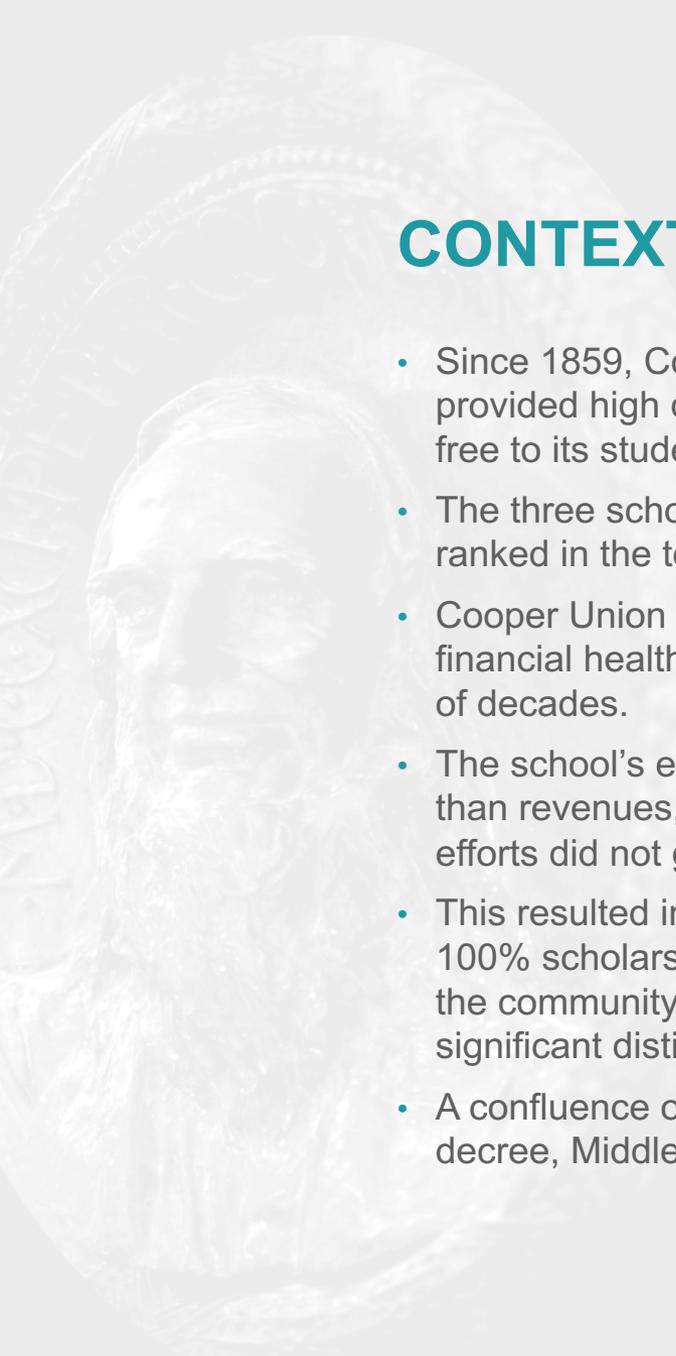


FALL 2018 COOPER COMMUNITY MEETINGS

# REVITALIZING A FREE COOPER UNION

STRATEGIC PLANNING **DISCUSSION**



## CONTEXT

- Since 1859, Cooper Union has provided high quality education, free to its students.
- The three schools have historically ranked in the top of their fields
- Cooper Union suffered eroding financial health over a period of decades.
- The school's expenses grew faster than revenues, and fundraising efforts did not grow in line with need.
- This resulted in the end of its 100% scholarship model, fracturing the community and degrading a significant distinguishing feature.
- A confluence of events—consent decree, Middle States accreditation, new leadership—called for planning on multiple paths in an expedited timeframe.
- First and foremost, we needed a long-term financial sustainability plan.
- **We now have a long-term financial plan, which includes a plan to restore full-tuition scholarships for all. With a long-term financial plan in place, we are now positioned to finalize our broader set of strategic priorities for restoring our sense of purpose and ambition in the world.**



