

BRONX CAMPUS

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President of the College

[Editor's Note: The Bronx Division of Hunter was opened in 1931, as a two-year center for freshman and sophomore students. It flourished until 1943, when the Navy took over the campus college and converted it to the *U.S.S. Hunter*, where for three years all enlisted WAVES went through their "boots" training period. At the close of the War the Navy withdrew from the campus in the winter of 1946. In March of '46 the U.N. Security Council convened in its first home in this country, the Gymnasium Building on the campus. In August the Council concluded its first session and the thirty-acre campus was again taken over by the College. Two months later, October '46, the Bronx Center was re-opened, with Dean Anna Trinsey, now our Alumni president, in charge. Like other women's colleges, Hunter too opened its doors to a group of returning veteran students, in special session on the campus.

The first regular coeducational class uptown was admitted in 1951. Since then, all classes have remained on campus for four years.

In February, 1961, the first regular session of the Campus School of General Studies was opened; and last summer, the first full-fledged summer session.

We publish here excerpts from the Bronx Campus section of President Meng's first biennial report on the College to the Board of Higher Education.]

Since the introduction of a four-year coeducational program to the Bronx in 1951 the growth of that campus has been remarkable. The opening of Shuster Hall in 1959 provided room for administrative functions and a large number of additional multipurpose classrooms. Occupation of the new library building in 1960 with facilities to house 245,000 volumes and seating capacity for 468 students supplied two of the basic elements of satisfactory library service. During the past two years the third essential has been added. With the cooperation of the City budget authorities and of the teaching staff of the College, a basic book-stock for the Bronx library has been ordered and is rapidly being catalogued and made available to students. . . .

Today the Bronx day-session enrollment has reached the limit of available facilities. Completion of the long-delayed renovation program for Gillet and Davis Halls may make possible an enlargement of the total day session by as many as four hundred students. I am happy to report that construction contracts for the renovation of Gillet Hall have been let and that similar contracts for Davis Hall are expected to be ready for bidding during 1963.

Experience in developing a School of General Studies and a summer session in the Bronx indicates that there is an almost unlimited demand for college educational services there. General studies enrollment jumped from 700 to 2,000 in a two-year period. Only one summer session has been held with an initial enrollment of over

Davis Hall



1,300 students. No graduate work is now conducted in the Bronx, but the extension of masters-degree programs to that campus during the years ahead seems inevitable. . . .

In view of the pressures already upon us plant-development plans for the Bronx call for the construction of three new buildings. The first of these has been approved by the City Planning Commission, and funds for the preparation of plans are included in the current capital budget. This is an auditorium, cafeteria, speech and dramatics building. We expect to engage an architect and start on the preliminary plans before the end of the 1962-1963 academic year. Projected costs of this construction are \$4,550,000. . . .

At this point I think it appropriate to discuss briefly the projected plans of the Bronx Community College and their possible relationship to the present and future needs of Hunter College. . . .

Present Bronx Community College plans call for three buildings to be located south of Bedford Park Boulevard. Two of these are the Library-Auditorium building and the Student Activities-Cafeteria building. Hunter College has already been authorized to proceed with planning for an auditorium-cafeteria, speech and drama building. I suggest that the Board approve a merger of these interests and that the two colleges jointly utilize the air rights over the transit yards south of Bedford Park Boulevard. Auditorium and theatre facilities for the joint use of the two colleges might be constructed on that portion of the plot immediately adjoining Bedford Park Boulevard and most convenient to surface and elevated transit facilities. South of the auditorium structure might be located joint cafeteria facilities consisting of central kitchens and totally separate dining and lounge areas. Still farther south might then be located an exclusively Hunter College music, art, and speech and drama building. These are all activities which require adequate sound proofing and air conditioning—necessities for any building located in this area.

Hunter use of air space over the subway yards in this way will result in more attractive planning and more future flexibility than would result from immediate construction on the present Hunter campus. Cooperative planning and some mutual adjustments in the total capital program of the two colleges will be necessary, but I have no reason to expect anything but goodwill on both sides in reaching thoroughly agreeable decisions with regard to these matters. As outlined above, one of the Community College buildings presently projected for the area south of Bedford Park Boulevard would need to be relocated in the north sector. There are advantages to this arrangement, I believe, since it would add

greater force and reason to a request that Paul Avenue be closed to general traffic and incorporated as a part of the campus areas of the two Colleges.

From Hunter's viewpoint, this type of cooperative planning will leave on our present campus sufficient space in the northwest and southwest sectors for the two additional structures which will be necessary before long. More importantly, this arrangement will prevent the loss of our present excellent facilities for outdoor athletic programs, a necessity that must be faced if we are to locate all future construction on the property which we presently hold. Still another advantage is that it will make possible the removal of all non-science departments from Gillet Hall, approximately half of which is presently being converted for scientific studies. Construction of a music, art, speech and drama building on Paul Avenue over the subway yards, and of a general purpose classroom building will free Gillet Hall for total conversion to scientific uses. Here, as at Park Avenue, are all the ingredients for the development of not one, but two, college plants in a way that will enhance their services to the community without property condemnations or loss of tax revenues.

A final note on the future of the Bronx must indicate that the tentative plans outlined above will make possible the adequate housing of a matriculated day-session population of five thousand students, sixteen hundred more than are now enrolled there.

Gymnasium Building

