Ivory Tower

By Andrew Rossi
I've always felt, when I step onto a college campus, a slight element of melancholy in the air. If you're a teacher, you arrive every fall semester for the new year, and you know that you've gotten a year older, but the students are the same age as they always were. They keep replenishing themselves. College is a way of trying to preserve cultural memory. It is an effort to cheat death, so it's a kind of struggle against time and mortality. The United States has managed to provide a postsecondary education to a larger percentage of its population than any society in history. But a lot of forces are converging at the present moment to create anxiety. Is college overrated? I'm saying it's a myth. It's become a race for credentialism. Has college become too expensive? I think it's going to turn into the foreclosure situation. Students are gonna default... Every parent who tries to pay for their child's education is feeling sticker shock, and access and completion of college are more challenging in our time. Of all the time bombs in the American economy set to explode, student loan debt in this country has reached $1 trillion. We may see a tsunami of student loan defaults.
There are problems in all the sectors of higher education, and it's a perfectly fair expectation for students and their families to want to know that when they leave college, they're going to have some skills that somebody's going to be willing to compensate them for. We've got a lot of people with college degrees waiting tables, cleaning toilets, you know, driving taxis. Nearly half of all students are showing no significant gains in learning. But there's an apocalyptic dimension to this as well. And that is the idea that the very concept of the institution of higher learning is about to be broken. And only a very, very small handful of colleges will survive intact on the other side of this tidal wave. We're at the point where people are saying, "Maybe you don't have to go to college."

REPORTER 7:
There have been moments in human history when those who said the future's gonna look a lot different very soon have been right. This might be one of them. This is the John Harvard statue. Now, people come from all over the world to take pictures with this statue. In education, there are these very powerful social forces at work where people just imitate what other people are doing without reflecting on why they're doing it.
Things like, "How do you get into the right college?" "How does your kid get on the right track?"
College has been sold and over-sold as the key to a better future. And somethings gone very wrong with it over the last few decades.
Higher education has had the privilege for a very long time of being a black box.
It created this prestige and this mystique around it, but we've never really examined very closely the ingredients on the box.
We need to really rethink, "What are the specific things that people are learning, "and why are they valuable?"
Welcome, Class of 2016.
You may have sensed that some of us are expecting you to save the world, preferably by the time you graduate.
But just remember, a key part of any success is the part of you that is willing to fail.
We at Harvard believe that the best kind of education for undergraduates is a liberal arts education.
And that means a broad education across the fields of human inquiry.
We aren't educating students for a first job.
We want to give them the abilities to think and reason and question for a lifetime.
Technology increasingly is something that every educated person should be familiar with in the 21st century.
We have an introductory computer science course
that is known as CS50, and it is now the largest undergraduate course on campus. Everyone on campus knows what CS50 is. It's definitely a course with a cult following. I think some of it is kind of related to the whole Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg being at Harvard. That's what's happening for our generation. People are growing up, and they're starting their own companies and creating their own websites, and doing all this amazing stuff with technology, and I think CS50, like, represents that.

Today we begin our exploration of the fundamentals of computer science and the art of programming. You will have this very practical skillset that you can then take back to all sorts of fields. And realize, too, it is not so important where you end up relative to your classmates in this class, but where you, by semester's end in week 11, end up relative to yourself this very day. Sometimes it can be intimidating, because there are plenty of people who have just more preparation. A tot of times, it's really easy to say, like, "How in the world can I do this?" Because I can't understand everything right away. College, it's a completely different environment than what I was used to. My path has been a little bit rough. I come from a pretty, uh, modest background.
When I entered ninth grade, the summer before, I had been, like, enticed to join a gang. I decided not to. They retaliated against my entire family, shooting at my home. Because of my path and where I've come from, I'm just that much more driven. I remember those times, and it just makes me all the more grateful for the things I do have now.

Before I came here I hadn't had a bed for over a year, and so, like, coming into my dorm, I legit jumped on my bed. That was something that meant a lot to me. It's a real blessing. Just being here alone has already changed my family dynamic. I always told them, "In order for us to get ahead as a family, each generation has to do better than the next."

David was, like, "Mom, how are we going to pay for college? What happens if I get in and I can't pay for it?"

I said, "Trust me. God will make a way."

You should see the video when we first got it. He was sitting there looking at the camera like he gonna be a star. When we got on Harvard's campus, I mean, I was just like, "My baby is at Harvard."

The first American college, Harvard College, was a child of the University of Cambridge in England. The Puritans had come over to New England in the early 1630s,
and after they settled the basics of food and shelter, they turned their attention to starting a college. In that sense the college was an offshoot of the Church. The lecture, so central to college education, is really a kind of modern version of the sermon. It was a commitment to the idea that students could be transformed to lead lives of meaning and purpose. Harvard is the source of DNA for almost all of higher education in America. It laid out the model that a university needs to emulate in order to get better resources, better professors, better credentials, better students. As Harvard passed that DNA down to everybody else, it created a race. When the colonial colleges started to become universities, and when brand-new institutions were founded as universities, you begin to see a tension developing between the mission to educate young people, and the competition for prestige, to out-build your rivals. American colleges are driven by the pursuit of prestige. And the way you get prestige is that you get the highest ranking, which expands your market, and allows you to charge more. So, in order to go up the ladder, everybody has to keep adding more programs and more facilities at a faster rate than the competitors. This really was the most
sort of grandiose vision
of what a university could be,
that it was a place of higher learning,
it was a place of research.
It covered every single discipline
under the sun,
and there really
was no end to its expansion.
And that became the model,
you had to integrate doing research.
You needed to provide the housing,
the classrooms,
all the food that they needed,
and the facilities that are required
in order to play in the game.
And that's a tough game to keep playing.
The system
of elite residential higher education
that Americans assembled
over the course of the last centuries,
is extraordinarily effective.
Nobody disputes that.
But it's also extraordinarily inefficient
in terms of the resources
that are expended
to produce these spectacular places.
Higher education in America
has been very successful for centuries.
But now things are changing,
because the scale
and the cost is enormous.
We have a product that is so expensive
that a lot of people can't pay for it
and they have to go into debt,
and it just isn't viable.
The rise
in student tuition is unsustainable.
We cannot continue
to charge significantly
more year after year after year
without running into
some kind of a brick wall.
College tuition has increased more
than any other good or service
in the entire US economy since 1978. We're in an environment where we're cutting spending for higher education. The states have essentially walked away. They have this great thing in colleges and universities called tuition, and it's been a great release valve. As appropriations have gone down in the states, tuition at public colleges has gone up. We've lost $100 million in funding, and the board has replaced one out of every four of those dollars with tuition. Far more of the cost of education is now borne by the student. Student loans are certainly a really important part of this equation, too. The availability of student loans to pay for college makes families less sensitive to the price, makes colleges less likely to compete on the price. All of the competition has been, "We are better than we used to be, and we're better than you." Universities are driven by perks wars. One offers an amenity, and they all have to offer the amenity. They're adding the climbing wails, and they're adding the plasma screen TVs. We're getting to the point where we're gonna have a swimming pool in every room. They have pools with tanning ledges, they have tanning beds. The student tells us, "I can take a five-hour bubble bath, "and no one will complain."
RICHARD ARUM:

