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THE BIRTH OF A MODERN UNIVERSITY

September 16, 2011 | [Salute to Scholars, The University](#)



MILESTONES & MEMORIES

The Birth of a Modern University

By Ruth Landa

City College's cathedral-scale Great Hall was the grand setting for historic CUNY events, including the 1963 inauguration of Chancellor Albert Hosmer Bowker.



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On a spring day 50 years ago, a "great gathering" of 2,200 guests reflecting the highest echelons of government and academia filled the Assembly Hall of Hunter College. The momentous occasion marked two milestones: the granting two weeks earlier of university status to New York City's 114-year-old municipal college system, and the inauguration of The City University of New York's first Chancellor.

The senators and congressmen, college presidents and political leaders heard keynote speaker U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Abraham Ribicoff challenge the new City University to "help young people to achieve" and "imbue them with the desire for excellence." The new Chancellor, Dr. John Rutherford Everett, a former philosophy professor, quoted Pericles as he likened New York City to ancient Athens and defined a university's mission as the nurturing of great citizens.

"The names of the great centers of learning echo down the ages from the past: Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Bologna," declared

Mayor Robert F. Wagner Jr. that April 24. "Our own American heritage contributes Harvard, Yale, Princeton ... Now the four senior colleges Queens, Brooklyn, Hunter and City, and the three community colleges will be coordinated by the Chancellor to make them all part of one great university..."

Lawyer Gustave Rosenberg, chairman of the Board of Higher Education, which had coordinated the system since the 1920s, invoked its historic mission: "that in a democratic society, the higher reaches of education are not the exclusive privilege of an elite, but an opportunity and a necessity for all qualified citizens who desire it, regardless of race, creed, or color."

Academic excellence. Public service. A centralized system. Opportunity for all. These ideas had propelled public higher education in New York City almost since the founding of the Free Academy in 1847, through more than a century of expansion to meet a rising demand for seats. Now, buffeted by political, social, financial and institutional forces, the system needed to expand again. A tsunami of students, born in the post-World War II years, was expected to flood the city's colleges in the early '60s. With only four, selective four-year public colleges and three community colleges, and graduate offerings capped at the master's degree level, the system was unprepared for the coming influx.

Just two weeks earlier, the Board had announced, "Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller's pen signed into history today, April 11, 1961, at 4:30 p.m., The City University of New York." The signed legislation codified university status for the system composed of City, Hunter, Brooklyn and Queens colleges, and Staten Island, Bronx and Queensborough community colleges, and envisioned a centralized institution empowered to develop Ph.D. programs.

At the time, the system had 91,000 students, employed some 2,200 full-time teachers, and offered baccalaureate, associate and master's degrees. It was overseen by the Board of Higher Education, forerunner of CUNY's Board of Trustees, which had just recently appointed its first Chancellor — Everett — to manage the pre-University system and coordinate its widening constellation of schools as an integrated institution. In 1961, the system was still largely funded by the city and partially by student fees — tuition — for courses taken by part-time and nonmatriculated students, as well as those enrolled in community colleges or graduate programs.

CUNY was born as the Free Academy in 1847, but its establishment as a Ph.D.-granting institution in 1961 provided the foundation for CUNY the modern public university. Its evolution would proceed slowly, involving power, funding and political battles revolving around city-state relations, local politics, and at times controversial approaches to fulfilling CUNY's historic mission of providing New Yorkers both access and excellence in higher education.

It would now be possible, Mayor Wagner told the inaugural audience of dignitaries that day in 1961, "for a New York boy or girl to progress from Kindergarten to the Doctor of Philosophy degree within the schools and colleges comprised within the City of New York."

STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

The soaring speeches celebrating the City University's promise, must have seemed an ironic memory four and a half years later on Saturday, Nov. 20, 1965, when another milestone was about to take place. It was already a changed institution, but not necessarily as expected. Everett was no longer Chancellor, having resigned two years into the job after what one newspaper called "a behind the scenes struggle for control" of the University. New York Herald Tribune education reporter Terry Ferrer reported "smoldering arguments They involved everything from the future of university graduate programs, to interference by Mayor Wagner, futile attempts to obtain city funding for the proposed doctoral programs, and slights such as the Board's rehiring of Dr. Buell Gallagher as president of City College, without consulting with Everett.

