

# BRANDON BOYS



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

Customer-owned cooperatives generate and distribute wealth in the communities they serve. Our community is privileged to have an organization like Common Ground and I want to see it thrive! Policy governance is a unique and effective way to establish a board's relationship with staff and also to keep the board focused on the big picture of having a well-managed store and producing community outcomes in line with our Ends.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I previously served on the CGFC Board from 2012-2014 and as Vice-Chair for one year. Over the past fifteen years I have served on multiple nonprofit and municipal boards, including four years on a City Council in Wisconsin. I most recently served as Chair of the Board for the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation. I have over ten years of professional experience in municipal and nonprofit management with an emphasis in economic and community development. I also have a graduate degree in urban planning and am a certified planner. As a collaborative leader, I value relationship-building and strategic implementation in partnership with diverse groups of stakeholders. I love democratic institutions and I love co-ops!

## **What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I hope to give more than I get from the experience. I am most interested in learning how our Owners would like to see Common Ground continue to develop and grow—both as a store and as an organization that invests in its community. It has been about a decade since the co-op's current Ends were established. So, I support the Board leading a process to reengage all of our Owners in a review of the co-op's Ends to realign and/or reaffirm them as needed.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

The co-op is first and foremost a grocery store and it must operate professionally for its customers. As noted above, I would like the Board to lead a process with the Owners to reaffirm the co-op's Ends. The Board and staff should then work together to lay out the co-op's future plans in line with those Ends. Ideally, I would like the co-op to create a new program that lends out funds to develop the capacities of our local producers and processors, whose enterprises truly make our co-op great.

# MICHAEL FELTES



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

Keeping Common Ground financially strong and focused on fulfilling its Ends is key to building our local food system and our local economy. Policy governance gives us the framework as amateurs in the grocery industry to govern meaningfully, since we focus on whether we're accomplishing our goals and leave the choices of how to accomplish them to our management.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I've enjoyed this past year of serving as an appointed member, have learned a great deal, and feel that I'm now up to speed on what's required. I understand how much work is necessary and have adjusted my work & family commitments to accommodate it. I've also started reaching out to other community organizations to help build Common Ground's profile, starting with an op-ed at Smile Politely. One particularly important lesson has been that speaking carefully and thoughtfully in public is important since we always represent Common Ground.

## **What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

One thing I'd like to get out of my experience is improving my knowledge about finance, particularly in cooperatives. I've taken one course from Columinate on the basics of financial management. There are also some online courses in Parkland's Community Education program that I'm considering. Another thing I'd like to get in exchange for service is an experience that demonstrates that democratically governing a business is both practicable and, at least in certain sectors & circumstances, a superior method of organization for consumers & workers compared to traditional ownership models. We need more variety in our political economy both regionally & nationally and co-ops can be an important part of that diversification.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

Policy governance, when practiced well, helps to connect these priorities. Monitoring based on Executive Limitations policies starts with the End in mind when considering the means to be avoided and the conditions to be achieved. The Ends should also guide our planning when we consider large-scale projects to ensure that they have the chance to fulfill a larger goal.

# **BEN GALEWSKY**



**Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

I love common ground and appreciate its pivotal role in our community and our local food system. I also love policy Governance! When I was previously on the board I taught many new members how to apply and love policy governance too.

**We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I served on the Common Ground board between 2007 and 2014 and was your board president during the store expansion. I was also on the first board of the Art Theater co-op in Champaign. I have a background in finance and led both owner loan campaigns and occasionally helped fellow board members learn how to read financial statements. I was on the committee that drafted our current set of ends.

**What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I was appointed to a vacant seat back in March of this year. At the time, this was a very inexperienced board. I've enjoyed working with this team and seeing them rise to the occasion of the most difficult seven months in our co-op's history. I would like the opportunity to fill out a full term to help rebuild connections between the owners, staff, GM, and board.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

I love common ground! It is the beating heart of my community. I have seen how steady and firm application of policy governance along with a commitment to ends can keep our co-op strong, vibrant and sustainable for all of us and for owners to come.

