Last Tuesday (February 7th), the annual wreath laying ceremony took place in Peter Cooper Square. As with all school-hosted formalities, students flocked to the event based solely on the ubiquitous promise that “food will be served”. Many professors attended as well as alumna. At the risk of being hyperbolic and cliché, it’s probably fair to say that everyone in attendance will remember this event far longer than any other wreath laying ceremony.

So there I was: my keyboard was set up as were my fellow musicians with whom I would be performing Cooper Union’s own Alma Mater, Marchion and Gold. A man comes up to the podium to quiet down the audience and to introduce President Bhaurcha. The president made a quick speech which, admittedly, I didn’t pay too much attention to. I looked into the crowd in front of me and noticed everyone holding balloons that said something along the lines of “110 years free” sloppily spray painted from a stencil. There was one gentleman who had a sign that expressed hostility towards President Bhaurcha and Mark Epstein written angrily in red and black markers. I would be lying if I said that I felt something bad was going to happen but there was clearly hostility in the air. The man’s protest-like stance with a sign to match juxtaposed with the clean and positive speaking of the President made me a little bit uncomfortable.

The second occurrence happening separately where two female students paying their own respect the Peter Cooper. Standing behind the podium, their top half were exposed — “Education is your naked right,” a phrase from Three Penny Opera, written on their bodies while the Cooper Union alma mater played. They had their own wreaths prepared and during the event, moved them from their shoulders to the base of the monument.

“I am so happy they did that,” said Dan Harrington. The words “Education is your naked right” may mirror the form, or vice versa, in a literal sense, but this is more of the monument. The ceremony meant to produce a healthy image of the continuation of Peter Cooper’s legacy, when right now, it’s anything but.

The gesture was crass and absurd, in a way that is not how we might think of a nude female form, usually represented erotically. But the crassness contrast the happy ceremony or to expect it to be happy any way of a smiling president and appreciation speeches served with cupcakes and hot cider.

The tuition debate may seems static, but perhaps things are slipping. The ceremony may not be an intentional gaslighting strategy, but after two sleepy long months spent internalizing and processing the confusion and anguish, the students, faculty, and administrative bodies, a structure strong foundation of Peter Cooper’s legacy, when right now, it’s anything but.

Despite the distraction there was “cider and cupcakes available inside.” Illustrating the lack of sympathy on the part of Cooper Union’s higher brass and the break between the ideologies of the student and administrative bodies, a structure strong in its duality. One must question if anything will feel natural again.
The Cooper Pioneer

February 2012

Christopher Hong (EE’13)

The Cooper Pioneer had a chance to sit down with Jody Grapes recently to discuss the recent raises given to all of the Cooper security guards. In our Holiday Issue (December 2011), James was interviewed as part of a special section called Faces of Cooper and he revealed his hardships due to the low wages working as a security guard.

We’ve asked Mr. Grapes what pushed FJC to give the security guards a raise. He said that he’s been discussing this issue with FJC for a while already. There has been quite a bit of discussion back and forth between Cooper and FJC. FJC has been providing Cooper Union security services for the last seven years and none of the security guards have received a raise in the last five years. A new contract has recently been worked out.

The new contract is a new five-year contract in which all security guards will receive a 5% raise each year for the next five years starting January 2012. According to Mr. Grapes, the security guards all made an average of $8.25 to $8.50 an hour in December 2011. Of course, there were guards who made more than that amount if they have been around Cooper for longer. Thus, the average wage has now bumped up to $8.86 to $8.92 an hour. By the fifth year (January 2016), the average wage of the security guards will be $10.55 to $10.85. The new contract is due to expire on December 31, 2016.

In addition to the raises, the contract included an unconditional 30-day termination clause. This clause allows either party to terminate the agreement at any time with written notice to the other party. This is unlike the conditional clause, where, which allows the company to correct any issues within 60 days prior to the termination of the contract. The unconditional 30-day termination clause is a built in safety mechanism for Cooper Union.

What about benefits, like insurance, sick days, etc.? Mr. Grapes stated that he does not know of many details regarding the benefits, but he did mention that FJC does provide some form health insurance. In fact, most employers do not cover all health benefits costs and employers usually have to pay for part of the plan. He said that he asked FJC to contact Jody Grapes to ask if they can provide Cooper Union with the necessary services to serve its mission—to provide students with a top notch education.