## WHY STRATEGIC PLANNING?

- Gives us a roadmap for the next 3 to 5 years
- Identifies Organizational Goals and Strategic Priorities
- Identifies specific pathways for achieving Strategic Priorities and delivering on Organizational Goals
- Integrates key inputs:
  - Reflections and ideas from alumni, faculty, staff, students, trustees
  - External dynamics
  - Independent evaluation (e.g., Middle States recommendations)
  - Plan to Return to Full-Tuition Scholarships

# MULTIPLE LEVELS OF PLANNING REQUIRE ALL HANDS ON DECK

## COOPER UNION'S STRATEGIC VISION AND PLAN

Middle States  
Self-Study &  
Accreditation



Full-Tuition  
Scholarships  
Plan



Strategic Path  
Forward



# WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

2016

Early 2017

2017

2018

## STABILIZE

## ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY, BUILD MOMENTUM, IMPLEMENT EARLY ACTION

## PLAN

## APPROVALS AND FEEDBACK

Begin to heal the Cooper community  
FEC begins its work  
Search for and select new president  
Review expense base and identify cost-cutting opportunities

New president begins  
Listening tour  
Early actions toward expense management and operational improvements  
Renewed emphasis on founding vision and values

Internal assessment  
External trends  
Mission Statement development  
FEC continues analysis and develops initial plan  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education Re-Accreditation self-study process begins

Mission/Vision Statement approved (December 2017)  
Plan to Return to Full-Tuition Scholarships / Long-Term Financial Plan (March 2018)  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education Re-Accreditation (July 2018)  
Alumni, faculty, staff, and students, and other community members review draft institutional goals and strategic priorities (October 2018)  
Board approval of institutional goals and strategic priorities (expected December 2018)

# LISTENING INFORMS PLANNING

Many points of intersection with alumni, staff, faculty, students, trustees, etc. informed development of Institutional Goals & Strategic Priorities thus far:

- President's Listening Tour (2017)—more than 65 transition meetings and 50 additional meetings with a wide range of the Cooper community
- Office of the President Open Houses & Office Hours (2017, 2018)
- Community Planning Collaborative (2017, 2018)
- Diversity Task Force (2017, 2018)
- Alumni, faculty, staff, student sessions as input for FEC analysis & planning (2017)
- Community Feedback Sessions & online comments collected on proposed FEC plan (2018)
- Middle States Re-Accreditation self-study process & evaluators' feedback (2017, 2018)

# WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

## EXTERNAL TRENDS

Cooper is operating in a world where:

- Demographics are shifting in significant ways
- Access to and equity in higher education are challenged
- The economics of attending college play an increasingly significant role in the choices families make
- Major shifts in K–12 education mean that students are differently prepared for college
- New technologies are both disrupting and enhancing higher education
- The nature of work is changing with implications for how we prepare students
- Increasing competition for high-potential students increases need for non-monetary competitive advantages/differentiation
- Student retention through graduation is an increasing focus
- Student/campus life is becoming more complex (sexual assault, mental health, activism and protest, international students and immigration issues, confronting institutional history)
- Colleges have challenged financial models and structural deficits
- Divisive sociopolitical dynamics are defining elements of our day-to-day experience

# WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

## INTERNAL OBSERVATIONS

- Strong desire to maintain and deepen excellence in the individual disciplines of architecture, art, and engineering
- Complexity of the world demands multi-dimensional solutions, and students (and some faculty) crave cross-disciplinary opportunities
- Part of Cooper's distinction is that the institution and the individuals that comprise it continually question and challenge the status quo
- Want to continue the legacy of pushing boundaries in our fields, our pedagogy, and civic engagement
- Cooper should play an important role in advancing the well-being of New York City
- Very hard to be a student at Cooper; there is pride in "getting through" but a lack of a shared, inclusive student experience
- For employees, also a sense of division/lack of inclusion, lack of support, academic silos, operational challenges
- Returning to full-tuition scholarships is a turning point for the community in terms of healing and momentum, although different perspectives remain about how to get there
- "All roads lead to Cooper" in that so many distinguished alumni have roots here and need a reason and opportunities to re-engage

# WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

## INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

### Strengths

- Academics
- Strong faculty, staff & student body
- Affordability/value
- Committed community
- Strong history and Great Hall
- Fresh start/new momentum

### Weaknesses

- Financial challenges
- Operational inefficiencies
- Underpowered fundraising
- Modest marketing activity
- Lack of diversity
- Thin student supports

### Opportunities

- Compelling combination of four areas of study
- Important alumni work to showcase
- Small size
- Continuing education and pipeline programs
- External environment—NYC, political climate, technology trends

### Threats

- Limited definition of Cooper's differentiation (other than formerly free)
- Lower applications could be leading indicator of threat to student quality
- Internal challenges—\$, silos, morale
- Failure to shift with demographics
- External higher ed trends could reduce \$, increase competition





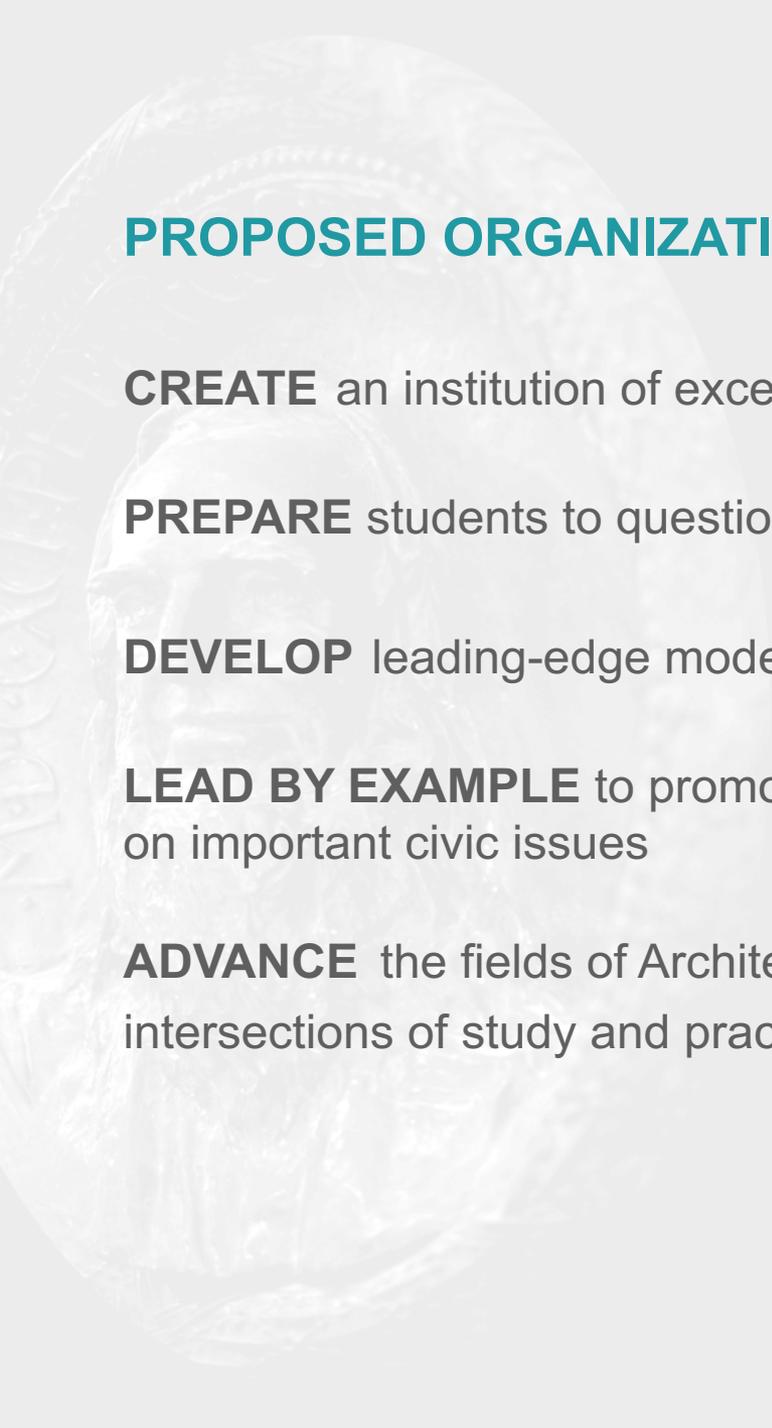
# VISION AND MISSION

## VISION

The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art is dedicated to Peter Cooper's radical commitment to diversity and his founding vision that fair access to an inspiring free education and forums for courageous public discourse foster a just and thriving world.

## MISSION

Our mission is to sustain The Cooper Union as a free center of learning and civic discourse that inspires inventive, creative, and influential voices in architecture, art, and engineering to address the critical challenges and opportunities of our time.



## PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

**CREATE** an institution of excellence (academically, culturally, and financially)

**PREPARE** students to question and lead in a complex world

**DEVELOP** leading-edge models for higher education

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE** to promote civil discourse and engagement on important civic issues

**ADVANCE** the fields of Architecture, Art, and Engineering and foster intersections of study and practice among them

# VISION + MISSION

## PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

CREATE AN INSTITUTION OF EXCELLENCE (ACADEMICALLY, CULTURALLY, & FINANCIALLY)

