student at the University of Texas with a focus in applying writing to Non-Profits.

I believe my experience, knowledge, and passion for cooperatives would serve the NASCO Education Board very well. I am going to be a life-long cooper and I will be forever dedicating a portion of my life to the cooperative movement. Serving on the board will be one of the best ways I can contribute to the cooperative movement.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

I believe co-ops are tremendously beneficial to everyone on this earth. The more co-ops that are created, the more happiness there is in this world. Co-ops are very empowering: socially, fiscally, and emotionally. I believe I am morally obligated to contribute to the cooperative movement.

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

The collective minds of all the members of NASCO have innumerable amounts of knowledge. Together in NASCO, we educate each other and further spread the knowledge that we have. We can apply new knowledge to our co-ops to make them grow for the benefit of it's members and community. It is important that NASCO gains membership and continues to find more innovating ways to improve our diversity and functionality of our cooperatives.

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 have organizational experience within College Houses so I intimately understand how our organization functions as well as how Non-profits functions. I also have archived College Houses documents therefore I learned a lot about the cooperative movement and how College Houses and other organizations came into being. I also have experience with meeting facilitation so even if I am not facilitating a meeting, I can help move-it-along in a progressive fashion. I am AORTA trained and very well-versed in issues of Social Justice. And I have experience in event planning.

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 will get those around me interested and involved with NASCO. And I would love to assist with anything outside of the board meetings just for the experience.

My two main commitments are being a student and my involvement with College Houses. I am very dedicated to my cooperative involvement so I will make sure to balance my schooling with my involvement. College Houses will be very flexible with me going to board meetings.

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

I want to work on getting more members further involved in the United States and Canadian cooperative movement and to have more members interested in learning. I also want expand the diversity of the cooperative movement and to help with expanding the cooperative movement to those who need it most.

Candidate Name: Isabelle Brace
Nominated by: 3B (Brooklyn, NY)

I joined my first co-op in 2011 on Guilford College's campus which houses the Greenleaf Coffee Co-op, a student based worker co-op in Greensboro, North Carolina. Its mission is to serve ethically produced coffee, create a queer friendly space, and incubate local social justice. I gained critical skills including facilitation, budgeting, communication, purchasing, and baristing. This experience empowered me to connect with local co-ops and showed me the relevance of co-ops in economic solidarity.

I am currently a member of the Greensboro Mural Project, a community based arts cooperative committed to preserving the local narratives that have historically been oppressed; bringing to light the effects of colonialism in the south as it connects to gentrification. I joined the project a year and a half ago. Our cooperative is active in our local grassroots movements; we frequently partner with our local BLM chapter, the Fight for 15, Food Not Bombs, etc. We have conducted anti-oppression trainings as well as workshops about the intersectionality of art and activism and the essential role art plays in the movement. We have completed large scale murals, performance pieces, and other creative dialog with our community.

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

Being a part of the cooperative movement is an act of resistance. We actively create space where we have more economic solidarity and build relationships and power within our local communities. This means we are actively engaging in our local communities and are well versed in the violence and oppressive systems that influence our communities daily. When we chant "It is our duty to win" at BLM and affiliated actions, I think how important it is for us to succeed as cooperative to support transparent and moral change that does not exist in our capitalist system as of now.

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

After participating in this last institute I more fundamentally understand NASCO's role in the movement. This is a place for continuing education, highlighting the essential role that elders play in the movement as well as empowering the youth and giving a voice to those who may not otherwise be heard. I am glad that NASCO is taking the initiative to have a diversity board because of the importance of black and brown inclusion narratives in the cooperative movement.

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?

One thing that stood out to me is the disconnection between student co-ops and community co-ops. As such, I would like to be a part of creating long term member support to aid this transition. As someone who is a former member of a student co-op and now a member of a community co-op, I have personally experienced the struggle to infiltrate the co-op world after college. We should be empowering students with the skill set to find or start their own cooperative life that fits their needs and the needs of their communities. My years of experience with facilitation, outreach, and community organizing has prepared me to work on this type of project.

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 left the institute feeling very energized by the people and work being done around NASCO. I am very dedicated to the cooperative work I am doing now and see this board as an opportunity to educate and be educated. I am aware of the systematic privilege of the institution that created opportunities that have led me to become part of the co-op movement. and part of my work to share the value of cooperation and solidarity economics. In line with the sixth principle of cooperatives, it is crucial to actively reach out and make room for collaboration between co-ops. I see the importance of the work being done at NASCO and would like to be involved. I have a deep commitment to the success of our movement.

