FIRST SEMESTER NEEDS OF REENTRY FEMALE

STUDENTS AT TULSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

By

BARBARA CLAIRE SLAGLE

Bachelor of Science

University of Tulsa

Tulsa, Oklahoma

1970

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
July, 1985

FIRST SEMESTER NEEDS OF REENTRY FEMALE

STUDENTS AT TULSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

Thesis Approved:

John L. Baird
Thesis Adviser

Linda M. Vincent

Sharon Y. Nickols

Norman N. Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The colleges and universities today are experienc-
ing an influx of older women students which is
unique in its scope and in its impact. The last
comparable episode occurred following World War II
when a surge of older students appeared on campuses.
The difference is that the older students in those
days were predominately men and the overall context
in which they returned to school was radically dif-
ferent. The older female college student presents a
set of challenges, problems, and opportunities
that have not occurred before in our educational
institutions (Suchinsky, 1982, p. 29).

Colleges and universities, and especially community/

junior colleges, are feeling the impact of a new and growing

student group on campus--returning women students. Their

impact on these institutions is even more acute because of

its timing. The number of adult women (and men) going back

to school is increasing dramatically at the very time the

number of traditional young students enrolling in college is

declining (Weinstein, 1980).

A review of enrollment statistics used by researchers

in this area will help make the point regarding the

enrollment trends of the adult woman.

From 1960 into the 1970's:

1.   The number of women students aged 25-34 doubled

(Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977).

1

2. The number of women students 3Ø and over doubled (Dwinell, 198Ø; Smallman, 1980).

In the 197Ø's and 8Ø's:

1. The number of women students on campus surpassed that of men by 1972 (Suchinsky, 1982), and by 198Ø women composed two thirds of the older student body (Dwinell, 198Ø).

2. The number of women over 25 enrolled in higher education increased one and one half times from 1972 to 1975 (Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977) and had doubled by 1977 (Dwinell, 198Ø).

3. The number of older women students tripled from 1974 to 1979 (Dwinell, 198Ø).

The enrollment trend of traditionally aged students increased as predicted until the early 198Ø's when the last of the "Baby Boom" generation graduated from college. As Tittle and Denker (198Ø) noted,

> The college age population (18-24) is expected
> to decline after 1981 . . . and even though the
> percentage of the group attending college [will]
> not decline, the impact on college populations
> will be telling (p. 5).

Recruitment and retention of adult students is a new issue--if not a new necessity--for most institutions of higher education. Attracting the majority of the adult population--the returning women students--is of special significance (Weinstein, 198Ø).

There are three reasons why it is important to learn more about the nature and needs of this student group:

1.   To better serve and assist the returning woman student in obtaining the kind and quality of education she desires.

Rice (1982) said:

> If professionals in education are interested in keeping continuing education significant and relevant to the people they are trying to serve-- and recruit--they must recognize that these are men and women in transition who are trying to cope with changing roles and demands for diversity unanticipated by their parents or grandparents (p. 4).

Suchinsky (1982) put it succinctly:

> I suggest that for many of the women being discussed, we are dealing with a kind of hatch- ing process, albeit one occurring later in life, with all the complexities of a developmental process that occurs later rather than earlier (p. 30).

Smallman's study (1980) showed the need for more research. She pointed out that

> . . . while some research has been done on the personalities and motivations of the returning woman student, little has been done on the specific concerns and problems once she becomes a student (p. 66).

2.   To learn more about a student group that will become increasingly important to the institution as the average age of college students continues to rise, funding decreases, and competition for students intensifies between enrollment driven institutions.

Research by Tittle and Denker (1980) pointed out that "In recent years, the increased attendance of older women students . . . and part-time students has played a major role in the growth of college enrollment" (p. 5). Speaking

of the declining numbers of traditional-aged students, they
said that,

> Given these statistics, it will be all the more
> important for institutions of higher education to
> focus on maintaining the initial high enrollment
> of women and encouraging and supporting returning
> women students (p. 21).

3. To better serve today's traditional female student
by alerting her to the importance of establishing vocational
and educational goals because the life patterns of women
indicate that she may be the returning woman student of the
future (Weinstein, 1980).

Today an increasing number of young women are going to
college, entering the work force and delaying marriage and
motherhood (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1984b). Nevertheless,
today's traditional young female student is likely to
follow the high attrition patterns of the young female
college students before her--the same patterns once followed
by today's returning woman student (Tittle and Denker, 1980;
Eakins, 1983). McCanne, McCanne, and Keating (1980) found
that this continuing attrition rate was due to a difference
in life patterns, not in intellectual or academic ability.
Eakins (1983) explained that many young college women have
ambiguous vocational and educational goals. They do not
"view education as a vehicle to a career in the sense that
men do" (p. 24). Those seeking a career do not intend to
give less energy to future roles of wife and mother.
Instead they hope for a "double track pattern" (Eakins,
1983, p. 15) that will allow them to combine marriage,

motherhood, and career in equal portions but have no formal plan to use to achieve that goal.

It is important that community/junior colleges like Tulsa Junior College (TJC) address the needs of the returning woman student because they are most likely to be the institutions serving her. Aanstand's research (1972) showed that by 1968 authorities were predicting that more and more adults would be enrolling in junior colleges and that junior colleges would have to develop programs to meet their needs. A study in 1970 of a group of community colleges showed that over 13 percent of all full-time students were 23 or older (Aanstand, 1972). Aanstand's research attributed the attraction of the mature woman to the community/junior college to three factors:

1. Easy accessibility to mothers and housewives so that they could go to class during the time children were in school.

2. Low tuition rates and open-door policies make it easy for women to begin classes.

3. Emphasis placed on part-time education and flexible class schedules fit their life patterns.

Tittle and Denker (1980) reported that by 1977 more women than men were enrolled in community colleges.

> What remains is for the junior college to continue to make itself available to the mature woman in the community. In order to do this effectively, junior colleges need to know what mature women want, and what they need from college faculty and staff (Aanstand, 1972, p. 3).

Returning women students continue to comprise an increasing percentage of the student population at Tulsa Junior College. Yet, little research was found describing their needs during the reentry period.

Problem

The problem for this study was the need to know the special concerns reentry women students at TJC face during the time of initial enrollment and during their first semester of classes which may impede their chances for a successful academic experience. If TJC is to live up to its mission of serving the citizens of Tulsa in a practical and convenient manner, and if it is to survive economically, it must continue to address the needs of adult learners--in this case returning women students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the needs of the returning woman student at the point of reentry and during the first semester of classes at TJC.

Research Questions

Research questions posed to address this problem were as follows:

1.   What are the characteristics of returning women students?

2.   Why are women returning to school?

3.   What college-related challenges do they perceive or experience:

     a.   During the enrollment process?

     b.   During their first semester of classes?

4.   What noncollege related challenges affecting their academic performance do they perceive or experience:

     a.   During the enrollment process?

     b.   During the first semester of classes?

5.   What types of resources would they like for TJC to offer to help them deal with the challenges they face:

     a.   During the enrollment process?

     b.   During the first semester of classes?

6.   Which TJC resources currently offered are they using to help them deal with these challenges:

     a.   During the enrollment process?

     b.   During the first semester of classes?

Definitions

The following definitions were utilized in this study:

Returning Women Students: Females who return to college after an interruption in schooling of at least two years. This term will be used interchangeably with adult female students, mature female students, older female students, and nontraditional students.

Traditional Students: Those students who have continued their formal education directly from high school with no interruption. This term will be used

interchangeably with younger students and younger female students.

Roles: Positions of responsibility carried out by an individual.

Educational Aspirations: The highest degree or level of coursework the student would like to earn (Prager, 1983).

Self-esteem: Perceiving one's self "as having valuable skills and competencies" (Prager, 1983, p. 147).

Assumptions

Concerning the survey to be conducted, the assumption was made that any woman student who has been out of high school for at least two years and has had an interruption in her formal education of at least one year faces the same basic problems in reentry that an older woman faces. The question of this study was not the age of the student but the anxiety she feels and the difference in life style, priorities, and resources she experiences compared to the traditional college woman.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study included the survey of a strati- fied random sample of returning women students from all three campuses of TJC, addressing the needs they faced during their reentry period. The study was limited to the problems inside and outside the academic realm that the returning woman views as specifically affecting her chances

for successfully completing her initial enrollment and first
semester of classes at TJC.

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters with varying
purposes. Chapter I introduced the topic of the study,
addressed the problem, purpose, limitations, and assumptions
of the study, provided definitions of commonly used terms,
and ennumerated the six research questions the study
attempted to answer. Chapter II reviews literature related
to seven aspects of the topic: past participation in higher
education; demographic information; reasons for returning to
school; preconceived ideas about returning to school;
obstacles faced outside the academic realm; obstacles faced
inside the academic realm; resources and programs of
assistance requested. Chapter III outlines the procedures
used in this study, covering the population and sample, the
instrument, how the instrument was administered, and how the
data gathered were evaluated. The results of the study are
reported in Chapter IV. A summary of the study, along with
conclusions and recommendations for additional research and
practice, are provided in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is divided into seven topic
areas: Past Participation by Women in Higher Education;
Demographic Profile of the Returning Woman Student; Reasons
for Returning to School; Preconceived Ideas About a Return
to School; Obstacles Faced Outside the Academic Realm;
Obstacles Faced Inside the Academic Realm; Resources and
Programs Requested.

