

THE ALUMNÆ NEWS

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I welcome the opportunity to report to the loyal army of Alumnae of Hunter College regarding recent activities which have led to the appointment of George N. Shuster as Dean and Acting President of the College.

On June 20, 1939, Dr. Colligan requested a year's leave of absence. At that time his wife was seriously ill in the hospital; and his own physical condition was drained both by illness and by overwork arising from New Building problems and the heavy administrative load of a scattered plant. This leave was granted by our Board as of September 1, 1939. And it became necessary in the Board's judgment to act promptly in order to assure an immediate successor who would handle the large administrative responsibilities which Hunter faces at this time. From the budgetary angle it was fortunate that there happened to be available the vacant line of an Academic Dean. We were not unaware that the Faculty Council had appointed a committee to search for such a Dean; but we were assured that by the end of the last academic year this search had not yet been narrowed down to one or two candidates. The College was on a vacation, and since time was of the essence of the problem the Administrative Committee of Hunter College decided upon a course of action of which the present facts are the outcome. It undertook an intensive, careful survey of the field, for a scholar who could at once serve effectively as Acting President as well as occupy the position of Academic Dean.

It selected for this position Mr. George N. Shuster, former editor of the *Commonweal*, who was working at Columbia under a Carnegie grant on a three-year research study of the history of the Weimar Republic. Mr. Shuster was unanimously recommended to the Board for this joint position and was unanimously elected by the Board at its meeting on July 6, 1939. I shall not take the space to recite Mr. Shuster's distinguished career in the academic field in the teaching of English, nor in the field of letters to which he has contributed a dozen volumes. But I can assure you that he comes to us with literally the most superlative recommendations as a man, as a democratic citizen and educationist, a keen scholar in the field of English and German, a true gentleman of high integrity, liberality of outlook, sensitiveness of feeling, and genuine piety in devotion to the best spiritual heritage of mankind.

I am confident that as soon as the Alumnae have an opportunity to meet Acting President Shuster face to face, they will share in my confidence that under his leadership the College is in splendid hands.

ORDWAY TEAD, Chairman,
Board of Higher Education.



GEORGE N. SHUSTER
Acting President of Hunter College.

THE ALUMNÆ AND THE COLLEGE

Permit me to say first of all that though my acquaintance with everything that is being done to maintain Hunter College at its traditional high level is necessarily limited, I have already seen enough to assure me that the coöperation given by the Alumnae is cordial and worth its weight in gold. This is a most encouraging fact.

The College needs its Alumnae more than ever before. I am thinking primarily of the fact that it is an institution unusually dependent upon public interest and good will. Hunter girls have the great advantage of living against the background of a metropolitan community; but their ability to utilize this opportunity to the full must in large measure depend upon the attitude of others towards them. This problem is recognized by the Alumnae. They are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that if they talk Hunter, represent Hunter, the students of the present will profit by this assistance more than by any other thing.

May I add also that we for our part are consumed with anxiety to associate the graduates more intimately with the life of the College? It is hoped that when the new building opens next year, a program of Alumnae activities can be inaugurated that will interest, in one way or another, every graduate. And of course we shall be only too glad to welcome any suggestions as to what that program might desirably be. If interest can be developed, the College will become what it might ideally be—an institution which binds the past and the present together in a living tradition.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER,
Acting President.

THE STAFF MEETS ITS ACTING PRESIDENT

On Thursday, September 21, the Instructional and Administrative Staff of Hunter College gathered in the Park Avenue Building's largest room to meet their new Acting President and Academic Dean.

After a greeting from Dean Hannah M. Egan, Mrs. Walter S. Mack, Jr., Chairman of the Hunter College Administrative Committee and Hunter's staunch friend, took the chair.

Dr. Ordway Tead, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, introduced Acting President Shuster in a thoughtful speech in the course of which he also touched on several College problems. He told of the formation within the Board of a Committee on Curriculum and Faculty Relations; of the proposal for the formation within each college of a Committee on Faculty-Board Relations consisting of the President, the Academic Dean, and three faculty members elected by the Faculty Council; and of the formation of a committee to handle the appraisal and reclassification of the clerical staff. He also reported that the Presidents of the four colleges had been asked to work together concerning budget matters and the appraisal of teachers. He concluded by presenting the new Acting President.

