

# THE COOPER UNION ALUMNI & PIONEER

## Cooper Voices

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

– David Gersten AR '91, Architecture Professor '91-, former Associate Dean and Acting Dean

Education is a right, not a brand. Peter Cooper saw higher education as a public good, not a commodity. Tuition-less education is a moral imperative at The Cooper Union. Although it's not part of the official mission of the school, it has come to be understood this way.

– Adriana Farniga A '96, Adjunct Instructor '08-

The richest and most precious of our natural resources is the unlimited potential of the young. The thrust of higher education has become the commodification of skills. Cooper Union students are not seen as consumers but as young people who represent the sole hope for the future.

– Day Gleeson, Art Associate Professor and Academic Advisor '85-, Chair of Admissions, former Interim Dean

Anyone who wants to see an America where merit trumps privilege, talent is valued over wealth, and lack of money is no obstacle to education - please support the Cooper Community right now in demanding our voices be heard and our concerns addressed.

– Kerry Carnahan, CE '00

It is wrong to blame the financial crisis on the lack of alumni contributions. Letters and telephone calls I received never communicated that The Cooper Union really needed my money, compared to other causes - particularly in the context of the visibly expensive new building, the knowledge that Cooper owns the land the Chrysler Building is on, and its rosy public financial profile. When I gave money it was out of gratitude and solidarity, not actually thinking it would make a difference.

– Laura Newman, A '78

How about discussing trends such as student debt, administrative bloat, disregard for the contributions and expertise of faculty, and the disconnect between boards, administration, and responsibility for safeguarding the most important aspect of an institution of higher education - the education part?

- Julie Castelluzzo, Librarian '95-

It is *not* a two-part aspect of Cooper Union that 1) it offers an exceptional education that is second to none, and 2) it is also tuition free. *They are the same thing.*

– David Brooks, A '00

Last year, the faculty and students from my department went to see the Yankees. There was a rain delay. As the delay continued the students got out their homework and projects. In the end there was a section of Yankee Stadium that was in study session! I don't know of another school that engenders that kind of focus and work ethic in the celebration of intellectual pursuits.

– Richard Stock, Professor of Chemical Engineering '94-

Unlike any other college we visited, there were no dorms, no student activity center, no cafeteria that serves every cuisine under the earth, no athletic facilities, pool, track (not even a gym!), no endless list of social activities, frats or sororities, and on and on. This was a unique college unlike any other in the country, or the

world, that focused on the educational curriculum first and foremost and the intellectual fabric of the Cooper Community. When she was accepted she was beyond ecstatic as we were but she was also accepted to other very top tier schools. They charged substantial tuitions and room and board fees which we were prepared to pay and urged her to accept, but her heart pulled her to Cooper. We were concerned parents and thought that she would miss the "college experience." We now know we were clearly wrong as she has grown intellectually beyond our expectations.

– anonymous parent

I trust that all the youth of our city and country, through all coming time, will realize that this Institution has been organized for their special use and improvement; and I trust that they will rally around and protect it, and make it like a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid.

- Peter Cooper, November 2, 1859

*The current version of this document can be found at <<http://www.notnicemusic.com/voices.pdf>>. The original version was completed on November 28, 2011. All quotations were selected from the 101 comments posted on The Brian Lehrer Show: Cooper Union and the Cost of Higher Education, broadcast on November 23, 2011 <<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/bl/2011/nov/23/cooper-union-and-cost-higher-education/>>.*

*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.*