

# 2021 North Coast Co-op Election Guide

**Vote in the Board of Directors' Election  
September 21 through October 20**



**by Thomas Wehland**  
Employee Board Member

**D**ear fellow members,  
As I sat down to write this introduction, I promised myself I wouldn't mention the pandemic. I wanted an air of hopefulness, and if I'm being honest, I wanted to be able to spend a few minutes not thinking about it. I told myself that I would just write a brief message thanking you for your participation in our co-op's democratic process and, perhaps, extol the virtues of both the Co-op and democracies.

But I find that I cannot write about this election without thinking about the pandemic. It's tempting to look back on the recent past and remember only the struggles and the hardships; And I'm confident there have been plenty of both those things for most of

us. That said, as an employee board member I've also had the privilege to hear, many times, from our shoppers about how much it has meant to them that the Co-op continued to operate through these times as safely and conscientiously as possible. It has become clear to me that during a time of such upheaval and uncertainty, the services that our co-op provides are more important than ever. Even something as simple as working to keep the shelves stocked with toilet paper can have huge impacts.

I know the past two years have been hard. And I don't know what the next few will bring. Trying to look into the future is an uncertain endeavor in the best of times. That seems truer now than ever. The leaders we elect now will have the responsibility of steering our cooperative through that unknown future. They'll set the tone and the vision that our staff will follow.

I don't mean to give the impression that I am fearful of a future that includes challenges and pitfalls. That is certainly not the case. I am quite confident in our cooperative spirit and steadfastness. In my time as a Co-op employee, I have seen firsthand the evidence that our Co-op, starting

with our membership, is exceptionally resilient. We've weathered other storms together in the past, and I am sure we will again.

I'm pleased with the field of candidates we have to choose from in this election. And I look forward to a bright future—one that the leaders you select will help point the way toward. I wish the candidates luck in their elections, and I look forward to serving with the winners.

I'd like to close by saying thank you. Thank you, for participating in the Co-op with your dollars, with your smiles, with your stories, and today with your votes. I'm proud to count myself as a member of this Co-op along with all of you.

Thomas Wehland  
Employee Director & proud member



**Learn more about how  
to vote online on page 8!**



**SEE INSIDE FOR**  
**Candidate Statements • Voting Guide**  
**Official Ballot • Annual Membership Meeting**



# Meet the Candidates

All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



## Fareed Ahmed

### 1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

As a Director of the North Coast Coop, I will set forth strategic plans to establish evolutionary pathways within local agriculture development for creating more nutritious and more tasteful food with each generation of crop and livestock. I will promote the networking of expert scientists and our local Humboldt County farmers for purposes of using scientific and technological advancements towards nurturing the longevity of the Natural World through sustainable agriculture research and development. My directive within our organization is to advance environmentally sustainable practices that nourish our Planetary Host in producing healthier offspring through each descending generation. By directing the intelligence and ingenuity of our species towards the mutual development of all life, we establish avenues practicalizing the

symbiosis of our species within the Redwood Forest Ecosystem. Together, we can integrate the global missions of our community into practical avenues achievable through the simple steps taken by our Cooperative.

### 2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

My name is Fareed Atiq Ahmed. I was born at 2:28pm on May 9 1993 in Washington D.C on Mothers Day. For those familiar with the esoteric knowledge, my entire Numerology Core is the Numeral 9. My Existence is devoted in Service to the Eternal One (whom all life sprouts forth and to whom we all return). I inspire my team members to greatness, nurturing the infinite potential inherent dormant within us all. I am a visionary holding a broad range of knowledge and expertise, unique insights into the predicaments of life, and capacity for harmonizing diverse groups into mutually functioning systems. My background is in physics and I have spent the last 12 years developing the field of Interdimensional Physics through the integration of Eastern and Western modes of Universal Understanding. I have spent the last 4 years customizing structural layouts for creating Eco-Cities with the Redwood Forest and will be moving into prototype development in 2022.

### 3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

In this new decade, I see the Coronavirus as both our greatest opportunity and our most difficult challenge. The Coronavirus requires our world to become more health conscious. With our planet on the brink of extinction, our way of living, as a species, is being challenged for drastic change. Residing here within Humboldt County, one of the last remnants of the Ancient World of Nature left on the North American Continent, our Cooperative is in a position to guide our planet into the future. Our Cooperative has the opportunity to become a global leader by establishing our own system of Universal Health Care through the development of nutritional well-being within our food. There are certain foods that have natural nutrients capable of killing specific kinds of microbes within the body. By using our scientific and technological advancements to support the natural development of the food, we can establish evolutionary pathways, through descending generations, towards the creation of superfoods with such high nutritional content, they are capable of healing the body of illness and propelling evolutionary development within our biological systems.

