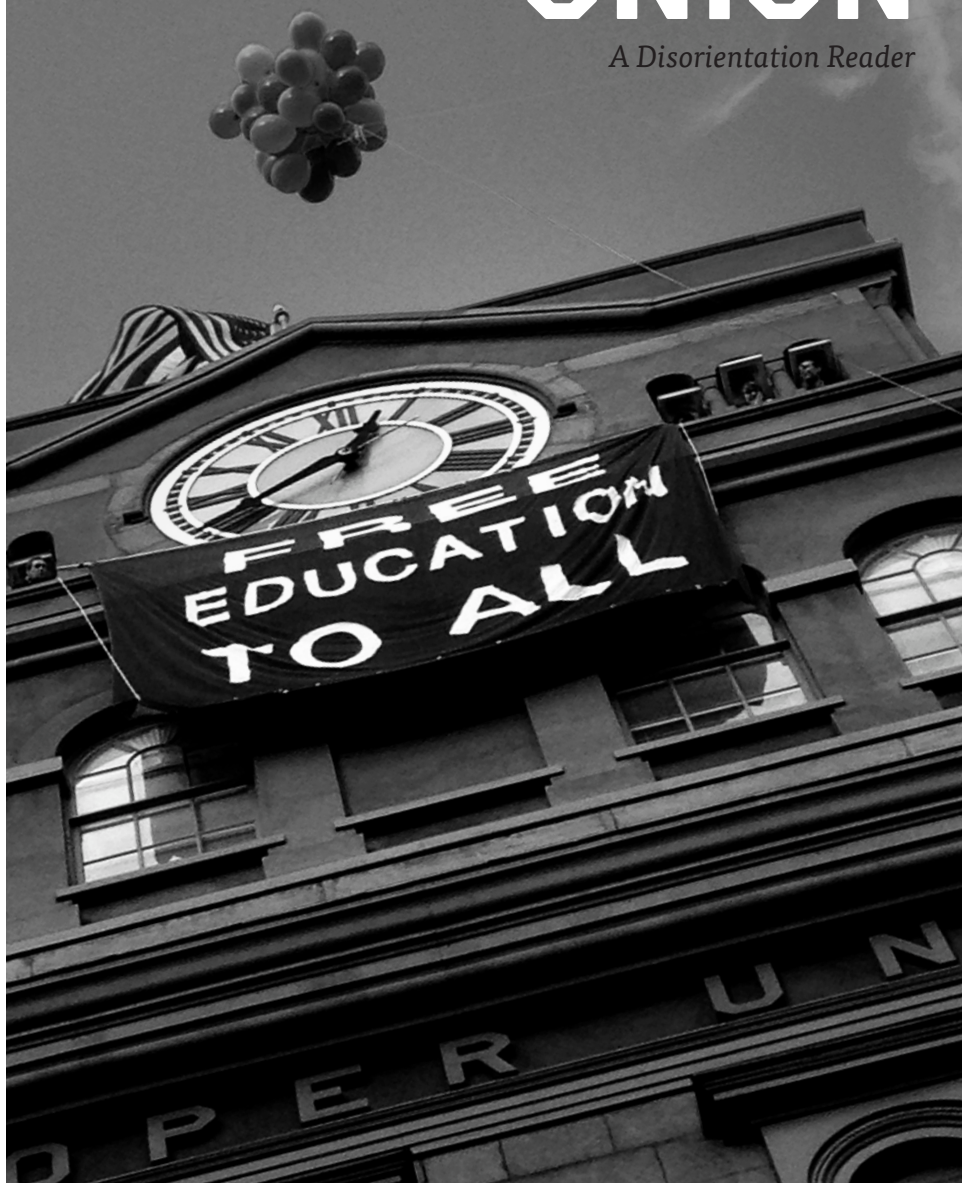


# FREE COOPER UNION

*A Disorientation Reader*



# *dis*ORIENTATION

is a student-led *counter*-orientation intended to introduce you, the incoming class of 2017/18, to the real story of Cooper's dense internal politics, as well as larger student issues, and to preserve institutional memory that is all too often expunged upon graduation.

**A note on abridgement.** Much of the content in this reader has been ~~hacked and slashed~~ edited to fit within these tiny pages. You can access unabridged versions of the works — and other content like videos — online.  
[freecooperunion.github.io/disorientation](https://freecooperunion.github.io/disorientation)

**Correct us if we're wrong.** We did our best to fact-check. But facts are often disputed around here. We're happy to make corrections.

**There are no stupid questions.** Write us an email and we will get back to you: [cooperunionsos@gmail.com](mailto:cooperunionsos@gmail.com) or send us a text/voicemail: 917.746.5634

# **disCONTENTS**

## **Removing Barriers Mobilizes Resources**

What do elevators, undersea cables, democracy, and Cooper have in common?

## **Two Educations for the Price of None**

An open letter to the incoming class from Jakob Biernat, Art '16

## **Free Cooper Union**

Who we are and what we stand for

## **On the Tuition Issue**

A refutation of twisted histories by Cooper's resident historian Peter Buckley

## **#STEPDOWN**

A look at Bharucha's track record as President

## **Must Love Debt**

A timeline based on research by Barry Drogin, EE '83

## **Waste Makes Want**

Comparative financial background by Adrian Burton Jovanovic, BSE '89

## **Faces and Places**

Keep your friends close...