# JACQUELINE HANNAH



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

When I first encountered policy governance in 2006 as the GM of a food co-op, I was not a fan. I didn't understand it, especially the board/GM separation of duties. But as I continued to work for a food co-op, I came to not only understand policy governance, but to trust it. Since that time, while no longer a GM I continue to work in the food co-op field and in coaching boards and I've come to believe that, while no system of governance is perfect, policy governance is the best system of governance currently in existence. It's a dynamic system that allows for both accountability and strong leadership \*if\* the board understand the tool and invests the time and energy to wield it well.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I currently serve on the board of Shared Capital Cooperative and am chair of their membership/outreach committee. In my work for Food Co-op Initiative, I coach the boards of startup food co-ops, lead annual board retreats for 6-10 startup food co-op boards a year, and have written a workbook on how startup food co-ops can effectively transition from being a working board to a policy governance board as they bring on their first GM.

## **What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

It is one thing to serve a board as a GM, another to coach food co-op boards, and quite another to directly serve on the board of a food cooperative. Common Ground continues to be near and dear to my heart though my career has taken me on to new roles, and I am excited about what I can learn serving directly on the board of a food cooperative for the first time, and doing it on behalf of my home food co-op.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

The dynamic tension between Ends, strategic planning, and operational accountability is one I have spent almost 15 years studying. There are tough questions hiding in that tension, and I have faced many of them and spend a great deal of time thinking about them. I believe my deep knowledge of both the board and the GM role in policy governance, and of the tension between moving forward our Ends and thriving as a grocery store so we can continue to grow our impact on our Ends, can be very valuable to CGFC's board. I'm not afraid of these tensions, and I have a great deal of practice with balancing those tensions calmly and thoughtfully.

# MING KUO



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

I'm a long-time Urbana resident, a single mom, cancer survivor, teacher, and scientist. For me, many roads lead to the coop, and the Board. I taught a Farm to Table class, which taught me how important local food systems are in a post-fossil fuel future. I also teach about how to reconcile human happiness, resource consumption, and environmental sustainability — and that's taught me that community is a keystone of human thriving. I care about the ways our economic and political system is failing us and that led me to see the coop as a place to address our system's overly narrow emphasis on profit to the neglect and harm of broader goods -- the good of our community, our owners/shoppers, our staff, our suppliers, and the environment. The Coop's ends are my ends.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I founded and direct a multidisciplinary Lab which has conducted roughly \$8M in research. At UIUC, I've been elected to the campus' highest-level grievance committee as well as the Faculty Senate, which suggests my colleagues trust me (or they want to foist a lot of work on me). I co-founded and run a Letters to the Editor informal co-op, where we share our letters, feedback, and encouragement to write; we've collectively submitted 200-300 letters to the News-Gazette, Decatur Herald Review and the Springfield SJR. And I've been active trying to help the Co-op thrive -- participating in Visioning meetings, attending and speaking at one or two Board meetings, attending meetings about the Co-op with staff and former staff, writing to the GM and Board members.

## **What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I hope to help the Board live up to its chief task, it's *raison d'être* — to be the voice of the owners. Most owners may not care about the Coop's policies, but it's clear from attendance at Visioning sessions that some owners do. We have an amazing community of owners, with passions for local food, equity, labor practices, and the environment; we have owners with amazing expertise. Currently, those voices have