Past Participation by Women
in Higher Education

Tittle and Denker (1980) noted that it was not until
the late nineteenth century that women had a chance to
participate equally with men in higher education. The
Greeks and Romans only paid lip service to the need for
educational equality for the sexes (Parks, 1978; Farello,
1970; Tittle and Denker, 1980). In the sixth century
monasteries gave a limited number of women a chance to
extend their education but it was a narrow path to follow
(Parks, 1978; Farello, 1970; Tittle and Denker, 1980). A
few humanists, like More and Erasmus, wrote favorably of

higher education for women, but most felt it would harm women's virtue (Parks, 1978).

American women did not have a chance at higher education until the early 1800's, almost 200 years after the beginning of higher education for American men, and even then educational opportunities were not equal (Goodsell, 1923; Struggs, 1981; Tittle and Denker, 1980). The development of education for American women was largely the result of the law of supply and demand. The demand in the early to mid-1800's was for an educated citizenry, and qualified teachers were in short supply (Farello, 1970; Parks, 1978; Tittle and Denker, 1980). This shortage, matched with a trend toward romanticizing women and the reform movements afoot against slavery and drinking, led to the encouragement of women interested in advancing their education (Farello, 1970; Parks, 1978; Tittle and Denker, 1980). In the last quarter of the nineteenth century women's colleges were formed, offering separate but equal education for women wealthy enough to afford it, starting with the founding of Vassar in 1861 (Goodsell, 1923; Farello, 1970; Tittle and Denker, 1980).

The twentieth century produced two different trends in women's education. The first half of the century was a time of growth (Goodsell, 1923; Horowitz, 1984; Struggs, 1981). The proportion of women undergraduates grew from 36 percent in 1900 to 44 percent in 1930 with corresponding increases in the number of women graduating from college (Tittle and Denker, 1980). In the 1920's a highwater mark was reached

for women in higher education (Parks, 1978; Tittle and Denker, 1980). Greater female enrollments and aspirations to the professions on the part of women were recorded more frequently than at any other time in the century until the mid-1970's. Evidence of this change in goal setting for women was the significant increase in the number of female college professors during that period (Tittle and Denker, 1980; Horowitz, 1984; Struggs, 1981).

In the 1940's the number of female students and graduates decreased slightly to 40 percent from the 44 percent figure in 1930, but basically maintained its strength (Tittle and Denker, 1980). However, the Second World War in the 1940's caused several twists in the development of adult education for both women and men. As male students left for the war, colleges suffered drastic reductions in enrollments. As a result, colleges encouraged women to enroll. This trend continued until the end of the war when there was a decline in female enrollment and graduates (Carnegie Commission for Higher Education, 1973; Farello, 1970).

The end of the war brought about a revolution in adult education and the catalyst for this revolution was the G.I. Bill. The G.I. Bill meant that the large numbers of men returning from the service could afford a college education--perhaps for the first time. Scores of veterans took advantage of it. While the G.I. Bill led to a major increase in the number of males able to attend college, it

meant a corresponding decrease in, even exclusion of, female students (Tittle and Denker, 1980; Farello, 1970; Struggs, 1981).

By the 1950's women had begun to move out of the workplace and the college classroom and back into the home. Society believed that it was important to give available jobs and classroom space to returning veterans (Tittle and Denker, 1980). Many women choose the role of homemaker over that of student or employee to enjoy the fruits of "the highest level of security and luxury any women had ever attained in history" (Parks, 1978, p. 23). In large numbers women choose the role of mother. The resulting dramatic increase in the nation's birthrate interfered with the participation of these women in higher education (Carnegie Commission for Higher Education, 1973). Finally earlier women's movements faded in popularity and were not replaced by new causes (Farello, 1970; Carnegie Commission for Higher Education, 1973). The cumulative result of these factors was that male college graduates outnumbered female college graduates almost two to one (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1984a).

In the 1960's, traditional female students began to increase their numbers but their educational expectations were generally limited to the vocations of teaching, nursing and secretarial science (Struggs, 1981; Lichtenstein and Block, 1963; Tittle and Denker, 1980). As a whole, they viewed college studies as a continuation of their high school education and a stalling pattern until they got

married (Struggs, 1981; Tittle and Denker, 1980). A good description appeared in the New York Times in 1962:

> After four years . . . the average college girl views her future through a wedding band. Despite compelling evidence that she will be working at 35, by choice or necessity, today's twenty-one year old woman has difficulty looking beyond her own marriage and her baby's christening (Bender, 1962, p. 34).

Some of the women who had chosen the roles of homemaker and mother in the 1950's were now beginning to look beyond those roles for fulfillment (Lichtenstein and Block, 1963; Parks, 1978). At the same time the legislation of the 1960's, enforcing equal access to educational and vocational opportunities and equal pay for equal work, began to change expectations as to who would be participating in higher education (Struggs, 1981; Parks, 1978). Slowly, adult women began to appear on college campuses.

The major shift in women's education occurred in the next decade as the nation's birthrate declined and its social consciousness rose (Carnegie Commission for Higher Education, 1973). By 1970 at least 300 special programs for returning women students were in place on college campuses and from 1972 through 1976 there was a dramatic increase in the number of older women students (Aanstand, 1972). The number of female college students age 25-34 alone increased 187 percent from 1970 to 1978 (Copas and Dwinell, 1983). It was also during this decade that a sharp decline in the number of traditional-aged students occurred (Dwinell, 1980).

Demographic Profile of the

Returning Woman Student

Researchers differ in their definitions of returning women students. Definitions range from any woman whose education has been interrupted for at least one year since age 18 (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980) to a woman who is 35-40 years old (Ekstrom, 1972). Most accept age 25 as the cutting off point for traditional students or the beginning point for nontraditional students (Dwinell, 1980; Aanstand, 1972; Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; Prager, 1983; Smallman, 1980; Tittle and Denker, 1980). The minimum length of interruption of education for these students ranges from one year (Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980) to five years (Prager, 1983).

A majority of returning women students are married and have children (Tittle and Denker, 1980). Unmarried women maintaining families, whose numbers have risen radically in the last twenty years (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1980), are also returning to school. Increasingly these married and unmarried mothers are turning to education as a means of achieving economic stability, and women with small children still at home must search for acceptable childcare facilities during the time spent in class (Smallman, 1980). Women who are single or married and childless often return to school to enhance their already existing skills (Wheaton

and Robinson, 1983). Older women students are often
experiencing the "empty-nest syndrome" and are looking for
new ways to fill their lives (Rice, 1982).

Returning women students' goals are clearer than those
of the traditional female student (Lichtenstein and Block,
1963). Markus (1972) maintained that traditional female
students face a role conflict in college--"achievement
orientation versus the prescribed feminine role" (p. 3).
She asserted that "achieving independently and occupa-
tionally only becomes important when affiliative needs are
met and feminine identity is achieved" (Markus, 1972, p. 3).
The returning woman student, on the other hand, presumably
has met these needs and, for her, "returning to school seems
to mark a period of determination and goal setting, a phase
of achievement" (Markus, 1972, p. 3).

McCanne, McCanne, and Keating (1980) compared the
effects of a return to school for both male and female
nontraditional students. They found that more women than
men reported an improved relationship with their families
but found no differences between the two groups in the
following areas:

    a.   Length of time out of school

    b.   Importance to them of their new role as a student

    c.   Attitudes of family and friends toward their new
role

    d.   Impact the new student role had on their
relationship with a significant other.

Smallman (1980) concluded that the returning woman
student is both goal-oriented and self-accepting. In her
study, Smallman found one sixth of the women participants
went out of their way to comment on "their positive feelings
and appreciation for their college experience" (p. 69).
Galliano and Gildea (1982) found the same to be true in
their study.

Returning women students are serious about their
studies and make higher grade points than traditional
students (Prager, 1983; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977;
Galliano and Gildea, 1982). Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek
(1977) pointed out that

> While many returning women students seem to do
> very well academically once they are in school,
> the decision to attend college and the adjustment
> to life as a student may be particularly difficult
> (p. 1).

Reasons for Returning to School

For most returning women students, a number of
interacting factors lead to their return to the classroom.
Few women enroll for only one of these reasons. Chief among
these are desire for self-fulfillment, economic necessity,
desire for a career or completion of a degree, and escape
from problem situations. These reasons can be placed in
two categories for the purpose of review: self-fulfillment
and economic need/career opportunities (Smallman, 1980).

Desire for Increased
Personal Fulfillment

A desire for increased personal fulfillment is the
motivating factor that takes many women back to school.
This is particularly true for those women with older
children, children who have recently left home, or for women
who for other reasons have additional leisure time and fewer
roles to perform. For some returning women students a
return to school "may be an attempt to reclaim the ground
many women lose in personal development and self-esteem
during the middle years of adulthood" (Markus, 1972, p. 2).
Aanstand (1972) characterized a return to school at a
practical level as a positive way to provide relief from
boredom. She saw it as an escape from unpleasant personal
situations and a "means of establishing new patterns of
life" (p. 6).

Markus (1972) felt that this "self-initiated attempt
to actively change and improve her life" (p. 1) is a
significant development for women. The importance of women
acting on decisions based on goal setting and self-induced
change--"a result of one's efforts [rather] than a demand of
others" (p. 1)--should be noted as a recent developmental
attitude for the mature woman.