## **Spectrum of Allies**

Where recognized Cooper groups stand on the issue of tuition

## **Stay in the Know**

How to reach us and how to help us reach you.



*Students in the School of Architecture painted the third floor lobby black after bearing witness to tuition.*

# REMOVING BARRIERS MOBILIZES RESOURCES

By **David Gersten**, School of Architecture faculty

**I THINK WE** all recognize that our Cooper Union faces an existential crisis.

*"I for one, have been blessed with...a moment in education... where I have had...a Social Contract and many of the people sitting today in this audience, have made my life...more understandable, because of their understanding of the Social Contract." —John Hejduk*

It is not that: The Cooper Union holds up free education, but that free education holds up The Cooper Union.

It is not that: we can no longer afford to: freely educate, but that we cannot afford to break the promise of Free Education

The largest single financial asset that the Cooper Union currently holds is its promise of free education: TO ALL. The value contained within this promise far exceeds our current endowment as well as the physical properties held by the institution including the land under the Chrysler Building.

Our challenge and obligation, our social contract, is to comprehend and make more understandable how to mobilize the resources contained within this promise.

Peter Cooper was directly involved in countless inventions. There are three specific inventions that offer direct lessons to the questions we face. When this Foundation Building was

constructed it was one of the tallest buildings in New York City. It contained an elevator shaft that waited four years until Elisha Otis invented the "safety elevator," an elevator containing a mechanism that secured the elevator cab if the cable was cut. This securing mechanism mitigated the risk of injury or loss from collapse and created the credibility necessary for the elevator to be widely used by the public.

The safety elevator removed the vertical barrier of walking above eight stories and the city EXPLODED upwards, creating an entirely new geography of human inhabitation. Removing the vertical barrier mobilized the resources that fueled the 150-year vertical rise that is: New York City.

Peter Cooper was also directly involved in pulling the Transatlantic Telegraph Cable between the two continents, compressing weeks into seconds, in the exchange of: information and ideas. The Transatlantic Cable removed the communications barrier of shipping speeds and the exchange of ideas EXPLODED between the two continents, creating an entirely new geography of human interaction and exchange. Removing the communication barrier mobilized the resources that fueled the 150-year continuous transformation of Global communications.

The massive resources invested in creating each of these transforma-

tions were mobilized as a direct result of removing barriers and articulating a credible vision of the consequences of their removal.

Peter Cooper's years of struggle in pulling the Transatlantic Cable were overcome by his clarity of vision, that through this connection, "Knowledge shall cover the earth as waters the deep."

Articulating this vision, keeping this promise, required the third invention, I believe, Peter Cooper's greatest invention: the removal of barriers to education. Education is by definition a transformative pursuit, individuals come together and engage in transformative interactions and experiences: Knowledge evolves. Creating circumstances of proximity and interaction among a great multiplicity of ideas and questions, leads to mutual transformation and new forms of knowledge. In creating the Cooper Union, Peter Cooper invested in the profound idea that removing the barriers to education creates a dynamic crucible of free thought where a great diversity of people and their questions can interact and co-evolve, developing new linkages, new thought processes, and new questions. Peter Cooper understood that the barriers to education were not only unjust to those that they excluded, but those barriers impoverished the internal life of an institution. Barring any segment of the population creates a diminished geography of human knowledge and experience within the

educational community.

Like the vertical barrier removed by the safety elevator, the invention of the Cooper Union removed the artificial age limit above which people could freely participate in the transformative interactions of education. Like the Transatlantic Cable, the removal of the financial barriers to education collapsed the distances within the vast and uneven geographies of resource distribution and accumulation, bringing into direct proximity those who would otherwise have an ocean between them. Removing the barriers to education creates an entirely new geography of human: proximity, interaction and transformation, a new geography of knowledge and imagination. The value and meaning of the Transatlantic Cable and the global communications revolution that it unleashed is found in the exchange of: knowledge and ideas that pass through it. The Cooper Union is Peter Cooper's greatest transformative invention, because it creates transfor-

**It is not that we can no longer afford to freely educate, but that we cannot afford to break the promise of free education.**

mation itself. It is the invention that sustains invention and contributes to the continuously expanding universe of knowledge that elevates mankind.

There are many forms of interaction where the introduction of a financial barrier to participation dramati-

ly alters the meaning of the interaction. I would offer the example of participatory democracy. While the process of participatory democracy requires the mobilization of vast resources, gathered together from all of the participants, requiring an individual fee to participate in voting would alter the meaning of the process, to such an extent, that it would collapse the value of participation, it would no longer be participatory democracy.

In fact, the ultimate safety device, the mechanism that secures individual agency and gives credibility to all forms of collective judgment, is the: Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each and every Right guaranteed by this United Nations declaration requires the mobilization of resources. These rights are of such fundamental value to mankind that the burden of these resources must be borne by US ALL. Assigning an individual fee to those who are the supposed beneficiaries of these rights is to collapse the value of all of our rights. I imagine this principle was in mind when crafting: Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Article that designates education as a Human Right and specifically says: "higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit." They must have been quoting Peter Cooper.