And now, five days before Thanksgiving of 1965, Everett's successor, Dr. Albert Hosmer Bowker, was resigning too, along with Dean of Students Harry Levy, Brooklyn College President Harry Gideonse, and Hunter College President John Meng — a group of educators representing most of the top officials of the City University system.

It was a bare-knuckles show-down in what had been a two-year power struggle between Bowker and the Board — and, another turning point in the development of CUNY.

A World War II statistician and former dean of graduate studies at Stanford University, Albert Bowker had, like Everett, been stymied in launching the University's Ph.D. programs and in obtaining adequate funding to cope with rising enrollments and inadequate campuses he would later recall as "slums." Bowker, whose mumbling, ruffled demeanor masked a shrewdly strategic mind, had repeatedly butted heads with Board of Higher Education Chairman Gustave Rosenberg.

Bowker "found essentially the same problems which had beleaguered his predecessor: too little authority, too much interference by the Board, and an underlying resistance to change. He found that these problems seriously inhibited his capacity to build a doctoral program — the job he was recruited to perform," wrote Sheila C. Gordon in her well-received 1975 Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation, "The Transformation of the City University of New York, 1945- 1970."

State officials' actions added to the pressure. "Shortly after authorizing the new University, the State conveyed to the City its intention to provide no financial support, to the dismay of those who were planning the doctoral program," Gordon wrote. "It was generally believed that the State was withholding funds in order to extract certain commitments — specifically the intention to charge tuition — from the City as a condition of future aid."

There were precedents for charging tuition. Dating to the founding of the Free Academy in 1847, free tuition had been held as a sacrosanct tradition that had permitted high-achieving students to earn diplomas free of charge from the legendary "Harvard of the Proletariat — City College — and the other public colleges founded during the early 20th century to serve a surging population fueled by immigration. But only students who met selective requirements were eligible to matriculate tuition-free in the four-year colleges. Many "non-matriculating" students whose high school averages fell short, paid to attend the public colleges.

In fall 1909, under the presidency of John Houston Finley, City College launched an evening baccalaureate program serving

CUNY Then and Now	
1961	2011
Enrollment	
91,450 (fall 1960)	480,000
Includes senior college day session undergraduates, School of General Studies, division of Graduate Studies and Adult Education	All institutions (compared with all institutions in 1961)
Campuses	
7	23
City College, Hunter College, Brooklyn College, Queens College, Staten Island Community College, Bronx Community College, Queensborough Community College	11 Senior Colleges, 6 community colleges, William E. Macaulay Honors College, Graduate School and University Center, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, CUNY School of Law, CUNY School of Professional Studies, CUNY School of Public Health
Degrees Offered	
Baccalaureate AA AAS Master's	Baccalaureate Associate Master's Ph.D.
Faculty Members	
(day session) 2,158 (1959-60)	(full-time instructional teachers) 7,084 (March 2011)

200 students. Over time, in the decades that followed, the system's night Schools of General Studies served tens of thousands of "non-matriculating" students who paid tuition for their courses. In fall of 1957, while nearly 36,000 attended the city colleges for free, some 24,000 paid as much as \$10 a credit or \$300 a year, based on a 15-credit semester — still a value compared with the \$900 per year charged that year by private New York University.

Also paying tuition in 1957 were 546 community college students, 8,737 graduate students and 12,371 in adult-education courses. An early-1960s newspaper ad touted "Evening Courses for Men & Women" at Hunter, offering a smorgasbord of classes including accounting, "cooking" and TV writing, for "\$20 per course and up."

Tuition and other student fees comprised 19 percent of the system's \$46.8 million in total receipts for the 1956-57 fiscal year, according to Board of Higher Education reports.

