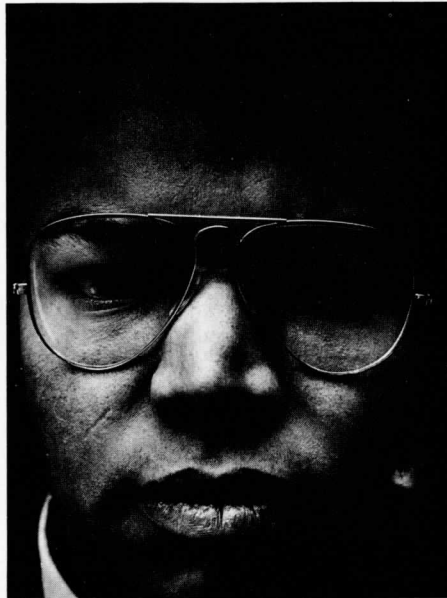


## SEEK and other Programs



THE DEMAND for more black students in New York's city colleges has long been a justifiable point for criticism. As late as last year, Hunter's percentage of black student enrollment was 3 per cent of total day session matriculation. This year, including SEEK students (who are 90 per cent Negro or Puerto Rican), the total has risen to 4½ per cent. (In the entire City University system, including the community colleges, black students make up only 11 per cent of the student population.)

The problem is more than a numbers game. While many people seriously believe that those percentages should be increased and that the number of black students in city colleges should be more in proportion to the number of black students in city high schools, there are certain physical limitations on how many students can be accepted and accommodated at any college. And

there are those who feel that city colleges, which have always maintained a reputation of "high standards," must not allow them to go by the board.

Yet administrators faced with social change and mounting minority pressure must think in terms of reaching those most in need of the benefits of higher education. A recent study showed that only 5.3 per cent of all academic diploma high school graduates in this city were Negro or Puerto Rican. Yet these two groups comprised 38 per cent of the total city high school population. How can the rest of these students be reached and given a chance to participate in free higher education?

The SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge) program is one way of trying to start solving the problem. Established in 1966 by order of the New York State Legislature, and financed by both the city and state, the program is designed to bring youth from poverty areas into the university. High school graduates, without either the required courses or required entrance averages, are selected for SEEK on the recommendation of their high school teachers and counselors. They are considered to be highly motivated and have college potential.

Though they start with a technical handicap, they are brought up to the general level of requirements through a program of individualized and special programs which make them ready to fit into regular courses as soon as possible. As Fred Hechinger of *The New York Times* points out: "One crucial aspect of the program, in contrast to some special sub-standard admission programs elsewhere, is that it obviates lowering academic standards in the colleges. It

Some additional programs are:

#### 100 SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Information released by  
The City University of New York

"I didn't expect to go to college," said 19-year old Olga Cruz of the Bronx, who entered Brooklyn College last fall under the new admission policy of The City University of New York aimed at giving youngsters from the ghettos a chance to go to college. Miss Cruz' reaction is typical of the 154 students who have been admitted under the "100 Scholars Program" adopted by the Board of Higher Education last August 2 and launched immediately by Chancellor Albert H. Bowker.

Under the new policy the university guarantees admission to the senior colleges to the top 100 students in each of the 60 public high schools in the city, regardless of the type of diploma earned. This year, out of these 6,000 students there were 676 who had not met the regular CUNY admissions standards. Chancellor Bowker extended invitations to these 676 students, who would be in addition to the regular enrollment at the colleges.

Dean Lester G. Brailey of the Office of Admission Services reported to Chancellor Bowker that 228 had responded, 191 came for counseling, and 154 had entered the university. There are 136 attending senior colleges (6 at Hunter), and 18, at their own request, attending CUNY's community colleges.

The principal beneficiaries of the new policy are Spanish speaking, mainly Puerto Ricans. The students

raises the student to the college instead of lowering the college to the student."

To do this, SEEK students receive special treatment. They are taught by teachers assigned to the program in special SEEK course sections, limited to small classes. They receive constant testing, reevaluation, special counseling and financial assistance if they need it. If education skills (such as writing, efficient reading, speaking, exam taking, effective use of English, etc.) are poor, remedial work is given. And at Hunter, they are marked as hard as any regular student would be, according to SEEK program director Dr. Florence L. Denmark, who is also an assistant professor of psychology at the college. The idea is to get them into the mainstream of the college as quickly as possible. Many SEEK students are already enrolled in regular sections of foreign language, history and sociology courses, as well as the various other disciplines.

During 1967-68, 1,400 students were enrolled in all SEEK programs of the City University. Now the figure totals at least 3,000 in the six colleges of the City University. Retention rates in full-time programs run to over 60 per cent after two years.

Until last fall, Hunter maintained only a part-time program with less than 70 students enrolled in the spring 1968 semester. This year, spring 1969 registration was estimated at 125 plus about 25 transfer students.

In contrast to the disturbances which have marked the Queens College SEEK offices in recent months, a visit to the Hunter SEEK office at Roosevelt House found a relaxed atmosphere. We visited during the registration period, and the students, as ever, were

struggling to decipher the mimeographed course schedules. If they had a question, they got a polite answer. If they had to fill out a questionnaire for a second time, it was explained why. Several students stopped by Dr. Denmark's desk to pass on the news about marks from last term. ("Well, I flunked that Spanish course I had told you about," one boy said, "but I got two B's and a C in my other courses, and I think I have another C coming.") A SEEK student, discussing the schedule of colloquiums with Dr. Denmark, asked for permission to speak to the students and was given a date with no questions asked, even about his topic. Students involved in a student advisory group on the SEEK program made a

date to meet and prepare their own student handbook. All in all, the students in the program seemed to have a lot to say about what they wanted to do and what the general ground rules were to be.

