

Candidate Statements for NASCO Board Elections 2014

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Nick Harvey**

nominated by NASCO board members: **Maria Langlois, Mingwei Huang, Layla Oghabian, Daniel Kronovet, and Brian Van Slyke**

Part I: Personal Data & Statement (Limit 200 Words.)

I hold a Bachelor's degree in English, a Paralegal license, and an Alternative Dispute Resolution certificate. I'm the President of the Board of Directors of my coop, Cartier Square (Ottawa). We deal regularly with issues of inclusion: disputes, member engagement/involvement, and social events, due to the wide range of member lifestyles and origins we always aim to resolve member issues or conflicts promptly and happily. We also work with our housing coordinator on finances/ledgers, and seek to research and execute optimal maintenance/repairs, so I'm comfortable with accounting and property management. Also, I've worked with the Labour Relations and HR departments of the Public Service Alliance of Canada and with the Professional Institute for the Public Service of Canada, both of which manage several Canadian government unions. There I was able to observe mediations, arbitrations, and negotiations relating to grievances/accommodations a perfect opportunity to learn about best methods of helping people collaborate/compromise to find harmonious conditions. And finally, since September 2012 I've been on the NASCO Education Board. I've done my best to absorb all I could about NASCO's history, situation, and possible paths, as well as offer suggestions, help, and support. I want to ensure useful, beneficial member services, activities, and decisions are initiated and maintained. I'd like to continue doing my part in helping the cooperative movement build on its already thriving chunk of virtually every sector improving, developing, and cultivating quality and conditions of life as a result of sharing work and resources.

Part II: Questions (Limit 600 Words total.)

1) *Why are you involved in coops?*

I am involved in coops because I believe that community is crucial to quality of life and happiness. Humans are meant to work and live in close groups beyond family level which cooperate *more than* just living near friends and neighbors with whom you contribute to the same GDP. Cooperation means that tasks, time, and energy are shared and spread out so that each individual finds far less struggle with financial or labor cost ("many hands make less work"). Community can also mean sharing any other burdens and joys of life, and can provide opportunities for families, experiences, and development of all kinds.

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

My vision of NASCO within the cooperative movement is as a resource in virtually any element of a coop's life or needs. This could mean that NASCO is there to help out with coop creation/development (loans/mortgage/growth), coop maintenance and management with physical systems as well as with logistics and member dynamics/relations/engagement/conflict resolution, and finally with education, training, anti-oppression audits/guidance, and other support. Ideally, NASCO would be the go to organization for any service needed by a coop, whether directly providing the service or linking members promptly and relevantly to what they need, and overseeing all resulting activities to ensure appropriate help was given.

NASCO's longterm success in cooperative education would require a board and a consulting circle of parties with a keen eye on the needs and paths of its members and cooperative movement trends in general, as well as setting a well researched, member consulted Strategic Plan and adhering to it. Next,

NASCO needs to keep consistent and warm relations with educators, trainers, and researchers (including those who are already part of the boards) who are accessible and beneficial to members.

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?*

I believe my skills would be primarily in the second category: helping provide guidance and oversight. I would be very interested to do my best with the other board members in keeping an eye on policies, initiatives, projects, and programs/services.

The feedback gathered from my contributions to discussion and brainstorming, as well as putting forth proposals

and suggestions, would join the many unique perspectives needed to meld into the first category (planning, stewardship, development, strategic visioning, etc.). In this area I would collect research and do my part in adding my skills to an already stellar Board in helping ensure ideas and paths are explored in straightforward, efficient fashion.

Finally, I have experience with financial statements/accounting, and have completed a small accounting course (not to mention having interacted in detail with my own coop's finances for 4 1/2 years and NASCO's for 1 1/2!). I'll continue to offer suggestions based on observations, experience, and research on for example how to save money in NASCO's operations and logistics without sacrificing services or resources.

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 continue to contribute all the time and energy I can to helping plan and execute each CETI (as I did last November), doing my part to help make events run smoothly for facilitators/presenters/volunteers/other board members/NASCO staff. I enjoy making it easier, clearer, and more accessible for anyone to learn coop values and practices!