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

Two issues stand out to me especially after our small community co-op caucus: the push for more social engagement in our local communities from our co-ops, and the disconnect between student and community co-ops. Social engagement can come in all shapes and forms whether it be showing up for city council, standing in solidarity with oppressed groups, or organizing a childcare service for our neighborhoods. The co-op movement has a duty to support the communities we are a part of and not be isolated within ourselves. We have a responsibility to use the access and resources we possess to build community and up lift existing ones.

Candidate Name: Jenn Scott

Nominated By: The Hive (Ann Arbor, MI)

Personal Data and Statement

In my lifetime I have sat upon the board of directors to a few non-cooperatives, including the boards for River City Housing Collective where I served as treasurer, Trinity United Church of Christ as a staff advisor, M&N Augustine Foundation as a youth advisor to the board, and I also have been involved as a participant to the tribal council for the White River Band of the Cherokee Nation of Missouri and Arkansas. I am also currently concluding a two-year term to the NASCO board of directors, to which I was elected at CETI 2013 via the Diversity Congress and persons with disabilities caucus. On the NASCO board, I am currently serving my second term as Vice President, and have also had the honor of twice serving the organization as the interim president as a part of this role. The strongest skills to which I can bring the NASCO board include a strong background in consensus-based decision making, training in diversity sensitivity and mediation, hands-on experience and training with two-person team facilitation, and a passion for anti-oppressive leadership.

Questions

1. Why are you involved in co-ops?

I believe that ownership should lie in the hands of those who live, work, purchase, and experience a location or organization. Those who tend to a place should be its trusted stewards. Cooperatives are the most functional way of organizing this type of an ownership scenario.

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

I feel as if NASCO serves a unique role within the cooperative movement. There are many sources to find services to start or develop a cooperative, but the opportunities to find educational help to existing and growing cooperatives is a niche role within the cooperative movement that I haven't seen tackled outside of NASCO. I believe that organizations having an institution to which they can turn for education and advice is imperative to the long-term sustainability of any cooperative. Knowing that there is support and guidance to which they can turn both from NASCO itself and from the relationships that NASCO can help our members build between one another is vital. It gives new and emerging leaders the confidence to know that they are not growing and working alone, and in this confidence they are freer to take risks towards growth and development because they know that there are resources for training and education when they need it.

3. Of the items listed in the *Requirements for 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?

Of the four categories listed as requirements for directors, I feel as if I can offer skill and assistance in each. When it comes to planning and stewardship I can bring institutional memory and guidance as NASCO moves forward. We're currently in the plan of putting together a Mondo Meeting to bring all three boards together, and it's been exciting to build cross-board relationships as we prepare for that step. I think taking the prior work of the board into these meetings lets our history help to frame our future goals to carry momentum forward, even when we use that momentum to steer into new directions to meet the growing and changing needs of our members. When it comes to guidance and oversight, I feel that my experience with facilitation as well as my prior term on the board are strong benefits. As the vice president and interim president I have served on and chaired the Personnel Committee as we have drafted

a method for evaluating our newly organized staff collective. The chance to continue serving on the board as this method is polished after we complete this first evaluation would be work I look forward to helping provide to the board and to staff and the organization as a whole. My strongest offering towards program support comes via CETI, both in the offering of workshops and volunteer time, but also through the facilitation of caucuses and the Diversity Congress. When looking at the responsibility of Financial Assistance, I have hands-on experience with both fund-raising and grant-writing, both of which I am happy to use to help the board and NASCO as often as is appropriate.

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?

Currently, NASCO is my only professional priority, and if I am elected to another term I do not anticipate that changing. As a disabled individual, my health is my first priority. My family always comes immediately next. But the challenges of my health are balanced by an abundance of free time during my healthy moments. I have been immensely grateful in these last two years to the opportunities that NASCO provides me to give back to the world around me when I am healthy enough to do so.

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

Diversity and access to leadership has been my primary focus in NASCO, and if I am elected to serve another term, it would continue to be my first priority on the board.

Candidate Name: Jo Anderson

Nominated by: River City Housing Collective (Iowa City, IA)

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

Bachelor of English from Cornell College, currently pursuing an MFA at the University of Iowa.