Economic Necessity and Desire

For Career Opportunities

A more recent motive for women's return to school is
that it is economically necessary or personally desirable
for a woman to gain or upgrade her skills in order to
increase or obtain an income (Tittle and Denker, 1980;
Aanstand, 1972; Markus, 1972; Smallman, 1980; Galliano and
Gildea, 1982). Several factors enter in:

1. From 1960 to 1978 the number of families
financially maintained by women rose dramatically from 4.5
to 8.2 million. These families were "among the most
impoverished" (Tittle and Denker, 1980, p. 17) because
employed women continue to lag behind the employed men in
pay and status. "The latest figures show women earn about
59 percent of men's wages ($12,001 for women versus $20,260
for men)" (Fisher, 1984, p. 72) echoing the ratio recorded
for full-time male and female workers in 1977 (U. S. Bureau
of Census, 1980). (It should be noted that among full-time
workers younger men and women are closer in income levels
than are older men and women [U. S. Bureau of Census,
1980].)

2. The number of families maintained by two
incomes has increased. In 1978, 55.6 percent of all female
workers in America were married women with husbands present
in the home (Tittle and Denker, 1980; U. S. Bureau of Census,
1980). The employed wife and mother may make the difference

financially in saving for retirement or children's college education (Aanstand, 1972), keeping up with the high standard of living (Aanstand, 1972; Markus, 1972), or helping to provide basic financial necessities (Tittle and Denker, 1980).

3. The number of women pursuing careers due to new vocational and educational options has increased. These women, single or married, may stop-out of school briefly or continue to be enrolled in school past the age of a traditional student because they want or need to pursue a career (Markus, 1972; Aanstand, 1972; Smallman, 1980; Tittle and Denker, 1980). "All together many women today feel that a college education is within the realm of possibility for them as equal persons in our society" (Smallman, 1980, p. 65). This recent development harks back to a similar trend in the 1920's.

Tittle and Denker (1980) found in their research a close tie between women's increased involvement in the labor force and the corresponding enrollments of women in higher education. They believed the relationship was cyclical; "The more education, the more likely a woman is to be in the labor force" and therefore back in school (p. 18).

Adjustments to a Rapidly Changing Society

Some of the factors mentioned above existed before the influx of mature women onto college campuses in the 1960's and 70's. The demands of a rapidly changing society

created a variety of situations that made it attractive or necessary for women to take action:

1.   Mature women have more time to attend school. During this century, the life span of the average woman increased from 48 to 74 years. As a result, women now have more productive years that are not centered on the rearing of children (Smallman, 1980; Markus, 1972). Smallman (1980) contended that women are also remaining single longer and having fewer children once married. Markus (1972), on the other hand, suggested that women are having children earlier and can therefore return to the classroom at an earlier age. In addition, technological advances have freed women from the heavy time restrictions household chores used to impose (Smallman, 1980; Aanstand, 1972; Markus, 1972) but, as recent studies point out, it is still the wife who contributes most to household production (Sanik, 1981).

2.   Mature women are trying to meet the new expectations and demands of a rapidly changing society (Aanstand, 1972). Women are exploring the expanding number of lifestyles and roles open to them in today's society and are trying to clarify for themselves how they feel about this new development, as Markus (1972) pointed out. Aanstand (1972) and Markus (1972) noted that women are trying to keep up with the rising standard of living through a variety of avenues. Aanstand (1972) believed that women are following the general population shift toward more education for everyone, and Tittle and Denker (1980) postulated that an increased number of mature women in the

labor force generally leads to an increased number of women enrolled in school.

3.   College and universities are changing in their understanding and appreciation of the adult student. "More liberal institutional policies, easier financial and geographic accessibility" make college a possibility for more adult students than ever before (Smallman, 1980, p. 65).

<div align="center">

Preconceived Ideas About

a Return to School

</div>

Mature women students anticipate that life will be different once they return to the classroom. Their concern is divided between preconceived ideas about how they will perform and be accepted in the academic setting and preconceived ideas about the impact school will have on their lives outside the classroom. The anxiety women experience in conjunction with these preconceived ideas centers on the returning woman student's ability to "juggle" all the roles she would be called upon to perform (i.e., student, wife, mother, employee). Apprehension about this balancing act is a major concern of the returning woman student (Copas and Dwinell, 1983; Markus, 1972; Aanstand, 1972; Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Prager, 1983; Rice, 1982; Smallman, 1980; Suchinsky, 1982; Weinstein, 1980).

Preconceived Ideas About
the Academic Setting

Preconceived ideas about the academic setting center on how the returning woman student feels she will "fit in" socially. Concern over scholastic performance is an issue.

Fitting In

Returning women fear that they will not be accepted by younger students because of their age. They assume that they will be the only students who are not recent high school graduates and that they will therefore stick out like sore thumbs. In Aanstand's study (1972), 45 percent of the returning women students surveyed knew someone on campus (friend or relative) before they enrolled. Returning women students are also concerned that faculty members may not accept them as serious students or may actually disapprove of their return to the classroom (Aanstand, 1972; Suchinsky, 1982; Prager, 1983). Finally, returning women students tend to enter school with lower self-esteem than returning male students or traditional-age students of either sex. Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek (1977) described this as a "lack of confidence, pervasive depression, and difficulties in establishing personal identity" (pp. 1-2). This lack of self-esteem has an impact upon the mature woman's social adjustment to student life and puts her at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to other students.

Scholastic Concerns

Returning women students are uncertain of how they will perform academically.

> Apprehension about skills and abilities, such as taking notes, recalling material, writing papers, taking exams and using the library services may be powerful deterrents to the re-entry process. Fear, usually unrealistic, that she cannot keep up with the academic pace of the younger students in her classes, may result in a general reluctance to enter the academic environment (Weinstein, 1980, p. 4).

Three points should be considered about their outlook on education:

1. Returning women tend to set unrealistic educational goals when they first reenter college. While traditional-age students usually rely on past grade point averages to set goals, mature women students rely on their own personal assessment of their skills (Aanstand, 1972; Prager, 1983).

2. Returning women students tend to put their self-esteem on the line in the classroom. They "expect the skills they have acquired through life experiences to be valued and recognized by their instructors" (Prager, 1983, p. 144). They believe they should be better informed than traditional students (Aanstand, 1972).

3. Returning women students tend to view grades made on tests as an absolute measure of their intelligence or ability to learn (Aanstand, 1972; Prager, 1983). If the test scores confirm or exceed the student's expectations, they may encourage the woman to set higher educational goals or to stick with the goals she previously envisioned. The

negative consequences of a disparity between test scores and
initial expectations can deal serious blows to the student's
self-image and her resolution to continue with school
(Prager, 1983; Copas and Dwinell, 1983).

It is noted in Aanstand's study (1972) that approxi-
mately three-fourths of the mature women students she
surveyed expressed concern about "fitting in" and/or
succeeding academically at the beginning of their reentry.
However, once they had some experience as students, the same
percentage indicated that they felt comfortable in academic
and social acceptance areas.

Preconceived Ideas About
Life Outside the Classroom

Preconceived ideas the returning woman student has
about the impact school will have on her life outside the
classroom center on three areas: her ability to juggle
roles and time schedules, guilt about "putting herself
first", and apprehension about the amount of support she
will receive from family and friends for her new venture.

Juggling

The anticipation of a lack of time to perform the role
of student while continuing in her family and work roles
will become a reality for most returning women students--but
one most can handle (Smallman, 1980; Copas and Dwinell,
1983; Aanstand, 1972; Markus, 1972; McCanne, McCanne, and

Keating, 1980; Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell,
1983; Suchinsky, 1982; Rice, 1982; Weinstein, 1980). Women
who do not manage to juggle these roles are prime candidates
for attrition. This area will be discussed in greater
detail in "Obstacles Outside the Academic Realm."

Guilt

Guilt is a major contributor to the anxiety women feel
about a return to the classroom according to the research
done by Lichtenstein and Block (1963) and Weinstein (1980).

> . . . because women often view themselves primarily in
> nurturing and mother/wife roles, re-entry women may
> feel 'guilty' in pursuing independent activities
> outside of their families. They may feel 'selfish'
> in using the family's financial resources, and
> neglectful of their spouses and/or children (Weinstein,
> 1980, p. 3-4).

The returning woman student "may encounter difficulties in
overcoming the guilt and isolation arising from deviation
from traditional housewife roles" (Johnson, Weiss, and
Sedlacek, 1977, p. 2). Studies by Suchinsky (1982) and
Smallman (1980) concurred with these findings. In fairness,
it should be pointed out that McCanne, McCanne, and Keating
(1980) found mature male students experienced more guilt
about taking time away from their families than mature
female students.

Support

Closely interwoven with her anxiety about juggling
roles and her feelings of guilt is the returning woman's

concern with the reaction of her family and, to a lesser extent, friends to her new role as a student. Having support from these groups is of utmost importance to returning women students as is noted in most studies (Copas and Dwinell, 1983; Markus, 1972; Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; Rice, 1982; Smallman, 1980). Anxiety she feels about the impact support from family and friends could have on her efforts to succeed as a student is well founded. As Markus (1972) pointed out, this support is particularly crucial to the married returning woman student. If this support is missing, especially the support of the husband, she may never enroll at all. The issue of support will be discussed more extensively in "Obstacles Outside the Academic Realm."