There's a massive construction boom on US colleges and universities today. It's an arms race, if you will, in higher education. It's a feeding frenzy to have a better student center, a bigger football stadium. Sometimes it can be grotesque. What we've really seen is, I think, colleges have kind of lost their way about who they are and what they are, and they've turned into these large businesses that have structures around them. They're mini cities. Families do desire a lot of the amenities that colleges have provided. The proverbial rock wall. To sustain those, colleges have to borrow more money, they have to charge more tuition. To pay $60,000 for a college tuition... You give momentum to this notion of the student as customer when you charge them so much money for their education. We tend to focus a lot on student debt, but over this last decade, institutions themselves, college and universities, doubled the amount of debt that they took on. And in fact we've seen more people be hired that never step foot in a classroom, and that's where a lot of the rising cost of college has come. Administrations seem often to be the tail wagging the dog. Some of our leading presidents
can be quite shameless
in the size of their compensation.
We're now starting
to question what we're buying.
Are you really buying a better,
higher-quality education?
It used to be,
you'd get to a public university,
it wouldn't cost very much to go there.
The University of California
used to have no tuition.
The tuition costs here in Arizona
used to be near zero.
And we need to get back to the point
where it's not a huge economic barrier
that you have to get over to gain access
to a world-class university education.
As a public university, our responsibility
is to take a broad cross-section
of talent from around our society,
moving it forward with world-class
learning experiences
at the lowest possible cost.
A lot of people would say
that's not possible.
We say it needs to be possible.
ASU was ranked
as one of the top
public research universities,
but it also has another ranking
that many people think...
Party school.
It's funny, so we laugh about
this party school thing.
I mean, we literally laugh about it.
Our model for learning is the robed don
at Cambridge or Oxford
or the kid on the East Coast in
Boston or New York City or something
who's huddled around their lamp light
in the dark winter night.
When you live in a place
with bright sunshine
and palm trees and beautiful weather,
people think you can't be too serious,
but the whole party school thing
is just bogus.
It's the party school!
Come on, what are we doing right now?
It's paradise, baby! What's not to love?
ASU is a big school,
and of course people party and drink
and get crazy and all that stuff. Um...
But you don't have to.
They say that ASU is, like,
"one of the top party schools"
according to Playboy or whatever.
The average ASU student
comes to get drunk out of their minds
and be in this sort of, like,
vapid, hedonistic area.
Woo!
In 2004 we started looking
at the party scene at large,
mid-tier state universities,
and how it didn't fit in
what the majority of students
actually need to get out of college.
The fact that
college-age kids are having some fun,
that's not really the problem.
The problem is institutions are creating
these party pathways through college
and take their money,
but don't ask anything
of them academically.
In fact, just give them beer and circuses.
In this moment
of declining state support,
students who can pay full,
out-of-state tuition
without seeking financial aid
are very important for the university.
You've got to cater to these
out-of-state, less-studious students,
who want to party.
We know how to party!
We all know how to party!
Students from out-of-state picked a school because of the social life. Big-time athletics, the really big Greek system, increasing numbers of luxury condominium-style living. But that has consequences for everybody else. The Vue is like one of these privatized living complexes. They have these pool parties every so often, where everyone just goes and gets wasted or high or whatever, and then they just start these fights in the pool. ASU! ASU! ASU! ASU students romanticize staying at this "private apartment complex" where you hang out by the pool and smoke cigars, when ideally you should be focusing on your schooling and actually getting a diploma. 36% of the kids in our study say they studied less than five hours per week, less than an hour a day. Full-time college students. Half the kids in our study said they didn't have a single class where they wrote more than 20 pages. We are confronting a situation in this country where, for large numbers of students, they are not doing much of anything academically. There's a lot of distractions here, and there's no one holding your hand. Some people, they're not ready for the college level. They fail classes,
or they withdraw, drop classes midway through the semester because they're not doing so good in them. And they get discouraged by the fourth year, and they drop out or they just don't have the motivation to continue. I mentor freshmen.

You try to give them tips. You try to give them a way to study more efficiently. You try to give them ways to do their homework in a better method. You know, it's really easy to fall back into that trap. Keep the mindset that you've got to graduate, you've got to do good in college to be successful. Right? That mindset.

Many of these actors in higher education do not have a fundamental interest in promoting academic rigor and student learning. They're focused on something else. Faculty today are increasingly rewarded in terms of promotion, tenure, compensation by their research productivity and scholarship. A focus on teaching can get in the way of one's research and scholarship. And when these institutions assess one's teaching, they typically do it with course evaluations. At the end of the class, students are given a consumer satisfaction survey, "How much did you like the class?" "Would you recommend this class to a friend?"
You're incentivizing faculty not to be rigorous but to be actually lenient with grades, because the only measure that the institutions are paying attention to is, "Are the students happy as consumers?"

At the same time, the number of full-time faculty in this country is in sharp decline, being replaced by part-time adjunct instructors. Many of them have limited resources for focusing on rigorous academic instruction. Institutions invest in these other things, thinking simply as a business. But these organizations are non-profits. They're accountable to the public. They're accountable to fulfilling their mission. It's perfectly appropriate that we shine a strong light on America's colleges and universities, and that we demand better of them. We should be outraged by the abuses and the distortions. But we do not want to erase the history of higher education and say, "These places are not about the formation of character or self-discovery."