For almost ten years of my life I pursued a career in the mental health & social work sector, becoming a Qualified Mental Health Professional during my tenure across facilities in Eastern Iowa. Over the years I have worked for Community Care, Inc., Skyline, Inc., The Arc of East Central Iowa, and the Mayor's Youth Empowerment Program. I have held several positions, from Direct Care Staff to Director of an Intermediate Care Facility for Persons with Mental Disabilities. I currently serve as the Vice President of the River City Housing Collective in Iowa City, IA.

Growing up in Eastern Iowa, I participated in family farming initiatives and communities who worked together and functioned as an informal CSA-style cooperative.

I am applying for a director position as I feel very passionately for the cooperative movement and, beyond the activist principles that permeate the culture, I believe that real change can affect communities across the country with proper education and tools. I am also interested in the position as I wish to encourage a more direct focus on small-community style cooperatives that can serve as alternatives to detrimental and often dangerous modals of living that the least privileged among us face in this country, and the world.

Questions:

1) Why are you involved in coops?

I am involved in the cooperative movement primarily because my life feels more fulfilled on a daily basis when I am surrounded by a supportive and thoughtful community, otherwise known as fictive kin. My desire is to live among people who share values, but come from varied walks of life and bring experiences that often wouldn't reach my life otherwise.

It is secondary, albeit no less imperative, that I am involved with coops out of concern for the global community and the dangerous precedents set by our unfettered carnival capitalist society that values profit over people.

I do see the cooperative movement as being tied directly and uncompromisingly to progressive politics, and the desire to disrupt and overthrow systems that exist in this world that do their best to hinder success among the nebulous 'other,' often for material gain. Overall, I see the cooperative movement as an answer, and movement towards solutions that would otherwise be closed to us by the powers that be. We have an opportunity through cooperation to bring education and tools to communities and raise up voices that would otherwise be silenced through manufactured fear.

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

As an international organization, NASCO has the opportunity to be a hub for knowledge and a focal point

for skill dissemination and change. The cooperative movement reveals power in groups to enact change in the way their communities function, and allows individuals to feel personal moments of success through works.

NASCO should strive to increase the number of access points they are able to provide, bolster networks through which skills can be shared, and refocus efforts on underprivileged communities that can most benefit from the efforts of the movement.

Outreach is imperative for success, and data collection, however difficult, can be used to better analyze what results our efforts are yielding throughout the world. Balancing the numerous different ways in which co-ops manifest, and how quickly and effectively different models reach goals is important to consider when pressing forward. NASCO can also be a tempering organization through education, aiding the community in making decisions while still empowering groups to take charge of their own organization and action.

Finally, NASCO can be a face for the cooperative movement to the world at large, providing a point of entry into the cooperative movement, and showing those people flirting with cooperation the road inward.

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

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 believe that my strengths lie in planning strategically as well as communicating and educating members on policies and plans that are developed. I also have had substantive training and working experience in working with budgets and finances of various non-profits. I think that one of the greatest asset I have to offer the organization is an abundance of time and energy, which I will gladly dedicate to a movement that I feel so passionately about. Thanks to the Information Age, I am privileged to have a job that requires only my attendance via the internet, and therefore affords me a mobility that many are unable to take advantage of. Outside of board meetings, I am fully capable of working on and developing lesson plans, traveling to gather information and skills, and distributing and sharing those lessons and skills as I visit cooperative communities. I am also quite interested in assisting in planning Institute and ensuring that courses are made available to a wider range of co-ops in order to broaden our focus as an organization.

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

As a board member I would like to see efforts and movement made regarding the following topics:

- Co-ops that provide and focus for persons with developmental delays and disabilities, as an alternative to facilities that often prove detrimental to individuals.
- Co-ops that provide and focus for elderly persons, both who do and do not require assistive care, as an alternative to 'retirement' facilities that often prove detrimental to individuals.
- Recognizing that since our greatest asset is People, that we can crowd-source skills and find ways to mobilize them, in order to more effectively disseminate skills across communities.
- Ensuring that our focus does not stray too far from the catalyzing efforts of cooperatives, by providing aid and boosting the voices of marginalized communities and the underrepresented.

NASCO Main Office, 330 S. Wells St, Suite 618-F • Chicago, IL, 60606 USA

Tel (773) 404-2667 • Fax (331) 223-9727 • www.nasco.coop

Candidate Name: Kiyomi de Zoysa

Nominated By: Santa Barbara Student Housing Cooperative (Isla Vista, CA)

Part I:

This is my third year living in a housing cooperative. I have been an active member of the Santa Barbara Student Housing Cooperative. For the last six months I have been playing the role of the house manager, an important role which holds the responsibility of ensuring the smooth execution of the system of chores and the enforcement of accountability through working daily with housemates to ensure cleanliness and an equitable distribution of chores.

