

The Occupy Harvard Crimson



Sources: NY State Comptroller, Federal Reserve, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Congressional Budget Office, Institute for Policy Studies

CEO SALARY - 350

WORKER SALARY - 001

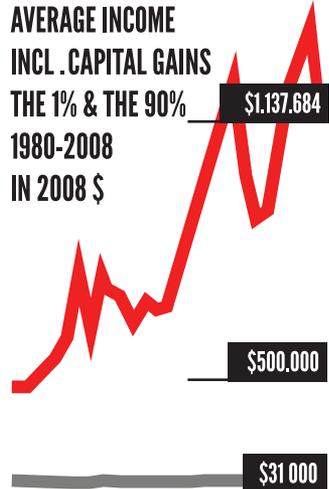
'07-'09 WALLST. PROFITS +720%

UNEMPLOYMENT +102%

ONE YEAR, MINIMUM WAGE - \$15080

INCOME REQUIRED FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY - \$30000

**AVERAGE INCOME
INCL. CAPITAL GAINS
THE 1% & THE 90%
1980-2008
IN 2008 \$**



occupy!

Occupy Harvard: A World Within a World

Maryam Monalisa Gharavi

[Excerpt from a longer piece published in Los Angeles Review of Books]

On Wednesday, November 9, Occupy Harvard began. The university is frequently accused of being an “academic gatekeeper,” but the administration and police response to the nascent protest movement has made this gatekeeping uncomfortably literal: Harvard Yard has been placed on indefinite “lockdown.” That the administration’s actions in creating a virtual checkpoint at Harvard Yard have fomented animosity toward Occupy Harvard comes as no great surprise.

For reasons of ideology or inconvenience, many believe that the Occupiers should pack up their tents and relocate to a less visible, less unwieldy site, or simply cease to exist at all. Yet there is no such intolerance for the presence of the “big six” giant corporate banks (Bank of America, J.P. Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo) on campus: Harvard’s Office of Career Services is an employer partner with four of them, in addition to other “bulge bracket” firms like McKinsey and Merrill Lynch. If massive recruitment from investment banking and consulting firms — the very institutions that helped plummet the international market economy into a recession — is not only tolerated but implicitly encouraged, what accounts for the intolerance toward dissenting views?

It bears noting — whether one “likes” Occupy Harvard or not — what gumption it takes to reclaim space on the land of one of the most powerful (both real and imagined) entities in the world, and in the face of peer disparagement. After police locked down the gates completely, prompting participants to crowd the gates and chant together, some freshmen from balcony dorms yelled, “We are the 1 percent! We are the 1 percent!” (bringing to mind the widely disseminated video of investment bankers drinking champagne from their high lofts and laughing at Occupy Wall Street demonstrators).

The editorial board of the Harvard Crimson initially castigated the Occupy Wall Street movement, and it wasn’t until very recently that it began offering supporting viewpoints. A new awareness of the role that universities, and Harvard in particular, play in legitimating the current economic order is one of the most significant byproducts of the Occupy movement.

An institution is never just one thing. Many social processes go to make it up. Horizontal and vertical authority structures exist side by side all the time. Professors, graduate instructors, and staff give of their time and attention liberally; dining hall workers and custodial staff go beyond the call of duty in serving student needs; incalculable examples of peer-to-peer mutual aid and cooperation abound. While wealth inequality, profit-driven economic pursuits, and a pro-corporate agenda may dominate, they simply do not and cannot constitute all forms of life at Harvard. For every moral wrong at the “Corporation” level, there are multiple acts of ethical fortitude to be seen every day on campus.

Occupy Harvard is polarizing the university community, and this should not be ameliorated but embraced. Polarization is a process in which people are actively thinking, discussing, and acting on ethical principles rather than living in dormancy. That the Occupy mobilization has, within its short lifetime, managed to arouse the country's citizenry from its dogmatic political slumber is among its most important legacies. If its seedling presence in Harvard's backyard can do the same for our academic institutions, it will be no small accomplishment.

