Moscow Food Co-op Board of Director Application

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Candidate statement

For voter's guide

1. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have served on the Board of Directors for the Moscow Food Co-op for the past three years. This experience has further opened my eyes to the value of the Moscow Food Co-op to our communities and region. During this time, I chaired the Nomination and Election committee for two years and have been the Board treasurer and a member of the Policy and Bylaw committee during for the past year. There is no question the past three years have been extraordinary. The COVID virus has affected everything we have done as a Board and has had a huge impact on the Co-op. Being on the Board during this time has given me the opportunity to be a part of a team that has helped the Co-op manage this crisis, as well taking the next steps. My past experiences as a farmer and agriculture researcher have also helped me develop critical thinking skills and have shown me the importance of the Co-op in supporting local agriculture. In addition, while living in Ohio I volunteered with the Ohio Invasive Plants Council to help organize the 2007 Ohio Invasive Plant Research Conference. Through these experiences, I have observed differences of opinions and perspectives, but have also seen that consensus and listening are important attributes for attaining a greater good.

2. The Moscow Food Co-op is a gemstone institution for our area, no doubt! I have valued the Co-op ever since the early 90s when it was located on 3rd street. I very much appreciated the selection of bulk items and different coffees and teas. My spouse and I left the Palouse in 2001 for the eastern U.S., but returned in 2015 to find the Co-op in a great new location. I would very much like to continue serving on the board and to be a part of the discussion on how we move forward. There are current challenges we still face, such as COVID, that will be important to monitor and address. We also need to discuss the future and what that may look like. I am committed in preserving the Co-op's role as a great community gathering place with a welcoming friendly atmosphere, but also as a go-to source for good local food and healthy alternatives to commercialized products.

For the board, only

3.a. The past three years have certainly been a great learning experience for me regarding group processes and decision making. It was apparent that while we may have not gotten everything right, we did, and do, work really hard to make good decisions. The one thing I am sure of is that we all have the Co-op's best interest at heart. I have seen that listening is critical to good group process, and sometimes a disagreement is not always bad. Differences of thought are as co-op as the Co-op itself. These lessons will help me in future discussions and group interactions. My past group interactions have involved planning farming and research activities, which didn't involve the same responsibilities, i.e., fiduciary, policy, as required for the Co-op Board; however, I am enthusiastic about our role as Board Directors and strive to be a good participant.

3.b. My take on shared power in a group setting is that we all need to bring our 'A' game and that everyone should have a voice. During my committee experiences, I have purposefully tried to engage others and to listen to differences, approaches, and opinions, as well as share power in the processes. A good team effort is really powerful!

3.c. Delegating areas of decision to others goes along with a good team effort. This is exactly what I tried to do in the Nominations and Elections committee as well as other Board process in which I have been involved. That said, I also feel that as a team we need to situate our individual actions within the mission and role of the Board, itself. In farm and research work, there are times when decisions have to be made by those in the field, so to speak, and I have to trust those decisions are made in good faith; however, if I am in charge of the whole procedure or process, then I also have a responsibility to see that actions are done as well as possible. This has certainly been the case when I have overseen student workers or guided graduate students. In one instance, I was very fortunate to have hired a student who was truly interested in the work. I was able to go over the work protocol in the beginning and then give him the reins to carry out the work. He did a great job!

4. With regards to the three-year commitment, my spouse is faculty at University of Idaho and there are no plans to move to a different area. Unless there is some unforeseen circumstance, I commit myself to the time requirements, i.e., monthly meetings, preparation time, committee appointments, and retreats. I also agree to the campaigning and election guidelines.

5. I am looking forward to working with you all in the years to come!