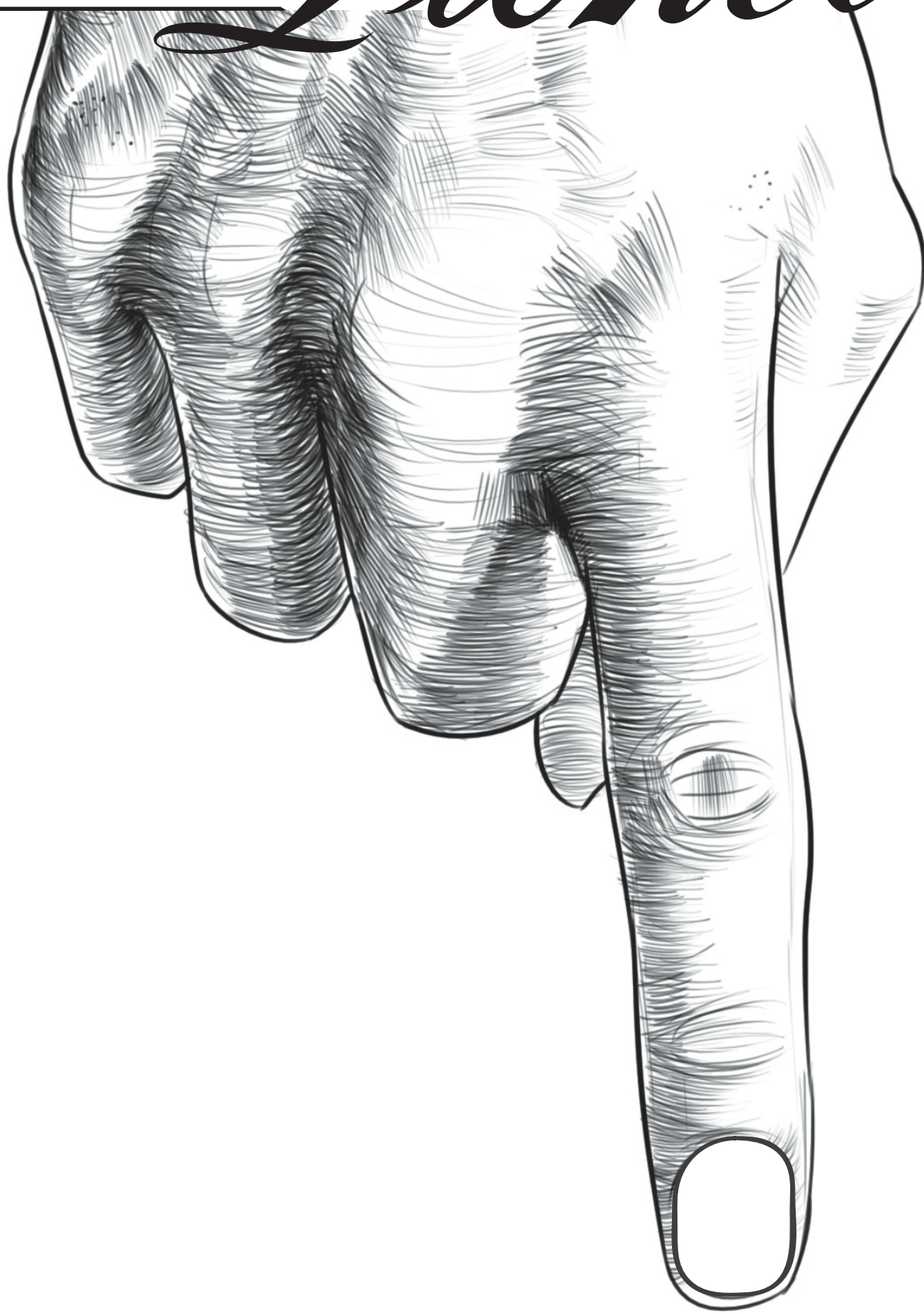


# The Pioneer

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★★★★★

**OPEN DIALOGUE  
AND  
LIVE DISCUSSION  
WITH  
STUDENT TRUSTEE  
CANDIDATES**

★★★★★

**TONIGHT AT 9PM**

How are you going to vote if you don't know  
any of the candidates?

Even if you do know their names, do you really  
know what their stances are?

*The Pioneer's* got your back.

We're hosting a forum for you to get to know  
the candidates. They are real people with  
individual views on what the  
role of Student Trustee is.  
Come find out!

We know you're suuuuper busy,  
so we're keeping this event short.  
Very short.  
Plus, there's free food!

Be present and vote wisely!

***BE  
PRESENT!***



NOT THE MARCH MADNESS YOU’RE THINKING OF, THE OTHER ONE

TOBY STEIN (CE ‘18)

It was March, and it was Madness. What can only be summarized as a semi-packed Rose Auditorium gathered to hear our own professors orate on the topics that they held most near, and most dear to their hearts. As professors slowly trickled into Rose, the excitement in the air was palpable, like the buzz before a championship game. All week the professors practiced their three-minute drills. What they would do under pressure? How would they keep their composure after a call did not go their way? Only time would tell.