There are some colleges that have tried to go to the far end of the spectrum in terms of the intensity of the experience. For instance, Deep Springs College, where students make a two-year commitment to, in effect, drop out of the world. The mission of Deep Springs College is to provide a free education to young men in preparation for lives of service to humanity.
That's accomplished through what are called the three pillars. And those are self-governance and academics and labor. We live in this small community. And we spend half of our time in class and spend the other half of our time working either on the ranch or in some way for the community. In committee meetings throughout the week we exercise self-governance, which is basically taking responsibility for the community. We choose what classes we're going to take together. We have Political Theory After Marx, Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School, Nietzsche. I think there will be something incredibly rewarding about going in-depth onto one school of thought very intensely. Through this education we are, like, putting ourselves through a grinder of some sort. I cared so little for the idea of going to college. It was kind of like Deep Springs or nothing. It's a place that demands of you pretty constantly. And I like that. Because I think if I'd gone to another college I would become really self-absorbed and narcissistic. The main attraction of Deep Springs for me was self-governance, having to compromise with people, And having to put myself
in other people's positions.
And I don't think
that's something natural for us.
I think that that has to be taught.
It has to be the result of an education.
The college classroom is perhaps
the best rehearsal space for democracy.
Students learn to speak with civility,
listen to one another with respect,
and most of all,
they learn that you can actually
walk into a room with one point of view
and walk out with another.
Hegel is saying you need to have
a common identity as citizens
because it creates
the bonds of affection.
We are not simply sons or brothers,
students or doctors, but also citizens.
Like, why are we talking
about the state at all?
Expression of the individual
through the state, I don't feel that.
That's because
you're treated like a person already.
What's being defined as personhood
has previously been
exactly the mode in which we have kept,
you know, entire races of people
outside of the state,
so I agree with you in the sense,
why are we talking about the state
when, like, its definition of personhood
isn't good enough here?
But you recognize
that Hegel can be read against
that argument very effectively?
Right, yeah, I agree.
But sometimes I think the best way
to bring Hegel into the new day
is to transgress him.
Students actually
have a lot to learn from each other.
But what I think of
as the most transformative events
are, really, at the end of the day,
one-on-one experiences
with a teacher who looks you in the eye.
I had a shitty
public school experience. Right?
Like, saw lots of racism,
lots of sexism, got beat up, got in fights.
Teachers can't do shit.
Families can't do shit.
I do think
families and teachers can do shit.
Every time that I come in here and I say,
"What do you guys think about this?
"Do you want to change
these assignments?
"How do you like these readings?"
I'm trying to give you
opportunities for agency,
so that I'm not just simply
treating you as any old students.
The purpose of this place is for you
to create what you want here, right?
And the problem is
that for you to get what you want,
you've got to cooperate
with other people,
which means trying to figure out a
way to communicate your anger
without being antagonistic.
Two and a half hours of Hegel.
Take a half hour break,
another hour and a half of Lacan.
Absolutely. Yeah, I'm happy to.
Even as
Deep Springs seems
to become more and more obsolete
or more and more
of some kind of idyllic fancy,
there's something there,
and everybody feels it,
having been through it.
This school stands for something.
Because of America's status as a country that's always reaching for higher and higher ambition and growth, in the 19th century, we started to have this idea that a university education could be of benefit to absolutely everyone, that we should be able to all have the learning that we need to have self-respect, to be able to support ourselves, and also to be able to be full citizens. That idea really culminated in the Morrill Act in the 1860s. In the middle of the Civil War, in 1862, Congress of the United States, amazingly enough, found focus and attention to pass the Morrill Act, which funded the [and grant colleges that later became the great state universities. The federal government provided for the expansion of this dream of higher education at an unprecedented scale. This had never happened before in any human society that we'd have institutions of higher learning coast-to-coast, and it wouldn't just be for the nobility. Senator Merrill believed in education even for the sons of slaves, creating, post-Reconstruction, the historically black colleges and universities. Institutions arose at a time when we had racial segregation and we had gender segregation to ensure that black Americans and female Americans could get a higher education. Spelman College
was founded less than 20 years after the end of slavery with the idea of creating educational opportunity for women who had had none. It's a place where a young woman can say, "This place was built for me."
I am a testimony.
Every Spelman student is a testimony.
A testimony of prayers during slavery. Slavery. They themselves had been denied...
Denied.
- ...education.
- Education.
As it had been prophesied.
Prophesied!
One of the major things I think you get from being a young black student at a historically black college is that you get to have those conversations about race and about gender, how the two fit together and then how that affects What you're thinking, how you're feeling. When you're in a place for four years where there's people who look like you, and they're achieving, it does do something for your own confidence. So it's really a space where you can grow as a person. I went to The Winsor School in Boston, and it's predominantly white. Coming from a minority experience to a majority experience, I think it forces me to find an identity other than the obvious. At my high school, you know, "Who's Amirah?" "She's the black girl."
Here I have to really figure it out.
There are so many other intelligent black women here. College, being a place of mental growth, simultaneously can be a place of spiritual growth, because the two really go hand-in-hand. Glory! My sense of self is stronger, and it's really helped cultivate who I am. God's a-gonna trouble the water So wade in the water Children I do think you can get that experience without going to college. You can travel the world and get that experience. You can merely migrate from your hometown and get that experience. But college is a place where that all comes together in one. Historically black colleges are very powerful. They have a strong connection between the students, the alumni, and the other fellow historically black colleges. But for me, in particular, I didn't apply to many HBCUs. I've been around black people my entire life. I went to a school that was more than, like, 90% African-American. I didn't know how to interact with white people, and I was afraid. The biggest thing, I think, that I've been able to pick up while being at Harvard is the ability to connect with people from all different walks of life. I don't want to just impact my community. I wanna be able to impact the larger community.
All of these institutions have made immense contributions to the history of our democracy. And if you cannot have a democracy without an educated citizenry, you want to see as many citizens as possible get as much education as possible. The philanthropists of the Gilded Age gave us the idea of mass higher education as a basic human right.

Peter Cooper was this industrialist who believed in education as free as water and air. He founded The Cooper Union, a school of industrial arts and design in New York City, with the idea that it would be available to people, no matter what their background, to study useful and practical arts. But today The Cooper Union is one of the last examples of a free higher education institution in the country. A full scholarship for every enrolled student is the current mission statement of Cooper Union.