So what does this do with the costs to Cooper? According to Mr. Grapes, Cooper will have to pay FJC more money each year—5% increase per year. Prices go up over time due to inflation and luckily this increase in costs more or less matches the raise that each security guard gets annually so it is almost as if Cooper Union gave the security guards a raise.

In this more cost effective than hiring security guards directly from Cooper? The simple answer is yes. FJC is a management security company they have the resources to run security at Cooper efficiently. Mr. Grapes stated, “Our job is to, in the most efficient and effective way we can, provide Cooper Union with the necessary services to serve its mission—to provide students with a top notch education.”

Mr. Grapes brought up the fact that there was a large turnover in security guards and this was mostly due to the wages that are lower than average. Due to this large turnover, new security guards would have to be trained, learn new faces, and get accustomed to our policies. Buildings and grounds have polled academic institutions similar to Cooper (in size and location) in New York City to find out what their security guards were getting paid. The average security guard at these institutions earns about $10 an hour. Because Cooper Union paid an average of $8.25 to $8.50 an hour, it is difficult to obtain and retain talented guards.

Prior to the new contract, Cooper has been on a month-to-month term with FJC, meaning security guards were hired on a monthly need. The old contract with FJC had expired a while ago. Although this was a cost saving money for Cooper, it did not retain many guards. But now with the new contract, security guards have received raises and the pay rate will motivate more security guards to take the challenges and demands of Cooper. In the end, we would expect to get better performance from the security guards and better security services. Most importantly, we will be able to retain the talented guards at Cooper.

Mr. Grapes stated, “We’re here to do the right thing—get ourselves in a more competitive position because providing security services is extremely important for the safety of the Cooper community.”

I would like to personally thank all of the security guards for their good work and congrats on their raise!
A t Cooper Union, being gay isn’t something people talk about. For those who are gay, it’s not something they commonly share with their peers. Despite the significant non-hetero- normative population amongst the nine hundred or so students enrolled at Cooper Union, being queer is something that is generally disregarded. It’s something that isn’t communicated, and as a result, has been repressed within the overall community. In short, being gay at Cooper Union is a taboo.

As a freshman in the school of engineering, it wasn’t long before I realized that this taboo on non-heteronormativity existed within the limited social sphere of Cooper Union. Over the past few months I have become acquainted with and even befriended a handful of people who, many over a lengthy amount of time, revealed to me their identities with the LGBT community. On the rare occasions that we would discuss issues related to the LGBT community at Cooper, the overwhelming opinion was that people did not feel comfortable revealing their sexuality within the school and that something should be done about it.

After taking some time to think about it, I only seemed reasonable to assume that there must be others within the school who share these same views. It was obvious that something needed to be done to unify the LGBT community, and I was extremely surprised that there was not a single established support structure within the school to help achieve this goal. Could it be that the LGBT community was so demoralized and disunited up to this point that it could not find the means to help bring an end to this state of social instability?

The issue is not just the existence of a barrier between the heterosexual and LGBT community, but the fact that this barrier has had on the LGBT community. The truth is, being non-hetero- normative is something unique among the students at Cooper Union. Cooper Union has created an uncom- fortable and uncomfortable environment for LGBT students. Although sex itself is not something you generally hear discussed in conversation among the students at Cooper Union, the social environment is still extremely different for those who are hetero- normative than for those who are not. Because of social custom and expectation, many people assume that everyone around them is straight, and that to be queer is abnormal.

Last month, while attending a wonderful event at Cooper Union, I was moved to act. The event, which was called "Support for All," was a benefit for the American Foundation for Equal Rights. The event is a yearly benefit for the organization that works to help achieve equality for the LGBT community. I was moved to act because I felt that this issue needed to be brought to the attention of the community. It is time that we work together to solve this issue.

Day 1: Before deciding what to get, I asked the baristas to explain what some of the menu items were and what the categories "long" and "short" meant. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the baristas are open to discussion about this issue. I asked them about the "long" drinks. Some of the baristas were able to explain what the drinks were and what they contained. I asked them about the "short" drinks. Some of the baristas were not able to explain what the drinks were and what they contained.

Day 2: While talking to a couple of people who prefer not to remain nameless, one particularly eventful night over the trip, we began discussing the possibility of establishing an LGBT club at Cooper. And I thought it was a great idea.