After a quick coin flip and introductory statement, Dean Anita Raja took the snap, and handed it off to the first back, perennial contender, Professor Mintchev. Starting of the game strong, and setting the bar high, Mintchev spoke about his interest in mathematical neuroscience, however, he drew a five yard penalty due to his lack of regard for the apparently strict ‘only five words after the buzzer goes off’ rule. Following right after him was the rapid-fire duo of Professor Cataldo speaking about the green roof on the Javits Center, and then Professor Baglione explaining possible energy efficiency improvements to the engineering building, as well as research within the vibrations lab. Batting cleanup was Professor Davis who hit an absolute tape measure home run with his explanation of designing chemical processes that are more sustainable and have less impact of on the environment. Much to the tangible anticipation of everyone in the audience, Professor Yecko stormed the stage, ignoring the doctor’s advice, and boldly playing through his broken hand to deliver a MVP performance in discussing the intricacies of transport and control in time dependent and stochastic flows. As the first quarter wrapped up, it was shaping up to be an absolute blowout, but the oncoming professors were confident primed for a strong inning in the next round.

Unfortunately, the second period began with a bit of a sad start, as Professor Topper was reported out for the rest of the game due to sickness. The fans, however, were still given a show, watching his power point in silence for the duration of what would be his time. The audience described it as “the most hard hitting presentation of the day” and “the silence spoke volumes to his research”. Similarly, Professor Cumberbatch also reported an injury, as he had a case of ‘being in Ghana’, and his presentation had to be delivered by his replace-

ment: perennial senior Chris Curro. Blazing through the middle innings were Professor Dell with his description of engineering the impossible, Professor Raja with her crusade towards predicting pre-term birth, and Professor Wolf with his use of high speed video cameras to study a variety of engineering and science topics as well as building with magnetic fields.

Quickly emerging from the locker room, with his “basement prototype” Professor Smyth explained how simple introductory linear algebra could be coupled with some cannibalized Logitech instruments to create a mouse that provided the user with motion with six degrees of freedom. Professor Fontaine quickly asserted his play calling expertise in demonstrating how you “cheat” to represent information with less data than the theory requires. Point guard Professor Sidebotham explained a new theory on space heating technology, much to the chagrin of the chilly audience members who were seemingly affected by the quick change in the rink’s weather conditions.

The bottom half of the genetic engineering set was covered by outside hitter Professor Medvedik, as he explained what is innovative on the frontier of recombinant DNA technology. Next, Professor Luchtenburg discussing his research into modeling and feedback control of complex systems, with specific reference to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Professor Wootton’s investigation into better classifying and quantifying sleep apnea put major points up on the score-



Professor Yecko (above) and Professor Baglione (below) present at the 2nd Annual March Madness event on Tuesday, March 29. Photos by Winter Leng (ChE ‘18).



board, and he left the stage confident that his final score would put his team over the top so that they could snag the victory.

Overall, March Madness was a resounding success yet again, drawing a massive crowd, young and old alike. If you were a complete hooligan of a human and did not show up, but are interested in doing some research into some of the presentations discussed above, I encourage you to talk to a professor, and find out what you can do this summer to help them out! ♦

BILL MEA: ALL SPACES ON CAMPUS DEGENDERED

MONICA CHEN (ME ‘18)

In a campus notice email on March 18, The Cooper Union administration announced a decision to remove signs of gender identification from all spaces on campus.

The original proposal was made in December 2015, where Acting President Mea attempted to reach a compromise between those who opposed the gender-neutral bathrooms and those who endorsed the idea by proposing the following modifications:

- (1) Unlocking and opening all single-stall bathrooms on campus for anyone to use
- (2) Opening gender-specified bathrooms to all who identify with the indicated gender

Following this proposal, Bill Mea sought out feedback from students and the rest of the community. The proposal’s mild stance was met with passionate responses by many students seeking

a greater degree of change. Mea met with students at length and these conversations strongly influenced the final implementations set in place last month. The new policies regarding the use of bathroom facilities include:

- (1) Removing gender identifications from any spaces on campus
- (2) Opening single-occupancy restrooms for everyone’s use

Additionally, the NYC Commission of Human Rights’ legal guidance states “that individuals be permitted to use single-sex facilities, such as bathrooms and locker rooms, and participate in single-sex programs, consistent with their gender, regardless of their sex assigned at birth, anatomy, medical history, appearance, or the sex indicated on their identification.” In short, it explains that New York State laws prohibit any policies that deny transgender or gender

non-conforming individuals access to a single-sex facility that is consistent with their chosen gender identity.

The Cooper Union administration’s decision in March to remove signs of gender identification on restrooms has caught the attention of various news outlets. *The Guardian* quotes Bill Mea, “When there’s a gendered space, there’s a sense of ownership to that space. When people see someone who they think doesn’t belong there, it can create stress for everyone. So we thought, let’s just take that away.”

In response to the reaction of the general student population to the implementation of the policies, Mea said, “I don’t expect much to change [with the implementation of the new policies]. People will continue to use the restrooms they are used to using regardless of the signage on them. That is what we have seen in Foundation [building]

over the past few months. Most of the responses have been very favorable, but some people do not what things to change and I recognize that change is difficult for most people.”

“We, who are in positions of power, have the obligation to not only stand with those without power, but to stand in front of them, clearing a path for them to walk,” wrote Bill Mea. ♦



Examples of new signs that will be placed outside of bathrooms on campus.

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MAKE COOPER GREAT AGAIN—REALLY!

KAVYA UDUPA (BSE ‘19) | BRANDON QUINERE (CE ‘19)

There is another very important election in our midst this year. Your friends and family aren’t ranting about it on Facebook, but it should have just as much attention and concern devoted to it, as it affects our student body and your personal experience as a student at Cooper much more intimately. Plus, this one doesn’t involve Donald Trump.