PREPARE STUDENTS TO QUESTION AND LEAD IN A COMPLEX WORLD

DEVELOP LEADING-EDGE MODELS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

LEAD BY EXAMPLE TO PROMOTE CIVIL DISCOURSE AND ENGAGEMENT ON IMPORTANT CIVIC ISSUES

ADVANCE THE FIELDS OF ARCHITECTURE, ART, AND ENGINEERING AND FOSTER INTERSECTIONS AMONG THEM

## PROPOSED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A. Fortify our rigorous professional schools

B. Return Cooper Union to full-tuition scholarships

C. Create opportunities for experimentation at the intersections of disciplines

D. Increase diversity of thought, background, and experiences

E. Balance budget, build reserves, instill financial discipline

F. Develop programs, activities, and physical space to increase student engagement and improve student life

G. Set a leading edge standard for the integration of professional, practice-based education with a humanistic and socio-political education

H. Integrate public service orientation into academics and actively contribute to betterment of NY

I. Position the Great Hall as a premier forum to advance critical issues of our time

## KEY PATHWAYS TO GET THERE

Rebuild Community Engagement | Use Internal and External Data to Improve Academic Program | Establish a Culture of Operational Excellence  
Position Cooper Union in a Positive Light, Building Supporters on Multiple Levels | Raise Money and Lay Foundation for Capital Campaign

# KEY PATHWAYS FOR ACHIEVING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## Rebuild Community Engagement

- Rebuild internal momentum, pride, connection via formal and informal gatherings and opportunities to shape new initiatives
- Continue to increase transparency from Board and Administration
- Develop external commitment with neighborhood, city, state and industry

## Use Internal and External Data to Improve Academic Program

- Establish visiting committees, using external expertise to improve academic program
- Use internal data analysis and research-based interventions to increase retention and graduation rates
- Implement Middle States recommendations

## Establish a Culture of Operational Excellence

- Develop student-centric approach
- Streamline and automate for greater efficiency/effectiveness
- Develop internal service orientation