Once I returned to American soil, I began the process of creating such a club. The club, which is now officially established, is known as GLASS (Gay Lesbian and Straight Spectrum). Though it is still in the early stages of development, I encourage all who are interested in helping to create a more open and comfortable environment for the non-heteronormative and hetero- normative commun- ities to join. The club has great potential to make a difference in the lives of many students at Cooper Union, and change can only take place if we work together in this effort.

Review: Au Breve, 51 Cooper Square

ROBIN KUTNER (CHE ’13)

I’m no coffee expert, but along with being a college student comes the constant need for caffeine. How convenient it is for us that there is a new coffe shop right inside the NAB. Over the course of a week, I went with my friend A to try out what Au Breve has to offer. The café is officially located at 51 Cooper Square, and its entrance is shared with an art gallery on the west side of the NAB.

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If you would like to participate in and help shape the future of GLASS, please email robin.kutner@gmail.com today.

Continued on page 7
The Cooper Union Volunteer Tutoring Initiative

CATHERINE SANSO (CE ’14)

E veryone seems to be familiar with Cooper Union’s current financial crisis — we are in need of millions of dollars with no definite strategies to acquire the money. Understandably, many students are upset about this and looking for outlets to contribute to finding a sustainable solution. This is tricky, however, with the multitude of courses we are managing and the semblance of social lives we are attempting to hold. The Cooper Union Volunteer Tutoring Initiative is a great resource to manage all three concerns: Cooper Union’s future, education, and fun.

What is the Cooper Union Volunteer Tutoring Initiative? It is a new program created by Benjamin Schenker, a sophomore electrical engineer with significant experience at other successful institutions. The goal of the program is to “sponsor” our work. For example, donors could commit to donating a certain amount of money per hour that we tutor, which will then be fully donated to the Cooper Union to alleviate the financial problems we currently face. Though it might not seem like a large sum of money immediately, the Volunteer Tutoring Initiative estimates that if Cooper students tutor every week for each semester, we can contribute tens of thousands of dollars annually. Also, we believe that this kind of activity could attract donors who would not normally donate to Cooper but appreciate the club’s mission. This not only benefits Cooper Union directly, but it assists struggling public school students through tutoring and mentoring. Though this is only one vision of the plan to improve the school’s situation, we are open to suggestions as to the most efficient ways to work with the community and achieve our goal of lessening the debt. As Ben Schenker, the founder of the club expressed, “We are trying to do something good while helping ourselves out of Cooper Union’s crisis.”

“Work Makes Work” is an exhibition that took an insurmountable amount of work and the semblance of social lives. By the spring semester, we will be historical, based on single events that changed people’s lives. The program is designed so that it can work around the busy schedules of Cooper students while still maintaining some regularity by tutoring the same group of children.

How does Cooper Union finance this? Well, even though the students are volunteering their time and effort in tutoring the younger pupils, the goal is to get donors to “sponsor” our work. For example, donors could commit to donating a certain amount of money per hour that we tutor, which will then be fully donated to the Cooper Union. The Cooper Union wants to take our fair share of activity that could attract donors who would not normally donate to Cooper but appreciate the club’s mission. This not only benefits Cooper Union directly, but it assists struggling public school students through tutoring and mentoring. Though this is only one vision of the plan to improve the school’s situation, we are open to suggestions as to the most efficient ways to work with the community and achieve our goal of lessening the debt. As Ben Schenker, the founder of the club expressed, “We are trying to do something good while helping ourselves out of Cooper Union’s crisis.”

We are trying to do something good while helping ourselves out of Cooper Union’s crisis.

Cooper Union is a unique school filled with extremely gifted and creative students. With the combined efforts of art, architecture, and engineering students united by the Volunteer Tutoring Initiative, we have the potential to make a real impact on our school’s deficit and do something that is both personally and communally rewarding. If interested, please contact Benjamin Schenker, me (Catherine Sanso), or Daniel Ritchman. All interest on any scale is welcomed and appreciated!