### 4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

"It takes a certain darkness to see the stars" – Osho



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All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



## Laura Jones

### 1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

The Co-op has helped me over the years - as a shopper, a worker, and as a member. I would like to return the favor.

### 2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

I am a Humboldt State grad. & 34 year Co-op employee.\* I have served on 2 boards, attended Co-op Board meetings & Finance Committee. I have learned how boards work. I listen. I have an open mind.

\* Now retired.

### 3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

Opportunity – educating members, community & Co-op staff about racial & socio-economic inequity. Challenge – selling affordably priced Food while educating community, members, staff & workers about environmental responsibility, racial bias, fiscal prudence, etc.

### 4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

I am a Conservative Cooperator. For me, the Co-op is all about affordable good food. The Co-op needs to make \$ to buy food to sell to shoppers, and, the food needs to be affordable. The Co-op needs to make \$ to pay workers and staff who stock the food & balance the books.



# Meet the Candidates

All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



## Pamela Lee

### 1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

I was elected to the B.O.D. last fall for a one year term and would like to continue my role as a Director. I believe that worker and member owned businesses are one way we can move beyond our current extractive economy. I've spent my entire 30+ year career in Food Service of some type, mostly dedicated to improving the health of the foods being served to marginalized populations. Helping improve the health of people through access to nutritious foods is one of my personal missions, and is in alignment with the Co-op. I am grateful to the Co-op for weathering many storms and wish to give back to the community by being part of the decision making team.

### 2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

I have a degree in Foods and Nutrition and have spent my 30+ year career in Food Service of some type. I've run large School and Senior Programs as well as working in Natural Food Stores (the Co-op in the 80's and Real Foods in Helena Montana). My work in large institutional programs, aimed at Food Reform, was done with organizations that all had a Board of Directors, so I have years of experience either attending meetings, presenting to meetings, or in the case of my time with senior nutrition, serving on the Board. I also spent 2 years as a volunteer on the Grant Making committee with the Fund for Santa Barbara.

### 3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

Market Competition. We have Costco, Wild Berries and Eureka Natural foods that all offer organic merchandise. I think our biggest challenge is to identify ourselves as something different. We need to get the word out that a member owned business is different from a privately owned company that puts profit over people. We need to prioritize our employees and customers, while at the same time being fiscally responsible. We also need to have an amazing training program and a way to appreciate our staff so that employee retention, happiness and education stand out. We need to make the Co-op the place that people want to work and shop.

### 4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

I am the graduate of a 2 year leadership program called Radical Aliveness ([www.radicalaliveness.org](http://www.radicalaliveness.org)) that has been beneficial in helping me communicate more effectively. This program seeks to develop in it's students the ability to listen to and see multiple perspectives, approach communication from a non-shaming attitude and to facilitate smooth conversations. Having spent the past year on the North Coast Board of Directors, I believe that I will be of even more assistance if I am elected again.

# Meet the Candidates



All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



## Humnath Panta, Ph.D.

### 1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

I want to serve on the Board of Directors because I have education, experience, knowledge, and expertise to contribute to the board and the members of North Coast Cooperative. I can provide a meaningful contribution to the Coop and its member as a board member.

### 2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

I have several of experience working in both the public and private sectors. I am an experienced and well-organized team player who is highly motivated, energetic, detail-oriented, and results-driven, with expertise in administrative principles, practices and methods, principles and practices of budget development and administration, contract management, public administration, financial management, budgeting, financial policies, and procedure development, supervising and training staff, analyzing complex technical and administrative problems, representing government agencies, model development, validation, statistical design and methodology, market research, leading teams, and administration. Besides, I have a Ph.D. in finance, and I have been teaching and training university students for over ten years. Therefore, both my experience and education help me succeed as a board member.

### 3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

I see the following challenges for Co-op in the coming five to ten years:

- Competition with other retailers;
- Growth;
- Quality of products;
- Excessive product price increase, etc.

There are also opportunities for Co-op for growth. It can continuously expand its accessibility to the general public by reducing its pricing on products and services and increasing quality. The economy of scale helps the company improve productivity and lower prices which can be instrumental for growth.