Obstacles Faced Outside
the Academic Realm

The largest body of research conducted on the fairly new phenomenon of the returning woman student has been done in the area of obstacles that may ultimately impact on her ability to enter or remain in higher education. The multiplicity of roles and demands on her time are well documented. These roles and demands mix and mingle and are hard to review as separate entities, but in general could be categorized as lack of self-confidence and autonomy, lack of time and energy, lack of emotional support, and lack of money.

Lack of Self-Confidence and Autonomy

Lack of self-confidence and autonomy is perhaps the most basic problem faced by returning women students. Suchinsky (1982) described the normal developmental process of autonomy and how most women deviate from the pattern. Small children have a strong drive to learn about everything around them. In adolescence this is replaced by a strong desire to understand one's own physiology. In early adulthood it is normal to again have a strong desire to learn. For most young adult women this drive is postponed or abandoned when they become preoccupied with starting a family. Consequently, when a woman is forced or chooses to function autonomously later in life, she is unprepared and has difficulty operating "in a fashion that is relatively independent of the environment" (Suchinsky, 1982, p. 31). Suchinsky equated development of autonomy to an individual's level of maturity and pinpointed three types of women who have problems in dealing with the autonomy that is thrust on them; the displaced homemaker; the "empty nest" mother; and the blue-collar wife. He concluded that, for various reasons, they return to school to find ways to help them deal with this uncomfortable feeling and lack of development. Markus (1972) referred to this "cycle" in a woman's life and its effect on her personal development and self-esteem. Lack of self-esteem is also addressed by Copas and Dwinell (1983), Aanstand (1972), Prager (1983), and Rice (1982).

Lack of Time and Energy

Lack of time and energy to carry out her many personal roles and also be a student is the problem most frequently reported by the returning woman student according to Copas and Dwinell (1983), Smallman (1980), and Aanstand (1972). Chief concerns for these women are coordinating college classes with childcare responsibilities and job schedules. As Copas and Dwinell (1983) found in their study, keeping up with family responsibilities was a significant problem for all women whether they were single, divorced, or married. They also pointed out that the returning woman student faces more complex demands on her time than does the traditional student. Smallman (1980) found that

> . . . only when these non-college responsibil-
> ities were under control could they begin to worry
> about how to study, what courses to take, and
> their ability to succeed in general (pp. 69-70).

Lack of Emotional Support

Lack of emotional support from family members for their return to school is a negative factor returning women students have difficulty in overcoming. Having emotional support and cooperation from family is often noted as the biggest advantage a returning woman student can have. As Rice (1982) stated,

> It is impossible to ignore the fact that this
> person's educational decision has an enormous
> impact on her personal life and on the signifi-
> cant others in it, and that these significant
> others have in turn tremendously influenced

her perception of her educational experience
(p. 4).

This two-way impact is the key to the emotional support issue. If the woman is able to carry out her previous roles without altering the responsibilities of significant others or if the significant others voluntarily adjust their responsibilities so that she can be freed to pursue her new role as student, the returning woman student will have the emotional support she desires (Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Rice, 1982; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; Galliano and Gildea, 1982; Markus, 1972). The key element in this scenario is the support of the spouse (Markus, 1972; Rice, 1982; Smallman, 1980).

From her research, Rice (1982) made three other observations about this reciprocal impact that are important to consider:

1. Returning women students are reluctant to ask for help with domestic chores, and usually little change in the division of labor occurs.

2. The returning woman student who is uncertain of her commitment to the role of student will find that "the family system will respond with dysfunctional behaviors aimed at forcing her to return to her former roles or at least clarify her role in the family" (p. 4).

3. Returning women students may attain high academic achievement out of rebellion against their families' attempts to keep them in their old roles.

Lack of Money

Lack of money is a key concern for the returning woman student as has been discussed earlier in this review. Smallman (1980) identified it as second in four factors related to the problems of mature female students. Interestingly, McCanne, McCanne, and Keating (1980) found finances a more recurrent problem for adult male students than adult female students. Nevertheless, it can be assumed from the increasing number of women supporting themselves or others that this is an important problem for the returning woman student (Tittle and Denker, 1980; Fisher, 1984).

Obstacles Faced Inside
the Academic Realm

The returning woman student faces two major types of obstacles when she returns to the academic realm: obstacles perpetuated by the college through its policies, services, or atmosphere and obstacles caused by the aging process that affect the returning woman student's ability to compete with traditional students.

Obstacles Perpetuated by College
Policies, Services, or Atmosphere

Obstacles Perpetuated by Policies

Obstacles perpetuated by college policies can be broken

down into four areas of concentration: admissions, scheduling, curriculum, and financial aid.

Admissions. Returning women students face problems in admission to college because policies are geared toward younger students and because some college administrations and personnel have negative attitudes toward mature female students (Weinstein, 1980). Lichtenstein and Block (1963) gave evidence that older students (women in particular) earn better grades than younger students. They went further and said, ". . . these women are getting more out of their educational experience than most students" (Lichtenstein and Block, 1963, p. 238). Nevertheless, as recently as 1972, college administrations were wondering if older women could "handle college academically" (Aanstand, 1972, p. 4).

Ekstrom (1972) addressed the problem of admissions extensively. She described two basic types of institutional barriers: those that actively discriminate against women students and those that discourage women from enrolling because colleges have failed to review their policies. The paperwork required to complete college admission requirements can cause problems for the returning woman student. These policies are generally designed for students who are entering directly from high school or transferring from another institution. Obtaining transcripts or receiving transfer credit for previous coursework may not be a problem for traditional students, but it is a problem for most mature female students (Aanstand, 1972). Markus (1972)

pointed out that the number and intensity of these obstacles increases with the age of the student and the time she has been away from the academic environment.

Scheduling. Returning women students have problems with the times classes are offered and the operating schedule of college facilities. At most colleges and universities, classes are scheduled and services (like the library, computer room and counseling offices) are offered at times that are convenient to traditional students--hours that may be inconvenient for nontraditional students. The frequency at which a class meets can cause problems for the returning woman student who must get a babysitter, leave work early, or drive long distances to campus (Aanstand, 1972). Times at which classes are scheduled can present insurmountable obstacles for employed women or women with young school-aged children.

Fear for safety at night on campus was a significant inhibiting factor for the mature female student in the study done by McCanne, McCanne, and Keating (1980).

> Such an obstacle could have the affect of inter-
> fering with a woman student's progress through
> school, especially when one considers the need
> to use the library, laboratory, computer or
> other campus facilities, competition with other
> students [during the day] for use of those
> facilities and the need . . . to do school-
> work in the academic rather than the home envi-
> ronment (p. 78).

Aanstand (1972) found that mature women students listed these "mechanical arrangements" as the factor that made a difference in whether or not they would return to school--

even above the general anxiety they felt about being a student. "The relationship between these two factors--anxiety and mechanical arrangements--seems to be an important yet elusive one" (Aanstand, 1972, p. 22).

Curriculum. Returning women students have problems with some of the courses they are required to take and with the absence from the curriculum of other courses they would like to take (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980). In addition they felt that they should be given academic credit for past experience (vocational or general in nature) and that they should not be locked into curriculum patterns designed for younger students who have not yet had an opportunity to gather these experiences (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980).

Financial Aid. Returning women students face problems with financial aid. In their comparison of mature male and female students, McCanne, McCanne, and Keating (1980) found that more women than men depend on financial help from sources other than themselves. Ekstrom (1972) listed financial aid as one of the five major institutional barriers faced by women returning to school. Aanstand (1972) pointed out that returning women students are often not eligible for scholarships and loans due to their age, part-time status, or because they are self-supporting. Tittle and Denker's review (1980) of women in the workforce (and consequently in the classroom) made it clear that financial assistance of some kind is imperative. In

Smallman's study (1980), financial aid and legal aid were most important to women who no longer had a spouse at home, were in low income brackets, or who were carrying more hours.

Obstacles Perpetuated by College Services

Obstacles perpetuated by college services can be divided into three areas: lack of services targeted to older students; quality and quantity of counseling services; appropriateness of student activities.

Lack of Services Targeted Toward Older Students. Returning women students desire services geared to their lifestyles. They see the presence of such services as a plus in assisting them toward a successful college experience. Examples include childcare facilities and lower tuition rates for part-time students. (These topics will be discussed more thoroughly in "Resources and Programs Requested.")

Quality and Quantity of Counseling Services. Returning women students are concerned about the type and availability of campus counseling services. While not necessarily seeking the type of social groups formed through student activities, returning women students do voice a desire for support groups or counseling services that would assist them in their transition into the role of college student (Ekstrom, 1972; Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell,

1983; McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Smallman, 1980; Weinstein, 1980). Interest in career counseling or planning is apparent (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Ekstrom, 1972; Weinstein, 1980). The appropriateness of guidance into degree programs is still something of an issue. McCanne, McCanne, and Keating's study (1980) found 25 percent of the women versus 6 percent of the men reported that they were encouraged to select a major appropriate for their sex.

Appropriateness of Student Activities. Returning women students on most campuses ignore student activity programs because these offerings are usually geared to the needs of the traditional student--social interaction, development of basic leadership skills, and opportunities to develop intimate relationships. Single returning women, particularly those recently single, show more interest in participating in student activities because their social and support needs closely parallel those of traditional students. Married returning women students, who generally have more intimate relationships--if not support--than they can handle, have little interest (Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Smallman, 1980).

Obstacles Perpetuated by College Atmosphere

Obstacles perpetuated by the college atmosphere can be divided into two areas: acceptance by other students and acceptance by college faculty and staff.

