

## **Students for a Free Cooper Union call for press conference Tuesday afternoon**

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We, the Students for a Free Cooper Union, who reclaimed The Peter Cooper Suite from the current Cooper Union administration yesterday at noon, have established base overnight. We will continue holding this space until our demands are met or we are otherwise removed: we will not negotiate. To this point we have publicly presented our terms and principles and reached out to the broader community and press, but we have yet to be contacted in any capacity by the president. Faced with ideological opposition to the expansionist model, Jamshed Bharucha has withdrawn from public view and shirked his responsibilities overseeing the college.

We denounce our president's repeated absence in the face of community organizing. Last year, while the New York City Police Department arrested our students, our administration was nowhere to be seen; and chants of "Where is our president?" still echo today. We need transparency, not invisibility. In contrast, the public has come together in support of our principles and demands. Displays of solidarity—from tweets all around the world to a candlelit vigil eight floors below—resonate our rejection of the global system of student debt and articulate aggravations that are felt worldwide.

Yesterday, an anonymous source shared a report with us detailing the results of a committee convened to analyze the feasibility of implementing undergraduate tuition in the School of Engineering. The research concluded that within 10 years, students could face between \$40,000 and \$80,000 in tuition fees. Since we received and shared this document, other members of the community have stepped forward to clarify the nature of the report. It is our understanding now that this committee was one of many tasked to research revenue generation for the school. We struggle with the fact that all of this information has come to light solely from a leaked document, and not the from our expectations of transparency and candor.

In response to the undervaluing of student voices and the continuous dismissal of community organizing, Students for a Free Cooper Union are holding a press conference on Tuesday, December 4, 2012 to address the aforementioned points. We are organizing our fellow students as public intermediaries to speak on our behalf while we retain the Peter Cooper Suite.

**We invite everyone to this press conference in front of Cooper Union at 7 East 7th Street, New York, New York at 2:30 PM.**

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## **Students for a Free Cooper Union lock-in to Cooper Union's Foundation Building to preserve free education**

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We, the Students for a Free Cooper Union, in solidarity with the global student struggle and today's Day of Action, have locked ourselves into The Peter Cooper Suite on the top floor of Cooper Union's Foundation Building. This action is in response to the lack of transparency and accountability that has plagued this institution for decades and now threatens the college's mission of free education.

We have reclaimed this space from the administration, whom we believe is leading the college in the wrong direction. In recent years, plans to expand Cooper Union with tuition-based, revenue generating educational programs have threatened the college's landmarked tradition of "free education to all." These programs are intended to grow the college out of a financial deficit caused by decades of administrative mismanagement. We believe that such programs are a departure from Cooper Union's historic mission and will corrupt the college's role as an ethical model for higher education. To secure this invaluable opportunity for future generations, we have taken the only recourse available to us.

**We will hold this space until action has been taken to meet the following demands:**

1. **The administration must publicly affirm the college's commitment to free education.** They will stop pursuing new tuition-based educational programs and eliminate other ways in which students are charged for education.
2. **The Board of Trustees must immediately implement structural changes with the goal of creating open flows of information and democratic decision-making structures.** The administration's gross mismanagement of the school cannot be reversed within the same systems which allowed the crisis to occur. To this end, we have outlined actions that the board must take
  - Record board meetings and make minutes publicly available.
  - Appoint a student and faculty member from each school as voting members of the board.
  - Implement a process by which board members may be removed through a vote from the Cooper Union community, comprised of students, faculty, alumni, and administrators.
3. **President Bharucha steps down.**

Students for a Free Cooper Union  
Monday, December 3rd, 2012

## **Students for a Free Cooper Union lock-in to Cooper Union's Foundation Building to preserve free education**

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To The Cooper Union Administration,

We, the Students for a Free Cooper Union, in solidarity with the global student struggle and today's Day of Action, have locked ourselves into The Peter Cooper Suite on the top floor of Cooper Union's Foundation Building. This action is in response to the lack of transparency and accountability that has plagued this institution for decades and now threatens the college's mission of free education.

We have reclaimed this space because we believe you are leading the college in the wrong direction. An expansionist strategy and lack of accountability have put this college in a financial deficit, and we reject the current style of governance that emulates those failures. We believe that all tuition-based revenue-generating programs are a departure from Cooper Union's historic mission and will corrupt the college's role as an ethical model for higher education. To secure this invaluable opportunity for future generations, we have taken the only recourse available to us.

Within this space we have taken all necessary precautions to ensure the fullest extent of safety, security, and expression. Entrances to the Peter Cooper Suite have been secured by wood and steel barricades designed to not damage the building and be easily removable from the room's interior in the event of emergency. A first aid and CPR certified student is also present in the room. We have taken all preventative measures in securing the banner. It does not endanger the building, surrounding area, or persons inside and out.

**We will hold this space with moral insistence and safety precaution until action has been taken to meet the following demands:**

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  - Record board meetings and make minutes publicly available.
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  - Implement a process by which board members may be removed through a vote from the Cooper Union community, comprised of students, faculty, alumni, and administrators.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Cooper Union Day of Action & Summit on Debt and Education**

For two years, students, alumni and community members have been organizing to raise public awareness about Cooper Union, a historically tuition-free institution that is currently at risk of beginning tuition-based programs. A Day of Action will take place outside the Cooper Union and will include performances, speak outs, and free classes to continue bringing attention to the growing crisis of student debt and rising tuition costs nationwide.

The Summit on Debt and Education will conclude the Day of Action. The Summit will consist of a variety of lectures, performances and readings that address subjects such as the rising costs of higher education, the history of student protest movements, organizing around debt, and Cooper Union in the context of these spheres. Participants include:

Henry Chapman - Friends of Cooper Union, Alumnus  
Marina Sitrin - Sociologist, Writer, Organizer  
Amin Husain - Lawyer, Artist, Activist  
Suzanne Collado - Cultural Analyst, Occupy Student Debt Campaign, Strike Debt  
Cassie Thornton - Artist, Activist  
All In The Red - Activist Collective  
Peter Buckley - Historian, Cooper Union Faculty  
Annie Spencer - Geographer, Occupy Student Debt Campaign, Strike Debt  
Yates McKee - Professor, Strike Debt

#### **DETAILS:**

Monday, December 3rd  
Day of Action: 12PM - 6PM  
Summit: 6PM-9PM  
Free and Open to the Public!  
The Cooper Union  
7 E. 7th St, NY, NY 10003