Peter Cooper wanted the school to be accessible to the working class, to women, to people of color. I come from a lower-middle class family. My parents told me about Cooper. And when I found out, like I... I was like obsessed. I didn't even think about going anywhere else. Nowadays, so much is against this 19th-century model of a free education. Ideologically, financially it's ancient. When Jamshed Bharucha,
the current president, came into office, he announced to the Cooper community that we are running a large deficit and that tuition for the first time in 154 years would be on the table. Free tuition, it's our mission! The current administration is trying to say that education as a right is not something that we should be focusing on. Being free, the financial model is extremely complicated. You look at the financial statements and you can see. An extraordinarily large deficit. I think Peter Cooper would have wanted us, if we had to talk about tuition, to be able to talk about it. We all acknowledge that we're in a financial strait right now, but the administration and the board fail to understand how tuition's going to destroy the school. President Bharucha's come from tuition-charging colleges, and he thinks that we should become like other colleges. It's covered by normal kinds of words like sustainability. I'm here before you because the very survival of this institution is at stake. We do not have a sustainable budget. If you want free education, how are you going to structure it? I believe it's not compatible with small class size, highly-interpersonal interaction, and with providing good compensation to people, and I believe in providing good compensation.
The President makes in excess of $700,000 as total compensation. At a school of only 1,000 students in tight financial times, one would have thought there would have been some proportionality. I believe the President of Harvard makes $899,000, and she's overseeing 12,000 faculty, 21,000 students, and $30 billion endowment. She doesn't have a fraction of the problem we have. Not a fraction of the problems we have. Apparently we are the Harvard of Astor Place.

I don't think that the model of free education doesn't work. There's all sorts of things that got us into this mess, and it wasn't the cost of educating the students. Most of higher education believes in growth at all costs, growing their way out of difficulty. And that becomes rather problematic when you are building a building at about $1,000 a square foot, which is more than a luxury hotel. It's possible to have downsized, as Cooper Union has done in 150 years of ups and downs in the market. But that was not the decision that was made.

Do you think it was wise to invest in hedge funds and to use the money borrowed in the $175 million loan for that purpose? You know, I'm not an investment person. I mean, I'm...

Uh...
I'm good at budgets, but I'm not an investment person. Were they risky decisions?
Well, uh.
One can ask if they were or not, but there is no question that loan is a, uh...
Yes, a challenge for the institution to pay back.
Cooper Union is faced with a mortgage payment of $10 million a year. It's a terrible irony that an institution which was supposed to get people out of debt gets into that kind of debt itself.
The idea that Cooper Union would think about charging tuition really seemed like such a huge betrayal and a bellwether of where education is. Students are not seen as having a right to their education, and institutions sort of feel free to continue to raise the price. What's happening to higher education in this country? Why is it seen as being the province of the rich and the rich alone? People are ignoring all of the functions that education has served throughout our history as a public good. Certain economic truths have become self-evident. Among these, the right to a good education.
Right after the Second World War, the GI Bill was passed, which made it possible for men, who would never have been allowed to walk onto a college campus, except perhaps as members of the custodial staff or as delivery boys, to actually walk through the gates as students. Over two million veterans took advantage of the GI Bill. This was an opportunity that was free,
given by the government. And it made a difference to the American middle class.
That expansion of the franchise of higher education was really so unprecedented, and it led directly to the Higher Education Act of 1965, creating the Federal student aid programs. This law means that a high school senior can apply to any college and not be turned away because his family is poor. But the rug was pulled out from under students in the 1970s. We shifted from seeing education as a public good to seeing it exclusively as a private good. Conservative governors, especially Governor Reagan of California, had really run on the idea that higher education was a wasteful way to spend taxpayer money. Governor Reagan actually said the state should not subsidize intellectual curiosity. And he ran for president later on a promise to disband the Department of Education. Certain advisors started to say that anything of a private advantage should be paid for. The word free is one of the most misused words. We speak of "free education." Education isn't free. It costs money. If this is something that is going to be good for individuals to get a job and earn more money, they should finance it and make the investment themselves.
We need to keep government on the sidelines. Let the people develop their own skills, solve their own problems. We stopped expanding the franchise of higher education, graduation rates stopped rising, and access for the poor to higher education started going down. In the 1970s, a Pell Grant was more than enough to pay for tuition at an average state institution. But today a Pell Grant pays for a fraction of tuition. This led to the growth of the student loan industry, which ended up being the largest source of money for all of tuition. The student loan program was never intended to be this large. We've just hit an awful milestone. Our nation's combined student loan debt has now hit $1 trillion. It's now larger than credit card debt in this country. The average American student now graduates more than $25,000 in debt.

**STEFANIE GRAY:**
I grew up in a low-income household. I was always told to work hard, and if you follow your dreams, it will pay off, and if you need to go into educational debt to achieve those dreams, then so be it. A couple of months after I graduated, collectors started calling, and I told them that I could not pay. Even with a master's, I couldn't get a job cleaning toilets at a local hotel.
I was on food stamps.
I was living off mostly beans and rice.
Twenty years ago,
we would have said
all the kids who aren't going
to college are being the victims,
and now it's actually turning out that
a lot of the kids who are going to college
are also the victims.
It's like a subprime mortgage
broker that ripped you off
and talked you into buying
a house you couldn't afford.
Education in some ways
is even more insidious than housing.
There actually isn't the same kind of
safety valve in the student loan market
that you see in the mortgage market,
in the sense that
there's no such thing as foreclosure,
and, in fact,
there's no such thing as bankruptcy.
Over half of loans today
are either in deferment,
or else they're in default.
And when you default
on your student loans,
interest is applied to the principal.
And you see, very commonly, things like
original balances in the tens and
twenty thousands of dollars
ballooning up into
the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
Starting off, $78,000.
Ending up at $106,000 in interest alone.
You're going to be saddled with that debt
and that ballooning balance
until the day that you die.
That's the kind of garbage
our government is playing
with our young people.
The government will make
$184 billion in profits
over the next 10 years.
All those profits made
off the backs of our kids
who are trying to get an education.
I think this whole system stinks.
- What do we want?
  - Education!
- When do we want it?
  - Now!
- What do we want?
  - Education!
- When do we want it?
  - Now!

