

## **DE Advisory Committee Elections**

### **Candidate Statements**

**Name:** James Hunter

**Organization:** New Orleans Firemen's Federal Credit Union

**DE Class of:** 2019

**Campaign Statement:**

Throughout my career I have been a servant leader. It was not until my exposure to Credit Unions that I realized the, "Why behind what I do."

By choice, my Credit Union experience has afforded me the opportunity to work for a billion dollar credit union, a 500 million dollar credit union and currently a nearly 200 million dollar credit union. Uniquely, I have had the privilege of serving members of our community throughout 5 different states across the Southern Region. One common theme that I have recognized is that bad things happen to good people. The economic development traps that burden the United States are even more prevalent and apparent in the South. Low income and wealth, sub par living conditions, magnified by lack of opportunity and poor education has produced a vicious cycle of persistent poverty that greatly contributes to the wealth divide.

In order to serve the underserved and bridge the wealth divide, I created an affordable housing program that provided members of the community we serve to attain a 100% mortgage loan, with no PMI and allowed sellers to contribute up to 6% in closing costs. In addition, everyone who went enters the program is required to go through financial counseling through the credit union and also complete a HUD certified home buying course.

My DE project immediately provided a bridge for a large segment of members who were paying rent to the tune of a mortgage, but not building any equity. Members now have a new outlook on life and a path to homeownership. Everyone is not ready for a home, but through education and the right opportunity everyone can plant their seeds, and take back the ability to have an option. The impact of the DE project has spread across the South and even into the Northern states. As a result, I have shared the work with other like minded servant leaders to aide in promoting the motto of, People helping People.

Over the past two years , I have had the privilege to serve as an Executive Board member for Inclusiv, a CDCU based out of New York. In serving, I have embarked on my next DE project, "Predatory Lending" Through a non for profit 501c3, I have been fortunate to establish a payday loan alternative that has been piloted and in 11 months provided loans to over 250 members in the amount of 300K. The impact has translated into savings in interest rates fees in the amount of 900K. This is money immediately injected back into homes of the families that work hard to support themselves.

Everyday, I wake up I ask myself, "In who's life can I make a impact." People are my passion! That is the, "Why" behind what I do.

Please accept this narrative as my statement of interest. It would be my privilege and an honor to serve as an Advisory Committee Member.

**Name:** Daniel Marquez

**Organization:** LincOne Federal Credit Union

**DE Class of:** 2018

**Campaign Statement:**

I am interested in serving on the DE Advisory Committee to further expand and expose the passion and purpose of the Credit Union cooperative model to the Credit Union community near and far. I have been involved in the Credit Union Movement since a young child, growing up in a culture that celebrates community, diversity, and passion for people helping people. I have worked in Nebraska Credit Unions for 8 years and worked all areas of operation, specializing in Credit Union history, philosophy, principles, coaching professional development, philanthropy, community development and culture development. Serving communities in the capacity that Credit Unions do, inspire me daily to continue to impact individuals through innovation. I have worked with non-profit organizations for nearly 15 years, building experience in event planning, fundraising, operational leadership and project management. Helping communities, families, and individuals become financially fit and sustainable to dreams come true and create opportunity. I currently have developed a Drag Persona that specializes in financial literacy offering story hour workshops and activities for folks of all ages, colors, genders and sizes. Madam Nymphadora is a Credit Union Advocacy Warrior, passionate about spreading the message of the Credit Unions and financial well-being to all. She has developed programs to assist Credit Unions in reaching a broader, more diverse audience to fully embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Credit Union space. Madam Nymphadora has programs that can be tailored to interests specific to helping Credit Union staff and membership better understand diverse communities and provides training and tools to help these folks achieve much success.