Also, I'm always researching and thinking carefully on ways NASCO can offer as many and as appropriate services as possible while operating on an optimal budget.

Finally, I regularly speak positively of the overwhelmingly positive activities and sentiment of NASCO (as, I hope, do the other board members and coop members!) in effort to promote NASCO's growth and mutually beneficial partnership, whether direct or otherwise, with other organizations, sectors, and individuals.

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

As a board member, particular areas of focus I might enjoy seeing NASCO head toward could include improving and maintaining the NASCO hosted network directory of coops (both members and nonmembers of coops in every sector). This wasn't originally my idea, but in my opinion crosssector 'webs' of people in food, residential, agricultural, financial, or other commercial coops are some of the most useful ways to increase access and cooperation while reducing costs.

Also, I believe reaching out to coops of types underrepresented in current NASCO membership is important (seeing what they need and aiming to provide it to them if within NASCO's mandate), whether it is the folks who live or work in them or the sectors they represent that is underrepresented. They may need help or support, whether advice or more hands on, or just to know there are some others out there with the same sentiment and with whom they can feel some solidarity! This in turn will help with my primary goal just above uniting people in different areas of coop life to seek a more harmonious overall existence. One day, virtually any goods, services, or life elements a person may want should be available via a local, nationally networked coop.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Dan Rathjen**
Nominated by River City Housing Collective

Part I: Personal Data & Statement (Limit 200 Words.)

I studied at the University of Iowa where I earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Sociology. I have been a member of the River City Housing Collective in Iowa City since 2008. I began working as RCHC's only employee in 2011 and have been doing so full-time since 2012. Since that time I have worked on many projects including developing new policies, creating structures for completing routine tasks, fund-raising, increasing publicity and outreach, completing deferred maintenance projects, investigating opportunities for expansion, changing local zoning laws that prohibit cooperative housing, and creating long-term plans for the co-op and a budget to make them possible. These experiences have provided skills and knowledge that I would like to share with the Board and hone by applying them beyond my cooperative. I want to help NASCO do all it can to help its member co-ops thrive.

Part II: Questions

1) Why are you involved in coops?

I am involved in co-ops because, in short, I believe in co-ops. I believe that living cooperatively represents the easiest path to a life that is sustainable, promotes equality, and provides for a diverse and cohesive community, which I feel to be the biggest challenges society currently faces.

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

I see NASCO as forming the foundation for future expansion of the cooperative movement through education, assistance, and building connections. As an organization primarily serving students, NASCO provides the critical first cooperative experience to many individuals. It is important that NASCO be there to ensure that members have the knowledge they need to be strong contributors to their co-ops. The connections NASCO creates between its member co-ops help unify and give a face to the cooperative movement. This motivates members by reminding them their co-op is not an island, but part of an international movement that is making a real difference in the world. Providing this experience encourages members to seek out or create new cooperative living arrangements that suit their needs later in life as they move on, leading to future expansion of the cooperative movement. I think the keys to long-term success are continuous updating of educational materials based on research, more engagement with members, and working to tailor education to members' specific needs.

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?

I would feel comfortable aiding the Board in any of these goals, as I have already undertaken similar work in serving my cooperative. I have worked to help my co-op transition from budgeting on a yearly basis to making a five-year budget based on member surveys, board recommendations, and outside advice. As part of my current job I am responsible for evaluating my co-op's performance and that of its officers and committee heads, assessing proposals made to our Board, and proposing changes to improve the organization. I have already begun visiting other co-ops in my region to seek ways that we might cooperate and I would be happy to continue visiting co-ops to assist NASCO in providing services and representation to member co-ops. I've also devoted time to fund-raising for my co-op and am happy to do the same for NASCO. I will have no trouble attending meetings or other functions, staying abreast of co-op issues, assisting in NASCO's activities, or representing the needs of its members. These are all activities in which I currently engage and quite enjoy. What I feel I bring to the Board is a high degree of commitment, years of working experience with co-ops, concern for members and their needs, a familiarity with NASCO and its operations, research experience, knowledge of legal and financial matters relevant to cooperatives, sociological knowledge, organization, a strong work ethic, and a passion for cooperation.