Voting for the Student Trustee opens today, and talk surrounding it has been somewhat sparse. In the weeks leading up to today, students have been relatively silent about the election itself. While signatures were required for nominees to run, students signing were unaware about the plans of the candidates and the candidates themselves, let alone what a Trustee actually does for us. The lack of concern surrounding this election is frightening, as it leaves the Cooper community left with a student vote without the support or awareness from which that vote requires: the students themselves.

There isn’t much history behind the Student Trustee as the position was recently created. Monica Abdallah (ChE ‘17) and Jessica Marshall (EE ‘17), the current Trustees, are the first students to hold the position, whereas Devora Najjar (ChE ‘16) was the first Student Representative to the board.

Jessica was elected as the next Student Representative in the spring of 2015 but became the Student Trustee as the Consent Decree, approved in November 2015, stated that there should be two Trustees to the board. The second Trustee was chosen by the board from the two students who ran against Jessica in the previous year; the board chose Monica as the second Trustee. From then on, the process of voting for the Trustee was staggered. One of the first two Trustees, Monica, will only hold the position for one year, which allows for voting for a new Trustee to begin today.

Though both jobs share a lot of similarities, there is one huge difference between the role of Student Trustee and the role of Student Representative: Student Trustees can vote. But having the ability to vote makes the Student Trustees look at everything from a fiduciary standpoint; As Jessica states, “We have to do what’s best for the Cooper Union, the institution. Not what’s best for our constituencies, the student body.”

So, what does the board vote on? The board discusses various issues that range from the budget of the school to the new president search and all of these issues are discussed in separate committees like the Governance, Academic and Student Affairs, Presidential Search, and Free Education Committees. A lot of the decisions that affect Cooper immediately are made by the administration and faculty of Cooper, what some call “the Cooper bubble.”

In essence, the board deals with long-term goals and fundamentally have “big picture final say, not implementation final say,” as Jessica puts it, which in turn brings in the role of the Student Trustee. The job of the Student Trustee is to listen in on the discussion and voice their opinions when they feel that something in the big picture either does or does not sit well with them.

The role of Student Trustee is very difficult to hold, as there is a delicate balance that needs to be maintained in terms of the relationships between the Trustees and the student body, as well as between the Trust-

ees and the administration. “There’s more going on than what people see; there are confidential ideas that if exposed to the entire Cooper community, would be twisted very quickly,” Jessica states.

It is clear that Student Trustees cannot divulge everything that is discussed during board meetings. Recognizing confidentiality during these discussions is immensely important for the position, as Jessica explains, “Though people want transparency, it’s not necessarily beneficial to the community as many good ideas are lost before they were even thoroughly discussed.”

The nominees for the Student Trustee position are Jacqueline Baum (Art ‘18), Zhenia Dementyeva (Arch ‘20), Julian Mayfield (Art ‘18), Waseem Nafisi (Art ‘18), Kevin Savillon (Arch ‘19), and Clara Zinky (Art ‘18). Speaking to some of the nominees individually over the past couple of weeks revealed an interesting range of motives for each in regards to running.

Regardless if candidates were motivated to run for any reason other than to better engage our student body, the mystery surrounding the sincerity of our candidates’ motives would rightfully generate some suspiciousness in any curious voter. The events of last week in preparation for today’s Trustee election attempted to alleviate that concern, to what many consider subpar results.

The Student Trustee Forum held in Rose Auditorium last Wednesday night was loosely moderated. Though the more Trustee-related questions had the intention of showcasing the candidates’ knowledge about their role, they were executed in a way that allowed nominees to branch off of each other’s answers. The forum became more conversational, and while good for generating healthy discussion, it did not reveal individual views for each, which was important for any student in the audience to hear.

The style of the forum was somewhat of a blessing in disguise, as it did serve its purpose in showing the Cooper community whether some of the candidates truly understood their role as a Student Trustee. Many candidates were confused as to what the role entails and have not done sufficient research to figure out the extent of the job. Case in point, when asked if they sought out advice or knowledge from current Student Trustees Jessica and Monica, the candidates on stage remained silent.

The students in the audience, on the other hand, were not as silent as they had an opportunity to pose their own questions for the candidates. A portion of the forum was saved for this audience Q&A, which still did not aid in understanding the strategies of our candidates, with responses instead focusing on personal ideologies rather than actual plans. This was displayed in the amount of students that stayed in Rose to reflect on the forum after it was over.

Students voiced their concerns to peers as well as to the candidates themselves on how this platform for them to speak was unsuccessfully acted upon. Allowing students to vent these opinions to each other in person, however, was a refreshing change of pace from the slew of passionate rants that has become prevalent on our Facebook feeds.

Cooper students have a tendency to privately complain to their friends or publicly complain on social media about the

SO AN ARTIST, AN ARCHITECT AND AN ENGINEER WALK INTO A ROOM...

DANIEL GALPERIN (ChE ‘18)



Photo by Sage Gu (CE ‘19).

Everyone knows that we’re a resourceful bunch, but have you ever considered what four Cooper students could do with a medium sized room, some free food and an icebreaker? Anyone that attended the “Common Ground” event on March 24, knows that this is a pretty good recipe for school unity. Approximately 50 students followed the scent of Vanessa’s dumplings and kosher pizza right into a trap: a room full of strangers.

