

# THE COOPER UNION ALUMNI PIONEER

## Listening to You Say Words

by Casey A. Von Gollan, A '13

I translated the Jamshed Bharucha email from Bullshit into English:

August 30, 2012

Welcome back to a new academic year! To our incoming class of 2016, we celebrate your joining our community and becoming part of The Cooper Union's tradition of excellence and innovation.

If you read Peter Cooper's diaries, he actually never wanted free education to become a tradition, so I just left that part out.

In my first year as President, I have been moved by the stories of the transformational power of a Cooper Union education.

I have no emotions.

In all of these conversations with students, faculty, staff and alumni, I am impressed by the accomplishments of the members of our community, and with the passion they bring to their work.

A boring part of my job is listening to you say words.

This is a particularly invigorating time in New York City and for The Cooper Union's disciplines of architecture, art, engineering and humanities and social sciences.

We're in a recession.

Institutions of higher education from New York and around the world are seeking to establish themselves within the Bloomberg administration's bold new eco-system in applied science, design and innovation. With our history of innovative programs and distinguished graduates, we at Cooper Union are poised to help craft this exciting future. In consultation with the City, we are developing proposals that build on our unique multidisciplinary perspective in design.

We lost the bid for Roosevelt Island to Cornell.

Meanwhile, we must position the institution to survive and thrive far into the future.

So look forward to those online courses!

Now that an array of ideas for reinvention have been proposed,

We're done listening, thanks.

the primary focus of our planning in the Fall semester will be for the faculty of each school to agree on a plan that is appropriate for the school, that ensures its future academic excellence based on a compelling vision, and that is financially sustainable.

And we're all on the same page, right?

At the same time, we must take full advantage of the unique synergies between our four faculties.

Synergy.

The faculty is entrusted with developing and stewarding the educational experience our students enjoy. Thus no plan can succeed without the support of the faculty.

If it wasn't for you meddling faculty...

The goal is for the faculty to agree on a set of plans, working closely with Vice President Westcott and myself, by November 15,

There Will Be Meetings

so that that I can make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for their December meeting.

They won't matter.

By putting our minds together in a spirit of constructive, civil discourse,

No more protests.

we have an historic opportunity

Did you know I'm also a dick about grammar?

to ensure that each school at Cooper can be sustained well into the future so that generations of graduates can continue to go out and do good in the world.

We will keep a shadow of this school open forever.

The parameters for the financial sustainability of our academic programs have been shared with the academic deans and the faculty. They include: \$12 million in new programmatic revenues, allocated across our three schools in rough proportion to their operating costs; an ambitious agenda for continuing education and public programs that fully utilizes our facilities and our academic potential;

Cut ALL the budgets.

and enhanced fund-raising,

Except the development office, which isn't gonna stop expanding anytime soon.

including an estimated \$130 million over ten years in new contributions from the annual fund, foundations and corporations, planned gifts, capital gifts and gifts to the endowment.

Money! It's just...not here yet!

As I did last year, I invite you to sign up for group discussions in my office, so that I may answer questions, share information, and hear your thoughts. Please click on one of the following links (students, faculty, staff, alumni/parents) to sign up.

Obligatory reminder that part of my job is listening to you say words.

I have found that the interactivity of these small group settings is highly effective for sorting out complex challenges such as the ones we face and for getting to know one another.

I have found that people won't yell at me if there are only five of us in the room.

You may also sign up for a financial information session conducted by Vice President Westcott. If you are just arriving or you and I did not get a chance to meet personally last year, please introduce yourself. I look forward to meeting you!

What's your name again?

Jamshed Bharucha  
President

*The current version of this document can be found at <<http://www.notnicemusic.com/listening.pdf>>. The original version was completed on August 31, 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.*