Acceptance by Other Students. Acceptance by fellow students--young and old--is particularly important to the single returning woman student, especially those recently single who seem to experience more loneliness and stress. The mature single woman sees the development of relationships with other students and faculty as a key to her successful adjustment to college life. These relationships are also important in helping married returning women students adjust to college, but to a secondary degree (Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980).

Acceptance by College Faculty and Staff. Acceptance by college faculty and staff can have tangible effects on the success of the returning woman student (Weinstein, 1980). Faculty members and administrative personnel may have more reactions, positive or negative, to the mature female student than to younger students. Some ". . . may have difficulty with older female students for reasons that might be quite personal in nature" (Suchinsky, 1982, p. 31). The result, perhaps created unconsciously, can be a negative classroom atmosphere for the mature woman student.

Obstacles Caused by the Aging Process

Obstacles caused by the aging process that affect returning women students' ability to compete with

traditional-aged students exist, but are minimal. Doty (1967) outlined the differences found in the two groups:

1. Returning women students score lower in abstract reasoning but perform equally well in verbal reasoning.

2. Returning women students report problems with concentration, reading speed, and note taking while traditional students have problems with retention.

3. Returning women students spend more time studying and have better study habits.

4. Returning women students explained their grades in terms of their maturity and appreciation for college while traditional students stressed their academic ability.

Doty (1967) concluded that returning women students are "highly motivated to achieve academically and that they may overcome their learning handicaps by applying effective study habits" (p. 165). Aanstand (1972) concluded from her research that, up to age 60, there is no correlation between a college student's learning capacity and age.

Resources and Programs Requested

Not surprisingly, the resources and programs of assistance most often requested by the returning woman student are practical ones. They tie directly to the problems these women have to solve before they can concentrate on their role as student. With the exception of childcare and scheduling, these resources did not seem to be listed in any priority. Requests for assistance were as follows:

1.   Appropriate childcare facilities provided by the college or university. Smallman (1980) and Aanstand (1972) both found in their research that one of the top two concerns of the returning woman student was the securing of childcare that would coordinate with college classes.

2.   Scheduling classes and facilities to coordinate conveniently with children's school hours or adult work schedules (Smallman, 1980; Aanstand, 1972; Suchinsky, 1982). This was the second of the top two concerns for the mature female students in the studies done by Aanstand and Smallman.

3.   A positive atmosphere for adult women students and college policies that recognize their particular needs. Specific suggestions included: a more flexible book reserve system, student activities geared to the social needs of families on tight budgets, quiet places to eat and study, guards in the parking lots at night, lowering nonessential academic requirements such as mandatory physical education courses. College faculty and staff members more attuned to the problems facing returning women students were also mentioned (Aanstand, 1972; McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Ekstrom, 1972; Suchinsky, 1982; Weinstein, 1980).

4.   More liberal admissions deadlines and policies including acceptance of past coursework or life experiences for college credit (Aanstand, 1972; Ekstrom, 1972; Smallman, 1980). Smallman (1980) found in her research that institutional policies are changing and college locations

are becoming more accessible in response to the increase of adult students they serve.

5.   Career counseling and guidance specifically designed to help the adult female develop skills that will help her prepare to seek employment (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Markus, 1972; Weinstein, 1980).

6.   Support groups or transition counseling (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Aanstand, 1972; Copas and Dwinell, 1983; Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983; Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977; Weinstein, 1980). Researchers seem to agree that the more support the returning woman student has from family and friends the less need she has for this type of assistance. "Their adjustment to this transition seems to be related to the stressfulness of their lives and available social support before entering school" (Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983, p. 373). Even with the backing and cooperation of her family and friends, the mature woman student is still entering a new world that asks her to perform and achieve in ways that she is not used to performing.

> For many students, developing a support system
> on campus may enhance their ability to do well
> in school, complementing the social network they
> have outside the university (Jacobs, Unger, Striegel-
> Moore, and Kimbrell, 1983, p. 374).

For women with little or no social support outside the academic realm, it may be the key element in their chances of succeeding as students. On the other hand, Prager (1983) found, "returning students may want to blend in with a

traditional academic environment rather than be given any special consideration" (p. 147).

7.   Financial assistance in the form of scholarships and loans designed for and accessible to the mature female student, and lower tuition rates for the part-time adult student (Ekstrom, 1972; Aanstand, 1972; McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980; Smallman, 1980; Tittle and Denker, 1980). Smallman's research (1980) found that financial aid is becoming available to the mature part-time student.

Summary

Women's participation in higher education is a recent historic development. Not until the late 1800's did women have an opportunity for an education equal to that offered to men. The twentieth century has witnessed the sporadic progression women have made in terms of participation and goal setting in higher education. Only in the last two decades have significant numbers of women returned to school after a break in their formal education. These women return to school to increase their feelings of personal fulfillment or to meet economic needs and prepare for career opportunities. Women contemplate their return to campus through a number of preconceived ideas centering on how their personal lives and their "school lives" will affect one another and how they will be able to perform in the academic environment. Obstacles mature women face outside the classroom (i.e., lack of self-confidence and autonomy,

lack of time and energy, lack of emotional support, and lack of money) may stimulate the returning woman student to greater achievement than she anticipated or may be barriers she cannot overcome. Obstacles mature women face inside the academic realm are often the results of college policies, services, or atmosphere. In addition, the aging process can negatively affect the study skills of returning women students, but usually to a limited extent. The resources and programs that would help women deal with these barriers in very practical terms are the ones most often requested by returning women students.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the needs of
the returning woman student at the point of reentry and
during the first semester of classes at Tulsa Junior
College. This chapter is intended to describe the
methodology and procedures used in this study and is divided
into four areas of examination: population and sample,
development of the instrument, administration of the
instrument, and analysis of the data collected.

Population and Sample

The population used in this study was limited to female
students entering TJC during the fall semester of 1984 whose
high school class had graduated a minimum of two years
earlier and who had experienced an interruption in their
postsecondary education of at least one year. These
criteria were based upon the suggestion of two TJC
counselors who, by the nature of their assignments, deal
most often with the returning woman student (Doremus, 1983;
O'Neil, 1983). These criteria were also supported by the
literature reviewed (McCanne, McCanne, and Keating, 1980;
Johnson, Weiss, and Sedlacek, 1977). Mature women students
from all three TJC campuses were included in the study.

Parameters of the population were identified by enrollment data for the fall semester of 1984 provided through the TJC computer services department. A total of 3,145 first-time entering female students, born in 1964 or earlier, made up the population. However, it was not possible to determine how many of these women met the final criterion (an interruption in their formal education of at least one year) until they were personally contacted.

Subjects for the study were selected at the end of the spring semester, 1985. A sample of 50 women students was extracted through stratified random sample. Five age categories within the population were determined and 10 women were interviewed from each category for a total of 50 participants. Age categories used were 20-30 year olds, 31-40 year olds, 41-50 year olds, 51-60 year olds, and 60 or more years of age. To insure that the desired characteristics of the population were met by respondents, women participants were questioned in the initial stages of the interview about their educational experiences in the year immediately preceding their enrollment at TJC and the year in which their high school class graduated. If stated criteria were not met, the interview was terminated.

Development of the Instrument

As a result of consultation with counselors working in the field (Doremus, 1983; O'Neil, 1983) and examination of similar studies in the review of the literature (Smallman,

1980; Aanstand, 1972), the researcher decided to use a survey--and finally a telephone survey--to gather desired information on the needs of returning women students at TJC.

The contents and format for the survey were clarified through three resources: the review of the literature, personal interviews conducted with ten mature women students who had experienced the reentry process at TJC, and pre-test of the telephone survey with five members of the population. The primary goal of the survey was to identify the obstacles the respondents faced during the initial enrollment process and during the first semester of classes. A secondary goal was to learn what services adult women students would have liked for the college to offer to help them through the reentry period, and what current TJC services they had used to help them adjust to college life.

Questions constructed for the personal interview were reviewed by five objective readers for consistency, clarity, and purpose. Both structured and open-ended questions were used to obtain information and were divided into three areas: demographic information, experiences and perceptions of the returning woman student during the reentry period, and information from a variety of realms that relate to a woman's experiences when she goes back to school. Volunteers for personal interviews were obtained during the fall of 1984 from sign-up sheets placed in TJC counseling offices, the Student Activities Office on the Southeast Campus, and Career Exploration Orientation sessions. Ten women were randomly selected and then interviewed on a TJC

campus early in December, 1984. Once all interviews were
completed, answers were reviewed and questions edited for
clarity and importance. Answers received in the personal
interviews (as well as reactions noted in the surveys
reviewed in the literature) were later used to compose the
structured responses listed as choices in the telephone
survey.

In late January of 1985 it was determined that the
instrument should take the form of a telephone survey. This
format was chosen to expedite the collection of data and to
give women participants a sense of anonymity. It was
believed that a telephone survey would encourage women to
answer personal questions more candidly than they might in
an interview and that it would give the researcher and the
participant the advantage of asking for clarification when
needed, something not possible in a mailed survey.

A draft of the telephone survey was constructed. It
was reviewed by two advisors, adjusted, and given as a pre-
test. Five returning women students from the population
were used as subjects for the pretest conducted on May 13
and 14, 1985. These women were randomly selected from the
population and represented five age categories. The
reactions of these women led to additional changes in
wording to insure that questions were easily understood and
visualized when heard over the phone. With these final
revisions, the survey was determined ready for use. A copy
of the telephone survey is included in the appendix.

Administration of the Instrument

Telephone surveys were conducted during the second and third weeks of May in 1985. Fifty reentry women students participated. Surveys required 15-40 minutes to complete, depending upon the respondent, and took place during day and evening hours.

Telephone calls were made to 227 women in order to obtain 50 participants who met the age and educational requirements of the study. Of that 227, 16 women did not meet the requirements of the study, 13 were women who declined to participate and numerous uncompleted calls were made to an additional 148 women.

The scope of the population for this study was determined through enrollment data on female students who were classified at TJC as first-time entering students in the fall of 1984 and who were born in 1964 or before. A sample for use in the study was selected through a stratified random sample of this population. Five age groups within the population were determined and ten women were randomly selected from each group for use in the study. The enrollment data was provided through the TJC computer services department.

Analysis of the Data Collected

Responses to structured and open-ended questions were collected. Responses to structured questions were listed on

a computer grid. A two digit code was assigned to each line
of responses, identifying the individual participant and the
age category in which she fell. The responses were then
entered into the college computer system. The Statistical
Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to determine
frequency distributions and percentages. Calculations were
made for the sample as a whole. Responses to open-ended
questions were listed, reviewed, and then summarized.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine the needs of the returning woman student at the point of reentry and during the first semester of classes at TJC. This chapter presents the findings of the study in the following order: response rate, demographic data, reasons for reentry, perceptions and experiences during reentry, retention information, support received during reentry, and resources used and requested.

Response Rate

A telephone survey was conducted during the second and third weeks of May in 1985. Subjects for the study were selected through stratified random sample from five age groups. Personal contact was achieved with 79 of the 227 women with whom contact was attempted. Of that 79, 16 women did not meet the requirements of the study and 13 women chose not to participate. The 50 remaining women, 10 from each age category, comprised the sample for the study. Survey questions 1 through 8 determined the interest and appropriateness of participants for the study.

Demographic Data

Ten of the 55 questions in the survey dealt with demographic data, the issue addressed by Research Question One. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each question and are shown in Table I.

Most of the returning women surveyed attended the Metro Campus (44 percent) with the second largest group attending the Northeast campus (30 percent). Three-fourths of the participants had experienced a formal learning situation following high school and for 54 percent that learning experience had taken place in a college classroom. For two-thirds of the women surveyed this extended learning had been done as a traditional student, with only 34 percent indicating that they had been returning women students before coming to TJC. Fewer women identified themselves as single (12 percent) than as previously married (20 percent) or presently married (66 percent).

A majority of the participants were employed outside the home; however, a significant number (44 percent) were not and 22 percent of those employed held part-time positions. The family income level most often identified was $20,000-$30,000 (34 percent). The remaining respondents were more likely to identify with income ranges above that level (32 percent) than below it (28 percent). Six participants declined to give financial information.

Participants were evenly split when asked if there were any children still living at home. Of the 25 women who

TABLE I

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Variable	Number	Percent
Age:		
20 - 30	10	20
31 - 40	10	20
41 - 50	10	20
51 - 60	10	20
61+	10	20
Campus:		
Metro	22	44
Northeast	15	30
Southeast	11	22
Evenly Split	2	4
Last Educational Experience:		
High School	9	18
Vo-Tech/Trade	11	22
Junior/Community College	6	12
Four year college	18	36
Graduate school	3	6
Other	3	6
Previously a Reentry Student:		
Yes	17	34
No	33	66
Marital Status:		
Married	33	66
Single	6	12
Divorced	7	14
Separated	0	0
Widowed	3	6
Other	1	2

TABLE I (Continued)

Variable	Number	Percent
Age of youngest child at home:		
Infant (0-2)	3	6
Preschool (3-5)	4	8
Elementary (6-11)	7	14
Junior high/Middle school (12-14)	2	4
High school (15-18)	4	8
College age (18-21)	3	6
Older (21+)	2	4
No children at home	25	50
Childcare used while in class:		
Daycare	3	6
Child in school	3	6
Older sibling	2	4
Close relative	8	16
Child cares for self	9	18
No children at home	25	50
Hours Employed:		
1 - 10	5	10
11 - 20	3	6
21 - 30	3	6
31 - 40	12	24
40+	5	10
Not employed	22	44
Family Income:		
0 - $10,000	8	16
$10,000 - $20,000	6	12
$20,000 - $30,000	17	34
$30,000 - $40,000	1	2
$40,000 - $50,000	5	10
$50,000+	10	20
Declined to answer	3	6

responded affirmatively, 7 had children of preschool age or younger, 7 had children of traditional elementary school age, 6 had children in junior high/middle school or high school, and 5 had children of college-age or older living in the home. Only 3 of the 25 women with children at home indicated that they went outside their own family to obtain childcare while they were in class. The most common responses were that the child cared for himself (9 participants) or that a close relative took care of the child while the mother was in school (8 participants).

Reasons for Reentry

Research Question Two asks why women are returning to school. Survey questions 19-20 and 21 attempted to answer that question. Frequencies and percentages were tabulated and are shown in Table II.

Thirty percent of the women in the survey identified more than one circumstance as prompting their return to school (65 responses). The circumstance most commonly noted was a desire for personal fulfillment (20); adding to the family income (2) was the motivation least often cited. However, a desire to become self-supporting was given 8 times, to gain new skills needed for a present job was listed 10 times, and pursuit of new skills to qualify for a promotion or to change vocation was listed 13 times for a total of 31 out of 65 responses that could be interpreted to indicate a desire or need for additional income.

TABLE II

REASONS FOR REENTRY

Variable	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Circumstances prompting return:		
Become self-supporting	8	12
Add to family income	2	3
Gain skills needed in present job	10	15
Gain skills for promotion or new vocation	13	20
Complete a degree	8	13
Personal enrichment	20	31
Other	4	6
Educational Goals at TJC:		
Two year degree	5	10
Transfer credit	5	10
Certificate	3	6
Classes related to vocational needs	21	42
Personal enrichment	14	28
Other	2	4

When asked about educational goals at TJC, 42 percent
of the women surveyed said that they had enrolled to take
one or two classes related to their vocational needs.
Fourteen percent indicated that they were seeking classes
for personal enrichment while 13 percent indicated they were
working toward a formal educational goal.

Perceptions and Experiences During Reentry

Research Questions Three and Four asked about the
college and noncollege related challenges that women
perceive or experience during the enrollment process and the
first semester of classes. The crux of this matter is
addressed in survey questions 22 through 28, 34 through 37,
43, 47, and 55 through 56. (Additional information related
to these research questions is found in subsequent
sections.) Frequencies and percentages were tabulated and
are found in Tables III and IV.

Women participants were asked to identify their
perception of their prospects for academic success and for
fitting in the college environment before and after they had
enrolled at TJC. In both cases women felt much more
optimistic about their chances for success after they had
experienced college for a semester. Before enrollment,
women were most likely to identify their chances for
academic success and fitting in the college environment as
average (40 percent in both cases). After a semester as a
college student, they rated their chances for future
academic success as very good at 40 percent and felt that

TABLE III

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANCES FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
AND FOR FITTING IN THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT
BEFORE AND AFTER EXPERIENCE AS A STUDENT

Variable	Number	Percentage
Preconceptions of chances for academic achievement:		
Very Good	8	16
Good	16	32
Average	20	40
Poor	1	2
Undecided	5	10
Preconceptions of chances for fitting in:		
Very Good	9	18
Good	13	26
Average	20	40
Poor	3	6
Undecided	5	10
Perception of chances for future academic achievement:		
Very Good	20	40
Good	19	38
Average	8	16
Poor	2	4
Undecided	1	2
Perception of future chances for fitting in:		
Very Good	14	28
Good	24	48
Average	12	24
Poor	0	0
Undecided	0	0

TABLE IV

PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC AND
ENROLLMENT EXPERIENCES

Variable	Number	Percent
Enrollment Evaluation:		
Very Easy	15	30
Easy	23	46
Acceptable	7	14
Difficult	5	10
Undecided	0	0
Academic Evaluation:		
Very Easy	10	20
Easy	18	36
Acceptable	16	32
Difficult	5	10
Undecided	1	2

their chances for fitting in the college environment in the
future would be good (48 percent). Before enrollment 10
percent of the reentry women said that they were undecided
about their chances for academic and social success. Only
two percent were undecided about their academic future after
a semester of class, and no respondents indicated that they
were undecided about social acceptance.

The perception most women had of their experience as a
student during the first semester of classes and their
experiences during the enrollment process were characterized
as easy or very easy by 56 and 76 percent respectively of
those surveyed. One third (32 percent) rated their
experience as a student as average.

Women were asked to supply additional information about
their enrollment experiences. Fifty-six percent chose to
describe, through 30 multiple responses, aspects of the
enrollment process they felt were helpful. These aspects
can be summarized as: a quick and easy process (14),
helpful staff (8), telephone registration (3), being able to
obtain materials before coming to campus (3), and other (2).

Aspects of the enrollment process that needed
improvement were listed by 48 percent of the women in 33
multiple responses. These responses can be characterized
as: need for clear directions (10), a process that is slow
and confusing (9), staff who were not helpful (6), and staff
who were not well informed (8).

Women were asked what advice they would give to a friend who was coming to TJC to enroll for the first time and 68 percent responded. Their 45 multiple responses fell into ten categories. The most common advice given was to know the academic direction you want to take before enrolling (8) and to seek counseling to help you determine that direction (8). Other advice included: obtain information about the process before you go to a campus (5), ask someone to give you directions to enrollment locations (5), take advantage of telephone registration (3) and early enrollment (2), which campus to attend (2), ask someone who has been through it to go with you (2), go ahead and do it (5), and other (5).

Sixty-four percent of the participants listed 42 multiple responses as productive or positive aspects of their experience as a returning student. The aspects most frequently remembered as positive were good instructors (15), other students (8), and a gain in self-confidence (5). Other aspects mentioned were quality of the subject matter, helpful staff, the joy of learning, a relaxed atmosphere, and other.

Negative or detrimental aspects of the student experience were given by 40 percent of those surveyed in 23 multiple responses. The three top concerns were poor instruction (6), the format of the class (4), and the individual's lack of background in the subject area (4). Other concerns were lack of access to equipment in computer

labs, staff who were not helpful, the quality of the class, and other.

A large number of participants (84 percent) offered advice to help other returning women complete their first semester back in school. Fifty-six multiple responses were given. Almost half of the responses could be summarized as encouragement to not give up when things were difficult. Other recommendations also were practical and to the point: start with one or two classes (4), set aside time for class and study (9), recognize that it will not be easy (5), set goals (4), take things one day at a time (2), do not be intimidated (2), ask questions and find someone to help you (5), and other (3).

Women were asked what adjustments they had to make in their daily routine in order to return to school, and 56 percent chose to respond. Their 42 multiple responses fell into seven groups: adjustments in childcare (6), finding time for class or study (9), changes in dinner arrangements (7), juggling roles (5), giving up much of their free time (5), shift in work schedules (3), and other (7).

Finally, members of the sample were asked if they had observed any difference in the treatment of adult female students versus traditional-aged students by TJC faculty and staff. Almost one third (16 participants) responded affirmatively. Treatment was classified as better by 7 women, worse by 4 women. A majority of the responses categorized as other could be interpreted as describing worse treatment.

Retention Information

An important part of the college and noncollege related challenges faced by returning women students, as addressed in Research Question Three and Four, deals with the issue of retention. Questions 44 through 46, 61, and 62-63 of the survey sought this information. Frequencies and percentages were tabulated and are listed in Table V.

A majority of the women contacted in the survey were enrolled in one class in the fall of 1984. Only 6 percent were likely to have been classified as full-time students (enrolled in 12 or more hours).

One third of the sample found it necessary to drop or withdraw from a class during the semester. A majority of this segment (24 out of 34 percent) indicated that the college could not have prevented the drop or withdrawal. The remainder (10 percent) listed poor instruction, poor communication by the college, and poor course structure as causes for their withdrawal.

Participants were also asked if they had met other returning women who did not complete their coursework for the semester, and 36 percent replied affirmatively. Causes most often mentioned were a lack of background needed for the classes (5), more time required than anticipated (4), poor instruction (2), and other (2).

TABLE V

RETENTION INFORMATION

Variable	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Number of classes taken:		
One	28	56
Two	16	32
Three	3	6
Four	1	2
Five	2	4
Dropped or Withdrew:		
Yes	17	34
No	33	66
Could TJC have prevented drop or withdrawal:		
Yes	5	10
No	12	24
Did not drop or withdraw	33	66
Know of other reentry women who dropped or withdrew:		
Yes	18	36
No	31	62
Do not know	1	2
Reason for their drop or withdrawal:		
Work schedule	1	2
Childcare	1	2
Financial Problems	2	4
Disliked Instructor	2	4
Lack of background	5	9
Took too much time	4	7
Other	2	4
Don't know reason	5	9

TABLE V (Continued)

Variable	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Do not know women who dropped or withdrew	32	59

Support Received During Reentry

Among the noncollege related challenges perceived and
experienced by returning women students, support for their
reentry role is one of the most important. This aspect of
Research Questions Three and Four is addressed in survey
questions 48 through 50, 51-52, and 53 through 54.
Frequencies and their corresponding percentages were
tabulated and are recorded in Table VI.

Almost three fourths of the women surveyed described
their families as supportive or very supportive when they
returned to school. It is interesting to note that
12 percent of the respondents felt that none of the
descriptions offered captured the reactions they received
from family and friends. Four percent reported that there
was a split within their family between very supportive and
very negative, and the remaining 8 percent described the
reactions as shock, amazement, surprise, and "you've lost
your mind."

The opinions of family and friends did not change for
most reentry women (82 percent). The change in opinion most
often recorded was to a very supportive position.

Forty percent of those interviewed said that they had
received special support during their reentry experience.
Of the 35 multiple responses given, over half (18)
characterized this support as general or personal
encouragement. The second most frequent type of support

TABLE VI

SUPPORT RECEIVED DURING REENTRY
FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Variable	Number	Percent
Reactions received when first enrolled:		
Very supportive	29	58
Supportive	8	16
O.K.	4	8
Negative	2	4
Undecided	1	2
Other	6	12
Was there a change in reaction:		
Yes	9	18
No	41	82
What was the change in reaction:		
Very Supportive	4	8
Supportive	3	6
O.K.	2	4
No change in reaction	41	82
Group or person most supportive:		
Husband	17	23
Children	14	19
Friends	7	10
Classmates	1	1
Parents	5	7
Self	16	22
Significant Other	1	1
Faculty	2	3
Boss	5	7
Other	5	7

mentioned was the family's willingness to adjust their routine to assist the returning student (6).

Only 10 percent of the participants stated that they did not receive the support they had expected. Lack of support was evenly distributed between family, friends, instructors, and TJC staff members.

Resources Used and Requested

Research Questions Five and Six focus on the resources that are used by returning women at TJC and additional resources these women would like to have offered to help them during the enrollment process and the first semester of classes. Questions 29-30, 31-33, 38-39, 40-42, 57 through 60, and 64-66 were designed to gather this information. Frequencies and percentages were tabulated and are found in Tables VII, VIII, and IX.

Questions 29-30 and 38-39 asked participants to recall TJC resources that had been of particular help to them during the enrollment process and during the first semester of classes, respectively. Participants were allowed to give as many as two responses, and a total of 57 responses were received. The resources most often used during enrollment were telephone registration (9), the class schedule (8), and counseling (7). The resources most often used for assistance during the first semester of classes were faculty (19), other students (6), and developmental labs (6). In response to both questions, a significant number of women indicated that they did not recall receiving special

TABLE VII

RESOURCES USED AND REQUESTED DURING THE
ENROLLMENT PERIOD AND THE FIRST
SEMESTER OF CLASSES

Variable	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Resources used during enrollment:		
Registration	6	11
Counseling	7	12
Campus Nurse	0	0
Student Activities	0	0
Telephone Registration	9	16
Catalog	3	5
Student Handbook	2	4
Class Schedule	8	14
Other	11	19
Cannot remember	11	19
Resources desired during enrollment:		
Childcare	5	6
Special counselor	15	18
Special enrollment area	6	7
Orientation for RWS	13	15
Maps/Guides	8	9
Financial information	2	2
Enrolling with other returning women	3	4
Step-by-step explanation	5	6
More convenient hours	1	1
Parking and transportation	10	12
Other	11	13
No suggestions	6	7

TABLE VII (Continued)

Variable	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Resources used as a student:		
Registration	5	8
Counseling	2	3
Campus Nurse	Ø	Ø
Student Activities	1	1
LRC (Library)	3	5
Division Offices	Ø	Ø
Faculty	19	29
Staff	3	5
Other students	6	9
Labs (Developmental)	6	9
Other	7	11
No, cannot remember	13	20
Resources desired as a student:		
Childcare	12	15
Special counselor	17	20
Special area or room	3	4
Orientation for RWS	8	10
Financial aid	6	7
More convenient class times	4	5
More convenient locations	3	4
More class sections	2	2
Easier parking	12	15
More convenient office hours	2	2
Security assistance	5	6
Other	4	5
No suggestions	4	5

TABLE VIII

INTEREST IN AN ORIENTATION FOR
RETURNING WOMEN STUDENTS

Variable	Number	Percentage
Would you attend:		
Yes	29	58
No	14	28
Undecided	7	14
Why would you not attend:		
Did not need help	7	14
Too busy	2	4
Someone showed me the ropes	1	2
Other	11	22
I would attend	29	58
Format preferred for the orientation:		
A half-day session	20	40
A day session	2	4
A one hour credit class	5	10
A one hour non-credit class before enrollment	7	14
Other	5	10
Do not have an opinion	11	22

TABLE IX

ADDITIONAL AREA OF CONCERN FOR
RETURNING WOMEN STUDENTS

Variable	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Safety	5	6
Parking and trans-portation	6	7
Making friends with peers	3	4
Financial Aid	4	5
Career counseling	9	12
Family approval	1	1
Acceptance by younger students	2	3
Setting priorities	3	4
Study skills	12	16
Learning the ropes	2	3
Help getting a job	7	9
All/several of these	9	12
Other	7	9
No suggestions	7	9

assistance (11 during enrollment and 13 during the semester).