Common Ground was revived, after three years, by a group of four students: Clara Zinky (Art ‘18), Waseem Nafisi (Art ‘18), Benjamin Greenberg (ME ‘17) and Zhenia Dementyeva (Arch ‘20). The night began with some friendly conversation and food—no surprises here—and then progressed into an icebreaker exercise to acquaint people in the room. The organizers put forward a real challenge, one certainly fit for Cooper students. Fifty students were told to close their eyes and were moved around and partnered up. The partners were to get to know each other’s hands in total silence. While keeping their eyes closed and remaining silent, the crowd was shuffled again and made to find their way back to their partners. Needless to say it was an interesting exercise and helped to connect people who’ve never met.

way our school is run. That is expected to happen for any opinionated student at any institution, but those objections are only justifiable if you actually participate in our student affairs. How can your peers take your grievances about the Student Trustees seriously if you never voted for a Trustee in the first place?

If you don’t feel personally represented by any of the candidates or feel that last week’s forum did not help with understanding the candidates, talk to them and make your own judgment as to who could have the ability to serve as your Trustee for the next two years. The majority of the candidates at the forum stressed how accessible they would be to students if they had any personal concerns. Take advantage of that accessibility this week.

Ultimately, vote and be smart about your vote. Your votes will decide which three of our candidates will be sent to the Board of Trustees to be interviewed and ultimately selected for the position. It is your duty as Cooper students to exercise your right to vote in deciding who will be our next Trustee.

Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are pre-

The main event, however, was the tours of the labs and studios throughout Cooper. The organizers divided the students into groups of five or six students, making sure each group involved only people who did not know each other. The groups were then set free and many groups went floor-by-floor through 41CS and the Foundation Building, as engineers showed off their labs and artists and architects showed off their studios. Some groups held their tours until as late as 1AM.

Common Ground was a smashing success all around and was an important step in bonding the students of the three schools. Seeing people set aside any social, political and otherwise ideological differences and getting along was a truly inspiring sight. The importance of unity between students across schools is vital at this junction in Cooper Union’s history, and it is important for people connect with each other through their work and share mutual respect for one another. For anyone out there that missed this event, despair not! The organizers are already working on another Common Ground early next semester. Hope to CU there! ♦

pared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.” Use this week to educate yourself and make an informed decision. And if you still choose not to participate in this week’s election: this decision to not vote will greatly affect you.

Even if you are at Cooper solely to learn, this election impacts you in ways that you probably don’t even realize. Student Trustees are sitting in on and speaking in discussions that directly affect Cooper. And what affects the institution will, in some shape or form, affect the student body.

One day, you will find yourself up personally affected by a change in our school. You may find yourself up in arms about this change, a perfectly rational reaction. What’s irresponsible is an inability to take on an opportunity when it’s provided to you to prevent that change from happening in the first place. Regardless of who you choose this week, voting for your next Student Trustee is that opportunity. It would be wise to use it. ♦

VOTING OPENS TODAY!



# AN EVENING WITH JOSHUA ALLEN

PRANAV JONEJA (ME '18)

Before you finish reading this sentence, think of the name of someone whose shoulders you stand on, a person without whom you wouldn't be here. This is how Joshua Allen, a black trans-feminine organizer working on issues of race and queerness, opened the conversation in the evening on March 25. The audience that packed Rose auditorium responded to that question in unison, with voices naming family members and friends, but also civil rights figures like Harriet Tubman, as Joshua did.

"Let's talk about black femme power", began Joshua, "that's what I've been invited here to talk about and why y'all are here, too!" Joshua introduced their two close friends joining them in the feature conversation: Shannon Shird, a writer, filmmaker, and activist; and Darielle Harris, a community organizer and activist, too.

They spoke about the erasure of black femmehood. Even as the income disparity between women and men are discussed (commonly cited that women earn 77 cents for every dollar of income for males), much less is said about the disparity for black women in particular (63 cents, but it's almost never talked about).

The realities for black women get even starker. Being disproportionately affected in a negative way by employment and housing policies, sexual assault and legal justice means that black women suffer extreme levels of stress that can impact their lives in unimaginable ways.

These impacts are unimaginable until they are talked about. The feature conversation took a turn to much more intimate topics when Shannon shared details of her pregnancy that ended in a miscarriage. Despite being an extraordinarily difficult topic to discuss, Shannon spoke about how academic literature is only just beginning to investigate what's being called 'Sojourner's syndrome'—how the stress associated with racism, classism and gender issues leads to the significantly elevated rates of miscarriage and high infant mortality for black women. In short, these issues are literally killing future generations.

Towards the end of the event, there was tension when an audience member asked what strategies could be employed to create much-needed solutions to these problems. Joshua responded in a passionate and deeply personal way, telling everyone



From left to right, Shannon Shird, Joshua Allen and Darielle Harris. Photo by Yifei Simon Shao (ME '19).

about how focusing on all the ways that black femmes are negatively impacted is irresponsible. Instead, being there to support each other, to help each other survive and prosper and ultimately be happy is the key. Often, direct actions and community organizing are more visible strategies, but that shouldn't erase the importance of surviving and supporting each other in the daily grind. Rio Sofia (Art '16), the student who organized the event, puts it this way:

"the work of battling depression and taking care of yourself is motivated to challenge systemic oppression just as much as large-scale campaigns are. The truth is that when I'm taking care of myself and have a strong support system, the work is better." Surviving is a strategy. Being a role model for black femme power is a strategy. That's what Joshua, Shannon and Darielle were doing that day. ♦

# CU@SC: COOPER RETURNS TO SOUTH CAROLINA

ROBERT GODKIN (ChE '18)



Cooper Athletics took their annual trip to Litchfield Beach and Golf Resort in South Carolina over spring break, with the tennis, golf, men's volleyball, and women's and men's basketball teams training over the course of a week. The students left Thursday evening from Cooper, and began their 12-hour journey on a bus, riding through the night. Arriving bright and early, and after a classic breakfast at Shoney's Restaurant, the teams spread themselves out at their respective facilities and got to work.