Most recently I created and lead the committee for the the annual fall orientation of SBSHC which is the biggest event of the year organized by the Board. I have extensive experience in meeting facilitation, through leadership in various campus groups and house meetings. Through serving as the President of the Board of Directors at SBSHC, I have gained significant experience in democratic meeting facilitation. I currently hold the position of Member Advocate on the Board of Directors which has been teaching me a lot about how best to serve as an active bridge between members and the Board, mainly through actively communicating with members. Through this role I have started to scratch the surface of the art of representation and addressing the varying needs and sentiments of members. The prospect of engaging in this way on a larger scale excites me greatly. Overall my passion for the cooperative cause is what will make me the dedicated board member that NASCO deserves.

Part II:

I am involved in the coops out of great respect for the non-exploitative economic model of common equity housing. I believe that cooperation is a natural state of relationship between organisms and cooperative principles should be applied to all organized systems of human living and business.

NASCO has been a provider of knowledge and technical skills for cooperatives to uphold cooperative principles through mutual aid and support. My personal vision for NASCO's force in the larger cooperative movement is for it to continue to act as a cohesive agent that bridges geographical distance across myriad forms of cooperatives in North America. I feel excited by the great potential it has to act like an energetic bee, cross-pollinating between different species within the same family; a family unified by the willingness to embody the spirit of cooperation. Not only would it spread the cooperative movement internationally but it would assist in processes of local community and village building.

An important goal for long-term success would be to ensure the training and the consultation of the NASCO board assists members and cooperatives to transition to independently functional agents of their own cooperative development in all aspects including anti-oppression education, management, organizational structure, as well as connectivity with other coop activists. Nurturing partnerships and alliances across differences through communication and networking opportunities will create the conditions for cooperatives to connect and learn from each other, thereby strengthening the cooperative movement and making individual coops more diverse and resilient.

Through my leadership positions in the housing cooperatives and the board of SBSHC, I have gained experience in evaluating the performance of staff, members, and programs within the system and learned the different nuances of directing the board in a direction which will allow them to flourish and accomplish both short-term and long-term goals. My passion for education as well as experience in advocacy and social organizing as a person of color to promote social and climate justice, has given me a

large toolbelt of skills, such as outreach coordination and coalition building, for activating people within and across movements to work together towards co-creating the change they want to experience. My experiences in facilitation and house management within SBSHC have honed my ability to communicate openly and concisely and has taught me to speak only when it is useful to others and beneficial to cause at hand. This gives me a basis to provide feedback and inspiration for refining and creating programs that promote equality, social justice, multiculturalism, and wider accessibility, transcending the entrenched societal boundaries between communities.

Outside of Board meetings I would like to work towards establishing connections both regionally and inter-regionally. In a similar vein, I would like to promote the expansion of the accessibility of cooperatives to marginalized or disadvantaged communities of color. I envision this to include programs for outreach into communities that lack opportunities for cooperative living and working.

In the Spring I will have graduated from UCSB with a bachelor's degree in global studies and therefore I have met this opportunity at a perfect time in my life. I am both willing and able to dedicate myself to a long held dream: to become a powerful catalyst for the global proliferation of the cooperative movement. The awareness I have of the vast existence of cooperatives in Mexico and Mesoamerica also contributes to my interest of expanding the scope and span of connectivity between cooperatives. This is indicative of my personality as a dreamer. Without dreaming big and wide, the regenerative cooperative model will not be able to effectively shift the paradigm towards sustainable and equitable society.

Candidate Name: Lana Wong

Nominated By: Whitehall Cooperative (Austin, TX)

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 many aspect of governance, including strategic planning, policy development, monitoring, and succession planning. I am knowledgeable in 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. Currently, I also serve on the OSCA (Ontario Student Co-op Association) board.

I was elected for a 2-year term at the 2012 NASCO board election and for a 1-year term at the 2014 NASCO board election. I served on Exec Committee as the Treasurer, Member Engagement Committee, Financial Sustainability Committee, Planning 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, through the support of NASCO board, staff, and friends, we have re-built operational capacity. Next step is to identify a plan for the future. As we plan for MONDO (NASCO Family strategic planning meeting) in Spring/Summer 2016, I believe that my knowledge about NASCO, Canadian student co-ops, and “large” co-ops, 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?