This institution is a shining demonstration of the transformative powers of removing the barriers to education. We have been pulling this cable for 150 years and now we face the risk that we are out of resources, that our debt load is too heavy and the only way to keep moving forward, may be to "cut the cable" and introduce the

barrier of tuition. This would not be moving forward at all, this would be a collapse in the value of the entire endeavor. For, in this journey, there is no other shore to reach; we are pulling the continuously expanding geographies of knowledge and imagination. The distance traveled creates the geography itself as we continue to move forward. Cutting the cable is not the solution; we must invent and construct the safety mechanisms that secure the continuous evolution of knowledge without barriers. We must articulate a credible vision of the value and consequences of removing the barriers to education, and this WILL mobilize the resources to continue the journey. As a way-finder at sea uses the force of the storm to out-run the storm we must keep the promise of free education to all, in order to secure the many promises of free education to all.

In moments of existential crisis, time has a tendency to collapse, whole chains of events that may usually require years and decades to unfold suddenly happen overnight. If we can get this right, if we can articulate a model that secures the credible promise of education without barriers, the transformative consequences will far exceed those of the "safety elevator" and the Transatlantic Cable. We will have shifted the trajectory, unleashing new geographies of knowledge beyond our wildest imaginations.

There is a city to be built rising above the geography of our current models of education, a city built upon the many promises of education without barriers. A new city elevating mankind through the transformative forces of: Knowledge, Imagination and Ideas.

# TWO EDUCATIONS FOR THE PRICE OF NONE

*An open letter to the incoming class from Jakob Biernat, Art '16*

**IT IS OFTEN** written that the crisis and scandal of Cooper Union is a crystallization of a national and global struggle in higher education, most recently in ArtInfo's article by Ben Davis:

*The attack on education in our era of austerity is a nationwide — rather, worldwide — phenomena. Without changing the larger picture, the same forces that are affecting institutions of higher learning everywhere are going to continue to press Cooper. Turning the tide of policy towards respecting the value of education as a public good is the only real sustainable solution for everyone. Conversely, accepting the inevitability of the situation at Cooper without anger only helps further set the limits of what is “realistic” to expect from the system — which right now isn't working very well, saddling young people with ever-greater levels of debt in return for pursuing their dreams.*

*One way or another, Cooper Union will end up being a symbol — either of an ideal to be reached for, or of the terrible present-day wisdom that says that ideals only matter for those who can pay.*

I firmly believe this to be the case. If you've ever yearned to be an actor in history rather than just a member of its audience, there is hardly a more exhilarating place to be as a college student than here at Cooper, here in a small, swiftly-beating heart of something much larger and more long lasting than each of our singular educations, whatever that means for each of us. This is an opportunity to act, to do excellent things, to serve and protect a tremendously worthy and fragile ideal.

It is also a responsibility. If the Board of Trustees has their way, you, the Class of 2017, will be the last class admitted on a full-tuition merit based scholarship. If those of us in the community fighting that decision have our way, you won't be. But either way, you all know you've been given an amazing gift, an unbelievable chance. Your lives will be changed forever, I guarantee it. But that gift must be repaid in citizenship, in contribution to our small community. It will be difficult, extraordinarily so, to juggle your work and your participation in the politics of the school and your personal growth, but you have to try.

By responsibility and citizenship, I mean a responsibility to try to confront that anxiety head-on rather than avoiding it, to do the research, to look at the history of the school and particularly the history of the last two years, the problems facing the school, the divisions, the range of possible solutions, the actions, the words, the politics, all of it.

This is not an attempt to tell you what to think. Of course, I put my bias on display, writing this from the Jamshed's desk in the midst of a student direct action against the administration. But still, I do not want what I am writing to



serve as a form of pressure, but rather as a way to help in the process of alleviating the pressure of not-knowing. I remember that pressure vividly from being in your shoes last year. Cooper is a lot to try to figure out, and it will take a long time to get comfortable here. That's part of why it's so exciting, but current events and circumstance can also cause a lot of anxiety.

A lot will be asked from you: good faith to your fellow classmates, who are just as much your teachers as anyone else will be; good faith to yourself and your work. You will make until you can't make any more. Then you'll make more. Then you'll write a couple papers. Try to take care of yourself, but know that this is the reality. Get sleep, try to eat well. You'll need it to get used to sleepless nights and constant stretching of your capabilities. You'll be taken apart, laid bare, and



*"The Illuminator"  
projects Peter Cooper's  
image onto the facade  
of the Foundation  
Building in solidarity  
with the summer 2013  
occupation of the  
President's office.*

empowered to build again with new clarity. Your classrooms will take the diffuse light of you and your fellow students and refocus it into something shockingly coherent, collectively, a light that lets you see farther into your work and into each other as a community of learners, a light that makes the paths we all must take more visible.

Please take your time. This is an urgent moment, a historic moment, but please pay attention to yourself as well. Your responsibility is not to act rashly, but rather to develop your understanding, to be critical, to pay attention deeply. Read. Think. Reflect. But whatever you do, don't ignore things. Be a member of the school, in all the ways that the factors of physical location (little scraps of land in the deep of Manhattan) and situation (ideological, vast, complex, widely implicating) and people (dedicated, remarkable, nourishing, challenging, sometimes adversarial, healing, empowering) exist and create a school. Whatever results of the attention I ask that you pay, whether or not you agree with x, y, or z, what is essential is that you have thought about things. Don't waste this chance.