Sincerely,
Peter G. Calero, CE ’13
President, Cooper Union Alumni Association

Letter to the Pioneer

Christopher Hong (EE ’13) in the January 23, 2012 mini-issue, and I would like to clarify some issues as it relates to alumni relations and the Cooper Union Alumni Association. The Alumni Association has been working to significantly reduce our cost to the school, and to “make every dollar count,” even before the full extent of the financial crisis became clear. I repeatedly tell President Bharucha and VP Wittner that the Alumni Association wants to take our fair share of budget reductions to save the school. The two positions that were recently filled (and were written about in the article) replaced three vacancies (including Director of Alumni Relations) that occurred in mid-2011, reducing the former alumni relations staff (now merged into the Development department) from six to five, or a 17% reduction. I also asked that the school cease serving food at alumni association meetings. I apologize to those students in the dorm who used to get the leftovers, and we have worked hard during the last six months to significantly reduce the cost to the school of alumni association events.

However it is clear that alumni must play a significant and sustained role in any solution to Cooper Union’s fiscal problem, and to do that, Cooper needs to invest time and effort, working with all-volunteer Alumni Association, in reaching out to the over 12,000 Cooper alumni. Many give back significantly to the school, both financially and in other meaningful ways, but we need to reach a lot more, re-establish their connection to the school, and convince them that, just as Peter Cooper and others assisted our educational need, we need to step up now for current and future generations of Cooper students. (Readers of The Pioneer will be alumni soon enough, so this applies to you too.) We needed a strong alumni relations leader with significant experience at other successful institutions, to work quickly improve and expand our alumni connection. The annual fund, originally begun by the Alumni Association, now raises more than $2 million towards the schools budget, and needs to do significantly better to help the school achieve financial stability. It only stands to reason that we could not afford, maintain, or improve the programs that manage that process stand vacant. The most cost-efficient way to find the most talented, experienced applicants out there is to connect to them. I hope this makes it an easy target to imply that money spent on research firms, alumni relations and fundraising is frivolous, but building strong alumni ties is the process that ensures the school to critical to the long term survival of Cooper Union.

Sincerely,
Peter G. Calero, CE ’13
President, Cooper Union Alumni Association
Grand Staircase Safety Makeover

MARCUS MICHELEN (CE ’14)

For the past month or so, rumors were circulating that there was a handrail being installed down the center of the grand staircase. I was a little bit skeptical because rumors move pretty quickly in Cooper so I decided to ask Professor Alan Wolf, Cooper’s Safety Coordinator and Chair of Physics. He was a little bit hesitant to tell me too much at first but gave me a fair amount of background information. He recommended I speak to Vice President Westcott for more information on the issue. On Tuesday, January 31st, I met with T.C. Westcott and she spoke to me about the issue: Cooper Pioneer: Could you give me a brief history of the handrail situation?

Vice President T.C. Westcott: I’m gonna do the best I can because that building was built before I got here. I joined CU in October 2009 and the building was occupied in July 2009. Time flies when you’re having fun. I think some of the history is that Thom Mayne, who is the architect of the building, is a Princeton prize winning architect and he had a vision for a place where people could gather. The vision came to life in the Grand Staircase. I can’t tell you for sure, I wasn’t there. This was a place where people could gather and in fact is an architectural feature. It’s not a means of egress, right? So in the case of an emergency, for example people always worry about a fire, the panels are supposed to drop down, and they do they’ve been tested, so that you wouldn’t go down the grand stair in the case of the emergency, you’re supposed to use the other stairs. So it was intended to be an architectural feature that was supposed to be a meeting place for students and others where it would be a cross-discipline place. I think that’s what the notion was. So the building was built and I think early on there was concern and people were in there and thought “oh my gosh we need another handrail” and the notion was that it wasn’t supposed to be a means of egress.

CP: So as long as you’ve been here, there have been people who have been trying to get this handrail installed.

TCW: Yes. There have been people who have been trying to get this handrail and it’s not been installed and now I’m happy to report: we are going to install a handrail. I don’t know when. I actually met with Thom Mayne in December, so we were in the building and I said, "Thom, you know your vision, the vision was that there would be a lot of people there, they’d be hanging out. I mean I don’t see a lot of people there sitting on the grand staircase and there’s a reason for that. It’s not working the way you thought it would work and I think if you give me a handrail that we’ll that change.” So I have been following up with him, waiting for a design. Once I get the design we’ll move forward. Hopefully people will use it, but who knows.

CP: Are we contractually required to have a handrail in order to get this handrail installed?

TCW: You know, I actually consulted with our School of Architecture because we have experts here and I said, "you know what do you think?” They felt that we should first talk to Thom Mayne since it was his original design. Now if Thom Mayne is not responsive, because I am following up on him, I’ll have to go to plan B. He was the original designer so the first option went to him.