### 4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

Currently, I am an assistant professor of finance at Humboldt State University. Before joining HSU, I was an associate professor at Brenau University. I earned my Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Texas at Arlington and a master's degree in Financial Economics from Ohio University. I also received a master's degree in International Relations and Trade from Monash University, Australia, and a BA in English Literature with a minor in Economics from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. I have over twelve years of university teaching, five years of public service, more than five years of high school teaching, and three-plus years of corporate work experience. Therefore, based on my education, experience, and expertise, I can significantly contribute to North Coast Coop as a board member.



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All candidates were given a 500-word limit to respond to the same four questions. Answers are printed as received with no edits.



## Alexandra Profant

### 1) Why would you like to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Coast Cooperative?

To learn more about the construct & operational functionary aspects of the Co-op & Contribute any knowledge or leadership skills which may be helpful to the Co-op.

### 2) Describe how your experience, including education, training and working with other groups or boards, will help you succeed as a board member.

My education is varied, and has led to a career as a foundation director and architectural conservator. This experience - international, national & western American – regional has led to a comprehensive understanding in the role ethno botany & historical settlement patterns play out in a (social scientific) communities realm, genomic preservation plant production and historic interpretation – of such is tantamount to our region’s sensitivity & evolution.

### 3) What do you see as the most important opportunities or challenges facing the Co-op in the coming five to ten years?

Balancing privacy & community interactions wherein electronic interfacing is displacing personal face to face communicating. Said challenges add to costs, cause ID theft(s) and financial abuse among our elderly populations & said rising costs affect food pricing and goods movement distribution.

### 4) Please share additional thoughts you would like the membership to know.

I often think of shopping at the tiny store – smaller in scale when our daughter was young and wonder if downsizing is in the Co-op’s future to bring us closer and cause opportunities to have smaller and more diverse locations. Thanks for considering my application!

# Voting Guidelines

Members can cast their ballots from September 21 through October 20 at 9pm.

## **Votes will be considered valid if all of the following apply:**

1. Membership with North Coast Co-op is current as of August 8, 2021.
2. Votes per ballot cannot exceed the number of open seats. There are four open seats. Two seats are for three-year terms, one seat is for a two-year term, and one seat is for a one-year term. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be seated for the longest terms.
3. Ballots must include the member's name written legibly, their membership number and their signature.
4. Write-in candidates must be current members of North Coast Co-op and agree to candidate requirements (list available at voting table).
5. All ballots, including mailed ballots, are to be received by 9pm on October 20.

## **Policies and Procedures**

- A vote may be cast online (preferred) or with a paper ballot.
- In the event that more than one otherwise valid ballot is cast by the same membership but by a different name on the membership, the vote of the majority will bind all.
- Electioneering will not be allowed within 15 feet of the ballot boxes or 5 feet of any entrances to the stores.
- Ballot boxes are located near the front entrance in each store.
- Ballots may be dropped off at ballot boxes in the Arcata or Eureka store or mailed to the address shown on the ballot. All mailed ballots must be received by 9pm on October 20.
- For a vote to be valid a quorum must be met, which is 250 or 5 percent of the membership (whichever is lesser) casting valid ballots.
- The four candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected.
- The Nominating Committee will count the ballots on October 23 and notify the membership with in-store signs by Monday, October 25.
- Household Shoppers on a membership are not eligible to vote.

## **Online Voting Guidelines**

- Online voting can be accessed through a web browser on a computer or mobile device.
- The member number, full name and signature prompts are required for a ballot to be valid.
- All voting prompts are optional. You may answer as many as you want to.
- Refreshing your browser window will restart the voting process. Only do so if you intend to start over.
- Step-by-step instructions on how to vote can be found on p. 8 of this Election Guide.

# Online Voting Guide

Vote online at [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote)

- Step 1 Go to [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote) on a computer, tablet or mobile device.
- Step 2 The front page has information on how to access this Election Guide electronically and the ballot submission deadline. Select START to proceed to the first question.
- Step 3 Enter your member number. This is a required step. Select NEXT to proceed to the next question.
- Step 4 Enter your First and Last name. This is a required step. Select NEXT to proceed to the next question.
- Step 5 You may choose up to four candidates to vote for from the selection (including write-in candidates). You may choose up to four write-in candidates as your choices by selecting any of the write-in options. (You will be prompted to enter write-in candidate names on the following page) Select NEXT to proceed to the next question. (If you choose not to vote on this question, select NEXT to continue to the next question.)
- Step 6 Draw your signature in the designated box. If you are on a computer, use your mouse or trackpad to draw your signature. If you are on a touchscreen device, use your finger or stylus to draw your signature. You may select the CLEAR button to remove the signature if you need to start over. This is a required step. Select SUBMIT to complete the voting process.