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News – Harvard Janitors Ratify Contract

On Friday, November 18th, Harvard University janitors overwhelmingly ratified a five-year contract with Harvard University that raises wages, keeps health care affordable, increases opportunity for full-time work, and provides all contracted workers at Harvard with same benefits as direct employees.

Occupy Harvard supported the janitors, who are represented by the Service Employees International Union Local 615, in their fight for a fair contract. Last week, Occupy Harvard marched with janitors and the President of the Service Employees International Union in Harvard Yard and issued a statement demanding that Harvard settle a fair contract as “the first step toward a more just university.” Occupy also joined janitors in a march at Dewey Square outside the office of the Harvard Management Company, which is located in the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

The contract agreement includes a ground-breaking childcare allowance fund, which helps employees pay for the cost of day care for their children and can be worth as much as \$5,000 per year, and a Tuition Assistance Program that allows employees to pursue an undergraduate degree or take courses at Harvard Extension School for a discounted rate. The contract also ensures an annual wage increase of up to three percent until 2016 and a commitment by the university to working towards 70% full-time employment and the elimination of all split shifts, as well as other victories.

President of SEIU Local 615, Rocio Saenz stated, “The agreement we reached with Harvard is an example of how our institutions and workers can work together to begin to close the income gap and raise standards for all workers. With the help of the students at Harvard, janitors were able to close the gap between the rich and the poor, a success that should be nationally replicated.”

Harvard janitor Jean-Claude Mondesir said, “It was not easy. It was a fight. My coworkers who came to meetings and showed they were ready to strike played a big role in winning this contract along with support from the students. In the end we got something good for everybody. To me, the biggest thing of all was winning parity for all contracted workers. It covers everyone, not just custodians, but also security guards and kitchen crews. This is one Harvard and we are one union.”

News – Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Address Occupy Harvard

Cambridge — Egyptian revolutionary and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Ahmed Maher addressed Occupy Harvard on the night of November 11. However, Maher could not enter the Yard, and instead addressed the occupation's General Assembly through the bars of Johnston Gate.

"We are youth like you searching for real democracy. We have a common interest," said Maher. "You must believe you can reach real democracy."

On the previous Friday Maher also spoke at Harvard Arab Weekend, in an address titled "The New Generation of Arab Activism."

"Maher can come to talk about youth activism, but heaven forbid it actually happen here at Harvard," said Harvard College sophomore Atul Bhattacharya. "It seems that the Harvard administration has a strange form of the 'not in my back yard' syndrome, except it's Harvard Yard they're keeping people like Maher out of. Harvard isn't doing itself any favors by keeping out those people who couldn't be kept out of Tahrir Square."

As of Saturday, Harvard Yard remained closed to those without a Harvard ID. Occupy Harvard issued an official statement opposing this action by the university's administration at their General Assembly on Thursday night.

Maher concluded, "We are here to express our solidarity with you, and our solidarity with youth, and our solidarity with all people who struggle for freedom in all the squares around the world."

Neon indoctrination – The Mankiw Way

Gilles Raveaud, former Harvard post-doctorate fellow -ec10 TF-, is a lecturer in economics at the Institute of European Studies at the Université de Vincennes à Saint-Denis. reprinted abridged with permission from Prof. Raveaud, from Adbusters #85

The Harvard economics professor and former adviser to George W. Bush is one of the most gifted economists of our generation. He is also one of the most effective and talented propagandists of our times. His target: young economics students. His field of operation: the world's universities. His weapon: the best-selling textbook in the world. It includes 36 chapters and 800 pages of color illustrations, graphs, stories and interesting asides. Don't worry if you or your kids don't speak English, Mankiw's text surely exists in your language.

What is most worrisome is that Mankiw's text presents economics as a unified discipline, one entirely committed to the neoliberal agenda. Mankiw believes that markets are the solution to everything – and he would like students to believe likewise. No other explanation for persisting economic or social problems is permitted.

Unemployment is an example of the market being imperfect. For Mankiw, if unemployment exists, it is only because of human interventions such as unemployment benefits, trade unions and minimum wages. Without these interventions, he maintains, there can be no unemployment. Mankiw presents this as a consensual view among economists. In fact quite a few of them admit that the labor market is a very special "market" indeed, where the price – the

wage – is not set the same way as the price of other “goods.” As Alan Krueger put it, “it is a gross oversimplification to say that ‘wages are set by the competitive forces of supply and demand’ or that there is a unique, market-determined wage.”