In the early 1960s, the state Legislature removed the mandate for free tuition in the city, but the tradition of providing it to the top students continued. However, the "abandonment of the free tuition requirement was to launch a City-State struggle in which the doctoral program (at the City University) was often a pawn," wrote Gordon.

TUITION PLAN

It was in this atmosphere that Chancellor Bowker, frustrated by his inability to get the doctoral program off the ground, and by his dealings with Rosenberg, went public in 1965 with a proposal for a funding mechanism to pay for his desperately needed capital projects. His plan called for charging students \$400 tuition, which would be fully offset by federal, state and city student scholarships and in the end cost students nothing.

Night students, graduate students, community college students and adult education students had for years been paying fees that had come to comprise a significant portion of the system's revenues.

Yet Bowker's proposal was explosive enough to draw a rebuke from the Board of Higher Education, which along with alumni associations of the older four-year colleges, passionately guarded the free tuition policy and were wary of state attempts to bring the tuition model in place at the State University, to the city. "So then the Board met," Bowker recalled in a 1993 interview, and declared that the college presidents "had not shown proper fealty to the Board, and [Brooklyn College President] Harry Gideonse [made] the wonderful statement, 'Fealty is for medieval serfs. I am not a slave.'"

The four University administrators resigned. The battle was on for control of the City University.

"Bowker had persisted through two frustrating years of attempting to change minds and programs," Gordon wrote of this turning point in CUNY's history. "In the brinkmanship style which was characteristic of him, he publicly confronted the Board over the issue of the professional autonomy of the Chancellor."

After several months of maneuvering and back-channel talks with City Hall, of "dramatic public hearings, daily front-page news coverage, student demonstrations, and attacks on all fronts," Bowker "emerged victorious." Rosenberg eventually was eased out as Board chairman; his departure had been one of Bowker's conditions for his own return. Rosenberg served for several months as the first chairman of the City University Construction Fund and resigned to take an appointment as a city judge.

Free tuition — already a battlefield between city and state — survived another decade, until the fiscal crisis of the '70s. But Bowker was now poised to build upon the foundation of the modern-day City University of New York.

The challenges then, as now, were great. The system had always been under pressure. Its budgets — first funded by the city, with increasing state allocations for teacher training by the 1960s — remained tight even as enrollments grew, particularly with so many students paying no tuition.

The Free Academy recorded 202 students in its entering class of 1849. By 1890, the successful, growing school had been renamed The College of the City of New York (1866), and the all-female, free Normal College of the City of New York — later Hunter College — had opened (1870); their combined enrollment was 3,112. Enrollment hit 4,454 15 years later, in 1905, two years before City College's breathtaking neo-Gothic campus opened in 1907.

As the city's population, fueled by immigration, exploded during the early 20th century, more public colleges were founded to meet the demand for affordable higher education. City and Hunter set up branches in Brooklyn and later in Queens, to keep pace with the boroughs' growth, as train lines were laid out and farmland gave way to neighborhoods.

City College's School of Business and Civic Administration opened in 1919 on the site of the original Free Academy building on Lexington Avenue. It would be renamed later for financier and CCNY alumnus Bernard Baruch. By 1920 Hunter's enrollment was the highest of any municipally funded U.S. women's college. By 1930, 36,249 students were in the city's public-college system. That year, the Brooklyn extensions of City and Hunter merged to form Brooklyn College, the third college to branch from the Free Academy; in 1936 classes began at Brooklyn's neo-Georgian-style campus.

That same year, the Board of Higher Education and Hunter College proposed a city university to coordinate the municipal colleges, offer graduate and professional training and meet the vast growth in the city's population, but no action was taken by the city. Expansion continued; The Queens' branches of City and Hunter merged in 1937 to found Queens College in Flushing. Hunter-in-the-Bronx opened during the 1930s, to serve women in their first two years of Hunter studies. During World War II, in one of many wartime uses of the public colleges, the Navy used the campus to train the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service); postwar, the campus temporarily housed the United Nations.

