

THE COOPER UNION ALUMNI & PIONEER

Scenarios for End Times (rev 4)

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Abstract

The Bankruptcy Scenario, the Sell Scenario, the Nightmare Scenario, the Accreditation Scenario, the Angel Scenario, the Austerity Scenario, the Full-Tuition Scenario, the Punish Scenario, the Lawsuit Scenario, and the Criminal Scenario.

The “Bankruptcy” Scenario – The Cooper Union is forced to file for bankruptcy. All assets end up in Bankruptcy Court. NYU buys up most of the assets, perhaps holding on to the Cooper “brand,” opening the Cooper Union School of Engineering or whatever, charging the highest tuition in the country, and offering very little in financial aid.

The “Sell” Scenario – Identical to the “Bankruptcy” Scenario, but the Board of Trustees are able to establish some contractual guarantees in the sale.

The “Nightmare” Scenario – Due to continued media attention and uncertainty, no high school students apply to The Cooper Union for enrollment in 2012. The school goes into some sort of desperation shock – there is no freshman class. Chaos and havoc bring some form of radical change.

The “Accreditation” Scenario – The Board of Trustees changes the mission statement, and the Middle States Association rejects the process and withdraws its accreditation of the college. The administration heads down the dark road of claiming that the Middle States Association doesn’t matter, isolating The Cooper Union from all other colleges in the region. Similar to the “Nightmare” Scenario.

The “Angel” Scenario – Some billionaire gives The Cooper Union a gift equivalent to the Andrew Carnegie gift of 1902. Without austerity measures, The Cooper Union continues its expansion and rising expenses, and repeats the crisis years later when the gift is consumed.

The “Austerity” Scenario – The Board gets religion and institutes severe austerity measures on The Cooper Union. Programs, such as the graduate school and CURF, are cut and some faculty are laid off, students are required to provide “community service” to the college to replace non-academic staff laid off, remaining faculty and administrators suffer pay cuts and reductions in benefits, a massive “Save the Cooper Union” campaign is launched to raise money from alumni, parents, and philanthropists. The current Chairman of the Board has already publicly rejected all aspects of this scenario.

The “Full-Tuition” Scenario – The Board of Trustees successfully stalls The Cooper Community to the Spring, receives the recommendations of the Revenue Task Force, and sends letters to all new accepted applicants that The Cooper Union is no longer a full-tuition scholarship college. Current students are allowed to complete their education without a significant increase in their fees.

The “Punish” Scenario – Similar to the “Full-Tuition Scenario,” but with a twist: in response to strong protests from students, alumni, and faculty, the Board raises student fees to cover the full cost of academic instruction, while leaving the “full-tuition scholarship” language of The Cooper Union in place. This is paired with a “Give

a Dollar to The Cooper Union” campaign that raises alumni participation rates in annual giving. Everyone is real quiet about it and some big donors accept this and give more money to the school. Perhaps the Board of Trustees drop their expansion plans.

The “Lawsuit” Scenario – Alumni file a class action lawsuit against The Cooper Union, suing for the return of all student fees charged, plus interest. This is largely symbolic, as most alumni return the monies to The Cooper Union (and perhaps legal counsel is provided for free by an alumnus), but the result is that the Board is forced to resign and stewardship of The Cooper Union is temporarily transferred to a judge who oversees the college’s finances. Some Board members incur heavy fines as damages, which most alumni also return to the college. The Cooper Union has strong legal council and has already protected itself from such a lawsuit, but some form of fraud may be provable.

The “Criminal” Scenario – Identical to the “Lawsuit” Scenario, but conducted by the New York State Attorney General’s office due to misrepresentations to the public about whether The Cooper Union was actually offering its students a free education. In addition to fines, some Board members serve prison time.

The current version of this document can be found at <<http://www.notnicemusic.com/scenarios.pdf>>.

Corrections to this document are appreciated and, if based on substantiated facts from legitimate sources, will be implemented by the author. The original version was completed on November 11, 2011, with later versions completed on November 12, 15 and 24, 2011, and January 28, 2012.

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