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 am able to contribute outside of meetings by visiting and staying in touch with other NASCO co-ops, assisting in NASCO's member services, doing research, consulting experts, generating proposals for improvement, or any

other activity that the Board requires. My current position has required that I be willing to work at a multitude of different tasks, and I am always ready to take on new challenges. My position is flexible and the Board of my co-op is happy to see me engage in work that supports the broader cooperative movement.

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

The main issues that I would like to address if elected are engagement with and cooperation between member co-ops. I feel that cooperation between our co-ops is a critical next step in broadening the cooperative movement, and that NASCO is in a unique position to encourage this inter-cooperation by increasing its engagement with its member cooperatives.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Sony Rane**
Nominated by Qumbya Housing Cooperative

Part I: Personal Data & Statement (Limit 200 Words.)

I am involved in the cooperative movement because I believe in the social, economic, and environmental benefits of living in community. It is much easier to 'walk in someone else's shoes' when you live in close quarters with so many different types of people from various backgrounds.

Professionally and personally, I am committed to working on sustainable development and resource conservation. I've spent several years working on institutional sustainability for universities and large catering companies like Sodexo and Aramark.

I am excited to get more involved in the work and mission of an organization that educates and engages people about cooperative living. As a board member, I would like to work on bringing more diversity into the cooperative movement, increasing public awareness of alternative housing models, and programming for NASCO Institute. Prior to attending NASCO institute, I was not fully aware of NASCO's role in the cooperative movement and I think many individuals living in NASCO co-ops are also unaware. I think we need to work on educating our own co-op members as well as the public about NASCO's work.

Part II: Questions (Limit 600 Words total.)

1) Why are you involved in coops?

My main reasons for living in co-ops are the environmental benefits of sharing resources, the emotional benefits of close connections, and the luxuries of sharing housework. I love the sustainability aspects of reducing waste, sharing household tools, and having the space for a house garden. Collectively, we can afford the luxuries of high-end equipment like a Vit-a-Mix, a projector, and a table saw.

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

There is a prevailing misconception that many co-ops live in community because of financial limitations. While living in co-ops is generally cheaper than living alone, most people choose co-ops for the lifestyle and not simply their finances. I think more people would be interested in getting involved in co-ops if they knew about all of the benefits to coop living such as cooking meals infrequently and still eating fresh, home-cooked meals every day.

I think connecting NASCO member co-ops would also be helpful in creating a more cohesive community. I would love to hear more about the co-ops all over the country and share resources. Perhaps, we could encourage individual house boards to share our monthly newsletter more actively with their residents.

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?

In my past job as Program Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability at the University of Chicago, I created educational programs, managed all outreach and marketing, and organized volunteers. A large part of my job involved educating and engaging our campus community in various environmental programs and I used social media, e-newsletters, and grassroots marketing to reach our audience. I used Facebook and Twitter as outreach tools and I increased our following on both social media platforms by 40%. I have experience planning large multi-day educational events such as [EarthWeek](#), [WasteWeek](#), and [VegWeek](#).

I recently completed residential energy audit training and lead abatement training and can also advise co-ops on weatherization and lead safety work.

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 am currently working part-time as a home energy auditor and I have ample time and energy to spend on NASCO efforts outside of Board meetings. I am happy to travel to board meetings and other co-ops. I enjoyed NASCO Institute last year and am looking forward to being more involved in the planning of next year's institute.

I plan on continuing to work part-time in the near future and will make every effort to stay involved with NASCO if my work situation changes.

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

I would like to work on establishing co-ops in rust belt cities that currently do not have many alternative housing options. I grew up in Cleveland and then lived in Pittsburgh for 6 years. Neither Pittsburgh nor Cleveland have housing co-ops, and both cities would benefit from them. They both have a growing population of progressive residents who care about environmental and social justice.