In the post-World War I era when discrimination against Jews was common at Ivy League universities and other private educational institutions, many Jewish students and academics found their intellectual home at New York's public colleges, where ethnicity, religion and national background barred no one. At City College, the "Harvard of the Proletariat," political movements were hotly debated in its hall during the 1930s. Student activism also surfaced during the Depression era; antiwar groups formed and rallies drew isolationists and idealists. But as European fascism emerged, antiwar sentiment ebbed.

CUNY GOES TO WAR

With Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the city's campuses mobilized. The war effort demanded trained personnel, and the municipal colleges responded again to public needs, expanding programs in the sciences, mathematics, economics and foreign languages, and creating new ones to meet military and administrative requirements. A Department of Military Science was set up at City College School of Business. Hunter offered a "war" class and nursing; Brooklyn had courses such as ballistics and cryptography.

Just as the Free Academy men had fought for the Union in the Civil War, even forming their own unofficial training unit to defend New York City against a Confederate invasion; just as City and Hunter men and women had served the cause of World War I, including developing the standard-issue gas mask, New York's municipal colleges participated fully in World War II.

"Only a talking film ... could begin to dramatize the extraordinary variety of our educational pursuits in this emergency year," wrote then-Board of Higher Education Chairman Ordway Tead, an editor and vice president of Harper's who had been appointed to the Board by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, in his June 1944 annual report.

In the midst of the war, the state Legislature appointed a subcommittee headed by George D. Strayer, professor emeritus at Columbia University Teachers College, to study the administration and financing of the city's financially strapped municipal

colleges. The 1944 Strayer Report gave early recognition of the colleges as a "system," and recommended further study of ways to finance expansion. "The Board of Higher Education is clearly charged with the development of a system of higher education for the City of New York," the report said, proposing the college presidents and Board "establish the broad purposes and the general characteristics of an integrated system of higher education for the City of New York."

The public colleges' purpose — to serve the city by providing it with an educated, well-trained citizenry — was noted by the Strayer report. "Here are a group of intellectually elite, physically strong, and morally determined young persons on the threshold of everything fine that America has to offer," the report said. "They are going to do much of the technical and professional work of the City of New York, and from their number will be recruited many of the political and social leaders of the City and the nation."

In 1926, the Board of Higher Education had been formed from a merger of the City and Hunter boards of trustees, and given jurisdiction over the municipal colleges — an early centralizing development. During the 1930s and 1940s, Mayor LaGuardia filled the Board with like-minded reformers who viewed themselves as trustees of the system, charged with efficient administration and with planning for the future. Pearl Bernstein (later Pearl Bernstein Max) was named Board administrator in 1938 to coordinate the colleges' programs, budgets and procedures. No Chancellor would be appointed until Everett, who was initially named as Chancellor of the municipal college system, only to be appointed as University Chancellor months later.

POSTWAR NEEDS

Enrollment at the colleges dipped during the war, but the Board was looking ahead to postwar needs, which were expected to be great. The question of access to the free public colleges was raised in Ordway Tead's 1944 report, foreshadowing things to come. Tead noted that only students from the top 25 percent of New York City high school graduates were admitted to City, Hunter, Brooklyn and Queens.

"As has been repeatedly pointed out, such an enforced policy of rigid selectivity ... means that approximately 75 percent of the graduates of our city high schools have no present prospect of a free college education," he wrote. "The citizens of our city can no longer remain complacent about so restrictive a policy which ignores the advanced educational needs of some 25,000 to 30,000 young people coming out of our high schools every year who cannot afford other college opportunities."

The theme — how to provide a college education to expanding numbers of students of all ability levels — not only the high achievers who had traditionally benefited from selective admission and therefore free tuition — would return again.

The end of World War II, with the flooding back of young men and women hungry to resume their educations and their lives, set the municipal college system on a new path. The GI Bill fueled an enrollment boom at the public colleges; a deluge of students was predicted by 1960.