little way to participate in governance and that expertise is going untapped. Currently, the format of the Agenda makes the actual topics completely opaque. This discourages owners from participating. Owners shouldn't be expected to decide whether they want to go to an evening meeting based on broad areas of discussion like "Monitoring" if specific questions like, "GM treatment of staff complaints," can be articulated. And if specific questions can't be articulated, that suggests discussion is unfocused and has no clear purpose. Currently, it is unclear when and where the Agenda will be posted before each meeting -- owners have to figure out where to check and then keep checking until they happen to find it. Similarly, meeting notes are not posted in a timely manner, which means if an owner wanted to respond to the Board's >ongoing< decisions, there is no way to do that. It is August and the most recent minutes are from April, even though the Board certainly met in June, July, and August. Currently, owner comments are only taken at Board meetings before any real discussion; an owner who is interested in the topic of the evening has no way of responding to what the Board says, except perhaps to wait until the next meeting. Might there be ways to allow for owners to comment during discussion -- if only to allow them to write down comments which the Board would read afterwards? Currently, owners' opinions on ongoing policy decisions are rarely solicited. As a social scientist, I'd like to explore some easy ways for owners to have a say -- whether just a comment board with the issue of the month, or a question tucked into the newsletter. I'd like to explore ways of improving the Board's current mechanisms for owner participation.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

I see these less as competing aims to be balanced, but as mutually interdependent. Without an understanding of our Ends (and subEnds), monitoring is likely to be unfocused and burdensome for no good purpose. Without monitoring, it's impossible for the Board to even know how the Coop is doing with respect to the Ends, let alone uphold them. If we don't look ahead at new opportunities, challenges, and changes, that makes it difficult to continue upholding Ends as the landscape shifts. If we don't know what's going on with the Coop, we have no basis for planning ways to get from where we are to where we want to go, etc. Monitoring is both more efficient and more useful when it's designed specifically to serve our upholding of Ends and future planning;

# KAREN LINDER



**Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

I am excited to run as an anti-racist. I believe our cooperative could do more to support both our employees and our community members who are people of color. I look forward to engaging with those who own our store, as well as the community at large.

**We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I manage our family farm, I have previously managed a small food co-op, and I previously served on the board of directors of a co-operatively owned distributor. I have been involved with co-operatives for most of my adult life.

**What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I hope to learn how our co-op is run. I hope to learn about who we are owned by and what their gifts are. I hope to learn from our employees what could be made better about our co-op, and how our co-op can have a bigger impact on our community. I hope to learn what my strengths are, and also areas where I can improve. I hope to learn how I can best support our employees and our community as a whole.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

I believe wholeheartedly in being profitable, so as we can count on our co-op's longevity. That is a priority for me. Our ends inform our corporate culture, which I equally feel is essential to guiding our co-op forward. It is critical to me that our ends are felt throughout every aspect of our business.

# **HYDE TAIDGHIN O'BRIEN**



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

I would like to serve on the Board because I think that the Board of Common Ground Food Co-op is not helping the Co-op live up to its Ends. I am personally invested in the local food system and live my life to create an equitable community in Champaign-Urbana. I think the Board could really use some new members with varied experiences and diverse views.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I am currently the Marketing & Communications Manager at The Land Connection in Champaign, IL. TLC's mission is to train farmers in resilient, restorative farming techniques; inform the public about the sources of our food and why that matters; and work to protect and enhance farmland so that we, and generations to come, will have clean air and water, fertile soil, and healthy, delicious food. In order to accomplish this, we partner with many local and regional non-profits, community groups, and businesses, including Common Ground. I am also the current Farmers Market Manager for Blue Moon Farm in Urbana and I serve on the Advisory Board for Urbana's Market at the Square. In short, I have a lot of leadership experience in the local community and the food and farming system that would greatly benefit the Board, Common Ground, and the community.

## **What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I want to learn about how the Board operates, what it sees as its role in relation to the Co-op, its Owners, and the community as a whole. I also want to figure out how the Board can be more directly involved in the community, so much so that being a Board member is seen as a role of importance and innovation. While I realize that the Board does not involve itself in the operational affairs of the Co-op, I want to learn

in what ways I, as a Board member, can interact with the community to better understand which needs the Co-op can fill and how it can better serve the community. I hope that by being a Board member, I can learn more about my place within the community and how I can better serve those around me.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

I will be an honest and candid voice that balances the needs of the Board, the Co-op, and the community for the betterment of all three. These difficult times are trying and stressful, and the Board needs to be there to ensure equity and inclusivity is considered at every level as we make the changes needed for the successful future of our community. Truly upholding our Ends is difficult, but is more important now more than ever, and I want to see the entire Board live those ends every day. I will lead by example in this regard.