Good luck y'all.

# FREE COOPER UNION

*We are students, faculty and alumni at  
The Cooper Union, organizing in response to the  
unfolding tuition and student debt crisis since 2011.*



## *Why the red clock?*

In December of 2012, eleven students occupied the Foundation Building's clock tower for one week in order to combat the administration's claim that adopting tuition would be the college's only sustainable financial model. During the lock-in, students began organizing as *Students For A Free Cooper Union* and issued these demands and principles (opposite page). Building off of the 2012 Quebec student movement against tuition hikes, symbolized by the carré rouge (red square), student occupiers at Cooper illuminated the clock tower with red lights. The red clock has since been a symbol of Free Cooper Union supporters.



## DEMANDS

1. The administration must publicly affirm the college's commitment to free education. They will stop pursuing new tuition-based educational programs and eliminate other ways in which students are charged for education.
2. The Board of Trustees must immediately implement structural changes with the goal of creating open flows of information and democratic decision-making structures. The administration's gross mismanagement of the school cannot be reversed within the same systems which allowed the crisis to occur. To this end, we have outlined actions that the board must take:
  - Record board meetings and make minutes publicly available.
  - Appoint a student and faculty member from each school as voting members of the board.
  - Implement a process by which board members may be removed through a vote from the Cooper Union community, comprised of students, faculty, alumni, and administrators.
3. President Bharucha steps down.

## PRINCIPLES

### *Higher Education Bubble*

The over-inflated costs of higher education have placed more than a trillion dollars of debt onto the backs of students. Higher education should be a means of social mobility and intellectual liberation, but it has devolved into an industry that exploits students for profit. Inevitably this bubble will burst and what appears to be a healthy and growing educational system will be revealed as a model that was always doomed to fail.

### *Grow Down*

The administrators who have grown us into this mess are trying to grow us out of it. Investing in the higher education bubble is short-sighted and uncreative. Playing a larger role in one's community provides strong roots. If we refuse to invest in a growth model and reaffirm our mission, we stand to see the principles of free education bring life back to our own community and other institutions as well.

### *Structures for Transparency and Integrity*

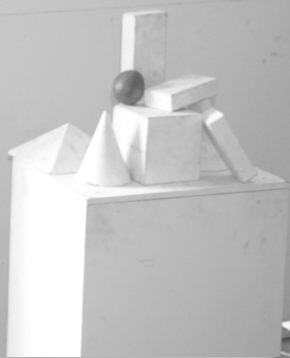
Bloated and visionless administrations have become an epidemic threatening institutions of higher education all across America. We must rebuild the governance of these institutions with open flows of information and democratic decision-making structures. Carrying a mission such as free education will require principled, rather than self-sustaining, leadership.

Seniors turn their backs on Bharucha as he speaks at graduation



On Peter Cooper's birthday, holding a surprise resignation party for Bharucha.

Painting a still-life during the lock-in.



Under threat of losing their degrees if they didn't vacate, occupying students link arms to show that they're not budging. It worked. The occupation lasted for two months, ending in a negotiated agreement



# ON THE TUITION ISSUE

Excerpts by **Peter Buckley**, humanities faculty, vice-president of the full-time faculty union, and historian of The Cooper Union

**COOPER UNION WAS** established as a free school in almost all of its educational activities. The night schools of art and science were always free, and explicitly made so in the founding documents. The Day School of Art for Women, originally called the Female School of Design, has a more complex history that is worth examining in close detail given the way that the very small numbers of fee paying students admitted to the school have been shoved into a Trojan horse and wheeled into Peter Cooper's founding intent.

Whereas those students in the Night School, presumed to be already at work, could use Cooper Union to improve their careers and fortunes, some women in the Day School could use their art courses to preserve their class location. Both the industrial (free) and amateur (paying) students in the Female School of Design needed each other according to the women's advisory council, which served as a supplementary level of trusteeship: the wealthier among the students could provide models of social refinement and funds, whereas the more unfortunate could provide examples of seriousness of purpose...