STUDENT 1:
to treat student loan debt
as an individual issue.
We must realize that as a society
we cannot have a generation in debt.
Once you hit $50,000
in debt, you need to pause
and take a look at the value
of the education you're getting.
You don't want to incur debt
that stops you from investing
in family formation, houses,
cars and children down the road.
The value of my education is priceless,
but the value of my education
is also not $140,000 in debt.
If I do ever have kids,
my private loans will be directly
passed to them even if I die.
It's just siphoning my dreams away,
and I feel bad talking about
any dreams that I have these days,
because there's all this talk that
Generation Y is so entitled and selfish
just for wanting the opportunities
that their parents had.
A lot of the
older generations
that criticize the millennials
grew up in a time
when you could go to a state university
and pay your way through
with summer jobs.
These millennial children
then got to college and realized,
"Oh, the money's not there to pay for me.
"I'm not going to be able to graduate
into a cushy job.
"And in fact, everything that I was told
about the way that the world works
"turns out not to be the case."
The student debt
crisis coupled with
the rise in tuition rates
over the past 30 years,
it's just a perfect
storm, it's a nightmare.
We are the students
We are the students
The mighty, mighty students
The mighty, mighty students
After 18 months of intense analysis,
the board of trustees voted last week
to charge tuition for all undergraduates
admitted to the Cooper Union
beginning with the class of 2014.
Right after the announcement
was made, I spoke to Jamshed.
Jamshed was, you know,
waving his hands, yelling, cutting us off.
Right outside of the school,
there was a lot of grieving.
People were angry.
You could kind of
feel this chaotic energy.
It kind of felt like at any moment
something could happen.
The moments
right before an action starts
are the most exciting, also scary.
It was a really long planning session.
Obviously, they can do these things,
and they can overstep us.
They can do that, and they're doing it.
We didn't know what to do,
but people were like,
"We have to do something.
"Let's just go into the President's office.
"We're just going to do it."
We went in,
40 or so people, maybe more.
Lawrence? Lawrence?
- Door, people.
- Lawrence?
The secretary tried to say,
"Don't go in there,"
but, you know, there was 40 of us.
Jamshed wasn't there.
"We, the students of the Cooper Union
for the Advancement of Science and Art
"can no longer uphold or endorse
the direction our college has taken
"under the leadership
of Jamshed Bharucha.
"By voting no confidence today,
"join us in keeping
Cooper Union free to all."
First let me say, I'd
rather you just leave.
"Students and others
currently engaged in
"a sit-in of the President's suite
are trespassing.
"We're going to give a one-hour period
for anyone to leave.
"Anyone remaining on
the 7th floor after that one-hour period
"will be subject to disciplinary action."
At some point, they are going
to have to try and remove us.
I am an officer of the Cooper Union!
- The police?
- They're coming.
There are security guards
on the other side of this glass,
and there's two or three other men.
Five, four, three, two, one.
Free Cooper Union!
For many of us
it was the first time
being in the President's office.
We have this red light that we'd show
to say that we're occupying the space.
It's like being in a submarine.
It's like a shared experience,
and it's hard to sleep
because there's all this energy.
There is some physicality
of having to be there,
actually having to abstain
from your normal life,
and that's very powerful.
This space of the action
is also this great opportunity
to have no one
imposing structures on us.
And this is really
not asking permission and unapologetic,
because we're not sorry.
An entire school
does not have any confidence
in your ability to lead The Cooper Union.
If people have no confidence,
it means that no,
you're not going to be able
to regain that trust,
because there's none left.
You know,
it's a little simplistic to say that,
"You don't do this, and you don't do that."
I'm on the board.
I was firmly for no tuition.
The numbers are what they are.
However they got there,
that's where they are now.
No!
Can I finish?
You need to go. You're so rude.
I would like
the tone of this whole
discussion to cool down a little bit.
It's pretty clear, I think, to all of us
that this moment is different
than anything that's come before.
We haven't been to this point. All right?
And I think we need to let go
of some of the old dialogue,
because we're in a new place right now.
What we need to do, quite simply,
is realize this moment in the country,
with a trillion dollars in student debt,
with all the models of higher education
as a business, it's failing.
This is a moment for this school
to be the vision
of what education can be in this country,
just as it was the vision 150 years ago.
It was part of a radical capitalist vision.
It is rooted in a turn-of-the-century idea
about humanity, and it's an idea
that I think is incredibly contemporary
and incredibly urgent. All right?
To effectively lead us,
you need to realize the moment
you're in and the position you're in.
It is a historic position,
it is a historic moment.
This is a big step
that you came here to meet with us,
but we need a leap, not a gamble.
Universities are clearly
at a crisis point.
We've had runaway cost inflation.
This is not what either the kids
or the parents signed up for.
For yea rs,
we've been saying college
is a great investment no matter what.
And now people are starting to
ask really, really tough questions
about the role that colleges play
in American society,
the authority that they have,
their moral high ground.
Moody's is saying that
college might not be worth the cost.
The rating agency says the high cost
of college plus growing public doubts
about the value of a bachelor's degree
has caused it to revise down its outlook
on the entire higher education sector
to negative.
There's going to be a collapse.
One way or another,
there's going to be a crisis.
It gets to the point
where the price of a degree is so high
that people just don't want
to pay for it anymore.
This is not
what most colleges want to talk about.
They want to pretend
the education is something
that's completely non-financial.
It's an end in itself.
These are very noble ideals,
but they don't make sense
when people are taking on
$100-200,000 in student debt.
I don't think you'll find a more
fervent believer in the liberal arts
than the guy holding the
microphone in front of you today.
When you start college, that's the time
to discover what you love to do.
It might be theater and biology.
It might be neuroscience and religion.
Whatever it is, now's the time
when you have
the chance to experiment,
when you have the chance
to open yourself up to new things,
when you can discover who you
are and who you might become.
Yes, sir?
What you just said is
terrifically exciting.
Reminds me of going back
to when I went to school.
But the truth is
many of us in this room are about to
lay out a whole lot of money to you.
- Tell me one thing.
- Yes.