In Albany, meanwhile, the 1946-48 Temporary Commission on the Need for a State University proposed a state university system, citing "the present large college population and the still larger enrollments anticipated by 1960" and noting that "facilities for research and education of research personnel are among the great needs of the country." It held back, however, on state-funded graduate programs.

The State University of New York (SUNY), initially composed of the state schools for teacher education, was established in 1948. The legislation creating it included state funding for the New York City colleges' teacher education programs, including the fifth, or master's level, year. The influx of state funds sparked the growth of intercollegiate master's programs at the municipal colleges, in teaching as well as in subjects — such as government and chemistry — deemed pertinent to teaching.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

SUNY was authorized to develop two-year, state funded community colleges, then called Institutes of Applied Arts and Sciences. There was only one such institute in New York City, in Brooklyn, but the development was significant to the city's college system. "These Institutes as a beginning of a state supported higher educational program, are significant for New York City," wrote Board of Higher Education Chairman Ordway Tead, "for they embody a recognition of a financial responsibility on the part of the State for some support to education in our City beyond the high school level."

The principle was "especially important" said Tead, "when the problem of substantial and greatly needed additional resources for the colleges from the municipal treasury is each year more difficult."

Postwar expansion of the municipal college system was slow at first, even though during the 1940s and 1950s the community college movement, begun in the 1940s, was in full swing across the nation. Presidential panels called for more community colleges, and educators saw the two-year institutions as critical to preparing for the expected 1960s enrollment onslaught. The two-year schools were transforming the higher education landscape, helping states to meet the growing demand for academic study and technical training, with many students transferring to four-year colleges after obtaining their associate degrees.

In New York, the Board of Higher Education commissioned Dr. Donald P. Cottrell, dean of Ohio State University's College of Education, to study expansion of the municipal college system. The Cottrell Report, released in 1950, recommended the Board develop community colleges that would be separate from the four-year city colleges. It cited "a vast unmet need at the two-year level in New York City."

But compared with the rest of the nation, New York's public college system was slow to embrace community colleges. Overall, the early to mid-1950s, roiled by the Cold War and Sen. Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist crusade, were a time of relative inaction when it came to preparing for the expected influx of students. At CUNY, left-wing professors were being scrutinized and in some cases dismissed from their jobs. At the same time, the municipal system's leaders — the college presidents — embraced the status quo, loath to compete for city funds with new, two-year schools.

The tone of the Board of Higher Education had also changed since the reformist LaGuardia years. The subsequent Mayors William O'Dwyer, Vincent Impellitteri, and Robert F. Wagner Jr. to some extent, were organization Democrats unlike the "fusion" reformer LaGuardia. O'Dwyer's and Impellitteri's appointments to the 21-member Board were more political in nature. By 1953, only six LaGuardia appointees were left.

During the '50s, state law was changed to allow the Board of Higher Education to sponsor community colleges. But it wasn't until 1955 that it established the city's first, in Staten Island, which in those pre-Verrazano Bridge days was reachable only by ferry. Bronx Community College opened in 1957; Queensborough in 1958. The three community colleges were hardly adequate to handle the enrollment pressures coming to bear.

But the complacency regarding significant expansion of the system was about to end, with an international event few could have predicted. The Soviet Union's launch, on Oct. 4, 1957, of the first human-made satellite, Sputnik, just 22 inches in diameter, was a startling event that triggered U.S. fears that its education system was lagging. Across the nation, the Sputnik phenomenon fueled increased education spending and a focus on higher education, as the U.S.-Soviet space race took off.

ROCKEFELLER IMPACT

In New York, there was another critical development that would shake the higher education firmament: the 1958 election, by a 600,000-vote margin, of the liberal-moderate Republican Gov. Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller. For Rockefeller, education was democracy's "lifeline" and he quickly embarked on plans to expand and strengthen the then decade-old State University system, which would grow from 29 to 72 campuses and from 38,000 to 232,000 full-time students on his watch.