The tennis team focused on training new recruits, developing team chemistry, and increasing the knowledge and presence of being on a tennis court. The team saw many new faces join, and is in the stages of rebuilding, with most of the previous members not returning to play this season. Within a matter of days, however, progress was shown, and Captain Jordan Selig (ME '17) said "the team progressed and began to grow as soon as everyone stepped onto the courts." The team underwent major changes from last semester but each member grows faster, becomes more cognizant, and understands the proper techniques faster and better with each practice. The team has several matches within the coming weeks, and is hoping to remain undefeated in the 2015-2016 school year.

The men's volleyball team returned to South Carolina, maintaining a strong core unit of the team, and even recruiting additional members. Captains Justin Poserio (EE '16), Jeffrey Tam (ME '16), and JJ Tesoriero (CE '17) had much to say with regards to team progress and chemistry. "The team improves so much during the athletic trips like South Carolina, and it's not just because we're playing volleyball

every single day. The trips to Cape Cod and South Carolina are the ultimate team bonding experiences," says Jeffrey. "As a senior, this trip was my last Cooper athletics trip as an undergrad. I wish it never ended (and was quite sad when it did), but I'm really glad it happened." Justin says that he needed to mention that "everyone should come to THE BIGGEST GAME OF THE YEAR on April 8th, at 6:30 PM at the 20th Street Gym." The team looks formidable, and will be ready to play.

The women's basketball team was able to improve their teamwork after a successful season, and with several members graduating this year, worked closely with the underclassmen to improve technique and team unity. Captains Jamie Chan (ChE '16), Nina Berlow (CE '16), and Kayla Weg (CE '16) agreed that team chemistry was at an all-time high. "We talk about rebuilding and establishing team chemistry every trip, but South Carolina is especially important because we focus on building individual skills," says Jamie. Nina was quick to add that she "feels so lucky to have been introduced to so many wonderful, smart, and talented individuals, and I know they will do very well in the next season!"

Revitalized last year, Cooper's golf team took a clubbing to the courses around Pawley's Island, including one designed by one of the greatest golfers in history, Jack Nicklaus. Led by Captains Matthew Smarsch (EE '16) and Jack Donnellan (ME '17), the team is ready to take on upcoming matches. "We're really excited with the progress that the team has made since its inception last season," said Matthew. "We were encouraged by our coaches and Cooper alumni, Charlie Canepa and Jason Damiano, to fo-

# ONE OF US FINALLY SNAPPED. CIVIL ENGINEERING DESERVES YOUR RESPECT.

GABRIELLA GODLEWSKI (CE '19)

I will never forget the first brush I had of how civil engineers are treated around here. During the freshman orientation trip to Camp Team USA, the upperclassmen put on a play in which the classic "civil engineering is not a real major" line was uttered. I couldn't help but think, "Civil engineering at Cooper has a curriculum, unlike computer science, but, I mean, okay, I guess." It was weird to me that this fact was ignored and everyone chose to take a jab at a legitimate major.

Things, as they tend to at Cooper, only got worse.

CivE upperclassmen told me horror stories of how they were treated by their non-civil professors, just because of their major. Freshmen began to catch on. Despite the fact that *we are all still academically equal and basically taking the exact same classes*, snide comments have passed from freshmen to CivE freshmen, to our faces and behind our backs. I have had "because you're a CivE" used as an insult to my face from people I sat next to in almost every class. If you are guilty of this practice, you have consciously chosen to perpetuate the hate created by past generations without truly understanding whether or not the hate is deserved. You have accustomed yourselves to an entitlement you have yet to even earn.

Besides the de facto discrimination civil engineers face in *some* classes taught by *certain* professors, my own friends have pressured me to "just transfer," long before I actually began considering it. Where I hoped to find support, I instead found a disregard for why I was here and what I wanted to accomplish. Nothing has proven more disheartening.

It only took a semester and a half but the straw that broke the camel's back has finally situated itself and demands that this

problem be faced - I demand that civil engineers at the Cooper Union be treated with respect because, contrary to ancient belief, we deserve to be taken seriously for our career choices just as much as the rest of you.

I did not choose civil engineering for the "easy workload." Furthermore, I did not choose civil engineering to be constantly ridiculed and looked down on for this choice I made long before I knew how many classes I was required to take. The reason I and the rest of my fellow civil engineering students chose to major in this field are entirely personal and not without good reason, I can assure you. We never asked for nor do we deserve the hate we get. We respect you for your major choice and we rightfully expect the same from you.

Lastly, to those of you who still think that civil engineering is a useless major, I raise you this: without civil engineers, none of you would have easy access to clean water. Buildings would barely be standing up, and skyscrapers would basically be nonexistent. For those of you who commute on a daily basis, civil engineers are responsible for the roads, the train systems, and, yes, traffic control. We students will one day be the reason you live a relatively safe life with all your basic necessary resources. And you choose to ridicule us?