I appreciate the cooperative values, and the way they guide the decision making and actions of co-ops. These values and principles lead co-ops to pay attention to not just profit, but also people and planet. Co-ops often are able to address changing members needs quicker, pay more considerations to the communities they belong to, and realize greater value creation in the long run.

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, especially as a membership organization. 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?

I have knowledge in board governance, strategic planning, finance, 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 making connection between NASCO and Canadian co-ops or co-operators 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. 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?

MONDO (NASCO Family strategic planning)! Bylaws and policies revision, Canada, and structural discussions.

Candidate Name: Syd Burke

Nominated By: Michigan State University Student Housing Cooperative (Lansing, MI)

Hello!

My name is Sydney Burke, and I am heavily involved in the Michigan State University Student Housing Cooperative, (MSU SHC). As a fourth year member of the largest house in our system, I have served as our house Finance, Assistant Maintenance, and Membership officer. As a Social Relations and Policy major at MSU, instead of looking for an already established internship (as many do), I convinced my field experience advisor to allow me to craft an internship with SHC to study cooperative alumni relations research. This developed into the position of Alumni Coordinator, where I created a fundraising campaign for our system, and am working on building an alumni association from the ground up. I also served on our house audit team, our hiring committee, and various Membership Subcommittees.

I was given the opportunity to attend the NASCO Staff and Managers Conference in Summer of 2014, where I was able to establish initial relationships with many Cooperative leaders around the country and beyond from ICC Ann Arbor, Berkeley Co-ops, and ICC Austin, to name a few. Since then, I attended two NASCO Institutes, during the most recent one I led a guerilla workshop, ran for Active Member Representative, and sat on the Diversity Congress—all incredible empowering opportunities, further confirming my strong will to commit myself to Cooperative endeavors. Cooperative development is what I would like to dedicate my career path to, and a position on this board is the most important next step I could take. I have never felt more motivated to support any other endeavor I've taken part in, and would love to serve alongside those who are most passionate about the movement I have grown to cherish and value.

I initially got involved in Co-ops because I was attracted to the affordability, but upon joining and spending a few months in Phoenix House, I realized how much more this experience would truly shape and benefit my life. I believe as a student, other than taking part in Cooperative living, there is no stronger opportunity for supporting and enacting positive change, democratically making decisions that impact our members, or offers a more truly life-changing experience from one's own home. To me, Co-ops are people to learn from (and learn with). People to teach (and teach with). People to help grow (and grow with). To me, that's what NASCO is all about: true, pure cooperation and the perpetuation of our values, our missions, and the ever-strengthening of our membership across national and international borders. I believe having, as well as encouraging, strong fundraising campaigns and alumni engagement resources are key for NASCO's long term success, as well as creating avenues for increased communication among NASCO's individual co-ops. I love the initiative NASCO has to include pre-recorded video workshops and trainings and webinars in their resource library, so that anyone and everyone can have access to some of the vital information shared at institute and beyond. I believe (if it doesn't yet exist) that creating a NASCO Alumni Association could be a very worthwhile endeavor, so that those who have served on past NASCO boards or in staff roles could continually offer their input even after their terms are up.

Of the general responsibilities of NASCO candidates, I believe I would be the most successful at financial assistance. I have already begun working with a fundraising planning team to plan and coordinate NASCO's fundraising campaign, and have relished the opportunity to lend my skill set to the cause. In the guerilla workshop I gave focused on building alumni relations and fundraising, and was able to give even the Berkeley representative (who's Co-op arguably has the most established and successful alumni relations program of any Co-op), some new ideas on possible alumni events and fundraising methods. It was a huge honor to be able to share my knowledge with those in the room, and I'd like to continually empower and facilitate methods for others to do the same.

Come Spring 2016, I will have graduated from MSU, which will allow me ample time to commit to serving NASCO on board. It is a very likely possibility that in addition to continuing my main goal with SHC to progress and maintain our alumni association and subsequent fundraising initiatives, I will run for the Executive Committee for SHC, so that I may gain even more experience and even greater responsibility within our system. Last year following NASCO Institute, I was so heavily inspired and moved by what I had experienced that I, with the help of other SHC members, coordinated a meeting among our NASCO attendees to discuss what they had learned and how to implement these ideas in SHC. From the meeting came the idea to hold a mini-Institute of sorts complete with workshops in meeting facilitation, mental health awareness, a consent workshop, conflict resolution training, and a maintenance workshop. Following NASCO Institute this year, we had a similar meeting, which evolved into more beneficial ideas and plans. I would love to see other co-ops work hard to spread their collective knowledge in similar ways, or learn more about how various Cooperatives implement what they learned at Institute. Thank you all so much for this opportunity.