This specificity in the way wages are set is one of the reasons why 600 economists (including stars like Kenneth Arrow, Robert Solow and Joseph Stiglitz) have recently argued in favor of an increase of the US minimum wage. But when students and workers at Harvard asked for a “living wage,” Mankiw opposed it. As he told Harvard Magazine in 2001, even a modest raise in the minimum wage for janitors at Harvard would “compromise the university’s commitment to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.” No kidding. Of course, Mankiw does not discuss the possibility that the salary of tenured professors might be above its “equilibrium” value; not to mention the very existence of tenure, which goes against the principles of a perfectly competitive labor market.

While unemployment is an example of an imperfect market for Mankiw, pollution is an example of the nonexistent market. But what is the solution to pollution? According to Mankiw, it is to define property rights to pollute, issuing permits to pollute that can be freely traded. This system is not stupid. Indeed, there are instances where such permit systems might work to solve simple pollution problems. But the problem is that, to the amazement of his students, Mankiw never mentions self-restraint, and he downplays government regulation as a way to regulate production and diminish consumption or waste. Nor does he bring up the imperative to use renewable sources of energy. In fact Mankiw even insists in his textbook that we are not running out of resources because if that were the case, the price of oil would be much higher than it is now. Climate change is a critical issue, caused by ever-growing economic activity – but it doesn’t even merit an index entry in Mankiw’s book. Incredibly, in Mankiw’s chapter on growth, the only two factors of production cited are capital and labor. As natural resources and energy are absent in Mankiw’s model, they cannot become a problem – for economists, that is.

Some of my students at Harvard have described Mankiw’s course to me during private conversations as “massive conservative propaganda.” One of them told me he thought Mankiw managed to “indoctrinate a whole generation.” In 2003 a protest against a similar course proposed by professor Marty Feldstein, an ex-adviser to President Reagan, led to the creation of an alternative intro economics course taught by radical economist Steve Marglin. But while Mankiw’s course gives the required credits to students, Marglin’s does not. As a result, Mankiw has around 800 students, and Marglin 100. Not to mention the more than 100,000 students around the globe who learn from Mankiw’s textbook.

According to Mankiw, since markets are a good way to organize economic activity, supply and demand is just about all you need to know in economics. But Mankiw’s text is all about trivial choices, such as how many slices of pizza you are willing to give up to buy yourself an extra can of Coke. This method is extremely effective in hiding the magnitude of what is at stake. The reactions of the students would be different if the textbook addressed how much health care people have to give up to be able to buy basic food. Also, the very notion of “need” is absent from Mankiw’s text. One may wonder how students would feel if we discussed the fact that a millionaire’s desire for a yacht will always be met because it is backed by money, while a poor family’s need for a roof won’t. But such discussions are avoided.

By repeating his trivial examples, Mankiw accustoms the students to the idea of individual choices and preferences. The words “poor” and “rich” are rarely used. But more surprisingly,

there is also no mention of the power of corporations to shape tastes. This is because Mankiw's world is a world of small firms operating in perfectly competitive markets. "Corporate America" is not part of the picture. No McDonald's, no Nike, no Microsoft.

Also, Mankiw downplays inequality despite the growing gap between rich and poor in the US over the last decade that has commanded the attention of more and more American economists, even within the mainstream. But Mankiw is not one of them. True, he admits there is more disparity in the US than in Europe (even if he forgets to mention that this was not the case in the 1960s). But he goes on to remark that there is less disparity in the US than in Brazil and China. So we can all relax.

Mankiw knows that the vast majority of his students are not going to become economics majors, his textbook is too simplistic to prepare a student for advanced study in economics. As he explicitly tells his teaching fellows, Mankiw's interest is in shaping the minds of thousands of citizens and future leaders around the world. Mankiw's world is one where "there is no such thing as a society." Rather, the world is made up of isolated individuals. But it is also a world where fairness prevails: everybody gets what they deserve. It is a world where – thanks to the magic of markets, private enterprise and property rights – standards of living rise constantly. It's a beautiful world ... if only it existed.