This was just about two weeks after the SEEK uproar at Queens. There, a group of SEEK students staged a demonstration demanding the dismissal of white director Joseph P. Mulholland, and demanding authority over hiring SEEK personnel and over the conduct of the program. Queens College President Joseph P. McMurray closed the college for two days to avoid violence. Later an interim director, Dean of Faculty Robert W. Hartle, was appointed and SEEK students again protested,

ripping Hartle's office apart in the course of the protest.

Hunter seemed, in comparison, like the Sea of Tranquility. Dr. Denmark explained that the two programs were run quite differently. At Hunter, the instructors are recruited from the various departments of the college (except for the remedial teachers who are hired specially). The program is aimed at getting the students almost from the beginning into the regular program as quickly as possible.

Queens, on the other hand, hired separate teachers. Students were not integrated as quickly into regular classes. Then, too, the first director, aside from being white, lacked the standard academic credential of a Ph.D. and was also a former parole officer. Some students felt there was a suggestion of a second class academic effort in assigning a non-Ph.D. to head the program, and, personal merits aside, his connection at any time with "law and order" caused resentment. Lastly, the announcement that SEEK teachers would be placed under the jurisdiction of various college departments led many at Queens to fear that the character of the program would be weakened or that larger classes might result.

At Hunter, such complaints as exist seem focused not so much on color sensitivities and demands as procedures, and Hunter's SEEK students seem more preoccupied with getting on with the business of education than with demonstration. "They realize that without SEEK they wouldn't be here," Dr. Denmark pointed out, "and they are serious students anxious to learn."

The Hunter Envoy made a survey of

placed came from 18 public high schools, mostly in poverty areas. Morris High School in the southeast Bronx supplied the most — 25; Boys High School in Brooklyn supplied 19; Ben Franklin in East Harlem, 18; Eastern District in Brooklyn, 16; Brandeis in Manhattan and Prospect Heights in Brooklyn, 15 each; Haaren in Manhattan, 14; and John Jay in Brooklyn, 11. The other high schools provided less than 10 students.

Of the 136 attending the senior colleges under the "100 Scholars Program," 25 will require no remedial tutoring, while 111 will enter the SEEK program, in which they will get special counseling and tutoring.

Of the 18 who chose to attend a community college, one is in the regular career program, three in a SEEK program, and 14 in the College Discovery Program, which also provides remedial help.

Several of these "100 Scholars" students had previously applied to CUNY or some other university earlier in the year and been rejected. Often their grades fell only a few points below requirements that are now being recognized by CUNY and Ivy League colleges alike as excessively stringent.

Part of CUNY's goal in altering its admission requirements is to improve the ethnic and racial imbalance throughout the colleges so that enrollments will reflect the ethnic makeup of the city's graduating high school classes. It is hoped that by fall of next year 26 per cent of the freshmen at the senior colleges will be Negro and Puerto Rican, compared to 20 per cent this year and 12 per cent a year ago.



### SPECIAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM

Dr. Robert Cross, Hunter's President, proposed an admissions experiment that has been accepted by CUNY and is planned to go into effect next September. Unlike the "100 Scholars Program" — which is spread throughout the senior and community colleges and in which Hunter participates — this Special Admissions Program will be only for Hunter.

According to Dr. Cross' plan, the college will admit 100 Special Students in place of students who would normally qualify. These Special Students will be:

1. "Late bloomers" whose overall academic average wouldn't qualify them but whose junior year performance was good.
2. Students who have shown promise in some subjects.
3. Veterans who didn't have qualifications.

Also, there is an option for the college to offer *early admission* to a limited number of students. Apparently this is working very well.

some of the SEEK students and came up with the following criticisms of the program:

*Mandatory counseling.* SEEK students are assigned a counselor, and are required to attend weekly group counseling sessions. The *Envoy* found this was the major criticism. Antoinette Brown, a lower sophomore, was quoted in the *Envoy* as saying it is "an invasion of a person's personal rights to confide in someone, if he so chooses." Another student termed it "an invasion of privacy."

Professor Denmark, taking this criticism into account, has now given students the option of individual or group counseling.

Dr. Leslie Berger, director of SEEK for CUNY, explained to *Envoy* why he believes in mandatory counseling: "It is not counseling in terms of let-me-know-how-you-feel. My concern is that I want to know at all times what happens to our students." If students and staff don't keep in touch, it is possible the student will be "discouraged and will give up and disappear."

*Excessive testing.* This was another complaint voiced by students, according to *Envoy*. Students complained they were given too many placement tests during the term. Dr. Denmark explained to *Envoy* the purpose of this testing. The tests at the beginning of the term determine whether the student needs remedial help. Retesting serves as a measure of student progress which Dr. Denmark must report back to the Faculty Council; it also serves as a check on her placement of the student.

According to *Envoy*, SEEK students will have an official body through which they can register their com-



*Black history course*

plaints. A SEEK Advisory Council is being formed to bring complaints to Professor Denmark when the students themselves are reluctant to do so.

Perhaps what really makes the Hunter program work can be summarized in the word "communication." People on both ends of the program seem able to "stay loose" and experiment together.

#### MISS ELION HONORED

We are pleased to append a footnote to the Profile, in the Fall-Winter *Quarterly*, on Gertrude B. Elion '37, head of the experimental therapy department at Burroughs Wellcome Research Laboratories. The George Washington University, Washington, D. C., has just conferred on Miss Elion the honorary degree of Doctor of Science "in recognition of her enormous contributions to chemistry, the basic medical sciences and the treatment of human diseases." In receiving the degree, Miss Elion was in the illustrious company of Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren.