

WHAT IS THE HUNTER COLLEGE SENATE?

by Karen Burdick

Democracy filters through our brains like pollution through our pores. Coating our complexions with soot and grease, our air is at times unfit for human consumption, as our system of government is for our styles of life. Very often we find that we have fallen into the minority classification which can be a frustrating and an overwhelming reality.

The Hunter College Senate which has been in operation since 1971, is a heaven for plurality. A potent design of legislation for the College, it is empowered to control the institute's policy for interest regarding curriculum, academic requirements and standards, instruction and the evaluation of teaching, and college development.

There is a group of people who meet once, sometimes twice a month in room 626 and decide what is actually going to take place in your school. Agents of the faculty, student body, and administration make up the voting unit. Along with twelve standing committees and a few ad-hoc committees, there are elections for faculty senators who are elected by the individual departments and serve a two year term. Elected into the Senate office are the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and the Chairperson of the Evening Session Council. Renate Murray, the administrative assistant for Senate Chairperson Prof. Allan Brick (English) said, "Some students really care but, they are new and still absorbing a lot." She continued to say that student participation is good, but there are openings for day

session Freshman and Sophomores in addition to many vacancies for evening session students and Graduate students.

So what about the minority of handicapped people? Do they fall under Article II, Sect. 1, E. of the Senate Charter which states "Safeguarding the academic freedom of *ALL* members of the Hunter College Community." When a handicapped person can't make it to his/her "academic freedom" what do they do? Take the Charter and yell I want my "academic freedom" too!

Everyone cares. Especially when it is they who require special facilities within the institution in order to make use of it. There are openings in the Senate Committees where you can get involved in some decisions. The majority has got to tune into the needs of the handicapped and integrate that into the Senate. Go to the Senate office on the 6th floor and ask for some paraphernalia on what the politics of Hunter are all about. The "Charter For A Governance of Hunter College," was written in September 1970. The only update was for 1) a committee on grade appeal and, 2) a College Calendar. Although the handicapped do fall under the by-laws within the Charter, the reality is altogether different. Everything looks better in writing. The future of the Senate and what it can do is dependent upon you, and how involved you get. That is where the power to change lies at Hunter College, for if we don't change we are all handicapped.