While Mankiw's text is easy for professors to use, it oversimplifies economic theory and omits the ways in which markets can degrade human well-being, undermine societies and threaten the planet. Each year tens of thousands of students go out into the world with Mankiw's biases as a road map to the future. But we know that the neoliberal agenda is more and more disputed outside universities. Within universities alternative textbooks are flourishing. One can thus hope that these new textbooks, with their greater relevance to real-world problems and better acknowledgment of the diversity and complexity of economic thought, will soon out-compete Mankiw's bible. As a believer in competition, Professor Mankiw could only consider this to be fair game.

Why All Harvard Employees Should Support Occupy Harvard

by Keith Rosenthal, a Staff Assistant at Harvard.

The thirty or so tents that have been pitched in Harvard Yard for the past week are an inspiring reminder that the voices of the 99% of us who are not worth millions of dollars have not yet been drowned out completely by the remaining 1% who own the Harvard Corporation that runs Harvard University.

Occupy Harvard was in large part begun in support of the custodial workers here, who are fighting to retain decent healthcare benefits, a livable wage, and job security, among other concerns.

If an institution that sits upon tens of billions of dollars in endowment money – while doling out millions of dollars to top executives – can get away with so needlessly attacking the already-meager compensation of its lowest-paid employees, what's to stop them from attacking all of its employees?

Actually, Harvard has already indicated its active desire to undermine another group of

vulnerable employees – the retired and elderly. As reported by the Crimson, Harvard plans to drastically cut healthcare benefits for staff retirees by introducing a \$250 annual deductible, increasing co-payments to \$20, and an out-of-pocket maximum of \$1,000.

As the Director of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) – the union covering Harvard staff – said in an interview, “We have some retirees who are living on \$20,000 or \$30,000 a year for whom the potential of a new \$1,000 health care cost could be catastrophic.”

The Service Employees International Union, which represents the Harvard custodial workers, has been very active so far in Occupy Harvard. The union I am a member of, HUCTW, has yet to come out with any sort of formal support for the Occupation, but it is clear that it would be remiss not to.

Occupy Harvard is demanding a “University for the 99%.” That means us – the workers that make Harvard run every single day. That’s why all of us should support this occupation. Stop by on your break or after work to talk to the Occupiers or participate in their evening meetings, called General Assemblies. Better yet, get a delegation of people from your workplace to go into the Yard together to express solidarity with them.

To paraphrase one popular slogan of Occupy Harvard: The question is not whether Harvard will be occupied or not; the question is whether it will be occupied by Wall Street or by the 99%.

Feeding the 99%: Sustainable Food and Sustainable Jobs

by Ed Childs, a cook in Adams House and a shop steward at UNITE HERE Local 26.

In the past few months, Harvard dining hall workers have made a tremendous effort to change their circumstances and the Harvard community, and also make positive change in the nation and the world. We have demanded and won our demand to have sustainable food and sustainable jobs at Harvard.

Michelle Obama’s anti-obesity campaign has focused on the problem of food quality in America today. Medical problems are rampant today due to low-quality processed food. Hunger is growing in our community, country, and the world in part due to unsustainable foods. Harvard dining hall workers have suffered all these ills from low-grade food. We have seen our community and friends sick due to nutritional needs and seen our children suffer from lack of food during Harvard’s layoffs. All of the Harvard community suffers from lack of what we call “sustainable food.”

So, Harvard dining hall workers and our union, UNITE HERE Local 26, made a decision. We felt as Martin Luther King expressed, that “the urgency is now.” The solution is not the status quo. Those who have control of our food and distribution in this country are either terrible at what they do or do not have our interests at heart. Dining hall workers have been campaigning for and with the Harvard community, saying that Harvard students, professors, and workers need to be fed correctly, and fed without destroying our environment.

This was our rallying cry, and we were determined to take charge. We organized and won sustainable food and sustainable jobs in our contract. Now, we have to help get these things implemented.

