

# THE ALUMNAE NEWS

Published Monthly from October to June, inclusive, at 49 East 65th St., New York 21, N. Y., by the Associate Alumnae of Hunter College of the City of New York

Entered as second-class matter, Dec. 28, 1945, at post office at New York, N. Y., under act of Mar. 3, 1879

VOL. LV

NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1950

No. 9

## SPECIAL EDITORIAL

The Alumnae Day exercises, having taken place on November 15th, in other words three days after the dead-line of the NEWS, cannot be reported on until the issue following this one. But one feature of these exercises was of sufficient importance to be treated as "Stop-Press News". This was the announcement made by Acting President Grady, and featured in the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune* the following day, of the recommendations of a committee of the faculty appointed last year by President Shuster to take action on the Cottrell Report (a document which, on the basis of extremely cursory investigation of Hunter's conditions and needs, had recommended that Hunter lose its Bronx buildings and campus, as already reported in an editorial in the April NEWS). The most striking of the committee's recommendations—all of which are of course subject to approval by the Board of Higher Education—is to the effect that, instead of confining the student body in the Bronx to the freshman and sophomore classes, Hunter conduct there as downtown a full four-year college, and that the uptown college be coeducational.

Personally—and it must be emphasized that the opinions here expressed are purely personal—your Editor deeply regrets the possibility of coeducation for Hunter. She has a number of reasons for this, among them the following.

In the student body of a coeducational institution, girls rarerly get an equal chance with boys. The important student posts, such as presidencies and editorships, usually go to boys; the girls have to be satisfied to be secretaries and assistants. More important, where an attempt is made to keep the numbers of the two sexes equal, entrance-standards are often lowered for the sake of the boys at the expense of the girls; thus it is our understanding that boys are admitted to Brooklyn College with lower grades than are girls.

In the faculty of a coeducational institution, women rarely get an equal chance with men; this is especially serious because in a boys' college, they have practically *no* chance at all. The college exists for the sake of the students, not for the sake of the faculty; but from the point of view of girls anywhere receiving college training, it is a pity if their ultimate opportunities for college teaching are still further reduced.

With a few exceptions, such as Swarthmore and some state universities, the coeducational institutions are in general not a match academically for the all-male colleges, such as Yale, Princeton, Amherst, Dartmouth, or the all-female colleges, such as Bryn Mawr, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Mt. Holyoke—and Hunter. The boys' colleges like Harvard, Brown, Columbia, Pennsyl-

vania, and North Carolina, that have an affiliated but more or less separate girls' college connected with them, offer a compromise that seems preferable to the completely co-educational institutions.

The curriculum in a coeducational college often tends to suffer from a tradition that certain subjects, such as art, French, literature in general, are "sissy" studies to be taken mainly by girls, and that certain other subjects, such as mathematics and physics, are sturdy studies to be taken mainly by boys. In the non-coeducational college, such as Hunter, there is no such dichotomy, and all types of liberal studies are free to flourish as they deserve.

And finally—and most important—Hunter has acquired a distinctive personality, and a distinguished reputation, as the largest, one of the oldest, and one of the best, *colleges for women* of the country. We do not like to see her character changed.

But on the other hand it cannot be denied that the committee's recommendations are based on careful and thoughtful study, and have the support of a majority of the faculty. The writer felt, and feels, that the old plan, of coeducational colleges in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, and a separate boys' college and girls' college in the central borough of Manhattan, was ideal in that it provided our students and their parents with an opportunity for the type of education that they preferred (and there is wide divergence of opinion). But it cannot be denied that the situation is altered by the action of City College in opening to women not only its special schools, such as those of Education and Business, but also to a considerable extent, in practice if not in theory, its liberal arts college as well. And perhaps it is logical that if Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens all have coeducational colleges, the Bronx should have one too—which is what Hunter now offers to provide.

It had been thought that the student body definitely favored coeducation. But it was interesting at the Alumnae Day ceremonies to note that the burst of applause that greeted the initial announcement of coed in the Bronx, and that which greeted the subsequent announcement of all-girls at Park Avenue, were both alike notably spontaneous and voluminous. Evidently many of our girls were happy to learn that provision is being made for the girls of our city who wish it, to continue to enjoy the benefits of a non-coeducational college—a privilege which will probably be denied to the boys. And those who, like the writer, do *not* favor coeducation and regret to see its increase, may derive comfort from the fact that, according to the plan, on her own traditional Park Avenue site our alma mater will still continue to flourish and to foster in her own traditional form.

E. A. H.