Acting President Shuster, after stressing the fact that his new position had come to him not of his own seeking, enumerated his three goals: (1) with reference to the student body, to keep the spark aglow, to reopen the question of student-teacher relationship, perhaps to change faculty control into solicited faculty leadership; (2) with reference to the staff, to be quite humbly its servant; (3) with reference to the public, to think through once again the College relations with the public, whose demands upon the institution increase as the finances of the population decrease. In conclusion he pledged courtesy, reverence for scholarly endeavor, and resolute devotion to the student body.

His speech was hailed with spontaneous and prolonged applause.

E. A. H.

COLLEGE NOTES

To bring the Alumnae into a closer relationship with Hunter is one of the aims for the College outlined in a recent interview by George Nauman Shuster, newly elected Academic Dean and Acting President.

Acting President Shuster, who will head the College during the year's leave of absence of Dr. Eugene A. Colligan, declared that Hunter affords opportunities to its graduates for help in chosen fields of intellectual and professional endeavor through its extension teaching, and asks in return only that its Alumnae still consider themselves in a measure citizens of the collegiate world.

Just past his forty-fifth birthday, Acting President Shuster has had a distinguished

career as reporter, soldier, writer, educator, and editor. In his office at 2 Park Avenue he "reminisced" about his experiences. He recalled that the entrance of the United States into the World War interrupted his career by picking him up "by the scruff of the neck" from a job on a Chicago paper and depositing him in a uniform in the Intelligence Section of General Headquarters.

Observing that there is a striking parallel between the situation facing students to-day and at the outbreak of the World War, the Acting President, who himself was a senior in the University of Notre Dame in 1914, went on to say that then as to-day the country was in the midst of an economic depression, the professions were overcrowded, and students just out of College had difficulty in getting jobs.

After the Armistice and a course at the University of Poitiers, he returned to the United States in 1919, his health impaired as the result of being gassed in the war and as "unsettled a human being as one could imagine". Uncertainly he experimented with various literary forms—free verse, essays, and articles; and the publication of these in periodicals and newspapers led to his summons back to Notre Dame to teach English. He remained there for four years until 1924, refusing a position on a newspaper to become Head of the English Department.

In the latter year he married Doris Parks Cunningham of Los Angeles, and with his bride came to New York to do graduate work at Columbia University. He continued to teach, however, giving courses at City College and Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Teaching for this affable scholar has always been recreation. "Nothing in the world," he says smilingly, "can keep a man young except contact with young people."

Plans to return west were changed when the former free-lance writer was invited to become an editor of the *Commonweal* upon its inception as a liberal Catholic weekly in 1925. The next ten years were strenuous ones for him, for in addition to becoming managing editor of the periodical he was made Professor of English at St. Joseph's College for Women. In 1933 he also gave courses in Shakespeare at Brooklyn Seminary.

During this decade, he edited college texts and wrote books on such diversified subjects as English literature, Catholic culture, and German civilization, including *Newman—Prose and Poetry*, *English Literature*, *The Hill of Happiness*, *The Catholic Spirit in America*, *The Eternal Magnet*, *The Catholic Church and Current Literature*, *The Germans*, *Strong Man Rules*, and *Like a Mighty Army*.

More recently he wrote *Brother Flo* and *Look Away*, and translated *The Flying Missionary* by Paul Schulte and *The Vatican as a World Power* by Joseph Berhart. A volume entitled *The Riddle of American Jewry* is scheduled for publication this month.

Editing a liberal periodical diversified the intellect, he found, but it did not allow much concentration on any one subject. To balance this condition, he undertook an intensive study of the Weimar Republic, in which he had been interested since the close of the War. He made three trips to Germany, in 1933 as an Oberlaender Trust Fellow, and was working on this material under a special grant from the Carnegie Corporation through the Social Science Research Council when called to his present post at Hunter.

“There is justice in transferring my interest from the Weimar Republic to the Republic of Women,” he said with a chuckle, “for it will be a continuation of the spirit of Weimar, in which the position of women was very high.”

Mr. Shuster's interests are as varied as his writings. He is a member of the American Christian Committee for German Refugees, the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany, the National Council of Survey Associates, and the Calvert Associates; but when he desires relaxation he goes up to his home in Stamford, Connecticut, and tends his rose bushes. He also is a chess-player of parts.