Is my daughter going to have a job
and she's not going to come back
home after it's done?
"Is your daughter gonna have a
job and not come back home?"
Uh, I can't tell you that,
although the time to be defensive
about education is not now.
This is the time to be aggressive
about a broadly-based,
intensely-personal and
intensively-practical form of education,
whatever school you go to.
And it is expensive.
I know.
I don't have to tell you parents here.
We're definitely ensconced in this view
that there's only one way
to go to college.
And that's, you know,
the four-year private school
where your kids live in dorms
with their friends
and have all their meals taken care of
and someone cleaning the bathroom.
I'm amply stressed
about the college search to come.
if you look directly that way,
that is the new One World Trade
building that they're building.
All the parents
I know, they're like
their kids' college search managers.
So, welcome to
the Bobst Library, everyone.
As you can see,
it's a very massive building.
Altogether there are
about nine libraries in the NYU family
and about six million volumes as well.
I want this for my kids.
It's just too bad it costs $60,000 a year, and it really does cost $60,000 a year.
And this is the main building for student life here on the NYU campus.
We have two athletic facilities for you to go to.
They do have, like, pools.
There's a rock climbing wall even in one.
There's a squash court in one.
So if you're really into fitness...
It takes a real shift to consider something different, when our kids are on this path towards a college degree.
Going to college has become a way to avoid thinking about the future.
"What are you going to do with your life?"
"I don't know. I'm just going to get another degree."
And instead of getting one credential after another on some sort of track, I think it's very important to think hard about, "if you didn't go to college, what would you do instead?"
Peter Thiel, the man who founded PayPal, funded Facebook, is offering 24 college students $100,000 if they drop out of school and start their own business.
When you think of hacking, the first thing people think of is literally hacking a computer. Hacking your education is really finding an alternative. I might go to college, I might not. So that's why I'm here right now.
If you wanna challenge yourself not to go college, or if you wanna challenge yourself to go to college and get the most out of college,
you have to reflect on what it is you're buying and what it is your parents are buying. The idea that you're going to go to keg parties for four years sounds cool, but when you think about what parents pay for, really what they're paying for is for you to not be left behind in the information economy, right? People say to me all the time, "Dale, aren't you ruining people's lives" by encouraging them to take a risk and not go to college?" I think it's much riskier to go to college and take on $20,000 of debt per year and then have miserable job prospects when you get out and to have to start repaying that debt. That seems like a really high risk to me. When you look at higher education, what you realize is what you're paying for is this mythical, large bundle of things that you're supposed to get. So I'm here to give you a framework to look at what types of services you could be accessing that could either supplement or kind of replace going to college. So I've unbundled college into three parts. The first is engaging with content you're supposed to learn. So it could be through a lecture, transferring content to you. Then there's an affiliate network. Enduring relationships with people that are going to took out for you, that are going to help you find opportunities. And the third is a credential of accepted value, which is literally a piece of paper that certifies that you have met.
some minimum level of competency. When I went to school, there was no way to access the services that higher education provided easily and freely or cheaply on the Internet. And it turns out, well, now you kind of can. What do you see, you know, in a world in which degrees don't matter so much, but where people say, "Hey, I'm a dropout, but..." I mean, not that you're going to phrase it that way. I won't necessarily say first off that I've dropped out of school, but they'll look at it and they'll say, "So you have experience." Since I was paying for college myself, I realized pretty early on it's too expensive for me to find myself in college. I need work experience, I need life experience, I need to get out of college and actually start my own path. There's, like, 4,000 schools right now. In a couple of years, that whole number is going to get depleted, and the only colleges that are really going to matter in the future are going to be the prestigious Ivy League colleges that have made a name for themselves. My mom didn't go to college, but my dad, he is definitely a person who's benefitted well from college. They thought I was crazy. They were like, "What is this? "A whole bunch of kids coming to San Francisco "who all don't want to go to college?" They thought it was more like a cult.
A friend of mine told me, "There's this Education Hackerhouse, "and you have to meet the people," because I was also into the future of education. I had no idea there was this whole community of people that were passionate about the future of knowledge and learning. We've had hackers come in and sleep on bunk beds working on their apps. We've had meetups in the backyard. We've had a variety of startups working out of this house. And it's a community of people that believes that we don't need to rely on traditional schools or institutions. There's no longer a great value proposition in paying 200K for a degree, particularly when you're not at an Ivy League school. I didn't want to go to college because of the cost in terms of time and money, and I thought that this would be an excellent place to kind of get the college equivalent, because I get the academics living with startup entrepreneurs and living with tech people. It forces me to grow up, because you have to do your own dishes, you have to cook for yourself, you have to deal with rent, all that kind of stuff. In Silicon Valley, we don't care about accolades or experience, even. We care about skills. As, you know, things progress, degrees will matter less and less. You shouldn't have to have 200K
or have 200K of debt
in order to learn a lot,
be really talented,
and then show the world
what your skills are capable of doing.
I dropped
out of college to start
working on Facebook full time out here.
Um, I later talked to my mom about it,
and she told me that she knew that
I was going to drop out of college.
There are a lot of
very successful entrepreneurs,
there are multi-millionaires,
we've had billionaires
that didn't go to college.
In fact, I'd say today,
given the Internet
and the ease with which
you can become self-educated,
there's more reasons
than ever not to have to go.
Truthfully, that's very bad advice,
because those people
were all exceptions to the rule.
They made it in spite
of a system and apparatus
that said they wouldn't.
The safest bet, by far,
is to go to college.
The Thiel Fellowship is focused on,
um, a small subset of people
who, I think, will do fantastic
even without a college credential.
I think it is a much
more difficult question
what one does for people from, uh,
average backgrounds,
less-advantaged backgrounds.
I don't have answers for it.
Many intellectuals are saying that
it would be better
if some people don't go to college at all.
I think that's an assault on democracy,
and it's an attempt
to keep people in their place
and reinforce social inequality.
Education should foster social mobility
and the possibility of equality.
You have to be crazy
to intentionally not get a college degree
if you have a choice today.
And if the college education
is really a college education
and not just training
in one particular little field,
you learn how to learn.
So that can actually open up new things
in your life long after college.
Part of our responsibility as educators
is actually to help inspire students
to connect with problems in the world,
because we're leaving them
with a lot of problems,
and I think they know that actually,
and they want to engage.
We have three demands,
that Jamshed steps down as president,
that the board and the administration
publicly affirm the mission statement,
including free tuition,
and the third
is to have more democratic governance.
Now I know this has been a difficult time
for The Cooper Union community.
There is anger,
there is disappointment
over the tuition issue.
But the debate you're having really isn't
about whether education is free.
It's really a debate about who can,
and who is, willing to pay for it.
There's nothing really free in life.
Please join me in welcoming
the President of The Cooper Union,
Jamshed Bharucha.