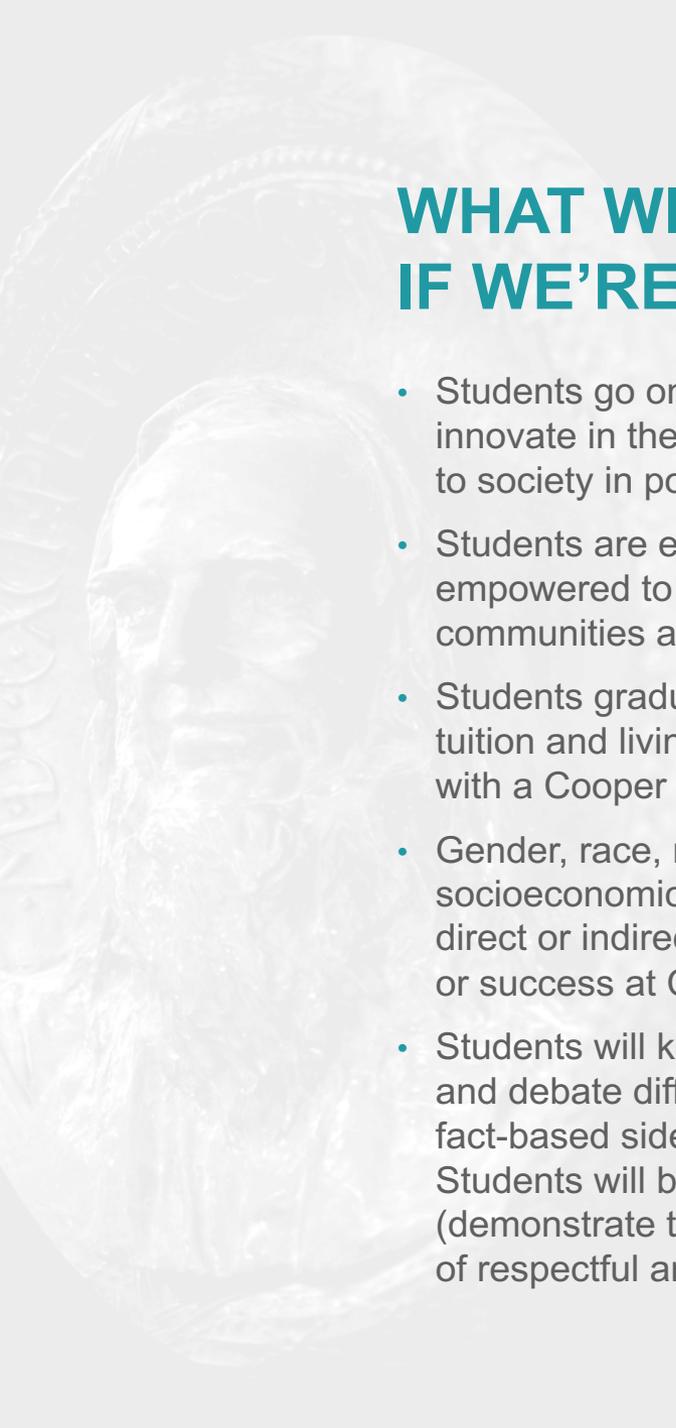
## Position Cooper Union in a Positive Light, Building Supporters on Multiple Levels

- Preserve and enhance Cooper Union's reputation
- Implement strategic communications plan focused on both programmatic and institutional marketing via earned, owned, shared media
- Implement program of regular internal communications