CP: When approximately do you think this will go up?

TCW: My goal would be, not a year. Worst case, in the summer. So I’m looking at three or four months. It depends on what you put in it. If it’s something simple you can get fabricated easily enough, okay. If it’s anything too complicated, which is not what we’re looking for by the way, we’re looking for simple, clean, easy to install, so the goal should be that, once we get the design, it should be able to be fabricated and shipped depending on when they build it. If it’s in upstate New York or Long Island City for that matter, you can get it pretty quickly. So the answer is I don’t really know. My goal would be to have it in as short a period of time as possible and I’m thinking for three or four months as opposed to a year.

CP: Prof. Wolf mentioned he was personally thinking about a handrail more along to the side as opposed to the middle of the stair-case. Can you speak to whether or not the design will reflect that or is that also up in the air?

TCW: I don’t know the answer. I’ll have to see the design when it comes. When I talked to Thom Mayne, I said, “look you don’t have to put it through the middle, you have to make a safe passage on the side” so we’ll see. And by the way, if he doesn’t give me a design I like, I don’t even have to accept it. Once again, I wanted to give him the first opportunity since he is the designer of the building but hopefully he’ll give me something we’ll like.

CP: How much will this cost?

TCW: Haven’t a clue. I told him very inexpensive because we don’t have money. But that

I think that really does make a difference and seeing that it’s not being used the way we thought it would be and we should make a change. Do we see people that aren’t all that confident wanting another handrail so it should be changed. On the surface it seems like an easy answer but it really isn’t because we wouldn’t know what it would be like at the time. Architects probably have a better sense of this than I do but you look to see how the facility is being used and you modify it based on that.

CP: Have you thought at all, if the Thom Mayne design doesn’t work out having a student based design or some type of competition where people design their own handrail?

TCW: You know, I haven’t but that doesn’t mean I shouldn’t. It’s something to think about. I’m following up with Thom so I’m hoping he’ll come back with a design we can move forward with and quickly. If it doesn’t work out I would consult with the dean before I did that though. I would look to them provide wisdom relative to that.
Enter our contest!

This contest is for fun, fame, glory, and prizes!
Entries will not actually be considered for the real handrail design

Submit your sketch, design, drawing, painting, or model by March 6, 2012.

$50 GRAND PRIZE
2 $25 Runner Ups

Email it to cooperpioneer@gmail.com or just slide it under our office door (209)!

Limit one entry per person. Please keep the entry within reason and appropriate for our readers. No purchase or payment of any kind is necessary to enter or win. Winners for the Cooper Pioneer may enter, but winning for us does not influence the actions of winning. Winners who enter will not be the judges of this contest for the integrity of the contest. This contest is not being published for outside of Cooper. Contest begins at 12:01 AM Eastern Time (“ET”) on 2/20/2012 and ends at 11:59 PM Eastern Time (“ET”) on 3/6/2012. All submissions must be sent to cooperteacher@gmail.com. All entries submitted will be sent to The Cooper Pioneer for the contest. Each submission will be selected at random. Winners will be announced on our Facebook page. Winners will be notified by email or phone. Winners cannot exceed the age of majority in their jurisdiction of residence at the time of winning. All entries become the property of The Cooper Pioneer, and may be used in any manner and manner appropriate. Limit one entry per person. No purchase necessary. No cash value. No transfer. Entries without requests will not be considered by The Cooper Pioneer. You may ask a friend to vote for you. Entries will be accepted until 11:59 PM Eastern Time on 3/6/2012. Entries become the property of The Cooper Pioneer and may be used in any manner and manner appropriate. Limit one entry per person. No purchase necessary. No cash value. No transfer. Entries will be accepted until 11:59 PM Eastern Time on 3/6/2012. Entries become the property of The Cooper Pioneer and may be used in any manner and manner appropriate. Limit one entry per person. No purchase necessary. No cash value. No transfer. Entries will be accepted until 11:59 PM Eastern Time on 3/6/2012. Entries become the property of The Cooper Pioneer and may be used in any manner and manner appropriate. Limit one entry per person. No purchase necessary. No cash value. No transfer. Entries will be accepted until 11:59 PM Eastern Time on 3/6/2012. Entries become the property of The Cooper Pioneer and may be used in any manner and manner appropriate.
Steven Simon: I graduated in 2013 from Pace University, West Palm Beach, about an hour away from Miami.