# JESSY RUDELL



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

Common Ground's mission and the way it defines itself as a center of local food and community are critical now more than ever. As a longtime former staff member, I have been deeply involved in the co-op's operations and relationships and seen how a cooperative grocery store can connect the community directly with its means of survival in ways that corporate chains simply can't. Working at the policy level toward defining and achieving the co-op's Ends feels particularly important now, when building community and supporting the local food system are critical. The opportunity to help set the direction for the co-op's future, in particular, is exciting to me, as is the chance to serve Common Ground in a different kind of role from those I've held in the past.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I have been involved with Common Ground in many capacities since 2001. I started as a shopper and coreworker in the basement of the IDF, taking inventory, making signs, and cooking. In 2006 I was hired as produce manager, as operations manager in 2011, and finally as fresh merchandising manager in 2014. When I left employment at Common Ground in 2016, I was familiar with nearly every aspect of running the co-op, from refrigeration to farmer relationships to the budget. Since leaving the co-op, I have served as Executive Director of The Idea Store, overseeing that organization's formation as an independent nonprofit and move from Springfield Ave. to Lincoln Square (sound familiar?). I report to a board of directors myself and am responsible for all aspects of the store and the nonprofit. I work with the board to set policy and to define and fulfill the mission of the store. My experience directly with the co-op and knowledge of both operations and policy places me in a position to be of service as a board member in a wide variety of capacities.

**What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I hope that serving on the board will lead me to a deeper understanding of the role Common Ground serves in the community, and of my own role. Food and community are inextricably connected, and I look forward to learning more about how those connections work and how to strengthen them for everyone.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

One of the beautiful things about the co-op is that it serves a broader mission beyond making a profit on food. No other grocery store in town has the kind of commitment to buying local products, serving local residents, and building relationships with other local organizations that Common Ground has, not even close. All of this community good needs to be underpinned by the good stewardship of the co-op's resources, however. I am deeply committed to a strong and resilient local food system and believe that our co-op serves as a center of that system. In order for Common Ground to serve effectively in that capacity, it is essential to keep our eyes both on strong operations and on our larger mission.

# ROBERT TAYLOR



## **Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

I have enjoyed my time this past year on the board and wish to continue this service. I want to have my years of experience benefit an organization in both guidance and action. The CGFC board allows me to do this. My professional background of 20 years in Supply Chain and Operations Management can help to look at the operation of CGFC and help with continuous improvement. I have been very involved in the creation of policies and procedures within my organization. Adding a new social and professional group of dedicated people is a great benefit to me personally.

## **We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

Currently I work for CHEP North America which is the global leader in equipment pooling solutions, namely pallets. I have been with this organization for almost 20 years in a variety of roles from logistics, engineering, and operations. My current role is Director of Supply Chain. As Supply Chain Director, I have responsibility of close to 1,000 employees in a number of different locations across the US. My educational background includes an Associate's degree from Parkland, a Bachelor degree from Illinois State, and an MBA from the University of Oregon. I also have completed training in items such as Lean Manufacturing, Six Sigma, and several leadership development programs. I am also involved in our corporate community involvement program called CHEP Cares and have been a key player in our relationship with The Arbor Day Foundation. I also serve on the Board of Directors for my HOA and hold the office of Grounds & Maintenance Chair.