Sustainable jobs means that we will not allow our people to go hungry for lack of work. Most of us cannot collect unemployment due to a law saying that food service workers at educational institutions cannot collect in seasonal layoffs. This makes no sense, but the top 1% lobbied for a law that is not in our interest but only in theirs.

Sustainable jobs means no indiscriminate layoffs or cuts in hours. We demand a careful and respectful plan for distributing work that benefits the university and its workers.

We know that to implement this will take a big effort by us and by the community. Our survival is currently in the hands of those who have no interest in us, resulting in the callous disrespect of our lives. Our effort to get good jobs and food is for our survival.

We greatly appreciate the Occupy movement, for we know that the only people with respect for life is the 99% at Harvard--the students, professors, and us workers. The 1% are in control but the 99% must work together for respectful jobs for all, affordable and quality medical care, halting the spread of major diseases like AIDS, educational quality increasing not decreasing, and our food, nutrition, and environment to be vigilantly looked after. As Martin Luther King has shown us, the urgency is now.

Five Years to Stop Climate Change: The Urgency of Occupy

by Alli Welton, a freshman at Harvard College

The International Energy Association recently published a report stating that we have five years left to stop constructing new fossil fuel infrastructure, or else all hope of combating climate change will be lost. Five years to stop climate change. After that, there is no return.

We have to act now, with the greatest people power movement of all time to combat the greatest threat to the 99%. We have five years to turn our economy around, swing it onto a clean energy track, and keep our planet habitable into the future—this is the most urgent call of the Occupy movement.

Big Oil is the perfect poster-child for what the Occupy movement is protesting. On the backs of the 99%, Big Oil has made massive profits—Exxon last year made more money than has ever been made in all of history. On top of these extreme profits, Big Oil is supported with billions of subsidies paid for by the tax dollars of the 99%.

And how does Big Oil contribute to society in return for our tax dollars? In return, Big Oil reigns as energy system tyrant, insisting on using harmful and antiquated fossil fuels for easy profits at the expense of the 99% and the planet. In return, Big Oil brainwashes our citizens, somehow convincing us of the lie that manmade climate change is not based on strong scientific evidence, that it's something you can choose to "believe" in. In return, Big Oil buys out our elections and our elected officials, choking any attempts to pass the desperately-needed legislation that would cap carbon emissions and keep society safe.

Enough. Big Oil is the most dangerous of the 1%. Climate change will increase inequal-

ity, but the 1% aren't worrying—when our cities go underwater, when our coasts are devastated by hurricanes, when food prices hit the roof and poverty and war follow... the 1% will be cushioned by the millions they've amassed at the expense of the 99% and the planet we depend on. Famines and floods matter to everyone, even those with six figure incomes—no one can escape unscathed. But these disasters matter the most when you are already barely managing to put food on your family's table; they matter the most when the destruction of your home is the destruction of everything you own.

Enough. We're done with feeling powerless against Big Oil's empire. We the people have a dream that is more than a dream, we have a plan—we are ready right this second to start the conversion to a clean energy economy and thereby keep the planet safe for all of us. We call for an end to all new fossil fuel development, and an end to all fossil fuel subsidies. We call for a Green New Deal to revitalize our economy, a transformation that would create millions of jobs and ensure the stability of those jobs far into the future. We call for a just and effective international agreement with binding emissions caps for all nations.

The technologies and policies we need to stop climate change are here and ready; it's time for government to listen to our demands and to the reality of science. We must stop the corporate occupation of our climate within the next five years, in order to save both our economy and our lives.

Accountability for the 99%

by Aryn Alasti, a security guard at Harvard and a member of SEIU Local 615.

Large, stratified organizations are often unable to respond to stakeholders and to changing external circumstances. At Harvard, an excessively hierarchical structure functions too much on the basis of territorialities and administrative prerogatives. It too often lacks meaningful input (such as the Undergraduate Council's proposed Forum for Change) on matters of governance, ethics, prioritization of expenditures, provisions for enhanced social interaction, etc., which are of great importance to an academic community.