CB: Can you tell me about your educational and professional background?

SS: Sure. I went to Yale for my undergraduate degree and I graduated in 2005 as a math major. I had started out majoring in philosophy. I went to NYU for my graduate degree; got my PHD last May and then I came here.

CP: When did you first learn about Cooper Union?

SS: After moving to New York for graduate school in 2006.

CP: What brought you to Cooper Union? When did you start working at Cooper?

SS: Cooper Union has a great reputation for having some of the brightest students; I was excited to come here. Cooper gives me enough time to do my research, but I consider myself a teacher before a researcher, so it was a good fit. The students here are amazing and the overall quality of students here is very high, some of the students being very excellent. It’s been pretty good. I was able to talk about very advanced stuff with maybe 20 to 30% of them actually following, which is better than other places. Students here are actually interested in more than just the basics.

CP: What is your role in Cooper? What is your favorite math topic or formula in math?

SS: The main goal of the math department is to give the requisite math for students to be engineers. Personally, I have a Platonic view of math and I try to get the “pure” side of math across to give students a deeper understanding of what math is. Computations must be done, but there’s almost always an underlying beauty to the solution that comes from the “pure” part of math.

CP: How much do you like your job at Cooper?

SS: A lot. I would love to stay. I feel like I have a pretty good relationship with the students here and they feel free to come and talk to me about any kind of math.

CP: What advice would you give to Cooper students?

SS: Not really much job advice. My hypothetical advice would be to relax, have some fun, and stop worrying; grades really don’t matter. Unfortunately, the job market is so competitive that it makes students believe that they do. Students here take a lot of courses, that aren’t easy.

CP: Who is your favorite professor at Cooper? Why?

SS: I really can’t say; I haven’t been here long enough.

CP: Because this is our Valentine’s edition of The Pioneer, we were wondering if you would be willing to share stories from your personal life. Are you married/engaged?

SS: I am married to Shari Wiseman and we’ve been married since this past summer.

CP: When and how did you meet her?

SS: I met her in college. We were in the same majoring in science, and there was an issue that we discussed silly things in a serious manner.

Ben Davis

Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering Room 419 NAB

Cooper Pioneer: What is your role in Cooper? What is your department’s role in Cooper?

BD: We are the Chemical Engineering department; we teach students how to design and build manufacturing processes that deal with chemicals, chemistry, and chemical reactions. The capstone course in Chemical Engineering is the process design course. In it, we have students design a chemical plant to make things like ethylene or ammonia or hydrogen. As for my role, I teach the Numerical Methods course and co-teach the process design class. I also teach Separations and two electives—one on Optimization and the other on Sustainability and Pollution Prevention.

CP: Where are you from?

BD: I am from Grand Island, New York. It is an island between Niagara Falls and Buffalo, about the size of Manhattan.

CP: What do you think of your job at Cooper?

BD: I really like it. It’s very valuable to me to be able to both teach and learn every day. It’s really satisfying to see that you students are so dedicated to learning. At most schools, the challenge for the teacher is engaging the students and getting them to complete the work assigned. At Cooper, the students are enthusiastic and always do everything I ask them to do. This is great and creates a different challenge for me: I have to present a set of things which are meaningful and challenging to everyone at the same time, and I find that really fun.

CP: What advice would you give to Cooper students?

BD: Most of my advise I tell to get an engineering job after finishing their degree at Cooper. The training you receive at Cooper is very specific and technical. You are trained to be an engineer. I think you are very employable, and if you don’t try it out after you’re done, it’s kind of a waste of the value of your training. If you like working as an engineer, great. If not, you have all sorts of other options, like graduate school, or even law school or medical school.

CP: Can you share a special moment/story between you and your partner?

BD: Well, this isn’t a really a story, but she always likes to say that she was the one who pursued me, which I think is funny because it’s not true.

CP: What is your stance on Cooper’s financial situation?

BD: I do very much believe in the institution’s mission as tuition free. It’s something I think is valuable, honorable, and worth keeping. It’s part of what attracted me to Cooper; unlike many large universities, Cooper doesn’t treat education as a business or a revenue source. Too often, research grants serve as funding for graduate education and research. Education should be provided to anyone who wants it. It’s a choice, not a privilege, we make hard decisions to make, involving spending less money and making more money. I’m hopeful in finding a solution to do that without changing the mission or strengths of this institution.