Moving quickly to put his stamp on state education, Gov. Rockefeller named Ford Foundation President Henry Heald to review higher education needs and facilities in the state and propose ways to bolster the state economically, scientifically and culturally. The November 1960 Heald report made firm recommendations to address the state's growing higher education needs. It also aggravated sensitivities among New York City's public higher education establishment.

The report recommended that the state — facing anticipated and pressing student enrollment increases — expand the State University, including transforming the state teachers' colleges into liberal arts colleges, expand the community college system and increase its overall expenditures for public higher education.

Among the proposals that most rankled the New York City educators, the Heald report urged creation of two separate, prestigious, Ph.D.-granting university systems under state auspices — without mentioning a role for the long-established, high-quality public city colleges that were already granting master's degrees. The report also proposed that state education officials sit on the city's Board of Higher Education and that uniform tuition be established at all public colleges, including the city colleges. Private colleges would also receive public funds for construction and student aid.

At the time, New York City's public colleges, then funded largely by city coffers, were considered academically superior to the state institutions, which were largely teacher-training colleges. City, Hunter, Brooklyn and Queens Colleges were legendary, sought-after educational institutions that for many years had attracted the city's most ambitious students. By 1960, the city colleges had also become important as master's degree-granting institutions, responsible for 10 percent of all master's degrees granted in New York State. Momentum had been building for doctoral programs to be offered in the city colleges as well.

The Heald report and a subsequent master plan by SUNY trustees were criticized in the city as a state power grab. City College President Dr. Buell Gallagher, who had been advocating development of doctoral studies at CCNY, declared that some of the Heald recommendations would "strike a mortal blow" at the municipal college system, which held free tuition as one of its most venerated values. CCNY's influential Alumni Association issued a statement that denounced the report for ignoring the municipal colleges' "already-established master's program which serves more than 10,000 students" and "the fact that a graduate program leading to the Ph.D. degree could be organized and functioning at the city colleges in three years or sooner with the help of immediate state aid."

FAST FACTS

• For Rockefeller, education was democracy's 'lifeblood' and he quickly embarked on plans to expand and strengthen the then decade-old State University system, which would grow from 29 to 72 campuses and from 38,000 to 232,000 full-time students on his watch.

• This aggravated sensitivities among New York City's public higher education establishment.

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS RECOMMENDED

Within a few months the state began acting on the Heald proposals. The city's higher education establishment also made a move. For more than a year, the Board's "Committee to Look to the Future," headed by Mary S. Ingraham of Brooklyn, had been studying the municipal system. After the Heald report's release, Board President Rosenberg asked his committee for its report. A month after the Heald report, in December 1960, the committee's report was out.

The Committee to Look to the Future urged that the seven municipal colleges be reorganized into a city university empowered to grant Ph.D.s, expand undergraduate programs and retain free tuition in the four-year baccalaureate colleges. Immediate support for the university proposal came from soon-to-be three-term Democratic Mayor Wagner. Wagner was a strong friend of the public colleges, a sentiment imbued by his affection for his father, a German immigrant who had graduated from City College in 1898, later rising to the U.S. Senate. The committee's recommendation also was supported by the state Board of Regents.

State legislation creating The City University of New York as an integrated system empowered to develop doctoral programs and grant Ph.D.s, was drafted in February and March of 1961; state legislators passed bills giving university status to the system, and placing the new University under Regents supervision rather than under the State University.

John Everett, who was already in place as the newly appointed first Chancellor of the municipal college system, was tapped as the City University's new Chancellor, with great fanfare. Everett brought in Dr. Mina Rees, Hunter's Dean of Faculty, to develop the graduate programs. Rees had been honored by the United States and Britain for her service as a mathematician during World War II. After the war, she had headed the mathematics branch of the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research and directed its Mathematical Sciences Division.

New York State had long provided funds for teacher training in the city's public colleges. Dr. Rees cited a looming shortage of teachers when she asked the state for \$6.3 million to begin CUNY's doctoral offerings in nine disciplines. The state provided \$1 million, which allowed the program to begin. It would be several years before the first CUNY doctorates were granted.

