

THE COOPER UNION ALUMNI PIONEER

The Real Bharucha

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Abstract

How, prior to his first day on the job, President Jamshed Bharucha considered the full-tuition scholarship to be a “cherished aspect” of Cooper, but not as important as growth and globalization. Dr. Bharucha has become a popular speaker in the global education movement, and believes his training in psychology is useful in academic politics.

Prior to his first day on the job, Dr. Jamshed Bharucha’s plans to implement tuition and his vision for expansion were documented in a video interview on Education Update. In March of 2011, Dr. Bharucha sat down with Dr. Pola Rosen, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, and Dr. Joan Baum, Senior Reporter, to lay out his vision of a more globally-integrated Cooper Union. When asked what he thought the next level of our institution would be, he said:

I won’t be very specific right now but I think, in general terms, it's very important that [pause] while, historically, it would be important for institutions to preserve the very best of their history, it’s also important that we educate our students to be prepared to lead in a very complex world. The world is changing very fast. The world is becoming more globally integrated. The world is requiring a kind of thinking that's more integrative where technology, the arts, thinking about society have to be integrated, and so I would want to see [The] Cooper Union be at the very cutting edge. (2:20)

When Dr. Bharucha was repeatedly asked about the full scholarship model, he appeared uncomfortable, expressing no sense of commitment to preserving it in lieu of moving the institution towards a more globally competitive model. For example, when asked if he planned to preserve Cooper’s long-standing full-tuition scholarship model, he responded:

Well, of course, that has been a cherished aspect of this institution. I think one has to be very careful in looking at that. [The] Cooper Union will have to find... [pause] We will have to find new programmatic revenue sources. There's no question in my mind about that, if we are to continue to remain vibrant, particularly in the technology areas and engineering. So we will have to think creatively and innovatively about enhancing the resource base of the institution so that we can continue to be vibrant [and] dynamic while also maintaining the commitment to those families who may not be able to afford to send their kids to a college with a big sticker price. (7:45)

In the article written after the video interview, Dr. Baum paraphrases Bharucha's response as, “Sure, free tuition is a motivating factor in applications and historically a ‘cherished aspect’ of the college, but it is not the main reason students want to come to the college.”

When asked whether he had a desire to expand The Cooper Union beyond it's “three-pronged offering” (the three schools), he said:

Yes, I do think that it's very likely that we will be giving students new programs and they have to be thought through very carefully to find where the critical leverage points are going to be that are true to Cooper Union's mission, that can have the highest impact in terms of institutions, education, and the impact that the students of these programs can have on the world. So, yes, I do believe there will be some growth in programs.

Dr. Rosen went on to ask if Dr. Bharucha will be looking to alumni to fund and sponsor this potential growth, and he said, "Absolutely, absolutely," and proceeded to talk about inspiring a strong philanthropic spirit in graduates in order to have alumni fund this new direction.

Prior to becoming the President of The Cooper Union, Dr. Bharucha wrote and spoke extensively about a radically new definition of education, one which abandons traditional pedagogies in favor of new ones aimed at responding to a rapidly changing world within the framework of globalization. He believes our elite institutions, "the academy," are far too insular. He calls them ivory towers and talks about how they hang on to "cherished aspects" and historical charters and that this inhibits them from engaging as global citizens.

President Jamshed Bharucha is a big name in this educational movement, participating in various education summits in the United States and abroad. After announcing the Cooper tuition story to *The New York Times* on October 31, President Bharucha appeared as a speaker or panelist for various education summits and organizations:

- November 1-3: Speaker at WISE (World Innovation Summit for Education)
- November 4-12: Indus Foundation events (Bharucha is on the advisory board)
- November 13: Panelist, "The Role of the Academy in Educating the Global Citizen," Vassar College Sesquicentennial Conference
- December 8-9: Keynote Speaker, The Future of Higher Education, The New School

In an APA (American Psychological Association) interview in September 2011, Bharucha lays out his ideas about global exchange, which he claims to have successfully implemented at Tufts University with the creation of a graduate level medical school in Vellore, India. He talks about cross-global educational bridging in which Americans receive education at a reduced cost when they study in developing nations at the same time that students of those developing nations come to the United States to receive a quality education. Bharucha describes this plan as a "win-win."

In the Education Update interview (4:00), he was asked if this kind of plan was something he would like to bring to The Cooper Union, and he stated it would be a very high priority.

When asked by the APA if he thought his psychological training would help him in his new role as President of The Cooper Union, he said:

Absolutely. Never forget that organizations are about people, and people are very complicated. In an academic environment, you can't just order people around, so addressing their aspirations and fears and getting them to move an institution forward is one of the most complex leadership challenges there is. I often joke with CEOs of corporations that they wouldn't last in a university for six months. [Leaders] need to put themselves in the shoes of others to be able to really understand what makes them tick. Doing so greatly improves your ability to move the institution forward. There I think psychology comes in extremely handy.

The current version of this document can be found at <<http://www.notnicemusic.com/bharucha.pdf>>. Corrections to this document are appreciated and, if based on substantiated facts from legitimate sources, will be implemented by the authors. The original version was completed on November 27, 2011.

The Alumni Pioneer, <<http://www.notnicemusic.com/Cassandra/cooper.html>>, is a virtual newspaper with breaking news stories and links to analyses, sources and the media. It is written and formatted in an inverted-pyramid newspaper style to facilitate quick access to what is deemed the most important information. The abstract was added on January 28, 2012.