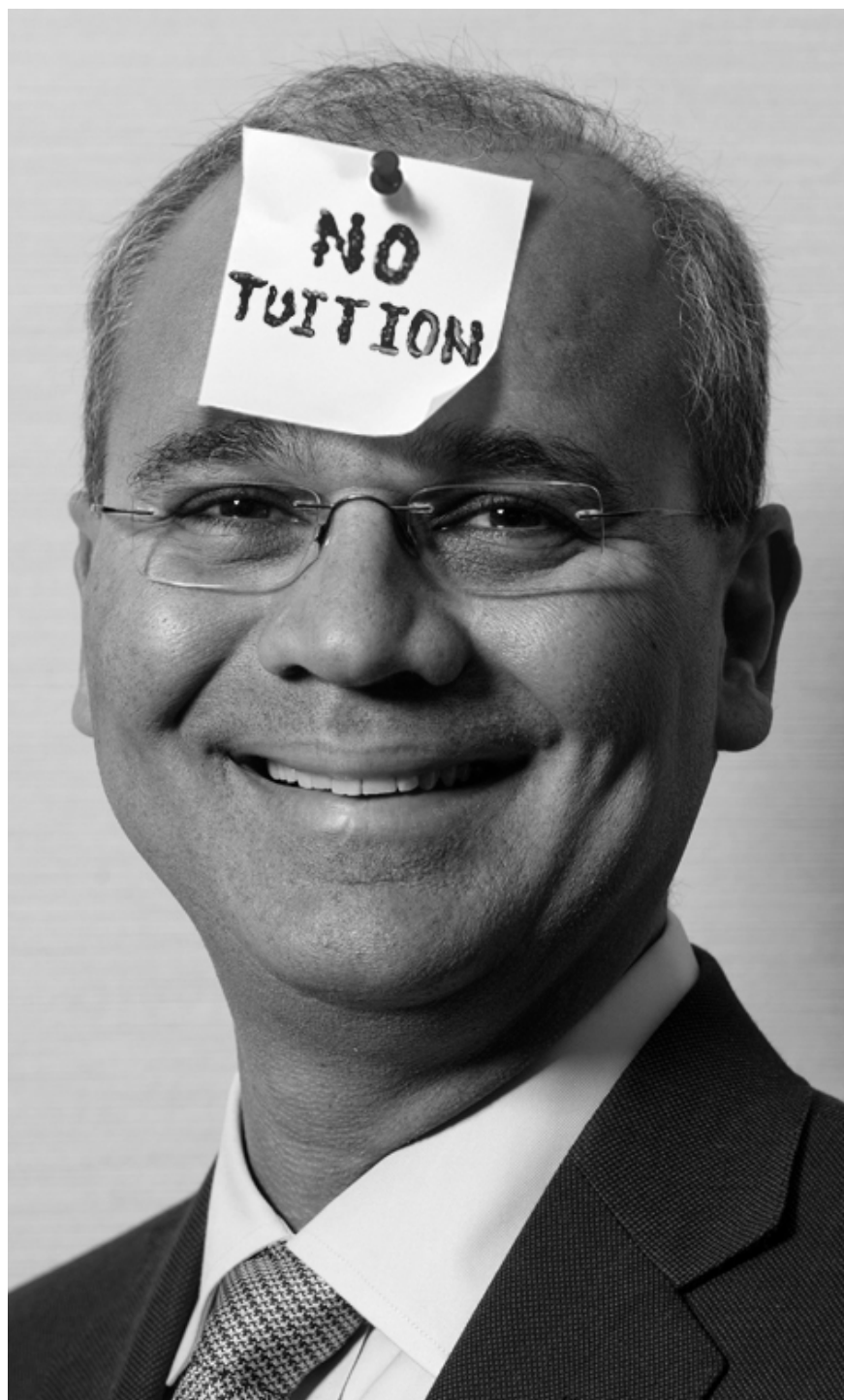
By the tenth annual report, the emphasis on training for "self-support" had been firmly re-established and the vestiges of the amateur class were removed:

*"On the whole, the attempt to instruct women in Art, with a view to securing a livelihood, may be pro-*

*nounced a success, but the conditions of success are in this the same as in all other pursuits, unwearied devotion to the work to be done. The only failures which occur, aside from the want of natural capacity, are due solely to the lack of industry and perseverance on the part of the pupil. Such failures occur quite as often with men as with women, and hence the Trustees see no cause for discouragement in the attempt to educate the latter for a career of honest industry in the arts of design. The cost of conducting the school during the last year, for instruction, has been \$5,118.19. The instruction is absolutely gratuitous, and no paying pupils have been or will hereafter be received. (Annual Report v10, 1869.)"*

From 1870, "free" was added to the official title of the day school.

By 1869 then, all courses that led to certificates, diplomas or, eventually, degrees were free. The 1902/3 date floated by the Office of the President is designed, for legal and ideological purposes, to separate free tuition from the era and intent of the founder. The date refers to the new day school of technology that only started in 1902. The school could not have been free before 1902 because it didn't exist! The President is overly keen to establish a new history of free tuition at Cooper Union to make sure that the mission of the whole college is only a matter of Carnegie's cash rather than Cooper's conviction.



# #STEPDOWN

*Is Bharucha still 'salvageable' as President? Could he conceivably change his course to save Cooper Union with its mission of "Free Education to All"? It's worth looking back at Bharucha's track record to assess whether or not he is fit to lead.*

## **Bharucha has never supported the mission.**

He refuses to recognize the value of tuition-free education or its role in the history of Cooper Union. He has never stated that returning to a tuition-free institution is a goal or priority. On the eve of his inauguration, he ordered the mission statement be changed on cooper.edu, to omit the section about merit-based full-tuition scholarships being granted to all admitted students.

## **Bharucha has not delivered on repeated promises about transparency in decision-making**

On September 21st, 2012 the Office of the President introduced "Board Reports" to "provide information about decisions and other outcomes that result from the quarterly Board of Trustees meetings." Only one board report has ever been published.

## **Bharucha has not acknowledged the Board's financial negligence.**

Despite numerous articles published on Cooper's financial decisions in light of the Vote of No Confidence, there has been no communication from the Board of Trustees to claim responsibility for their negligence. Bharucha has blamed the alumni, students, faculty and community and approved of passing debt onto future students.

## **Bharucha cherry-picks from history to support his agenda.**

In 1902 after Andrew Carnegie gave his large donation to Cooper, it was decided that all admitted students would receive full tuition scholarships because of the "insidious divide" between the paying and non-paying students.