I attended the U.S. Federation of Workers Cooperative and was surprised by how many worker co-ops exist in the States. I would like to explore how housing co-ops can collaborate with food co-ops and worker co-ops.

I would love to see more workshops about DIY homemaking at NASCO Institute. Living in my co-op, I have learned so much about house maintenance, including how to install light fixtures, properly paint walls, season cast-iron skillets, and more. Many of us in the house enjoy learning household skills so we can repair our home on our own and I'm sure other co-ops share this sentiment. It would be great if Institute could have skill-building sessions about basic plumbing, carpentry, wiring, gardening, weatherizing, etc.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Alex Green**
Nominated by Inter-cooperative Council Ann Arbor

Part I: Personal Data & Statement (Limit 200 Words.)

My name is Alex Green, and I am applying to the NASCO Board because I want to continue using my knowledge and skills to serve the cooperative movement, helping student housing cooperatives continue to develop members who will internalize cooperative values and share them with the world. An alumnus of the Inter-Cooperative Council of Ann Arbor, I was a member of Luther House for four years. During my time at ICC Ann Arbor, I served as both ICC President and VP of Finance on their Board of Directors.

I am a co-oper with uncommon professional and academic qualifications. I am a CPA who has worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers (one of the world's largest public accounting firms), auditing multinational insurance corporations such as AIG and Prudential. I obtained a Master's degree in Accounting at the University of Michigan after receiving both a Bachelors in Business Administration and a Bachelors in General Studies from the same school.

My cooperative experience outside of the ICC Ann Arbor includes attending four NASCO Institutes and facilitating a Big Coops workshop at two. Additionally, I have visited various cooperatives in Berkeley, CA; Austin, TX; Lansing, MI; Lawrence, KS; Urbana-Champaign, IL; St. Louis, MO; and New York City.

Part II: Questions (Limit 600 Words total.)

I am involved in cooperatives because of the cooperative ethos and community. The cooperative values align with my personal values, ideas of acceptance, opportunity, stewardship, empowerment, and ownership. Furthermore, I find cooperatives to be a community that I feel comfortable in. Most co-ops I meet are kind and considerate, interested and interesting, and socially aware and respectful in ways that make me feel all kinds of warm and fuzzy. A community that I care about and cares for me, one that I can feel comfortable with personally and philosophically, is one that I want to help strengthen as best that I can.

To me, NASCO has always been and should continue to focus on being an organizer, networker, and educator of cooperatives in the movement. As an umbrella organization for cooperatives, it is in a unique position to hold onto and disseminate information to cooperatives year over year, learn what works on one side of North America and convey that knowledge to those on the other side of the continent, connecting co-ops who may not know each other so that our organizations can be mutually supportive.

However, I believe that in order to better serve its members, NASCO must make an important change to its services: provide services that more closely match the nature of the cooperative that is being served. While NASCO does an outstanding job providing assistance to small- and mid-sized cooperatives, larger co-ops are less able to receive support for the issues that they uniquely experience (e.g., staff relations, catering to members who need mental health support, dealing with questions of diversity and inclusiveness, rolling out mature marketing programs, to name a few). Not only is providing adequate services to the larger cooperatives an important aspect of properly serving NASCO's membership, but it is also a necessity to ensure that the large cooperative members continue to feel as though their participation in NASCO is worth the dues they pay.

My skills and perspectives would be most useful to the NASCO Board of Directors when discussing planning and general operations. As a co-oper with business experience and know-how, I can bring a financial point of view to the board without sacrificing a focus on cooperative ideals. Furthermore, as a board member who dealt with many of the issues faced by larger cooperatives when I sat on the ICC Board of Directors as President and VP of Finance, I have firsthand experience to draw upon when creating a vision for how NASCO's programming can improve to better cater to its larger member-organizations. Finally, years of cooperative experience have gifted me a conscientiousness regarding issues of diversity, mental health, power, privilege, and oppression, areas that are vital to consider when taking on the role of a steward.

