

A New Day Dawns

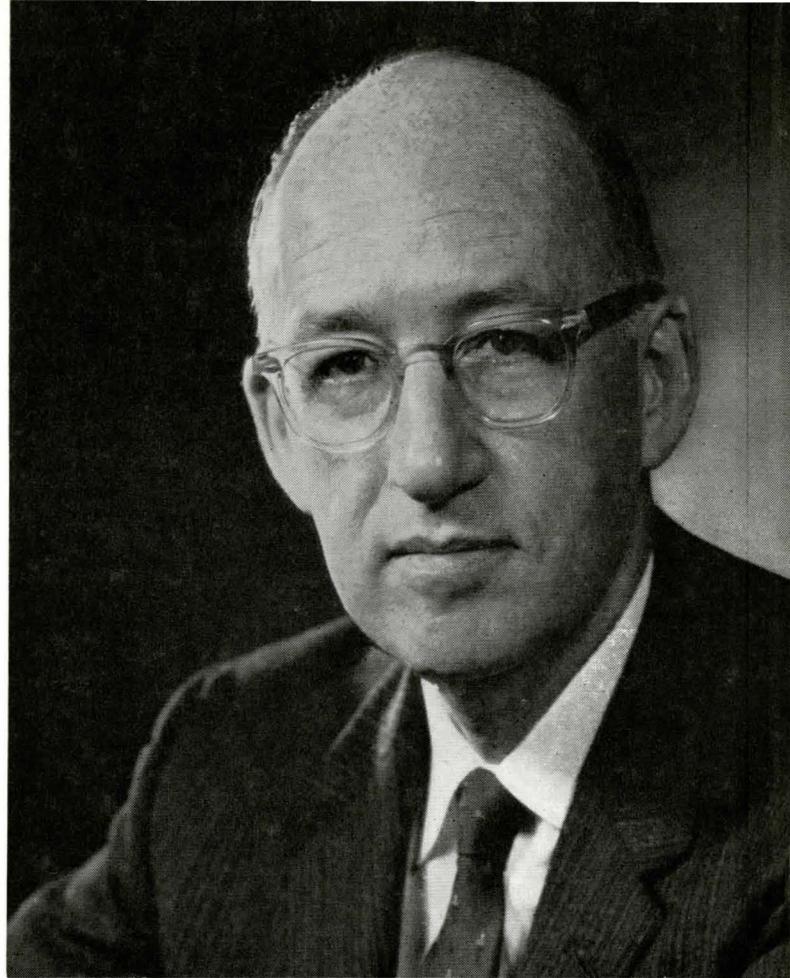
John J. Meng
President of the College

This *Quarterly* is an explicit recognition by the Hunter College Alumni Association of the dawn of a new day for public higher education in New York. The City University, created earlier, but only now becoming a reality with the opening of courses leading to doctoral degrees, has the potential of becoming not only the largest, but also one of the best of America's universities. Knitting together into a single institution the four senior and three community colleges of our municipality is a task accompanied by many significant problems.

Hunter Alumni may wonder whether the proud identity of their Alma Mater is destined to be submerged in a monolithic University resembling but slightly the smaller College from which they graduated. They may question the utility of alumni efforts to aid and assist a College that is in some respects but one part of a larger whole.

Neither the members of the Board of Higher Education nor the administrative officials of any of the colleges desire to diminish or detract from the identity of the individual institutions. There is, on the contrary, a positive determination to enhance the reputation and the quality of the present undergraduate colleges, Hunter included. Increased numbers of potential students—the development of entirely new fields of study—the rapid growth of knowledge in existing academic disciplines—all these factors now confronting the colleges forecast growth and demand the maintenance of high quality in undergraduate instruction. The continuing welfare of the colleges is indeed one of the most compelling reasons for the addition of doctoral programs and for the acquisition of university status. An institutional structure which supplies opportunities for advanced study and research attracts scholars of established merit and makes possible the infusion into all its parts of the richest academic offerings.

Efficient utilization of resources in terms of physical plant and teaching competencies presents a logistic puzzle of the first magnitude. If the solution of this puzzle and of many related problems is sought in terms of institutional rivalries or monolithic controls, the future of the experiment upon which we are embarked will be dark indeed. If, however, educational statesmanship within the University is supported by an understanding public, the future of the individual institutions will be assured and the success of the University itself will be guaranteed.



President Meng

The new University will bring new opportunities for public service and will require new organizational elements both within and without the existing collegiate institutions. The point to be kept in mind is that the creation of machinery required for the operation of a university neither diminishes nor alters the significance of undergraduate work. The colleges, far from being submerged in the University, can become still more important factors in the educational and social life of the City. They will have much more to accomplish rather than much less to do.

The attitude of the general public and of governmental officials will be of central importance in the formative years of this truly unique University. Of all sections of the public, the Alumni Associations are the best informed, the most amicably motivated, and altogether the most potentially powerful force for good in supporting and encouraging the proper direction of University and collegiate development. But they will be a helpful force for good only if their leadership and their members operate on the basis of knowledge and sound understanding of the issues involved and the objectives of their institutions. Misdirected alumni efforts have tragically complicated the development of more than one American college in times past.