Rees, and Everett, faced a challenging puzzle. Within the new City University, there had emerged political splits over the importance of the now-linked doctoral program and free tuition. Chancellor Everett, needing support from the Board of Higher Education and the colleges to restore the free tuition mandate and obtain state funding for the Ph.D. program, found there was more passion and interest among the college's politically powerful alumni groups — particularly those at City and Hunter — for the free tuition cause. Board Chairman Rosenberg had also embraced the free tuition fight as his signature public issue.

In 1962, after two years as Chancellor, Everett resigned. He cited "overwhelming personal and financial reasons," although news accounts described his nearly two-year tenure as having been fraught with arguments and behind-the-scenes maneuvers. Everett took a position with Encyclopedia Britannica, but by 1964 had returned to academia in Greenwich Village, as president of The New School for Social Research.

A national search was launched for a new Chancellor, and Bowker, who knew Mina Rees from his World War II service as a statistician, accepted the appointment. Bowker served as Chancellor from October 1963 to September 1971, pushing for development of an increasingly more centralized CUNY as the institution became engulfed in — and responded to — the turbulent '60s, a time of student unrest, advocacy for wider access to the University, and further expansion. He also grappled with, and instituted, a variety of admissions policies and programs that opened more CUNY opportunities to New York City's then burgeoning black and Latino population.

STUDENT EXPLOSION

But the system was straining. "The largest high school class in history, products of the first wave of the postwar 'baby boom,' was graduating in June of 1964 and expecting to enter college in the fall. CUNY was not ready," wrote Gordon. "The inertia of the 1950s and early 1960s had left the institution unprepared for the influx."

Earlier in 1964, the Herald Tribune's Terry Ferrer wrote: "This is the year. It's the year we've talked about and dreaded for almost ten years — the real start of the college boom. The war babies are here" The title of Ferrer's newspaper series was "The College Panic."

The Board of Higher Education responded with "Operation Shoehorn," emergency measures implemented for the 1964-65 school year to squeeze more students into the municipal college system's already overcrowded spaces. The measures included an earlier start to the school day, addition of Friday afternoon, evening and Saturday classes, and using closed-

circuit TV and other methods to teach more students at once. But it was clear these measures would be no match for the even more serious enrollment crunch projected for the late 1960s. Something had to be done.

By 1965, a 50/50 city-state financing arrangement was in place for CUNY, but city fiscal strains placed added pressure on the University's budget. A staff paper released by Bowker in September 1965 outlined two funding strategies that in some ways foreshadowed the CUNY Compact funding model pioneered by Chancellor Matthew Goldstein decades later and relied upon by the University today.

One strategy, entitled "A Modest Proposal," called for the state to underwrite the cost of the doctoral program and share equally with the City the costs of the senior colleges and central services. The second, "A Somewhat Bolder Proposal," focused on capital and operating construction costs, urging full state funding of CUNY's operating budget (except for community colleges) and introduction of the controversial "paper" tuition charges to capital construction. Bowker's decision to go public with the later "tuition" proposal sparked the crisis with the Board and the temporary resignations of Bowker and the three other CUNY officials on Nov. 20, 1965.

When Bowker returned to his post a few months later, the chancellorship had been revised and strengthened. Bowker had demanded, and received, access to government officials, control of CUNY's public relations, and bylaw revisions to confirm him as the University's and the Board of Higher Education's chief administrative officer. For the City University of New York it was an opportunity to begin to centralize University operations and strengthen the structure of the university, for the future.

One of Bowker's top priorities was centralizing the doctoral programs. Bowker and Mina Rees, who was in charge of developing the Ph.D. programs, had seen "the presidents and deans playing a political role, primarily protecting their own colleges, with only secondary regard to the quality of the University's Ph.D. degree," wrote Gordon in her doctoral dissertation. City College President Buell Gallagher "especially resisted any blurring of his institution's distinctiveness...."