it is with awe and humility
that I stand before you
to honor our students.
To our graduating students, congratulations.
You have distinguished yourselves beyond imagination.
Fellow graduates,
I would like you all to assist me, please, in filling this hall with our voices.
Mic check.
Mic check!
Mic check!
Mic check!
Hope.
Hope!
Hope is everything.
Hope is everything!
To do a dull thing with hope...
To do a dull thing with hope...
...will never be preferable...
...will never be preferable...
...to doing a dangerous thing with hope.
...to doing a dangerous thing with hope.
There is a change coming.
There has to be a change coming.
The four-year undergraduate residential experience is the gold standard.
Small classes, lots of intimate contact.
How do we create as close to that ideal as we can while reducing cost?
Technology has to be part of that solution, a big part of it.
Some people, including the President of Stanford University who uses the metaphor of a tsunami, believe that MOOCs, "Massive Open Online Courses," are going to transform American higher education, and indeed higher education around the world, beyond recognition
and sweep away
everything that we associate
with colleges like this one.
The MOOC
revolution began when
Daphne Koller,
my colleague in computer science,
had come to me a number of years ago.
She talked about a way
of teaching differently
with online technology.
Then she recruited Sebastian Thrun
to try some experiments.
Welcome to the online
introduction to artificial intelligence.
My name is Sebastian Thrun.
We're teaching this class at Stanford,
and now we're teaching it online
for the entire world.
We're really excited about this.
Sebastian said,
"Well, let's open this course
"to everybody in the world."
There was a bit of chaos,
I must say, um,
but there was also some real excitement,
particularly when
hundreds of thousands of students, uh,
started initially indicating interest.
We had an opportunity
to really change the access that
hundreds of thousands
or even millions of people had
to an education that they would never
otherwise have been able to get.
There's a red pill and a blue pill.
And you can take the blue pill
and go back to your classroom
and lecture your 20 students.
But we taken the red pill,
and I've seen Wonderland.
Having done this,
I can't teach at Stanford again.
These professors who took part
in the first round of MOOCs left Stanford to start their own venture capital-funded startups. Their rival on the East Coast is edX, which is coming out of MIT and Harvard. CS50x, one of Harvard's first courses involved in the edX initiative debuted this past Monday. Turns out we had a few more, uh, students show up on Monday than we initially expected. CS50x has 100,000 people following along at home. All of these platforms are using short videos, interactive questions, and online chat sessions, even robe-grading, to translate courses that were created at the world's top universities into versions that can and are being taken by millions of people all around the globe absolutely for free. One of the reasons we're experimenting with online education is to see if the technology can actually increase access to high-quality education. I don't know what people will learn. That's the most important question. For me, this is an interactive medium that empowers the students, just very much like a video game. So we ask the question, "Is there a different way to teach "that enables students to find out "by themselves how to solve problems?" Let me come back to one piece of this code that needs a little more explanation, and that's this kernel call. Here's the name of the kernel call square.
The way that I'm teaching
is very different
when I'm doing it under the camera
As opposed to in the classroom.
Most of what they see is hands,
and hands evidently
humanize it for the students
more than if they were
just looking at Whiteboards.
But that is literally
all they're going to see.
So as far as they know, I'm a robot.
We're certainly, um...
I guess we are controversial,
because we take the focus
away from the professor
and put the focus back on the student.
Does it really
make sense to have 500 professors
in 500 different universities
each teach students
in a very similar way,
or do you take
the rock star and put him here,
and you let him spend
10 times as much time? You know,
maybe that rock star could do
a little bit better job for these students.
Argh! I blew it on the last sentence.
Okay, try that again. For instance...
The students
united will never be divided!
What is happening to higher
education is not good for America,
and it's not good for the young people.
This huge cost structure
that is part of the marketization
of so many things in our society,
where does it get out of hand?
I think it's getting out of hand right now.
I don't want to see tuition go up,
but I don't know that I can convince
my colleagues here at the state capitol
to provide more money.
So we have to look at ways
of changing the design.
In 2012,
I get this email message saying,
"Hey, my name is Governor Brown.
We should talk."
I was reading
the New York Times on Sunday,
and I saw his name, found his email.
I emailed him.
He called me back very soon thereafter.
We spent about an hour on the phone,
and Governor Brown explained to me,
"Look, you've been focused on
"bringing this extremely high-end
Stanford-level education to the world.
"But realize, the disaster
in California is not that.
"It's really the lower level
where lots of kids are left behind."
From the beginning,
California's been a place of
pioneers and scoundrels
and bold people.
The California State University
System is a part of that lineage.
California
pioneered the best
public education system in the world.
They saw higher
education as the ticket
to a better life for people in California
and to a better economy.
And when you think about
what California has contributed
to the American economy,
you can trace so much of it back
To its higher education system.
It was a tiered system
with the community colleges,
the state colleges,
and the great research universities.
A system that virtually
guaranteed college education
to every high school graduate
in the state of California.
The vision of Clark Kerr
would provide instruction at all levels,
and students could move
upward through it.
California prospers in large part
to the extent that it provides ready
opportunity for all of its citizens
to secure education appropriate
to their interests and abilities.
The California system is still
a model for the rest of the nation.
The problem now is that
as the state has pulled back
on its financial commitment
to those systems,
the ideal there is really under threat.
Only 16% of the students
at Cal State get out in four years,
and the longer you stay,
the more you spend.
So this is a big huge problem
with student debt
approaching a trillion dollars.
Our students
are very hard-working.
Many of them
are first-generation to college,
And more than 50% of our students
need to take remedial courses.
But with the increasing budget cuts,
we're unable to offer
remedial math both semesters.
My goal as the provost
was to do some pilot testing.
San Jose could be a living laboratory
of students to test MOOC material.
Today San Jose State will sign
a partnership agreement with Udacity.
Our aim, to focus like a laser on
entry-level classes for college credit.
That's the key, it's for college credit.
RITA MANNING:
My colleagues were shocked
San Jose State wanted to be involved
at all in anything at all like Udacity.
We're licensing our education to
a for-profit outside vendor
that's a startup.
I wouldn't hire a startup do a
bathroom remodel in my house.
What's happening in California
is crisis management tactics.
Public funding is drying up,
so they need to offer
more courses for less money,
and putting a class on the Internet
seems like the easiest way.
But whether or not
it's the best way and whether or not
people who are standing to profit
should be making this decision,
I haven't heard
much honest conversation about that.
We're giving taxpayer money
to private business.
We're ready for the first question.
We haven't...
We can't disclose the amount. I'm sorry.
I mean, if we're going to spend money,
why give it to Udacity?
Why not just hire people
to teach the classes?
The idea of a public college
that is publicly-funded and is accessible
is under attack.
So we're really creating hierarchies,
Where the students who can afford it
work with teachers,
have one-on-one face-time with faculty,
and students who can't afford it
will go on YouTube.
The results, uh, for the first Udacity
courses are, I think, profound.
The data is outrageous.
The pass rate in Elementary
Statistics from Udacity, 50.5%.
College Algebra, 25.4%.