## **Bharucha has marginalized and disregarded the voices and alternative models of the student, faculty, staff, and alumni community over the last two years.**

### **1. The Way Forward**

The Way Forward is a document put together by alumni, students, professors and faculty that go by Friends of Cooper Union (FOCU). It was a first attempt by community members to put forward an alternative to the tuition-based models that Bharucha has been promoting since October 2011. FOCU did the best they could with virtually no access to Cooper's official finances. Instead of welcoming the effort and trying to galvanize the community, Bharuch deemed it a "laughing stock", his response lacks the same good-faith effort put into writing the document. The Way Forward hold true to the mission, Peter Cooper's ideals and the spirit, creativity and resilience of the community.

### **2. Within Our Mission, Within Our Means**

Art faculty "within our mission, within our means" discussions with the Faculty of the Whole (all 4 schools) were cut short by threats to shut down the School of Art. As retribution for going against the administration, Bharucha and the board moved to deferral of early decision School of Art applicants midway the admissions cycle.

### **3. Faculty 'coercion'**

In 2011, the deans of the three degree-granting schools were charged with coming up with revenue generating academic programs as a part of President Bharucha's "reinvention."

The faculty were forced to design revenue generating programs. The Art faculty, refusing to endorse their plans issued a statement in support of the mission. Despite open access to their plans, Bharucha refused to pass them onto the Board until the Art faculty publicly endorsed them. Bharucha often says that he won't "do anything" "without the support of his faculty", it is clear he is willing to secure "support" by any means necessary.

With more than 2,500 votes of "no confidence" in Bharucha, including votes passed by the School of Art, and School of Art Full-Time



faculty, as well as a majority of the Faculty of the Humanities vote of no confidence in “the leadership” of the institution, what is lacking is an earnest engagement with the community in generating solutions which uphold the mission of free education to all.

## **Bharucha maintains an oppressive and policing environment.**

Increased private security measures to keep alumni out and to monitor students, faculty and their gatherings.

Multiple instances of armed guards in the building without informing deans, students, parents, and faculty.

Confiscation and/or dismantling of approved artwork from classrooms, hallways and exhibition spaces.

Adjunct faculty (who make up the majority of faculty) having had their jobs threatened if they sign the vote of no confidence.

Student arrested while trying to leave Foundation Building during a protest she was not involved in (Sarah Abruna, 2011).

## **Bharucha has failed to articulate a vision for the future of Cooper.**

On May 11, 2013 Bharucha reiterated his five-point vision of the school:

“a student body that thrives on an intimate, immersive, rigorous conservatory-style education; a unique set of schools; a commitment to access for those who can least afford it; the historic Great Hall; and the most vibrant location on earth.”

This is merely a description, not a vision.

## **Bharucha can't explain free education to donors.**

Bharucha doesn't know what goes on in our classes or how our education happens. Why is he the one talking to Bloomberg and other potential large donors? How can we expect him to sell the school to donors if he can't even talk about the school passionately.

President Bharucha doesn't believe that Cooper's full-tuition scholarship is necessary, he believes it to be resource that's run dry. How can Bharucha sell the egalitarian vision of 'free education for all' to donors if he doesn't even

believe in it. Trustee Mike Borkowsky has very elegantly described his feelings about Cooper:

*“I got a degree in mechanical engineering from Cooper and never spent a moment of my working life as a mechanical engineer or as any other kind of engineer. Given that fact, many people wonder why I have spent so much of my life involved with the school. It is because Cooper Union embodies, in my mind, the ideal of higher education. You put 1,000 of the brightest, most creative young people together, with no regard for their economic status or personal backgrounds, challenge them to work as hard as they can, to collaborate rather than compete with each other, give them the opportunity to interact fully with faculty, set them all in the dynamic environment of New York City and do it with no charge for tuition and you have an institution of learning that is unique in all the world and must be saved.”*

## **Bharucha has diffused accountability and blame**

Bharucha's administration is heavily stacked and growing. He is the singular bottleneck between the Cooper community and the Board, he has withheld information from both parties and continually misrepresents the Cooper community by casting it in a bad light. Instead of confronting engagements with the community, he issues Vice President TC Wescott to speak on his behalf, he has since fired her.

## **Bharucha has, on two occasions, given exclusive statements to the New York Times with announcements about the future of the college before addressing the Cooper community.**

Bharucha continually manipulates the press, using them to cement decisions in place where consensus has not been reached. On Tuesday, April 22nd the New York Times tweeted: “Cooper Union Will Charge Tuition for Graduate Students.” Bharucha announced a plan to move forward with a “Hybrid Model” where graduate programs and online courses will be expanded and offered for a fee. A school-wide announcement from Bharucha was sent at 12:14pm, the NYT tweet was posted at 12:22pm. Bharucha had announced his plan to the media before even consulting the Cooper community.

# MUST LOVE DEBT

*Based on an article by **Barry Drogin**, EE '83*

## **1961-1968:**

President Richard Humphreys expressed concern about the finances of the school, recommended against developing graduate programs and new buildings.

## **1969-1979:**

Under President John White, Cooper Union revised its charter to no longer make trustees personally liable for the college's debts, and to allow the college to take out large building loans.