**Name:** Julie Gee

**Organization:** CSE FCU

**DE Class of:** 2009

**Campaign Statement:**

I would like to express my interest in serving a second term on the CUDE Advisory Committee. Serving members and communities through financial education, literacy and pride in achieving and maintaining a good credit score, are a few of the drivers that feed my passion for the Development Educator movement. Earning the CUDE and ICUDE designations has changed my life. It is because of these designations that my current title is Trainer of Development and Education (DE)! As the Trainer of Development and Education at CSE Federal Credit Union, I have created a two-week onboarding program that includes educating new employees in credit union principles and philosophy. I have shared and collaborated with other development educators to ensure that the materials are real and relevant to our staff. Most recently, CSE has empowered me to reach out to our community with financial literacy presentations. I have reached out to the development educator community for ideas in best practices, methods and ways that promote the people helping people philosophy. The Development Educator community is a valuable resource – a family of friends – that works together to improve the lives of others. I have served as a Mentor in the U.S., Caribbean, Canadian and African DE programs over the past ten years, and bring a worldwide perspective of focusing on development issues and ways in which collaboration and networking bring about change. Serving on the CUDE Advisory Committee allows me to continue to serve as an advocate for the viability and strength of the Development Educator network. My goal in serving a second term is to continue to create awareness of the benefits of attending the DE program, as well as to continue to grow DE network initiatives beyond the DE Day of Service. In addition, I will continue to serve as a Mentor of the Development Educator (DE) program in support of this life-changing movement. As a member of the CUDE Advisory Committee, I will continue to listen to credit unions of all asset sizes as to how the DE program would best fit their credit union. I look forward to serving another term as a member of the CUDE Advisory Committee.

**Name:** Mario Vega

**Organization:** Guadalupe Credit Union

**DE Class of:** 2016

**Campaign Statement:**

Since the day I graduated from the DE program back in May 2016 I have always had interest in learning more about development issues and how credit unions make an impact to address them. After attending the DE program in Wisconsin I truly felt I had a purpose in the credit union industry because of what my credit union (Guadalupe) has done to improve our members' lives. I have attended several conferences in the credit union industry and from speaking to other credit union employees I realized there are many credit unions out there who have never heard of the Development Educator program and the impact it has on one's self, the credit union, and our communities. From the DE training I was able to identify methods, share ideas, create policies that would be inclusive and share Guadalupe Credit Union's mission and vision. A mission that addresses development issues here in Santa Fe, NM; "providing financial empowerment within the communities we serve". On June 2017 I attended a DE Workshop in Kenya. I learned about various development issues from credit unions (SACCOs) in Africa that are being addressed. While riding on the van from one city to another I was able to speak to an official from Accosca and the problem with plastic in Africa. We were able to discuss methods and ways credit unions can assist with this problem, again giving everyone a sense of purpose. Within my travels to 35+ different countries I tend to notice development issues that are clearly visible while others are not so visible. For example access to roads (transportation), gender inequality, access to clean water, etc... With my expertise in Risk Management I contacted three small credit unions in Northern New Mexico creating my DE project. I briefly explained to these credit union's the Development Educator program and how I could assist them with required annual audits (BSA, ACH, SAFE Act) to save them money and for them to focus their resources elsewhere. The credit union's asset sizes range from \$2M to \$23M. By providing this assistance for the past three years it has empowered these small credit unions to thrive and focus their resources on staff and/or addressing needs in their communities. I have assisted them with examiner findings and trained their staff on how to conduct certain audits. Some of my work has been recognized by New Mexico's Financial Institutions Division (State Regulators) for the assistance and guidance that I have provided to these small credit unions. The DE program is phenomenal but like everything else we can always make continuous improvement and learn something new each day to make it better.

