

President Meng's *HOMECOMING MESSAGE*

. . . You assemble ten days after a momentous decision by the Board of Higher Education concerning the future of Hunter. After ninety-three years as a woman's college, the Park Avenue day session is to become coeducational in the fall of 1964. In recommending this action to the Board I noted a feeling of nostalgia which I think all of us must experience at this abandonment of a characteristic feature which has distinguished Hunter for almost a century. Hunter College holds proud rank among the pioneer institutions which established and fostered the development of higher education for women. The teaching staff of this College has been for generations one of the distinguished faculties in America, due in no small part to the presence among its members of the foremost women scholars in the country. If there is one aspect of modern academic life which I will combat in the years ahead it is the too prevalent tendency of American colleges and universities to build overwhelmingly male teaching staffs. During the past quarter of a century Hunter College has truly implemented (with greater impartiality and honesty, I believe, than any other American college or university) a totally non-discriminatory staff recruitment policy. There is no doubt that we have been aided in adhering to such a policy by the existence of a non-coeducational day session at the Park Avenue center. This is one of the sound values which I shall strive mightily to retain as the College becomes altogether coeducational.

The necessity of the Board's policy decision in this matter is almost self-evident when one analyzes the trends of recent enrollments and the limitations placed upon the wise use of public funds by retention of the day session for women only at Park Avenue. At a time when the City University and your Association are deeply concerned with retaining our no-tuition policy—at a time when the largest number of qualified high school graduates in history is clamoring for admission to the units of the University—we cannot in good conscience raise higher the barriers to admission as a Hunter undergraduate. Yet action to raise them still further beyond their present high level is the alternative to coeducation at Park Avenue.

This fall two of every three entering freshman on the Bronx campus are men. Within two years under existing arrangements (had no change been made) we would be administering two segregated campuses—one for men only in the Bronx, one for women only at Park Avenue. The facts of the situation are that in the day

session at Park Avenue we can accommodate more undergraduate students than desire to attend an all-woman college. The lack of uniformity at the two centers has resulted in certain expenditures of funds which may have been justified in less strenuous times but which cannot be defended in this period of maximum need by the high school graduates of New York City.

The College requires and must have a maximum degree of flexibility if it is to use wisely and for the benefit of the greatest possible number of students the funds and facilities which the City and the State of New York have entrusted to our administration. The first requirement of such flexibility is a uniform admissions standard on both campuses—an admissions standard uncomplicated by discrimination on the basis of sex. We have always abhorred discrimination on any other basis and have justified the woman's college on educational grounds. Only now, under the pressures of our day, have the educational advantages of a woman's college been outweighed by the educational needs of New York City and the educational advantages which can accrue from coeducation at Park Avenue.

We must recognize the needs of today and tomorrow, however much we may regret the more leisurely tempo of past decades. I ask you to join me in drowning your sorrow for things past in a healthy draught of the heady brew of challenge to wider service in the future.

You have read in the daily press, I am sure, of a variety of proposals for changes in all the Colleges of the University. I am proud to report to you that the academic departments and the individual faculty members of Hunter College are now occupied in planning for the admission next fall of more than a thousand students beyond our normal intake. This will require sacrifices from all of us in the College, but it is a task we undertake gladly since it promises to keep our entrance requirements within reach of most New York high school graduates who possess the basic qualifications for admission to a first-class college.

In this connection, lest you be misled by popularized discussion of admissions criteria, let me assure you that Hunter's present criteria, and any which we propose for the future, are and will remain among the most respectable in the land. No one in the Board, in the University, or at Hunter College proposes to decrease the enviable academic reputation of this College. Perhaps you have heard of proposals to drop the "combined score" average from 85% to 82%, accompanied by the

implications that 82% would flood the University with inferior students, and that Hunter College, using now an 83% combined score is sadly inferior to all but one of the other senior Colleges. Such implications are nonsense, and I beg members of the Alumni Association to so label them whenever they hear these figures bandied about. Any student with a combined score of 82% made up of College Board results and a four-year academic high school average is prime college material. Should pressure of numbers compel Hunter to drop its entering score to 82% we will be as proud of students meeting that criterion as we are of those we now have. When one tries to predict future student attainment on the basis of fractions of percentage points between 82% and 85% (or even 87%) sheer guesswork is involved. They are all good students. You need never apologize for Hunter's academic standards!

Once again, in the name of Alma Mater and of her faculty, I bid you welcome home!

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Free Tuition

In the *City College Alumnus* for December '63 the three new members of the Board of Higher Education, Mr. Benjamin F. McLaurin, Mr. David Sullivan and Mr. Jack Poses, express their strong support for the free tuition policy in our public colleges.

We quote from each of their articles. Mr. McLaurin: "The right to a college education must never be dependent upon the ability to pay." Mr. Sullivan: "The right to a higher education 'should be a broad social right, which this richest country in history can provide.'" Mr. Poses: "Education is a social investment whose dividends are essential to our national purpose."

A special bulletin on the progress of the campaign for mandated free tuition will shortly be sent out by the Joint Council of the City Colleges Alumni Associations.

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Travel Note

Members: If you are interested in a charter or group flight for summer of 1964, write to the Alumni Office for information, just released.



New Deputy Police Commissioner

The lady in uniform, Theresa Scagnelli Melchionne '34, newly appointed Deputy Commissioner of the Police Department of New York City, has been in the Department since 1942. In her new post she will head the Youth Program of the Department which involves supervising the work of five hundred men and women and eighty-one youth patrolmen assigned to each of the station houses in the City. She will work closely with the Police Athletic League in its expansion program.

Interest in and concern for children have played an important role in Theresa Melchionne's life since her graduation from Hunter. She had intended to teach mathematics, but became interested in social work and joined the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children as a special agent. She remained with the agency until she joined the Police Department where, too, there was the opportunity to work with children.

Her assignments in the Department have been varied. She has been attached to the Bureau of Special Services, and has also worked in the Missing Persons Bureau, and as an investigator for the Kings County District Attorney's office.

In 1952 she rose to be Director of the Policewomen's Bureau. Continuing her studies, she got her Master's Degree in Public Administration at the City College's Baruch School of Business and Public Administration in 1962.

The new Deputy Commissioner is a charter member of the Society of Police Science. She is married to Thomas J. Melchionne, an attorney, and lives in her native Bronx.