

Fear and Loathing in DeLand, FL

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When I read about Allen Irwin on the “Free Cooper Union” Facebook page, I was horrified at how I could relate to his experience at Cooper Union.

In a letter to the Vice President of alumni Affairs and Development at his former institution, which appeared on this Facebook page, Alumnus Allen Irwin says, “The Board of Trustees had decided that the Cooper experience is now a financial transaction.”

I couldn't help myself from replacing “Cooper” with “Stetson” in my mind. Especially after paying this last semester's bill.

I feel like Stetson has become about the payment, rather than about the academics. My first year here, I paid a little over \$46,000 with a creative combination of grants, loans, and my father's generosity, which I doubt I could ever pay back.

This year, the total was nearly \$8000 higher, and has risen every year to reach that terrible sum. I fear what it will look like next year.

The only difference in cost I've incurred comes out of the switch between a first-year room in Smith Hall and an upperclassman apartment at Stetson Cove. I've taken loans, dropped the meal plan entirely starting my Junior year (something that is forced on both Freshman and Sophomores now), I've worked Work-Study jobs and taken outside jobs to make ends meet.

I've tried.

And I'm tired of trying to meet costs that the university, and by extension the Board of Trustees, keep raising. Just when I reach the top, I get ten more feet of water dumped on me and I drown again.

Allen Irwin sent his former institution a letter. Attached to this letter was his alumnus card and the notice that he'd rather not be considered an alumnus than watch his school destroy itself.

I fear for Stetson University.