The first loan from DASNY (Dormitory Authority of the State of New York) financed a renovation of the Foundation Building by John Hejduk plunging the college into deficit, forcing the sale of Green Camp, and the elimination of the physics and night degree programs.

## **1980-1987**

Under President Bill Lacy the faculty union that formed after the elimination of the physics degree was threatened with elimination, the case lost in court.

## **1988-2000**

President John Iselin oversaw the construction of a dormitory for out-of-state students using a second DASNY loan that again plunged the college into deficit.

## **2001-2011**

President George Campbell established tuition at The Cooper Union in order to become eligible for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funds for needy students.

## **2001-2011 (cont.)**

An ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) process, allowing Cooper to lease out some properties for luxury and commercial development during the development of the New Academic Building (NAB) was approved.

New York State Supreme Court allowed Cooper to increase its debt significantly by mortgaging the Chrysler Building. Cooper Union got the loan, paid off the DASNY bonds, guaranteed a maximum price for construction of the NAB, and invested heavily in hedge funds.

In 2006, the Board renegotiated the 150 year Chrysler Building lease with Tishman (started in 1999) so that payments would plateau incrementally, the first bump is scheduled for 2018.

The crash of 2008 resulted in huge losses in the investment portfolio, delays in construction at 51 Astor, and a sudden drop-off in charitable contributions. Press and trustees were told that Cooper had survived the crash and was "in the black," expenditures continued to rise resulting in the largest deficits the Cooper Union had ever known.

## **2011-**

Jamshed Bharucha was elected by the board of trustees to "reinvent" the college.

With five years until the bump the college is cash-poor in unrestricted endowment funds, despite previous claims of financial stability.

# WASTE MAKES WANT

By **Adrian Burton Jovanovic**, BSE '89

In a sworn Cy Pres Petition statement to the NYS Supreme Court in 2006, the Cooper Union Board of Trustees petitioned for the right to borrow \$175 million against the Chrysler building.

- In the Cy Pres they committed to reducing operating expenditures by 10% by 2011.
- Instead, expenses steadily rose from \$43.7 million in 2006 to \$66.8 million in 2010 (excluding debt service & depreciation the rise was from \$39.4m to \$49.8m).

Meanwhile, the message broadcast by Cooper Union in Wall St. Journal and New York Times articles was that they had attained financial stability, pointing to a huge but misleading increase in the endowment as a result of the way the Chrysler building was handled on the books.

- In 2006 CU Development spent \$2.2 million to raise \$18.7 million (\$0.12 per \$1 raised).
- In 2012 CU Development spent \$3.9 million to raise \$7.5 million (\$0.52 per \$1 raised).
- According to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (C.A.S.E.), it should cost about \$0.17 to raise a dollar.
- In 1998 the CU President's compensation was \$205,047 / yr, now it is \$647,330/ yr.
- In 2009 the President's salary was in the top 10 nationally (relative to school budget).
- From 2005 to 2010, CU full-time faculty wages stayed roughly the same at about \$5m.
- From 2005 to 2010, CU non-faculty salaries and wages went from about \$12.5m to \$17.5m.
- Cost of benefits went from \$2.5m in 2002 to \$10m in 2012, an unsustainable trajectory.

- Defined benefit plans such as CU's have been converted out by many other companies (people are living longer & medical expenses higher than when plans started back in the 60s).

The recent decision to institute tuition not only runs counter to the 150 year mission of the school, but also potentially jeopardizes the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) payments Cooper Union has been receiving from the City of New York.

Studies have shown that once schools start charging tuition, the tuition keeps increasing, regardless of the financial aid provided. The current administration has not emphasized support for the free tuition mission and instead has pushed to build a "global brand" to realize the "enormous untapped potential" of Cooper Union.

From the above it seems clear that the Cooper Union Administration and Trustees have a lot of work to do to regain the trust of the Cooper community. They need to:

1. Seriously scale back spending (oddly the Expense Reduction Task force limited the reduction target to 12% and declared off bounds some of the most important areas for expense reduction, including administrative headcount and benefits).
2. Seriously engage with important constituencies including unions to address key issues such as Cooper's unsustainable and antiquated defined benefit plan.
3. Fundraise to preserve free tuition (a capital campaign to help preserve free tuition should actually have been done before the historic mission of free tuition was announced as suspended).

Until the Cooper Union administration gets its house in order it seems unlikely that major donors (or any donors) will feel comfortable giving to their full potential.

# FACES AND PLACES



**Peter Cooper**  
Founder



**Mark Epstein**  
Board Chairman



**Mike Borkowsky**

Trustees who started the  
anti-tuition working group



**Jeff Gural**



**George Campbell**  
Former President



**Jamshed Bharucha**  
Current President



**T.C. Westcott**  
Former Vice President of  
Finance, Administration  
and Treasurer



**Lawrence Cacciatore**  
Chief of Staff and Secretary  
to the Board Of Trustees



**Derek Wittner**  
Vice President  
of Development



**Jody Grapes**  
Former Dir. of  
Buildings and Grounds



**Elizabeth O'Donnell**  
Associate Dean  
School of Arch.



**Saskia Bos**  
Dean  
School of Art



**Alan Wolf**  
Former Interim  
Dean  
School of Eng.



**Theresa Dahlberg**  
Dean  
School of Eng.



**William Germano**  
Dean  
Humanities Fac.



**Linda Lemiesz**  
Former Dean  
of Students



**Steve "Dean" Baker**  
Dean  
"Athletics"



**Foundation Building**  
Needs no introduction



**41 Cooper Square**  
a.k.a. New Academic  
Building



**30 Cooper Square**  
Admin Offices



**Stuyvesant-Fish House**  
President's Residence



**Green Camp**  
Sold in 1970s

## **Board of Trustees**

governs the college by establishing broad policies and objectives. Cooper's board is composed of about twenty unpaid members that meet about four times a year. The board appoints the President.