**Name:** Brent Rempe

**Organization:** Allegiance Credit Union

**DE Class of:** 2015

**Campaign Statement:**

Going through Credit Union Development Education in September 2015 was one of the most transformative learning experiences of my life. I am interested in the DE Advisory Committee to give back to a program that has given so much to me. I entered the credit union movement in April 2014 after a decade of non-profit work in education. As a mission-driven person who strives toward servant leadership, I felt like I made a difference in the lives of my students every day in education. It was not until DE in 2015 that I realized that credit unions help me live my purpose through the difference we cooperatively make in the lives of our members. I believe my experience and perspective - both before and after going through DE - will help me serve in an advisory capacity as the DE program continues to evolve. I am an educator at heart who has formally studied organizational development and adult education, two elements of DE. Since DE, I have earned my I-CUDE and have worked with credit union professionals in Canada and across Asia and Africa. I will bring a unique international perspective to the committee. I also hope to serve as a sounding board and an additional resource for DEs who are brainstorming how to implement their first DE project. I am a strong believer that DE projects come in all shapes and sizes and I hope through the role as a DE Advisory Council member, I can encourage DEs to act and quickly start a project within with their sphere of influence at their credit union or in the community. I am always available to DEs to discuss ideas. My first DE project was "Finanzas para Todos," bringing together three credit unions to offer a six-week financial capability continuing education course at a local community college. My second was developing a 90-minute principles and philosophy workshop for my credit union. A subsequent DE project launched the annual statewide BizKids Entrepreneurship Contest in Oklahoma open to all co-ops in the financial, electric, agricultural, and other sectors with over 100 middle school student participants each year. My most challenging DE project partnered the African Cooperative Development Foundation with Mount St. Mary Catholic High School in Oklahoma City to build infrastructure (so far three classrooms and community center with a lending library – about 70% of the funding coming from DEs!) at Don Bosco Special School in Likuyani, Kenya as well as start a service-learning and cultural-immersion program that brings Mount St. Mary students and teachers to Don Bosco each summer. Current DE projects in my credit union include starting a financial counseling program, developing a Hispanic outreach initiative, and training a team of staff volunteers on a structure to quickly implement staff-led projects to improve the member experience. Co-opting the words of my Africa DE classmate Diana Dykstra – the success of a DE project depends on - "thinking big, starting small, and scaling fast." I believe to have success with DE projects it is important to start small, with something that needs little approval, and experiment – just take a risk and try something. The momentum makes it easier to accomplish bigger projects. We would not have been able to have had the success we did with Don Bosco Special School without the other wins along the way. I believe my education, experience with DE projects, international credit union exposure, passion for the movement, and desire to serve others will benefit the DE community and make me an ideal candidate for the DE Advisory Council.

**Name:** Amanda Stevens

**Organization:** TwinStar Credit Union

**DE Class of:** 2017

**Campaign Statement:**

I became a CUDE in September of 2017 and it transformed my life. Realizing “people helping people” is more than just a phrase to so many in the credit union movement has given me a passion for my career that I did not know was possible. Since 2017 I have completed several DE projects. I’ve completed two life simulations with the local community college sociology department. This entailed planning with the sociology professors, coordinating volunteers and student participation. Both events were highlights and the college is thrilled with the partnership. I’ve also mobilized the DEs at TwinStar Credit Union. We are having semiannual meetings focusing on how we can help each other with DE projects. As a result of organizing TwinStar’s DEs, there has been increased volunteer involvement with the TwinStar Foundation. Looking to the future at TwinStar, I will be developing the TwinStar Foundation, helping to give it more presence in our community and finding places where we can make the biggest impact. I was proud to mentor in September 2018. Assisting my team through the process was a joy and I wish everyone who makes a career in the credit union industry could go through CUDE. Employees noticed a difference after I returned, and I continue to share the passion I have for the program and the credit union movement. Someday I would love to travel internationally with CUDEs. I would love to serve on the DE Advisory Committee because it influenced my life and I want to see the program thrive for years to come. Part of my role at TwinStar is a financial-literacy educator, and this goes hand in hand with the development issues that the CUDE program focuses on. My background in education would enhance the committee and I would be excited to serve in this capacity. Thank you for your consideration.

**Name:** Josh Smith

**Organization:** SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union

**DE Class of:** 2012

**Campaign Statement:**

Like many CUDEs, it was my initial experience with the Credit Union Development Education program that first sparked my passion for the credit union difference. I had always been proud to serve Members, but DE showed me the real power and potential of our cooperative movement. I have since been honored to serve as both a DE mentor and facilitator, along with directly supporting the 2016 DE Workshop. I also currently serve the program as a member of the DE Scholarship Committee. Additionally, I'm fortunate to serve as the primary liaison for the DE program at my credit union. By coordinating our DE selection process and leading our annual DE Day of Service activities, I have first-hand experience in helping others "bring home" the incredible passion that comes with this amazing program. Seeing my colleagues discover that CUDE passion and helping them use it in the service of others is something I strive to do every day. Lastly, my position at SchoolsFirst FCU has provided me with skills that will be a benefit to the committee. In my role as Executive Director of Credit Union Advocacy, I have demonstrated the ability to set forth a strategic plan, successfully educate and motivate others, and accomplish goals critical to the success of my organization. It's my hope that this statement of interest effectively illustrates not only my support for the program, but also my desire to help it continue evolving for the future. I appreciate your consideration and hope to have the opportunity to serve all of you as a member of the DE Advisory Committee.