I am fully able to continue contributing to NASCO and its Board of Directors outside of board meetings. Currently, I am employed only part-time, so I have much flexibility with my time. However, even though I expect to be fully employed in the near future, I have no issue fulfilling my duties beyond attending board meetings when I have availability during nights and weekends. Were I to gain a place on the NASCO Board of Directors, it would be my main commitment outside of work. Moving forward, I would be careful to not take on any responsibilities that would conflict with those that I have already agreed to perform.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Marcel Jones**
Nominated by Michigan State University – Student Housing Cooperative

Part I: Personal Data & Statement (Limit 200 Words.)

As a member of the Berkeley Student Cooperative (BSC) I have served as a leader in several capacities. I have been a maintenance manager, garden manager, house manager, and house president for the African American Theme House. System-wide for the BSC I have served as a Board Representative and Alumni Coordinator. Outside of the BSC I have considerable experience in multicultural spaces on and off of UC Berkeley's campus. As Chair of the Black Student Union I work closely with community partners in the Bay Area including social justice organizations, community centers, and labor unions. I also have connections statewide through different campaigns and coalitions that I have worked within such as the Afirkan/Black Coalition (ABC), Cal Students for Equal Rights and a Valid Education (CaSERVE), and the University of California Student Association (UCSA). In short, I am a grassroots organizer with administrative and operational experience within cooperative and student spaces. On board for NASCO I would like to use my leadership skills to push forward the cooperative movement in a way that is social justice orientated and incorporates marginalized populations.

Part II: Questions (Limit 600 Words total.)

1) Why are you involved in coops?

I believe in living the solution. The cooperative experience allows me the opportunity to commit myself to maintaining intentional spaces that are inclusive and transformative. Through living in the Berkeley Student Cooperative, and encountering it's strengths and weaknesses, I have become a better community member and agent of change. I have also grown more comfortable with myself and with my identities. Due to all that I have gained, I strive to allow other folks the chance to go through their own coop experience.

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

For me, being a part of the cooperative movement is a lifetime endeavor that requires a continuous growing process. I believe that the role of NASCO is to facilitate such growth amongst folks that are interested in starting or joining cooperatives. The educational process that NASCO creates must be multifaceted and multilayered. To achieve longterm success NASCO must be able to reach different communities in a way that empowers folks and challenges the teacher-student binary. This requires continuous feedback and communication and a placement of lived experiences at the center of the educational process.

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?

I believe I can best aid NASCO in longterm planning and visioning work. I will also be able to provide direct support in programing and representation. I plan for my largest contribution to be fostering a sense of ownership and pride of NASCO amongst member coops. Major skills that I will bring to the board include: community organizing, teaching, and facilitating. Through my work within the Berkeley Student Cooperative and other spaces, I have gained the ability to create healthy learning environments that I think are necessary to push NASCO's mission.

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 on being in school for the duration of my term as a board member. A large section of my time within and without my academic pursuits will be dedicated to pushing the cooperative movement. While on the board I will make frequent visits to member coops asking for feedback on NASCO and pushing the coop movement.

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

By working through NASCO I would like to bring ideas and opportunities of cooperative living to low-income, people of color communities. I will work at developing educational tools that speak directly to different marginalized folks. Through an intersectional lens, I will also use the cooperative movement to address societal issues and provide alternatives to existing oppressive systems.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Kit Fordham**
Nominated by the Chateau Student Housing Cooperative

Part I

I am thrilled to accept the Chateau Student Housing Cooperative's nomination to the NASCO Board of Directors. It would be my pleasure to dedicate my time and efforts toward our common passion for empowered community. Since graduating from Warren Wilson College with a degree in Global Studies and Peace and Justice, I've worked with various non-profits dedicated to community development. In my current role as the Manager of Cooperative Services at Riverton Community Housing in Minneapolis, I've found a home where I'm able to put a diverse combination of skills to use to build sincere community while directing our common efforts toward a more sustainable relationship with our community.

My role at Riverton is most comparable to the GM of the average cooperative. As such I have the delightful challenge of coordinating the different elements of our communities to ensure we are socially, environmentally, and financially sustainable. The form these efforts have taken are great cultural diversity, several new urban gardens, the adoption of a park on the Mississippi, and a number of inter-cooperative activities to ensure our members are supported and encouraged to participate.