GRADUATE CENTER HOME

But over time, Bowker and Rees circumvented the turf-protecting college administrations by developing subject-based University committees composed of faculty members who came to be persuaded of the advantages of centrally located Ph.D. programs, according to Gordon. In 1966, Bowker engineered a spectacular real estate deal and bought a building on 42nd Street, across from the New York Public Library, to house the new graduate school. During his years as Chancellor, he created the Graduate Center — the Graduate School and University Center — providing an institutional structure and home for the development of graduate education at the University.

The day Rockefeller signed the legislation transforming the College of the City of New York, as it was known, into The City University of New York, the system had 91,000 students and a budget of more than \$60 million, with 54 percent funded by the city, 27 percent funded by the state and 17 percent funded by student fees, according to the Board of Higher Education's annual report for the 1959-60 fiscal year. Today, the largely state-funded CUNY is a magnet for record numbers of students — 480,000 today at its 23 institutions — and boasts one of the most racially and ethnically diverse student bodies in the world. Federal and state aid — Pell grants and state TAP awards — cover education costs, in many cases 100 percent, for the neediest students. Despite the fiscal challenges, the University in 2011 remains committed to providing affordable academic quality.

The reconstitution of the city's municipal college system and the creation of New York's public graduate school 50 years ago led to a period of great expansion of the University. Today, CUNY is organized in accordance with The City University of New York Financing and Governance Act, enacted in 1979 by the State of New York.

NEW TRANSFER POLICY

Its evolution as the integrated university, envisioned 50 years ago, continues today with yet another reinvention. As summer 2011 began, the University announced and approved sweeping new transfer policies, including a new "common core" general education framework, to make it easier for students to get credit for their CUNY community college courses when they transfer within the University and honor the ideals of the integrated University. Reforming CUNY's general education framework, Chancellor Matthew Goldstein said, would enable CUNY to "take the next step in advancing the University's academic transformation."

Fifty years on, focused on academic excellence, public service and access for who all seek a higher education, the modern, integrated University continues to seek innovation in the pursuit of knowledge, to search for new meaning and to reinvent itself to further meet the educational needs of New Yorkers and beyond. The great ideas, ambitions and challenges that sparked a flame for public higher education 164 years ago continue to burn brightly to shape the nation's largest public urban university in the 21st century.

Visionary Graduate Center Also Starts a New Chapter

How the CUNY Graduate Center grew from a maverick endeavor to a paragon of doctoral-level public higher education is the subject of a book to be published this fall.

Fifty Years at the Center: A History of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York from 1961-2011, is by visiting lecturer Michael Anderson, a retired New York Times Book Review editor. The center commissioned the book — including vintage photographs — for its anniversary celebration.

"To have become an internationally renowned institution in so brief a period is virtually unprecedented," said President William P. Kelly, lauding his faculty and alumni. He added that the center is also a "tribute to the strength and resilience" of CUNY.

Anderson's historic tale begins with Mina Rees, the first of the center's four presidents.

Rees, a mathematician and Hunter College alumna and administrator, also served as a World War II strategist. In a small office without students, courses or even a secretary, Rees began the Graduate Center on Sept. 1, 1961. Outside the University, many believed that advanced graduate studies should not be part of public education. Nevertheless, Rees assembled what Anderson calls "the best component parts" of CUNY and made a graduate school. She identified Oxford University, with its many colleges, as a model, and visited to see how it could inspire her own plans in New York.

Today Rees's vision is still in place. The center has 150 of its own faculty and draws on the expertise of more than 1,800 scholars, from throughout the University and the city. They teach and advise about 4,300 doctoral students in more than 30 doctoral programs and seven master's degree and other programs. The center's umbrella also includes institutes.

Anderson's book pays tribute to the center's notable intellectuals — past and present — and takes readers on a tour of the two legendary buildings where the center had its home bases.

Research for the book was conducted in a modest basement at the center's current home, the glorious Fifth Avenue building, formerly B. Altman & Co. department store.

There, Anderson worked with John Rothman, a volunteer archivist and retired New York Times director of information services, who organized five decades of documents and memorandums that now fill six bookcases.

— Barbara Fischkin

FAST FACTS

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