Entry Level Math, 23.8%.
I mean, that is downright scary.
What we want is a silver bullet.
What we want is a magic pill.
Well, there isn't, unfortunately.
And it's certainly not Udacity.
Oops! We blew it!
They didn't learn the material.
They couldn't succeed
in the next-level classes.
Oh, well!
Retention rates and pass rates
in online courses
are lower than
in face-to-face just because
you can bring a horse to water
but you can't make them drink.
So by the same token,
students have to have
that, um, discipline,
motivation and persistence.
Right. But you could
also say that you have to have a teacher
- to bring those qualities out...
- Yes.
- ...and to coach them.
- Mmm.
And we did
attempt to do that with online mentors.
You'll be seeing
a lot of our hands throughout the course,
but we thought we would
show you our faces too
so you can get to know us better.
The students who
need the most attention,
who are least confident
about their abilities as learners,
there's a lot of evidence
that those students
don't learn very much from MOOCs.
So I'm not quite prepared to give up
on the California vision of Clark Kerr
and turn it over
to the Silicon Valley and say,
"Onward and upward
and rescue us from this morass."
I have so much work to do.
CS50 this week is stupid.
What is it?
You ever heard of E-Trade? It's that.
Oh, that stock thing?
We have to build it. E-Trade.
I'm sitting there like,
"All right, this is just too much."
I started to wonder,
"Am I going to be able to finish?
"Am I going to be able to do this?"
I just have to leverage what I have
and not be so self-conscious about
the things that I'm not good at,
because you already have,
you know, 10 people in your class
that you can connect with
and work with and collaborate with.
I mean, look at this.
This is a computer science class
that could be entirely taught online,
and is, to a large extent,
but still look at how many people
are in this dining hall who need help.
They need help in person.
That's why they're here.
Mmm-hmm.
Um, could you walk me through that?
I don't know what that means.
Okay, so when you see square brackets,
that usually means an array.
Oh, like how after that
I have "comma session ID"
there should be more commas?
So by doing this,
this wards off one of those attacks
we started talking about briefly,
a SQL injection attack.
Students require
constant engagement on my part, on the teaching staff's part. Most of us are up at all hours of the night. We have pretty much 24/7 coverage. Students can ask questions almost any hour and get answers within minutes. So you're on the right track, and I'm really just proposing that you comment this out temporarily, just to at least get the whole thing working, and then you can plug in the additional data that you need. You can't, at least right now, just replace a teacher with an automaton, with some kind of robot or talking head on a screen. Nothing beats person-to-person contact. - See, there you go. That was the issue. - Oh. The human experience has a magic about it, and this is not replicable. We're not going to replace that kind of learning, students working together on projects that involve being there physically. So how do we put these things together, the face-to-face and the opportunities of the online, and how can we come up with hybrid models? Community colleges are the most flexible institutions we have. They are the most open to alternative curriculums, because they've always had to scramble to educate the less-advantaged kids in America.
What we need to accomplish today is to take a look at these lectures from edX. And so if you have any questions or problems, today is the day to kind of address those. The model here is to teach flipped classroom. And what that means is to have the lecture content be outside of the class. Students have an MIT professor doing video lectures, and they watch that at home. When they've completed a lecture, they come in here, they work in small groups, they talk to each other, they're encouraged to help each other, using more hands-on, using lots more problem solving skills and critical thinking. The character function will call up any character that has an ASCII value. I guess my method to do that was maybe a little bit different. By doing flipped classroom, eliminating the large lecture, there's an opportunity for the faculty member now to spend their time helping those students who are struggling. Are you testing it now, making sure it's working? Okay, good. How are we doing over here? We have to do something to keep students engaged, for them to learn. This is our job. This is what we're here for. We're in an experimental mode. We have no choice but to go very fast.
Experimentation will produce success and failure, and we need to learn to live with that, because technology is the hope for many young people who otherwise won't be able to afford the education they need. I think there's a tendency to romanticize the top-tier Ivy League schools. I think what is more important is to have the... The personal will to follow through on one's ideas and to spend their time to actually be impassioned about the things that they're working on. I feel that that is a much more important, um, dialogue to have with yourself. This is where I spent a decent amount of my life. It was like one of the toughest neighborhoods in Cleveland. It's been tough this semester. I'm not doing particularly well in any of my classes, and I start to question, "Maybe I'm not cut out to be here." And I just have to slap myself back to reality, like, "Wait, dawg, you're doing everything in your power to do well." And, like, if I dropped out of Harvard, I'm back where I started. I haven't actually bettered myself at all. I want to better myself. I look at you as a young man, and I say, "You know, he could have been a drug addict. "He could have ran the streets. "He could have been a hoodlum." But you wanted to make something out of life, - and that's what I'm so proud of. - Mmm-hmm.
They're gonna look at you and say, "He's from Ohio, he's from Cleveland, "and he was in college trying to make something out of himself." But you've got a lot of people out there try to discourage you. But you can't let that happen. It's a shame that, like, kids don't realize that, so they can position themselves to take advantage of all these opportunities, because, I mean, there's just so much. All right, I'll see you later. - Okay, hon, we love you, hon. - Love you, too. As a kid, you had all these wild fantasies and dreams about what you wanted to do when you got older. But what people consider a normal fife where I come from is to leave school and go get a job in a factory. They get caught in the cycle of poverty, caught in that ghetto, almost. That's like the fife to you. You don't know anything better. College is the place where you figure out that there's something better. It's finally over. I survived the challenge that is CS50! Yeah, it's just I wanted to do more. I had this big goal... The more campuses one visits, the more one discovers that the diversity of America's college students is mind-boggling. And everywhere I go, I meet students who give me hope for the future of our country. It has been and will continue to be a challenge to keep the doors of college open
to provide the best possible education
to as many people as possible.
Not everybody's going to want it.
Not everybody will be able to take
good advantage of more education.
But let's not assume
that college has outlived its usefulness.
Let's not assume that it's inevitable
that public support for institutions
of higher learning
has to just continue to decline.
There are other choices
that can be made.
I mean, what kind
of a society do we want to be?
We should tap into
the idealism of young people
and provoke students
to think for themselves,
to think critically
about the way society is put together.
America has been
all about critical thinking.
That's how we became America.
I support the occupation!
I support the occupation!
I support the mission statement!
I support
the mission statement!
And I support the notion of free
and accessible education for all!
This was one of the longest
student occupations
in American history.
Everyone I know has given
so much of their time
and their energies
trying to save our school.
It is very tiring,
and it feels very much uphill.
There's so much other work
that needs to be done.
In favor.
It's really tragic
that the only resolution
they could think of is to charge tuition,
but I think the tuition announcement
was not the end of an era.
It was actually
the beginning of a campaign.
It might take a long time to see
the world that we want to live in.
But anytime someone says,
"You can't do that,"
a little trigger goes off in my head,
and I'm like,
"But you can."