I'm thrilled to contribute and learn as a member of the NASCO board.

Part II

I am the Manager of Cooperative Services at Riverton Community Housing, a non-profit that was created by the Chateau Student Housing Cooperative with the mission of creating more student housing cooperatives in the neighborhoods surrounding the University of Minnesota. Since our inception we've helped to found four new student housing coops, while also providing financial support to other student housing coops throughout the United States.

In order to nurture and develop inclusive community we also provide ongoing support to our member coops. This allows us to work alongside our cooperative partners to help them identify and accomplish long and short term strategic goals. Our support services range from property management (leasing, marketing, logistical support, maintenance, etc.) to member services - the department that I oversee.

My role at Riverton is comparable to the GM position held at many coops. I work directly with the Boards of Directors of our five member coops. It's my job to oversee the development of projects, policies, budgets, etc. and ensure they are implemented efficiently and effectively. I am also charged with the task of ensuring that each of the community's needs are met by coordinating with our other staff members.

I have extensive experience working with boards on several levels. As mentioned above, I serve as advisor and manager for five cooperative boards, but I also serve the professional board of directors of Riverton by providing staff support.

I'm intimately aware of the need for preparedness and timeliness when serving a board. My experience has taught me the fine art of working efficiently and effectively both during and in between meetings.

But I believe my biggest contribution to the board would be my passion for sustainable living. I am a trained carpenter and have extensive knowledge of sustainable practices - I'm currently pursuing my MBA in Sustainable Systems at Bainbridge Graduate Institute in Washington. I know NASCO and the cooperative movement at large share my passion for sustainable living. If elected to the board I'd happily contribute to furthering our efforts toward developing a positive relationship with our ecosystem through transforming our cooperatives and working to develop a model through which our coops can share our knowledge and passion with the cities we live in.

This speaks to my vision for NASCO as an incubator and innovator of ideas within the greater cooperative movement. NASCO has served the coops I work for in many ways, but the most visible impact has been through education. At any coop event - NASCO Institute or an individual house meeting - it is clear that coopers are innovative and revolutionary. NASCO is a central organization where infant ideas and well developed ideas alike can easily be shared through the member network. If cooperatives have taught me anything it is that every idea benefits from input from all perspectives. Therefore NASCO as an educational organization can continue and even enhance its service as an essential hub of information in order to help ideas become revolutionary movements within the world of student-housing cooperatives.

With regard to the time commitment necessary for this job, I'm comfortable accepting this nomination because the communities to which I am dedicated have given me their blessing to join the NASCO ranks because they value NASCO's mission and great work.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Ben Pérez**
Nominated by Berkeley Student Cooperative

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

As a member of the Berkeley Student Cooperative, I have served as a member of the Board of Directors for two years and as a Vice President on the Cabinet of the Board (executive committee) for two non-consecutive year long terms. Immediately following the resignation of the Executive Director in 2012, I also served as Summer President. In that time, the BSC has faced and addressed many challenges including: long-run issues with habitability in our system, clarifying a decades-long backlog of HR policies, governance transformations, and substance abuse issues among others. On both Board and Cabinet I participated in or actively shaped the organization's response to challenging obstacles through member engagement, community dialogue, and cooperative decision-making. I would like to bring that experience to NASCO to help make the most effective umbrella organization of cooperatives possible. I care deeply for and have drawn deep inspiration from the cooperative movement, and as such I would take great privilege in working with NASCO to push that movement to new places in North America.

Part II: Questions

To the NASCO membership,

As my freshman year in college drew to a close, I had a problem. With no outside resources, little time, and facing my first search for housing without my parent's support, I had a few weeks to find affordable wheelchair-accessible housing in an impacted Berkeley housing market. As deadlines drew near and my search started seeming truly futile, I found and applied to the Berkeley Student Cooperative (then USCA) and I haven't looked back. The BSC and the cooperative movement showed me a new way of understanding the collective action issues, civic engagement problems, and unsafe spaces rampant in the world around me. For this reason, after years of working to support and work for the BSC I decided to submit my candidacy for NASCO's Board. I would like to commit my energies to helping build a stronger NASCO that re-commits to training and supporting its member co-ops in governance, organizational structure and initiatives, and acts as the best possible link between those members.