## **What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

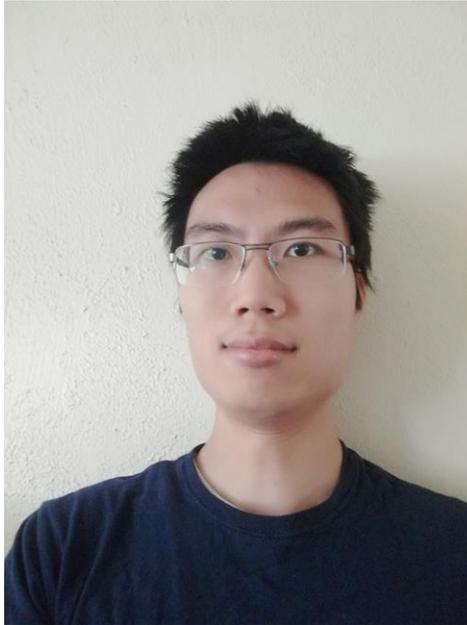
First and foremost is knowing that I am making a difference in my community with an organization that touches so many, particularly through the Round Up program. I am also a "foodie" so being involved with an organization centered around food and sourcing as much locally is exciting. I am also looking to expand my social network and get more involved with community members that share similar values and

can learn from each other. Working together on teams and particularly on challenges helps expand our knowledge and skills. I also look forward to learning more about how the greater supply chain impacts a local business and what kinds of innovative ideas can be discovered to improve efficiencies for all. Finally, I look at every new adventure as a way to be a better leader. I look to enhance my abilities to motivate others and develop strong relationships. I also hope that the experience on the CGFC Board will allow for more community opportunities in the future.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

Holding an executive position in my company, I understand the need for balance between meeting company and shareholder goals with the needs of employees and the community. On planning for the future, that is a huge part of my job now. My decisions will shape the future of a large organization for years to come so there must be very clear understanding of the challenges and needs to make a successful decision. Finally, on monitoring the operation of the grocery store, this is sort of second nature to me. I am constantly thinking about ways to optimize and improve organization.

# CALVIN WANG



**Why would you like to serve on the board? What excites you about policy governance?**

I am passionate about food issues in our community of Champaign-Urbana. I believe it is vital to address food affordability, accessibility, sustainability, education, and nutrition issues just to name a few. I am excited because common-ground has been in my experience in a unique place to impact these issues. As a business somewhere between a non-profit and a for-profit, policy governance is even more important than it usually is to navigate some of the gray areas. I believe setting the vision and direction through policy governance can have a profound impact on many of the important food issues in our community.

**We know that potential board members may have past experiences serving on boards, in other leadership roles, and within our community. What professional skills will you bring to our board? Share any relevant leadership experience.**

I am a leader in my workplace as a lead engineer/project manager I have experience leading a team and working with others. Professionally I bring a business management, website development, and other technology skills. I have also served as a freelance website developer and engineer so I have acquired some entrepreneurial business skills during that time. I am also a leader in other organizations such as the church that I attend and previous recreational sports teams. From those leadership roles, I have acquired more experience in interacting and working with different types of people with different interests.

**What do you hope to get from the experience of being on the board? What do you hope you will learn about yourself or our organization?**

I hope to get to know others who are passionate about food issues in our community. I believe service brings people together and look forward to building relationships over common interests. I hope to learn more about and contribute to the various ways the coop is pushing forward to better the Urbana-Champaign community. I hope to be challenged with new perspectives different than my own to have a

more complete picture of various community and food issues. Overall, by being on the board, I hope I can discover more about myself, get deeper in my knowledge about Common Ground, and contribute in any way I can.

**How will you help the board balance the needs of upholding our Ends, planning for the future of our community-owned cooperative, and monitoring the operations of our grocery store?**

I hope to bring a keen eye to prioritization and time-allocation as those are some of the necessary skills in my work life. I believe it is important in the balancing act of many things to recognize the limited nature of resources and be able to accurately assess and prioritize where those should go to have maximum effectiveness. In addition, I believe that creativity in planning for the future with new initiatives or ideas is important and should be balanced with the ongoing necessary needs of the coop. I hope to bring both creativity for new initiatives and realism for ongoing needs. Finally, during all this I think it is vital to stick to the 4 Ends as guideposts for all actions.