

New Wexler Library Goes On-Line

"On-line." "Database." "Touch terminals."

Words once uttered only by friendly, neighborhood computer whizzes are fast becoming colloquial to users and staff of Hunter's new, fully automated, open stack library.

Why the new lingo?

Simple. The library has computerized its card catalogue as well as its circulation and acquisition systems, a characteristic that makes it unique within the City University of New York and only the second college in Manhattan to make the switch.

"We went from a very old-fashioned library to what really is a state-of-the-art," explains David Lane, the chief librarian.

By all accounts, the transition has been smooth. The Jacqueline Grennan Wexler Library, named after Hunter's former president, opened in its new location in the East Building on the first day of the fall semester. Response to the new facility—nine floors containing study desks, typing rooms, comfortable chairs, carrels, and quiet rooms—

was dramatic and immediate. Five hundred books were borrowed on opening day, more than had ever been borrowed on any previous opening day in the library's history.

Since then, circulation has soared. Last October, for example, 2,000 more books were borrowed than in October of 1982. And according to Lane, about 5,000 people, or double the number of daily visitors to the old library, frequent the new one each day.

Credit for easing computer anxiety on the part of library users belongs to the library's staff, who conduct daily tours for students and faculty and patiently explain the intricacies of the automated system.

Searching for a book no longer involves lifting heavy file drawers or battling tightly packed index cards. Information is literally at one's fingertips. Prospective borrowers need only touch a computer screen displaying an alphabetized list in order to locate the author, title, and call number of any of the library's half-million volumes. And, unlike the card catalogue, the computer can also in-

dicate whether a book is on the shelf or, if not, when it will be returned.

Borrowers can now also browse freely through nine floors of open stacks, a liberty both students and faculty admit has been a boon to their research.

Given space to roam, visitors are also making good use of the library's seating arrangements. The new library can seat 1,500 people, triple the number accommodated by the old facility.

A triangular stairwell and four elevators provide easy access to any of the numerous collections, among them a separate education library, the College's archives, and an area in which current periodicals receive prominent display.

One concern prompted by the library's new technology has been about the fate of the card catalogue. Total extinction is unlikely. The trusty old catalogue, which will never go "down" because of a power outage, will continue to be used for all books classified under the Dewey Decimal system.

Cuomo Proposes Rise in Tuition

In his projected budget for the '84-'85 fiscal year, which he formally submitted to the State Legislature in January, Governor Mario Cuomo proposed a \$200 increase in tuition for undergraduates at the State and City Universities of New York.

The suggested increase, if approved, would become the third one since 1982. In both 1982 and 1983, tuition rose by \$150.

We urge you to write your legislators opposing the Governor's proposal because any tuition increase would seriously hamper the ability of students to attend Hunter.

If you wish to participate in any future activities regarding legislative appropriations, please contact Patricia Falk, Director of Community Relations, Box 373, Hunter College, 695 Park Avenue, NYC, NY 10021.

Half a million volumes are now at students' fingertips because of the library's new touch terminals.