NASCO, as an umbrella organization of cooperatives, holds a unique position in that it more than any organization is situated to link the work of cooperatives into a learning and sharing network. As a co-oper with experience in setting organizational direction at the Board level, I would like to start a NASCO-wide conversation about how we can most directly educate our members in the "principles and practices of user-ownership and economic democracy" in ways the organization currently doesn't (NASCO By-Laws Section 2.1). Specifically, this means creating programs that:

1. Engage NASCO members beyond Institute by facilitating communications between NASCO members as they address issues common to student cooperatives.
2. Expand the resources offered by NASCO on governance, operational policies and practices, and cooperative education models to help members further their missions.
3. Encourage dialogue between NASCO's members and with NASCO to ensure members participate in creating and utilizing those resources.
4. Start and institutionalize a membership-wide conversation about NASCO's strategic vision that pushes NASCO to do more and better things for its members.

More than anything, I hope to help NASCO build on its foundation as a support system to the key work of student cooperatives - housing university students. For me, this means a renewed focus on member engagement and communication in the ways NASCO members currently operate so they can learn from each other. My time at the BSC taught me how difficult organizational change can be, especially as we strive to govern ourselves cooperatively in a complex world. The lack of cooperatively run organizations on which to model our work complicates our context further. NASCO can and should be a place to find others working with the same goal to act as mentors, and to provide cooperative solutions to our common problems.

NASCO Candidate Statement for **Justin Chandler**

Nominated by College Houses

Part I: Personal Data & Statement

I've been living in Taos, a College Houses coop, since Summer 2010. I've spent 7 semesters involved with College Houses' Board of Directors, 5 as the scribe, and 2 as a voting Board representative. Over this time, I've watched or been a part of efforts and discussions on a wide breadth of issues, including event planning, policies, budgeting, loan refinancing, and recruiting and selecting our new General Administrator. I feel that I've learned far more valuable lessons from my four years of cooperative involvement than from my institutional academic education; the value of community; how localized culture and group identity changes and maintains itself in response to member turnover; the importance of individuals' willingness to spearhead efforts and do organizational work toward the collective's goals. The values of the cooperative movement are awesome, and I want to be involved in starting new coops and propagating the model to inspire others to start and/or participate in coops. I hope to have the opportunity to give my time and efforts to the goals of NASCO and its members.

Part II: Questions

1) *Why are you involved in coops?*

I love living in a community that fosters a general sense of inclusion and free expression. Cooperative living has played a huge role in my development as a person and has helped me tear down my own interpersonal walls.

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

I see NASCO as a collective effort between its numerous member communities to connect as a super-community in order to share ideas regarding our commonly held values, share lessons learned, to provide a support network across the continent, and to educate the public to spread the cooperative model.

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?*

I feel prepared for all of the requirements of the position, but I feel particularly qualified to assist in "Planning and Stewardship." My experiences with College Houses' Board and being an officer of a campus organization have been exercises in working in a group to defining and execute time-specific goals and regularly evaluate progress and refine goals. I think methodically and I'm good at efficiently brainstorming factors that should be considered and taken into account when executing plans.

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'll be graduating in May 2014 with an engineering degree, and my only central commitment will be my job, which I've discovered in the past leaves me with significantly more free time and available mental capacity than when I'm in school. As far as how I can contribute outside of Board meetings, I believe that most work should get done outside of the meeting, and that the purpose of the meeting is to define/refine group goals, coordinate work to be done, and present what has been done to the group for discussion and approval.

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

I would like to assemble a "How-to-Start-a-Coop" manual to be published on the NASCO website, with stories and lessons learned from people who have successfully started coops, legal information, options for financing, ideas for different organizational structures, and examples of bylaws.