Of course, here is the necessary disclaimer that my assertion that civil engineering is a legitimate respectable major does not detract at all from the legitimacy and necessity of any other major. As a matter of fact, I can almost guarantee that we civil engineers have only respected your majors, and since that has yet to kill us, it wouldn't hurt the rest of you. ♦

cus on the areas of our games that needed the most improvement, allowing us to make up strokes in our game in order to decrease the stroke count, but increase efficiency and accuracy. We're looking forward to playing in our first match."

There is a lot of chemistry, and team building that gets incorporated into the work of

a student athlete. Because the trip takes over spring break, the students get a chance to solely focus on their athletics. As with school, there's always new techniques to learn and plays to run, and the teams hope to finish their seasons off strong, and be ready for the games in the fall in the new academic year. ♦



FACES OF COOPER: PROFESSOR PETER BUCKLEY

ANTHONY PASSALACQUA (ME ‘18)

Can you give us a little background about yourself?

**Peter Buckley:** I was born in the UK; I first came to America during my college years as part of a study abroad program in my third year. I was already interested in the country, but that experience, when I was 21, determined that I wanted to study the history of the US. That’s what I’ve been doing since! I came to the US after completing my undergraduate degree in England, and then did all my graduate work here.

Where did you study?

I first went to SUNY Stony Brook, where I didn’t meet Professor Om Agrawal or Professor Alan Wolf, and then I went to the CUNY Graduate Center, and it was probably that move that determined most of my interest would be centered in New York City. So that’s the trajectory. After finishing my PhD, I taught at Princeton for two years, and then at Pratt Institute. It was when I was attending a lecture at NYU, I saw a flyer on the wall saying there was a position at Cooper Union. I interviewed, and I’ve been here since.

*“I’m thinking of getting some sheep for my place upstate, because they’ll probably be better behaved than the current crop of freshmen”*

Can you tell us about how your fellow British countrymen felt about your decision to study American history?

They said it was an easier thing to do because there wasn’t much of it. Isn’t that funny? It was especially funny because I think they were serious about it. When I was thinking about majoring in American history at the University of Cambridge, there were 43 medieval historians, and one US historian. That really gives you an understanding of how little the British academic establishment thought about US matters. I don’t think it was just to do with a kind of “colonial mentality” on the British part, and the fact that they lost the war of independence. I think it had more to do with actually realizing how powerful the US was after WWII and not really wanting to examine it.

You said a flyer convinced you to interview for a job here at Cooper, but what drove you to take the position?

Cash. I wanted a job, and Cooper, which I already knew about as a historical artifact, was a very interesting place to teach. It still is a good place to teach... maybe not to work, but to teach it’s good.

What do you teach here, besides the core HSS courses?

I teach a range of electives. Humanities and Social Sciences decided some time ago that it would be a good idea if the faculty taught on a two year rotation, so that any junior or senior would have a chance to take an elective. I think that’s been a wise policy, and I think it’s been looked at by other faculty as a model. I normally teach a particular range of courses: the history of NYC, American intellectual history, American social history.

You said that “this is a very good place to teach, if not to work.” The question is: what do you particularly like about the environment here, and what do you dislike?

The liking is quite easy. I like the students, and I like my colleagues. I think the students still embody the right forms of ambition, and the right levels of intellectual engagement. The faculty: everyone is excited about all the new hiring. We’re getting three new full-time hires in HSS, and two post-docs. That’s five people who, hopefully, will arrive next semester. I’m very excited about that, because that will entirely amplify the range of things we teach.

As for it being a place to work, the last few years have been tremendously tiring. Not just for the faculty, but I recognize that in the students as well. It was necessary to fight battles that should never have taken place.

This wasn’t a fight just about tuition; what had been really eroded was governance, and then with the attempt to impose a computer science degree, it was also an attack upon academic standards. That’s a particularly draining form of attack. I don’t know how to explain it exactly. It’s not as if faculty wake up in the morning every day and agonize over academic standards. But when such a thing happens, it cuts deeper than students imagine, because it’s the faculty’s business to make those standards and to uphold them. When that is under attack, it is especially corrosive to faculty morale. That’s how I would characterize basically the last four years.

*“It was necessary to fight battles that should never have taken place”*

The thing that was on the agenda, was not simply charging tuition, but something being called ‘reinvention’. What exactly that ‘reinvention’ was going to actually look like was never spelled out, but effectively it meant enacting a program of expansion that bore little relationship to the successes that we already had. It’s not as if anyone ever sat down and said “what do we do well?” That still has to happen. In my opinion, removing the President, and the previous Dean of Engineering, has not answered questions that were always there. Namely: “Who are we?”, “What are we as an institution?”,



Photo by Wentao Zhang (ChE ‘19).

“What do we do best?”, and “How would we like to change?” Throughout all of the last four years, a lot of things have been talked about, but education itself is conspicuous by its absence.

Let me pose one of those questions to you. For your department, what would you want to change, especially with all of these new hires coming in?

This is such a large cohort to hire, and the new faculty will inevitably change the nature of HSS, especially its core offerings. We had started examining HSS one through four, and that process will be made immeasurably easier, when we have new people contributing to that. For example, we’re due to hire someone whose center of interest is economics. A student has already asked “well, what does that mean for the core?” The answer is, obviously, something more to do with economy or political economy will appear within it. The decision of whom we hire is also a decision of how we want to change.

What do you feel your role of a professor here is? How do you think that reflects on your pedagogical methods?

I’d like to break that question down. One

answer is: I’m a historian. I like the study of history because of how it disturbs the present. So my role as a historian at the Cooper Union, is to make the present unfamiliar, by pointing to how the past is contingent, not a given. It’s contingent on a whole set of actions that have taken place in the past.

As a faculty member, overall, my primary task is to encourage a sense of excitement about ideas, and how questions themselves can be very exciting.

Do you have any advice to offer students?

Yeah, get out more often! By which I mean especially studying abroad, even if it’s just for a summer or a semester. I’m always surprised at the number of students who wish to remain in New York for their entire lives. That’s my advice: get out!

Our last question: What are your hobbies, and what do you do in your spare time?

As a rhetorical answer: Is there spare time at Cooper? Real answer: ... What do I like doing? I really like gardening, which is not something that is Cooper centric. I’m thinking of getting some sheep for my place upstate, because they’ll probably be better behaved than the current crop of freshmen. ♦

DIVERSITY/HERITAGE COMMEMORATIVE MONTHS

OLIVIA HEUIYOUNG PARK (BSE ‘19)

Every year, we dedicate specific months to commemorate different groups in an attempt to embrace diversity. February was dedicated to African American heritage, March to women’s history, May to Asian American heritage, June to LGBTQ pride, and September to Hispanic heritage. For those who might not get exposure to different cultures, these dedicated months are supposed to introduce different cultures mostly through different programs, events, and performances.

However, it seems like these months tend to focus on relegation, rather than dedication. The issue begins within their names: Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific Heritage Month. Although dedicating a whole month to a specific group could seem like a noble act of empowerment, designating months to certain ethnic groups basically attaches labels to them and segregates them.

What if I told you that Harriet Tubman wasn’t just black? Or that Rodolfo Gonzales wasn’t just Hispanic? Yes, we learned and wrote papers about Tubman being a great female civil rights activist for the African Americans, and Gonzales as a male convener of the Chicano conferences. But, what we don’t realize is that these two individuals are more than just their gender or their race. Most importantly, they were both human. Commemorative months falsely promote the idea that celebrating a group of people’s heritage for a month is enough—when we should be celebrating all lives every day.

It’s true that it’s easy to see people and group them into different categories according to race, religion, and/or gender. Society has shaped us to identify others through skin color, ethnicity, or gender. Yet, we simply conform to this, failing to take any action to remove these artificial lenses and see the world as it is—a habitat for all types of human beings.

Although they might have a noble motive, commemorative months promote labels and stereotypes instead of social unity. Through designating specific months to different groups, it only divides individuals and advocates continued categorization of people through labels society has attached.

Especially at a place like Cooper—a diverse community with a total of 51% underrepresented cohorts including but not limited to African Americans, Latinos, and Asians—commemorative months only further divide us, making us identify as different, separate groups. However, society blinds us into believing that we need to treat others differently depending on the labels on our body indicating a color, race, or gender. Commemorative months could be great, but because we have been engrained by society to label and separate, they promote separation instead of unification. ♦



TALE OF FOLKS

EMMA FAITH HILL (Art ‘17)



Atisha Fordyce (Art ‘16) poses in front of a piece in her senior art show, Tale of Folks.

A warm light is cast upon the walls, guests, and art; it as if they are wrapped up in twilight colored organdy. Grinning faces and robust spirits circle surround the gallery and just outside a platter of Guyanese pastries and bowl of sorrel juice are waiting for you. Occasionally, you stumble across scents wafting out from the work: car fresheners, wine, and Vicks vapor rub. And all the while, glimmering out from the walls came art school senior, Atisha Fordyce’s drawings. The opening of Atisha’s senior show, *Tale of Folks*, included many works by Maja Griffin (Art ‘17) and Adam Boothman (Art ‘16) and took place in the 41 Cooper Gallery.

The event was welcoming, like a balmy summer evening with people you’ve known for a good long time. From listening in on a two-hour critique of the show and speaking with Atisha myself one afternoon, I learned that this was just the type of energy she hoped to bring into the space: one of warmth and family. The three artists took a few steps to transform the typically sterile and white space; the wall you immediately view upon entering was painted a rich salmon color and they dimmed the lights down quite a bit.

The majority of the wall space was occupied by Atisha’s drawings, which collage prints and textures with images of her family drawn in blue pen. “I’m using images of my family that I took when I went back to Guyana to visit”, said Atisha. “They are helping me tell these stories through letting me sneak and take pictures of them or by posing for them.” The figures transcend basic family portraiture by becoming characters in Atisha’s much larger story; the drawings help to weave narratives and often depict Guyanese and African folk tales.

This world takes place on a veranda, which acts as a transitional space as it is both inside and outside. The setting of the veranda splits the space of the images into a near and a far; creating a middle ground between the character’s world and the viewer’s. When asked Atisha where she saw viewers fitting into her narrative, she replied, “I see the viewer as another character within the stories. All of these characters, whether or not

they are directly related to each other, are all cousins in one big family, so the viewer is like another cousin.”