CP: What do you think about the student body trying to help preserve the financial situation?

BD: I think it’s admirable that the students are doing their part to support the school, it’s a sign of good citizenship. It’s important that students acknowledge what is currently afflicting the institution. It’s good that Cooper students are involved and helpful. Ultimately, the decision-making comes from the top as far as identifying and implementing the best solutions. But students should be involved and make it clear that they do.

BY YARA ELBROLOSY (CE ’14)

BY ROBIN KUTNER (CHE ’13)
Of course, I did not gain a full appreciation came as a great surprise that the admission admissions statistics and found that it was moment. We looked into the college and its were New Yorkers and had an “oh yeah” dress from my American history class in high CP: When did you first learn about Cooper cal and biological systems. (phenomena), with some applications to physi tont, DC. I went to NYU for graduate school tion early on (freshman and sophomore years) improved over time. I think some introspec fessional satisfaction is huge, and has much professionals. This has a lot to do with choice and done well once more. There is no evi ate their goals and to ultimately grow from professionally. CP: Who is your favorite professor at Cooper? SM: I am optimistic. I think that tough times cause institutions and people alike to reevalu SM: My wife and I share special moments whenever we are reminded of how well we know each other and how much we love each other. Liz is incredible at throwing surprise parties. I was on the receiving end of one such, on the occasion of my 23rd birthday. She managed to organize my entire NYU friend group into showing up early and hiding out at our apartment in Stuy Town. It had been a rainy Friday in November, and I remember feeling other melancholic at the thought of a low key celebration “I love getting together with my friends and celebrating big”. Needless to say, I was thrilled when I heard the vigorous “Surprise!” Later that evening, I distinctly re SM: I was an exchange student, and I came with my Ph.D. thesis. I started an appointment as a visiting professor with the math department in Fall 2008. CP: What do you think of your job at Cooper? SM: I am privileged to have a wonderful academic appointment, one that allows me to teach interesting courses at a high level to talented students, while keeping up some research projects with mathematicians from NYU and abroad. I greatly enjoy being challenged by my students to improve their communication skills. I realize that I am becoming a better teacher in the long run, and I see this as a tremendous positive. I am thrilled to have a job that matches my life and improves me professionally. CP: What advice would you give to Cooper students? SM: This is a good question as a follow-up to the one above. I think Cooper students should think carefully about defining for themselves the difference between “job” and “career.” Bright, intelligent undergrads should aspire to having long, productive careers as trained SM: I went to high school at the Groton School in Groton, MA. I later completed BS degrees in physics and mathematics at The George Washington University in Washing SM: I went to NYU for graduate school in mathematics, completing an MS and a Ph.D. at the Courant Institute. I do research in the field of dynamical systems (a mathe- CP: When did you first learn about Cooper Union? SM: I was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, where I spent my first seven-and-a-half years. After a short (three-week) stint in Seattle, WA my father was a scientist-exchange program with Seattle’s Fred Hutchinson Hospital in ’86-’87, we moved to the Washington, DC area. In the late 90’s / early 90’s, we took turns living in Bulgaria and the United States. I got my US citizenship in the late 90’s. CP: Can you tell me about your educational and professional background? SM: My father was on a scientist exchange program with Seattle’s Fred Hutchinson Hospital in ’86-’87, we moved to the Washington, DC area. In the late 90’s / early 90’s, we took turns living in Bulgaria and the United States. I got my US citizenship in the late 90’s. CP: Can you tell me about your educational and professional background? SM: My father was on a scientist exchange program with Seattle’s Fred Hutchinson Hospital in ’86-’87, we moved to the Washington, DC area. In the late 90’s / early 90’s, we took turns living in Bulgaria and the United States. I got my US citizenship in the late 90’s. CP: Can you tell me about your educational and professional background? SM: My father was on a scientist exchange program with Seattle’s Fred Hutchinson Hospital in ’86-’87, we moved to the Washington, DC area. In the late 90’s / early 90’s, we took turns living in Bulgaria and the United States. I got my US citizenship in the late 90’s. CP: Can you tell me about your educational and professional background? SM: My father was on a scientist exchange program with Seattle’s Fred Hutchinson Hospital in ’86-’87, we moved to the Washington, DC area. In the late 90’s / early 90’s, we took turns living in Bulgaria and the United States. I got my US citizenship in the late 90’s.
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