## **Administrators**

are college employees responsible for the maintenance and supervision of the institution separate from the faculty. Administrative responsibilities include academic affairs, school finances, fundraising, public affairs, and press.

Administrative bloat is a term used for the inflated administrative ratios in recent years. Between 1993 and 2007, spending on administration rose twice as fast as funding for research and teaching at 198 leading U.S. universities.

At a time where college budgets are tight, students are amassing record debt, and tuition is skyrocketing, the ratio of administrators to faculty has jumped up in the past decade: across universities nationwide employment of administrators has risen 60 percent from 1993 to 2009, 10 times the growth rate for tenured faculty.

## **Tenured professors**

refers to a senior professor's contractual right not to have their position terminated without just cause. In 1975, 57% of all college professors had tenure or were on a tenure track, in 2007, that number had fallen to 31%.

## **Adjunct professors**

are part-time, non-salaried, non-tenure track faculty members who are paid for each class they teach. Adjuncts have no office or materials or supplies, limited technology and administrative support, are not paid for office hours, and have no job security since they are often hired per class. Studies have also shown that sustained interaction with faculty members beyond the classroom directly correlates with measures of student success such as retention and progress toward degree.

## **Unions**

are an organization of workers that have banded together to achieve common goals such as protecting the integrity of their trade, achieving higher pay, increasing the number of employees and employer hires, and bettering working conditions. Unions in general are in decline in the United States, academic unions in particular are under attack, and a large majority of faculty members hold part-time, nontenurable jobs that benefit from collective bargaining power.

Some campuses have made it difficult for faculty and staff to organize and have a voice as decisions have become more centralized within institutions.

# SPECTRUM OF ALLIES

## ADMINISTRATION

- President
- Admissions
- Development
- Office of Alumni Affairs
- Deans

## UNIONS

- Cooper Union Federation of College Teachers (CUFCT)
  - Full-Time (Art, Eng., Arch.)
- Part-Time Union (CUOP)
- Adjunct Faculty (Art, Eng., Arch.)
- Proportional Faculty (Art, Eng., Arch., Humanities)
- Staff Union (U@CU)
- Full and Part-time Staff

## FREE COOPER UNION

- Students for a Free Cooper Union
- Cooper Union SOS (CUSOS)
- Alumni
- Faculty
- Staff

## STUDENT COUNCILS

- Engineering Student Council
- Architecture Student Council

- Art Student Council

## ALLIES

- Engineering Faculty

- Art Faculty

- Architecture Faculty

- Humanities Faculty

ALUMNI  
- Alumni Association  
(CUAA)

FRIENDS OF  
COOPER  
UNION

- Alumni
- Faculty
- Students

BOARD OF  
TRUSTEES

- President
- Chairman

- Mike Borokowsky
- Jeff Gural
- Kevin Slavin
- John Leeper

**PUSHING  
TUITION**

**NEUTRAL/UNKNOWN/  
UNDECIDED\***

**FOR FREE  
EDUCATION**

\* Many Cooper Union student and alumni groups remain neutral, unknown, or undecided on the issue of tuition at Cooper out of fear of retaliation from the current administration or because they feel there is not enough financial information publicly available. Faculty, staff, and unions largely remain neutral because of the threat being fired by that administration and possible union violations, as evidenced by the recent firing of VP of Finance, Admin, and Treasurer T.C. Westcott and Dean of Students Linda Lemiesz.

# STAY IN THE KNOW

*These channels are all easy to unsubscribe from, so try them all out and drop what doesn't work for you.*

1. Text **DISORIENTATION** to **917.746.5634**

You'll get a text back asking for your name and email. Fill that in and you'll have added yourself to our contact database. That way we can reach you individually.

2. Text **@FreeCooperUnion** to **23559**

Moderated text loop for meeting and action announcements.

3. Follow **@FreeCooperUnion** & **fb.com/FreeCooperUnion**

This is us on Twitter and Facebook.

4. Fill out the form at **cusos.org/volunteer**

Tell us how you're able to help.

5. Fill out the form at **cusos.org/maillinglist**

Sign up form for infrequent email announcements.

6. Join **facebook.com/groups/SaveCooperUnion**  
and **facebook.com/groups/UnifyCooperUnion**

Facebook groups full of lively discussion about Cooper.

Great place to ask questions.

7. Contribute to **freecooperunion.hackpad.com**

The open wiki where we wrote this guide and do lots of planning.

Feel welcome to poke around and contribute!

8. Email us **cooperunionsos@gmail.com**

Group email address. Please do get in touch if you have questions.

9. Visit **freecooperunion.github.io/disorientation**

Online version of this guide, with extended materials.



**STAY FREE OR DIE TRYIN**