

2015 Statement of Intent Allen Wan

Who am I?

By training, I am an electrical engineer (Rice University) and a lawyer (Northwestern University). At the Dallas Makerspace, I play an amateur auto mechanic. In addition to working on cars I have had a life long fascination with logistics and inventory management. At the Makerspace, this translates into a rather quirky interest in the consumption rates of soda and toilet paper.

Some of my contributions include:

1. I spearheaded and implemented our practice of labeling our cleaning supplies so that people consistently return them to a single location. Before, cleaning supplies would float throughout the Space and if you wanted to find the Simple Green, you would have to search the Space to find it. As a side note, to get the permanent marker labels to last, I clear coat the label because unsurprisingly, some of the cleaners will dissolve the not so permanent marker.
2. Back in the day we use to have a hodgepodge of drills all requiring different batteries which were never charged when you needed them. I proposed and implemented an initiative where we standardized on a single battery type so that all of our battery operated tools could share a collective battery pool.
3. I am often associated with the automotive committee and I certainly consider it my biggest success. That is not to take anything away from the many other people who have taken leading roles in running the committee. Rather, it's an example of something that I started, and helped run, but more importantly it is something that has garnered enough community interest that others have now taken it over.

Why am I running?

Like many at the Space I am frustrated. The Dallas Makerspace has grown enormously and with the growth has come a need to operate the growing administrative back end that supports the operations of the Space. I think the primary objective of the board should be to support the creative endeavors of the members and specifically the committee chairs.

Although I am extremely appreciative of the enormous contributions that board members both past and present have made to our community, the historical reasons for the board to directly oversee and scrutinize spending no longer apply. It is not the job of the board to antagonize our members and they desperately need to stop harassing our volunteers. I want our committee chairs to be able to say that, **"My job is easier because of everything the board does."** Currently, that is not the case. The board that historically served as a watchful steward of our scarce resources has become an obstacle that must be placated and appeased.

It is my goal to shift operational decisions out of the board and into the committees. Doing so will not only free up the board to handle the growing amount of administrative work required to run the Space but also encourage the best people to volunteer to be committee chairs. No one likes being micro-managed. By empowering the committee chairs, we will be able to attract the best individuals into those roles.

The overly detail oriented attitude of our administration extends to the membership as well. The administration has recently asserted that the Space will not provide printer paper over the contrived fear that some might misuse it. Although this is but one example, the attitude has begun to permeate much of our decision making (Why don't we stock tape?), and I could not disagree more with the premise and attitude. Paper supports the basic functioning of the Space. We need it to print our forms and make quick signs. It is absolutely absurd that members of our administration demand that people put up signs on their projects while simultaneously denying them the basic tools to make those signs.

This kind of disconnect between what is demanded and what is provided is not only frustrating, but insidious. Frustration causes key volunteers to lose interest. As an organization that depends on volunteers, we need to keep our high contributors happy.

The Space exists to enable the creative endeavors of our members and the greater community. More to the point though, our members are what make the Space possible. The Space exists for their benefit. Things like **tape, paper, X-Acto knives, Sharpies, glue, and even basic screws and nuts and bolts**^[1] should be provided. These are fundamental tenets of my platform and among the first things I will fight to change.

What can I offer?

A litany of complaints does not make a campaign. The reason I think you should vote for me is that many of the issues our Space currently face happen to be interests and strengths of mine. I am fascinated by the challenge of providing and stocking a nut and bolt set that is both complete enough to be useful, but not so expansive as to make it too difficult to keep stocked. What kinds of tape? What kinds of glue? These are questions that interest me. The initiative to answer these questions is something I can offer our community.

As we grow, our administrative demands continue to increase. It is becoming an accepted reality that the Space will likely hire its first employee over the next year. Our IRS filings this year will more than double in length due to our increased revenue. My legal experience and training can help us take these next steps.

I was nominated by Paul Brown.

Although trademarked names are used and my current intent is to support the procurement of these name brands, I reserve the option to support and am open to the procurement of more cost effective equivalents.