Although various committees and the Faculty Council offer limited opportunities for dialogue on Harvard's priorities, initiatives and policies, community members at all levels have long expressed frustration regarding the overall opaque and unilateral nature of Harvard's determinations in these matters. To improve this situation, such participatory reforms could set an example of a working model for other universities and large social organizations of every sort, in addition to benefiting the "99%" right here. To the extent that this would fundamentally enhance "agency" for individuals within such organizations, this is what Occupy Harvard and other Occupy movements are about.

I believe that forums for collective inputs of ideas and opinion ought to be a regularly scheduled element of the functioning of each school and facility, House and dorm within the university. They should include everyone from custodians to upper-level management, with simultaneous translation provided as necessary. If funding would be a major issue, inclusion of the concept in the upcoming capital campaign would spur interest from donors to whom the transformative potentialities would be clear.

We could address so many controversies, grievances, damaging oversights, missed opportunities for improvement, and unnecessary hindrances to consensus if we could gather for that purpose with the approach of “how can we make this community, this family of house occupants, this organization, this world, better for us all.” I hope something of the sort will be taken into consideration.

“They fed up my diagonals”**

by Jia Hui Lee, a senior at Harvard College.

Occupy is a very physical word. Tracing the word back to its Latin radicals, Occupy contains the word *capere*, or “to grasp.” This action of taking hold, of folding one’s fingers over an object, brings to mind the solidarity fist, a symbol of strength that has united women, workers, queers, and African-Americans to fight for equality. But to grasp with the hand is also to move in space.

The other word implicit in Occupy makes present this space, the three-dimensional configurations needed to grasp. *Ob*, loosely bearing the meaning of “on” or “over,” when placed together with *capere*, gives us the word Occupy, to seize, to take over, to grasp hold of. To physically reach out and take hold of objects, streets, and City Halls.

In the last week, I have heard a lot of criticisms of the Occupy movements, some of them stingingly petty. “They fucked up my diagonals,” one student in Leverett dining hall lamented as he and his friends complained about the inconvenience of the closed gates. “Ridiculous, it takes me two minutes to show my ID,” said another. These comments refuse, or are incapable of, grasping and taking hold of the reasons some Harvard students are occupying the Yard.

Occupying the Yard has changed and challenged my mental and physical routines. It has forced me to think about what to wear to protect me from the cold, to think how to communicate with people who come by the camp, and to change how I move through and in the Yard. It is this sort of change to people’s lives, at varying levels of inconvenience, that brings present opposition to the Occupation. It brings together the comments in the dining hall, the obscenities shouted at us by drunken students on the weekend, and complaints online.

Harvard students are reluctant to change, so much so that they dismiss income inequality and socially irresponsible investment because of the very fact that Occupy movements are incoherent and inconvenient. Criticisms of the movements, while valid, stop short of actually addressing issues that the movements have highlighted. The battlefield is one of access to privilege, i.e. the Yard, and not of global social inequality.

Harvard’s commitment to creating a better world, sadly, rests upon an irksome group of campers who are forcing us to change our minds and our saunters through the Yard. Thanks to them, Harvard students can now lament on how the Occupy movements have spoiled our moods to make any social change.

Occupy is a physical word. And the movement goes beyond just talk between peers in dining halls or simply “(dis)liking” a facebook cause, or petition, for that matter. It occupies cities, parks, Wall Street, and Harvard Yard. And it changes habits of thought and walk.

an Allston Pledge

by Harry Mattison, a community organizer in Allston

Allston is a place where Harvard's deeds wildly diverge from Harvard's ideals. Harvard could choose a more enlightened future in Allston, but does Harvard have the institutional will to break from its hypocritical past?

A few months ago, Harvard administrators asked incoming freshmen to sign a "Values Pledge" to affirm the values of integrity, respect, and inclusiveness. Similarly, an "MBA Oath" championed by graduates of Harvard Business School emphasizes trust, shared prosperity, and a broad concept of well-being. If Harvard were to write an "Allston Pledge", what would it say?

Allston is a diverse neighborhood that is home to every segment of our society's 99%. It is a melting pot of recent immigrants and long-time Allston families who span the socio-economic spectrum. Harvard's commitments to Allston were supposed to be a source of community strength. Instead, Harvard's real estate monopoly is turning out to be Allston's Achilles' heel.