**Step 2**

**2021 OFFICIAL BALLOT**

Please read the Election Guide ( [www.northcoast.coop/electionguide](http://www.northcoast.coop/electionguide) ) and vote online OR by using a paper ballot in either store. The deadline to vote online or submit your ballot is October 20th, 2021 by 9:00PM PST.

4 Questions

START →

**Step 3**

What is your member number? \*  
(Required)

ex: 23

NEXT →

**Step 4**

Full Name \*  
(Required)

First Name Last Name

← PREVIOUS NEXT →

**Step 5**

There are four open General Director seats.

Vote for UP TO FOUR candidates in this section. If choosing one or more write-in candidates, you will be prompted to enter their name(s) after selecting NEXT. More than four votes in this section, write-in or not, will invalidate this ballot.

Fareed Ahmed  Laura Jones

Pamela Lee  Alexandra Profant

Humnath, Pantha, Ph.D.  Write-in #1

Write-in #2  Write-in #3

Write-in #4

← PREVIOUS NEXT →

**Step 5 (cont)**

Write-in #1

Provide the name of your write-in candidate

← PREVIOUS NEXT →

**Step 6**

Signature\*

Note that a signature is required.

Clear

← PREVIOUS This field is required. SUBMIT



# NORTH COAST CO-OP ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

ONLINE AT [NORTHCOAST.COOP/AMM](http://NORTHCOAST.COOP/AMM)

## CELEBRATE MEMBERSHIP

Get caught up on the on-goings of the Co-op, meet this year's board candidates and be the first to see our upcoming member benefits.

## STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

Meet with other members to learn about and discuss relevant community-based topics during breakout sessions lead by **Cooperation Humboldt**.

- Disaster Response Through Community Resilience
- The Future of Cooperatives in Humboldt
- Democratizing Finance: Public Banking

## APPLE & CHOCOLATE TASTING!

Sign up for one of two **FREE** tastings featuring local producers **Cacao Cocoon** and **Clendenen's Cider Works**. RSVP for a free tasting package to be picked up before the meeting.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10 AT 10AM**  
**FREE FOR ALL MEMBERS AT [NORTHCOAST.COOP/AMM](http://NORTHCOAST.COOP/AMM)**

## HOW TO RSVP FOR FOOD TASTING

Food tastings will be held online during the Annual Membership Meeting. Visit Customer Service at either store to RSVP and select which free tasting package you would like to reserve (chocolate or apples), and receive a redemption ticket for later pickup of your chosen tasting package.

Tasting packages will be available for pickup beginning Friday, October 8 - Sunday, October 10. **Last day to RSVP is October 1.**

For more information, visit [www.northcoast.coop/ammrsvp](http://www.northcoast.coop/ammrsvp)





NORTH COAST  
**COOP**

811 I St. Arcata & 25 4th St. Eureka | northcoast.coop

The **COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES** Seven

**voluntary  
& open  
membership**

*Democratic  
Member Control*

**MEMBER ECONOMIC  
PARTICIPATION**



**autonomy &  
independence**

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**EDUCATION, TRAINING,  
& INFORMATION**

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Cooperation  
among cooperatives

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**CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY**



# 2021 OFFICIAL BALLOT

Due Oct. 20  
by 9pm

Online voting option available at [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote)

Please read the Voting Guides on p. 7 and p. 8 of the Election Guide and vote online OR below.

All three lines below must be filled out and legible in order for this ballot to be valid.

Full Name *(Printed Clearly, Required)*

Member Number  
*(Required)*

Signature *(Required)*

Fold this section in second.

1. **There are four open General Director seats.**

Vote for up to **four** candidates in this section.

More than four votes in this section, write-in or not, will invalidate this ballot.

Fareed Ahmed

Pamela Lee

Alexandra Profant

Laura Jones

Humnath Pantha, Ph.D.

Write-in:

Write-in:

Write-in:

Write-in:

Fold this section in first to retain anonymity.

## Vote by October 20 at 9pm

Vote online at [www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote) or return your ballot to the provided ballot boxes available in both store locations.

Be sure to fold your ballot in thirds along the guides to retain anonymity.

You can also put your ballot in an envelope and mail it to:

**Attn: Membership Coordinator**  
**North Coast Co-op**  
**811 I Street**  
**Arcata, CA 95521**

Save a trip to the store by voting online at  
[www.northcoast.coop/vote](http://www.northcoast.coop/vote)

## 2021 North Coast Co-op Election Guide

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All ballots due by October 20 at 9pm

Return your ballot to the provided ballot boxes available in both store locations.  
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