Atisha’s drawings shared the gallery space with works by art school junior, Maja Griffin and first-semester senior, Adam Boothman. Upon entering the back section of the gallery, I immediately took notice of Adam’s sculpture hanging on the far wall. Attached to the wall were half of the springs from a mattress with pastel colored yarn unraveling down from the curled wire. Lathered onto the yarn was Vick’s vapor rub and as you walked in you were sure to catch a whiff of the stinging mint smell. Two of Maja’s trashcan prints were placed between you and Adam’s sculpture; this curation gave the narrow space the function of a hallway. While I was standing in front of Adam’s sculpture, I kept having the impulse to gently press my hand down onto the springs, as if it would send me back to a memory like the Pensieve in Harry Potter; except I would be tossed back to a memory of a parent haphazardly rubbing Vick’s on their child’s congested chest.

Dispersed across the gallery were Maja’s sculptures consisting of several “granny-carts” that had been adorned with various paints, car fresheners, and small objects (a photograph, a fan, a painting, an American flag, etc.). On the center of the salmon wall hung a drawing of women lounging on the veranda and directly beneath it is one of Maja’s “granny carts”. This specific sculpture has a small humming fan, gently whooshing at a photograph clipped onto the cart. While the edges of the family photograph flicker about, like a card tucked into a bike’s back wheel, a breeze glides by, as if cooling the women depicted on the veranda.

This image, of a familial, tender, and reflective personal narrative, reappears throughout the show. On this, Atisha said, “I decided to show with Adam and Maja because we have a lot of shared experiences. We come from different places, all three of us, but the themes in our work often overlap.”

The idea of populating the gallery space with drawings that not only feel, but look

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TOBY STEIN (CE ‘18)

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ACROSS

1. Pen manufacturer  
4. Entranceway  
8. Irwin School (abbrv.)  
12. Harem chamber  
13. Egyptian cross  
14. Rigged, as in the system  
16. Symbolic story  
18. Area 51’s singular topic  
19. A kind of crowd, the social elite  
21. Scottish/Northern English for ‘tenth’  
22. Water filled ditch  
24. X-ray alternative  
25. Food daily recommendation  
26. Auction action  
27. Profound

28. Opening at the end of the Alimentary Canal  
30. The loneliest number  
31. Exclamation  
32. Armed conflict  
33. Titanic’s undoing  
35. Skewered food  
39. American Airline stock ticker  
40. Meth, Eth, Pent, But suffix  
41. Tuna type  
42. Constrictor  
43. Bug  
45. Toddler beach toy, shovels’ partner  
46. At the end, take one  
47. All good  
48. American pub  
49. Abbrv. for alternatives  
50. Suffering

53. Economic yardstick  
54. Famous AIDS drug  
55. Bible Radio  
56. Brass component  
58. Party description, banger synonym  
61. Musical note, Sound of Music  
62. Corn unit  
63. Make more efficient, make a process do itself  
66. Japanese city  
68. Genghis \_\_\_\_\_  
69: \_\_\_\_ the line  
70. NYC’s uglier train station  
71. \_\_\_\_ von Freudenberg, celebrity eyebrow specialist  
72. Leisure and recreational body of the Fascist Italy government

DOWN

1. Gravy holder  
2. Unused  
3. Katy Perry song, abbrv.  
4. Important Irish god  
5. Yoko \_\_\_\_\_  
6. Pop. tech. for setting and communicating results  
7. Talking like Seuss  
8. Water in Span.  
9. Escape Alcatraz on a...  
10. Corporate executive marketing role  
11. Male pronoun  
15. Extreme  
17. Concludes  
20. \_\_\_\_ it in the bud  
23. Poem of praise

24. Yours truly  
26. Yawn inducer  
27. Touch lightly  
28: US Writers and Artists Association  
29. Indian bread  
31. Salute  
33. \_\_\_\_ at it again  
34. Tolkien creature  
35. Greek letter  
36. Indispensible part of a score  
37. Leather shoe  
38. Cuts  
41. Old people org.  
44. A lot of time  
45. Classic breakfast food  
48. US federal body dealing

- with geographic naming  
49. Economist Smith  
50. Cheap beer  
51. Aid and \_\_\_\_  
52. Not out  
54. Unmanned aerial vehicle  
56. Ex-1D member  
57. Golf club  
59. Shade of blue  
60. Woodwind part

like Atisha and her home is an important aspect for the artist. Atisha holds a great power through her drawings; she is able to create a world, and images, that will exist in our own. We are functioning in an America that tells people of color to submit and transform their bodies to be more “white.” Atisha’s characters, who are of color, display regal, personal, and complex qualities. As she creates her world, one drawing at a time, she is populating ours with images that offer an alternative to those of popular media.

While conversing about her diptych, Atisha shared the following, “I was thinking of my own story, of being a little black girl and thinking I was really ugly—like when I was younger I thought I was ugly not because I had ‘ugly’ features, but just because of my complexion. It took me a lot of years to realize how twisted my view of beauty was because of the twisted views of the people

around me. Not my family, but people I interacted with in school. In public, people would make fun of you if you had dark skin or kinky hair. It made me want change so much of myself—I wanted straight hair and I wanted fair skin, and all this stuff, whatever \*laughs\*. Anyways, I was thinking of all those little black girls who still feel like that.”

Atisha continued, “I just want to continuously put all those images out there of that beauty they don’t see and that they have, and just amplify it times a billion. This is my contribution to people who can relate to me, and little boys and little girls who can relate to my story in any way. And even if I’m not there to explain, ‘Oh, you’re so beautiful, don’t do that, or whatever’ \*laughs\*, then at least they have this image that is relatable and they can say, ‘oh, she drew me—that kind of looks like me’.” ♦