Candidate Name: Tristan Laing

Nominated by: Individual Members:

Personal 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 six years with the board of directors, holding the positions of treasurer, president, division representative, and 3 years as chair (my current position). 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. In this last year I have taken the plunge to make co-ops the focus of my academic life - I am currently enrolled in a Masters program at the University of Toronto in an Adult Education and Community Development program, where my research focusses on the impact of governance style on member engagement and psychological ownership in student housing co-ops.

My main goal in running for the NASCO board is to find ways that NASCO can help break patterns of inertia in Ontario student co-ops, as well as strengthen community ties between co-ops in Ontario, Quebec, and the Northeastern USA.

Responses to Candidate 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 charing and facilitation skills. I believe that the lapse in NASCO membership at CCRI and other ontario Student housing co-ops has left us short on program support in ways which we did not predict, and 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: Zach Tauer

Nominated by: Students Cooperative, Inc (Minneapolis, MN)

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

I have lived in The Students' Co-op, a 29 person housing cooperative in Minneapolis, for the last four and half years. While at The Students' Co-op I have served as president, house manager, and food manager for at least a year in each position. The Students' Co-op is owned by its members so there is a lot responsibility within the house to keep the house moving forward. During this time, I have participated in conflict resolution, systems changed within the coop, and the addition of community building with-in the co-op. I have also attended NASCO Institute four times. I have also been a collective member at the Minnehaha Free Space for three year, an anarchist community center that has thrived in South Minneapolis. Over the years at these organizations, I have developed many skills and experiences including facilitation, community education, collective organizing, leadership, and anti-oppression. I want to be a NASCO board member to continue to link cooperatives with other social justice movements. I also want to give a stronger voice to smaller cooperative, like the one I am from. Smaller co-ops tend to have less institutional resources and are still a vital part of NASCO and the co-op movement.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in co-ops?

I see co-ops as a tool to opposing some of the many negative forces in society today. These include racism, capitalism, and climate change. Co-ops can be used as spaces to deconstruct oppression and work towards a more just society, inside and outside of our living spaces. Co-ops are partially anti-capitalist, in that they encourage people to share resources and space, rather than the alienation that capitalism promotes. By pooling resources together, co-ops contribute to much less waste (energy, food) than standard methods of living, leading to less environmental destruction and human caused climate change.

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

It is important for NASCO to continue to include anti-oppression training in its cooperative education. This includes workshops on white supremacy, capitalism, gender, and similar topics. It would be very beneficial if NASCO offered more of these workshops, not only at NASCO Institute, but at NASCO member co-ops as well. NASCO can assist in training co-op members in meeting and workshop facilitation. It is important to continue to encourage the transfer of knowledge gained at NASCO Institute to our living and working spaces so member co-ops can spread these trainings.

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?

The two areas that stood out to me were *planning and stewardship* and *guidance and oversight*. At the Minnehaha Free Space, I was involved in creating long and short term goals and checking in with the collective and individuals to see how and if goals were being met. As a past president of The Students' Co-op, I facilitated and managed our managers, which set goals for the semester. I have also worked as an Environmental Engineer for the state of Minnesota. My experience with this job helped to round out my experience with different types of organizations: housing cooperatives, collective social justice spaces, and institutional government bodies.

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 plan to be strong member in the co-op community in Minneapolis. I am purposely unemployed and plan to work less than 30 hours per week for the next few years of my life. This is to allow me more time and energy to invest in passions and travels while I am in my twenties. As a result, I have the freedom to devote time and energy to this position. I do not foresee any difficulty in prioritizing some of my time towards my role as a NASCO board member and as a part of the greater co-op movement. I am also a very responsible communicator. In my jobs and organizations, I reply to emails and phone calls within a reasonable time.

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

I would love to work on assisting small co-ops, similar to the Students' Co-op. Small co-ops, which may be without paid staff or access to resources and institutional knowledge, are very important to the co-op movement and could use additional support. Small co-ops can be the easiest to start and are more likely to be in communities with no existing co-ops. I have experience living and organizing in a small co-op and would like to see more small co-ops involved in NASCO and the co-op movement. This would include outreach to smaller organizations that may be interested in joining NASCO, inquiring about the needs of small co-ops, and assisting those small co-ops with start-up and long term operation.

Thank you very much for reading responses and personal statement. I look forward to being involved in the co-op movement, as a member of the NASCO board or not.