The problem is twofold. First, Harvard bought more land in Allston than it knows what to do with. In the 1980's and 90's, Harvard purchased an astonishing amount of Allston, even spending \$226 million to buy 139 acres that includes the land underneath the Massachusetts Turnpike. But Harvard never announced plans for much of this property, instead choosing to land bank it for uses decades or centuries in the future. This imbalance between Harvard's vast property ownership and limited development plans was bad enough in 2007 when Harvard announced a 50 year Allston plan that excluded many key Allston parcels. But the disparity is even greater today, as the Allston plan recently endorsed by the Harvard Corporation ignores an even greater portion of Harvard's Allston property.

The second part of the problem is that when Harvard makes decisions about Allston, Harvard's unilateral and secretive process often produces results that are bad for the residents of Allston. Two years ago, Allston residents and planners from the Boston Redevelopment Authority worked on a community-wide plan for several of Harvard's blighted acres in the middle of the neighborhood. At the end of the process, Harvard's planners responded that new construction on Harvard property should be taller and denser than what the city planners and Allston residents proposed. The profits that these taller buildings would generate, Harvard explained, were needed to support the new parkland and retail that residents and City planners wanted.

When the ink was barely dry on this plan, Harvard made a deal to build a one-story McDonald's contradicting the recommendations of the Harvard planners. This summer, Harvard negotiated another real estate transaction that defies the community plan. Preliminary designs show a sprawling, low-density development that, like the McDonald's, will stymie efforts to redevelop Western Ave into a vibrant, urban Main Street with a strong local economy. Is there enough talent and creativity at Harvard to find a productive use for every Harvard property in Allston? Is there enough knowledge at Harvard's Program on Negotiation, Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, Transparency Policy Project, and elsewhere in the University to forge a true town/gown partnership? Of course there is. But the question is whether Harvard can move from an attitude of delay, deny, and defend, and instead live by an Allston pledge that it would be proud to sign.

What happened to free speech on Campus?

*Stephen Squibb, Occupy Boston Media & Fenna Krienen,
a graduate student of Psychology in GSAS*

The Free Speech Movement was born on a college campus. In 1964 Mario Savio, then an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, proclaimed,

“There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part; you can’t even passively take part, and you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop. And you’ve got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you’re free, the machine will be prevented from working at all...”

On November 9th members of the Harvard and UC Berkeley communities gathered on their respective campuses to set up physical encampments in the spirit of the ongoing Occupy movement. In Berkeley, riot police brutally beat and hospitalized students and faculty. Afterwards thousands of people flooded Sproul Plaza and maintained a vigil, day and night, in defense of the freedom to create a space for free speech. Video released yesterday shows campus police pepper-spraying students at UC Davis with incredible, chilling indifference to the fact that they were committing acts of violence against the students they were hired to protect.

Here at Harvard, HUPD were told to close the gates to the Yard, instigating a lock-down of our campus and a standoff the administration and the protestors who want the basic freedom to have an open conversation on an open campus. The police presence, both on and off campuses across America, puts the focus squarely on structures of power. We see this clearly today, 11 days into the encampment in Harvard Yard, where Securitas maintains checkpoints at the gates of our campus. Why does the presence of 30 tents pitched in peaceful protest of economic inequality, unjust labor practices, and democratic reform provoke the shuttering of Harvard University? The Harvard administration’s statement in response to our encampment said, “Free speech and the free exchange of ideas are hallmarks of the Harvard experience, and important values for the university community to uphold. At the same time, it is important that we assure the safety and security of our students, particularly those who live in the Yard.”

Today, as we pledge solidarity to our brothers and sisters at the University of California and condemn the violence against them, we are confused by Harvard’s statement. We are confused because we do live in the Yard; we lived here on November 8th and we live here today. We are confused that in speaking freely of injustice, we would somehow constitute a danger to ourselves. And we are confused, most of all, by the behavior of a University that admitted us because of our commitment to the democratic values of an open and just society. We will continue to take these commitments – to freedom, to equality, and to justice – seriously, and would ask that Harvard do the same.