## Raise Money and Lay Foundation for Capital Campaign

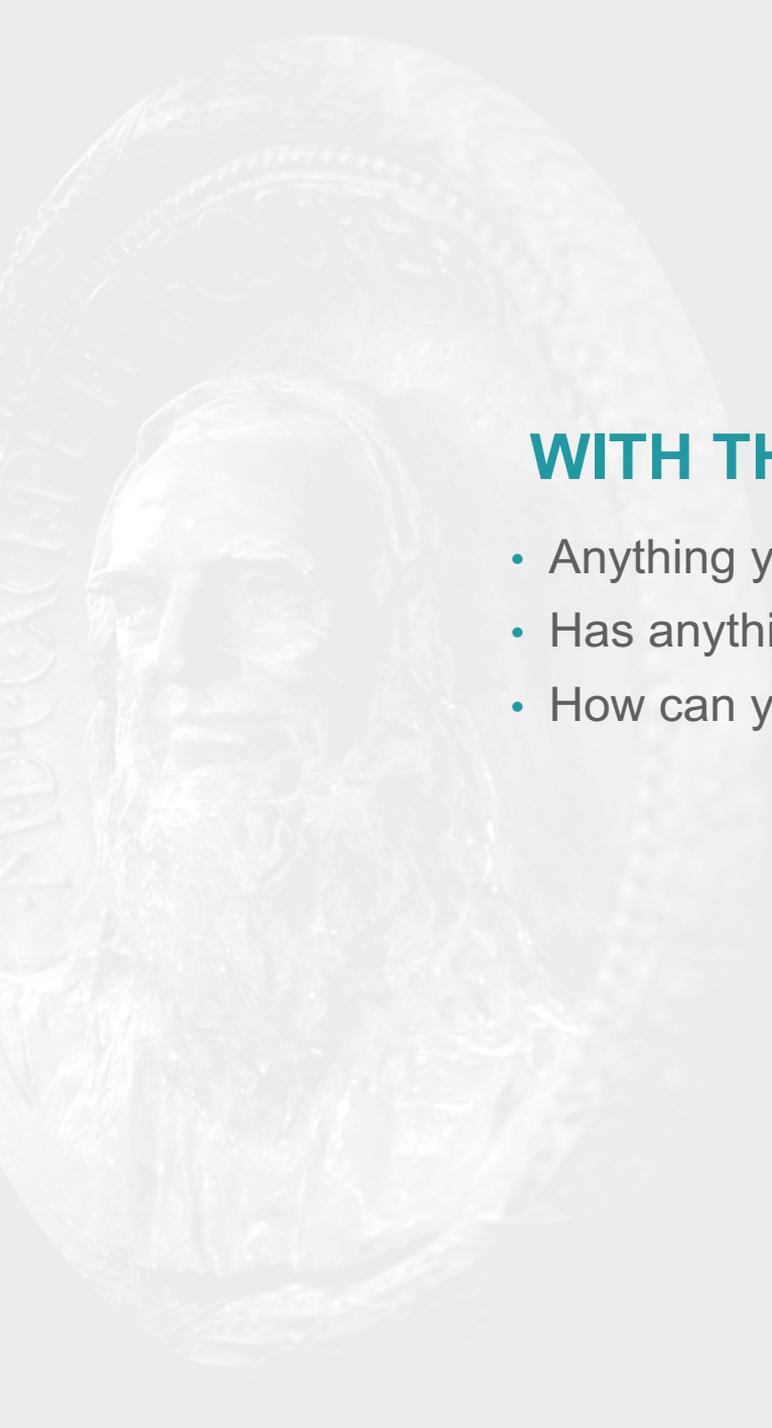
- Meet fundraising targets in long-term financial plan
- Develop fundraising momentum via visible gifts
- Increase base of supporters
- Develop fundraising capacity of Board to support initiatives
- Build an internal culture of giving

**WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE  
IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL?**



## WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL?

- Students go on to have vibrant lives, innovate in their fields, and contribute to society in positive ways
- Students are equipped and empowered to lead change in their communities and professions
- Students graduate without debt from tuition and living costs associated with a Cooper education
- Gender, race, religion, and socioeconomic background are not direct or indirect barriers to admission or success at Cooper
- Students will know how to understand and debate different principled and fact-based sides of an issue. Students will be skilled in (demonstrate the principles) of respectful and civil discourse
- Faculty feel supported in their teaching and scholarship
- Faculty and staff are inspired to collaborate within and across schools and offer interdisciplinary opportunities for student study and practice
- Cooper Union feels like a great place to work
- Alumni are engaged and feel connected to The Cooper Union
- Cooper helps to advance NY
- Cooper helps to advance ideas relevant for other global cities
- Cooper serves as a destination for important civic debate and organizing around issues that advance a healthy democracy
- Cooper advances its position as a global model for higher education



## WITH THAT BACKDROP...

- Anything you would add?
- Has anything been left uncovered/undiscovered?
- How can you help activate the plan?



## NEXT STEPS

- Faculty, administrative departments, alumni, and students review proposed goals and strategic priorities (October/November)
- Feedback informs final recommendations for organizational goals and strategic priorities
- Recommendations presented to Board of Trustees for approval in December
- Implementation ongoing