Questions 31-33 and Question 40-42 gave participants an opportunity to identify up to three additional resources they thought would be of significant assistance to the adult woman during the enrollment process and the first semester of classes. Seventy-nine multiple responses were given by 44 women in the first instance and 78 responses by 46 women in the second. The services most often requested to assist women with enrollment were a special counselor for reentry women (15) and an orientation program for the returning woman student (13). A special counselor was also the service most requested to assist mature women during their first semester of classes (17), followed by requests for easier parking (12), and childcare facilities (12). Only a small number of women did not choose to identify additional resources of assistance.

One resource was spotlighted for further investigation in the survey. Questions 57 through 59 of the survey focused on the participant's interest in an orientation program for returning women students. Fifty-eight of the respondents said that they would attend such an orientation, and a majority of the undecided responses indicated that they would attend if convenient. Most of the women who stated that they would not attend said that they did not feel that they needed such a program. Two of the members of the undecided category said that they would feel a need for such a program only if they were full-time students or were

working toward career goals. A half-day session for the orientation was the format favored by most women partici-pants (40 percent).

Women were given a final opportunity to identify up to three areas of additional concern for returning women through Question 64-66. Forty-three women answered in 70 multiple responses. The concerns most often mentioned were a need to develop study skills (12) and career counseling (7). It is interesting to note that 9 of the 43 women responding felt that several or all of these concerns should be addressed by the college.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter completes the study. It is divided into
three sections: summary of purpose and findings,
conclusions drawn from the study, and recommendations for
further research and practice.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the needs of
returning women students at the point of reentry and during
the first semester of classes at TJC. The study was
prompted by a scarcity of college research on the needs of
mature female students during this critical period and by a
recognition of TJC's mission to meet the needs of the
citizens of the Tulsa area in a practical and convenient
manner--particularly the needs of adult citizens. Specific
objectives in the study were outlined in the research
questions which asked what these reentry women were like and
why they were returning to school, what college and
noncollege related challenges they perceive or experience
during the enrollment process and the first semester of
classes, and what types of assistance they use and would
like for TJC to offer to help them meet these challenges.

A review of the literature indicated that women are returning to school in large numbers. They are looking for ways to enhance their personal development, economic means, or career opportunities. Mature women face noncollege related obstacles as students that center on time, money, self-confidence, and emotional support, according to the literature. College policies, services, or atmosphere may create additional obstacles for these students. The research indicated that women must find ways to deal with these obstacles if they are to succeed as students. Practical resources were frequently requested by women to help them meet these challenges.

A telephone survey was conducted during the middle of May, 1985. Fifty returning women students at TJC took part in the study. These women were said to represent reentry women because they were classified as first-time entering students, had experienced a break in their formal education of at least one year before coming to TJC, and were at least two years beyond the age of a traditional high school graduate. Participants were selected through stratified random sample and represented five age groups of the population equally. They were asked to report demographic data, reasons for their return to school, challenges they faced during the enrollment process and the first semester of classes, and resources they had used or had wished for to help them deal with the challenges of reentry at TJC. Results of the study were tabulated, and frequency distributions and percentages were noted.

The study showed that women in the sample were similar to those described in the literature. Demographically, a participant in the survey was most likely to be married, employed, and to have extended her formal education beyond the high school level as a traditional student before coming to TJC as a nontraditional student. Her family income most often was $20,000 or greater. One half had children still at home. Those with children generally did not have to look beyond their families to find someone to care for the youngest child while they attended class.

Survey participants returned to school for economic reasons, for career advancement, and for personal growth. They were concerned before coming to campus about how they would mesh conflicting responsibilities, how they would fare academically, and how they would fit in the college environment. After a semester of classes they were generally optimistic about their future prospects for handling these concerns and felt positively about their college experiences. However, participants advised that women may need assistance in adjusting to a pedagogical role once again. Many women expressed some need to be better prepared before coming to campus to start classes so that they could feel more confident and in control while going through a new and unsettling experience. Recommendations to help women in this way included the college providing maps or guides during enrollment and the first week of classes,

offering an orientation session for returning women, and employing a special counselor for the adult woman student.

The obstacle faced outside the college classroom that was of most concern to participants in the study was a lack of time and energy to accomplish all the tasks in their lives. The obstacles faced inside the academic setting that received most discussion were college procedures and personnel, although a majority of women were positive about these two areas. One in three women did find reason to drop or withdraw from a class during their first semester and indicated that this action was due to noncollege related obstacles she could not overcome.

During the reentry period, adult women students made limited, if any use, of TJC resources designed to assist students in adjusting to college life. Nevertheless they indicated interest in receiving such assistance and listed practical recommendations for these resources. Recommendations focused on helping women establish educational goals and on methods of helping women sustain their enrollment so that they could achieve those goals. Their advice to other mature women considering a return to school could be summarized as try it, take it seriously, and do not give up.

Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the study include the following:

1.   Participants were both optimistic and realistic about their role as a returning student. They were proud of

their achievements and had received support for this role

from family, friends, and themselves. They were pragmatic

about the effort required for a returning woman to succeed

as a college student.

  2. Noncollege related obstacles were the challenges

most difficult for women participants to overcome. These

obstacles were the ones most often listed by the one-third

of participants who dropped or withdrew from a class during

their first semester of reentry. The noncollege obstacle

most often cited by all women in the study was a lack of

time and energy to accomplish all that was expected of them.

  3. Returning women in the study were likely to

experience some degree of apprehension about their return to

school. Causes of apprehension were not knowing what to

expect in terms of enrollment procedures or classroom

demands and feelings of a lack of control over their

situation. This apprehension disappeared by the end of

their first semester back in school.

  4. Services currently offered at TJC to help students

adjust to college life were not used by participants during

the reentry period even though they indicated an interest in

having the college make similar resources available to them.

  5. Returning women were pragmatic when requesting

resources to assist adult female students during the reentry

period. They focused on services that would help women

determine an educational or vocational path to follow and on

resources that would help women maintain their student status.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Practice

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. Staff development sessions should be held for all TJC employees to educate them to the special needs and concerns of adult women during the reentry period.

2. A half-day orientation program for returning women students should be offered on all three TJC campuses and should be scheduled at a variety of times convenient to adult women.

3. Brochures should be developed to assist students coming to TJC for the first time, including a step-by-step explanation of the enrollment process, a list of TJC offices that are designed to help students adjust to college life (including their locations and a brief explanation of how these offices can be of help), a preview of what to expect in a college classroom, and a dictionary of commonly used college terms.

4. Simple maps of enrollment locations on each campus should be designed for student use. Guides should be stationed in central traffic areas on each campus to provide directions and answer general questions related to the enrollment process.

5. A counselor experienced in working with reentry women students should be employed on each TJC campus.

Further Study

More research should be conducted in the following areas:

1. Studies should be conducted to determine if there are differences in the reentry needs of adult women according to their age, income, educational background, marital status, and employment.

2. Exit interviews should be conducted with reentry women when they withdraw from TJC to learn if there are actions the college could have taken to prevent that withdrawal.

3. Exit interviews should be conducted with returning women graduates to evaluate the college's success in meeting their educational needs.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aanstand, J. "A Study of Mature Women at Santa Fe Junior College: A Topical Paper." (Unpublished paper, Florida Community College, Inter-institutional Research Council, 1972.)

Bender, Marilyn. "College Girl Often Sees No Future But Marriage." New York Times, (March 26, 1962), 34.

Carnegie Commission for Higher Education. Opportunities for Women in Higher Education: Their Current Participation, Prospects for the Future and Recommendations For Action. New York: McGraw Hill, 1973.

Copas, Ernestine M. and Patricia L. Dwinell. "Women's Opportunities Network: An Entity for Initiating Programs and Services for Nontraditional Women Students." Journal of the National Association of Women Deans, Admissions Officers and Counselors, 46, 3 (Spring, 1983), 23-27.

Doremus, Nelda. Personal Interview. Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 13, 1983.

Doty, Barbara A. "Some Academic Characteristics of the Mature Coed." The Journal of Educational Research. 61, 4 (December, 1967), 163-165.

Dwinell, Patricia L. A Needs Assessment of Nontraditional Women Students at the University of Georgia. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1980.

Eakins, Pamela S. Mothers In Transition: A Study of The Changing Life Course. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1983.

Ekstrom, Ruth B. Barriers to Women's Participation in Post-Secondary Education: A Review of the Literature. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, October, 1972.

Farello, Elene Wilson. A History of the Education of Women in the United States. New York: Vanatage Press, 1970.

Fisher, Bill, ed. Today's Education: 1983-1984 Annual
    Edition. Washington, D.C.: National Education
    Association, 1984.

Galliano, Grace and Kathleen Gildea. "Non Traditional
    Students: New Faces and New Issues" (Unpublished
    paper, Southwest Psychology Association, 1982.)

Goodsell, Willystine. The Education of Women: Its Social
    Background and Its Problems. New York: MacMillian
    Company, 1923.

Horowitz, Helen Lefkowitz. Alma Mater: Design and
    Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their
    Nineteenth Century Beginnings to the 1930's. New York:
    Alfred A. Knop, 1984.

Jacobs, Sharon B., Donald G. Unger, Ruth Striegel-Moore, and
    C. D. Kimbrell. "Mature Students: Providing the Support
    They Need." Journal of College Student Personnel, 24,
    4 (July, 1983), 272-274.

Johnson, Deborah Hazel, Karen L. Weiss, and William E.
    Sedlacek. A Comparison of the Needs of Returning and
    Traditional Students By Sex, Research Report No. 13-77.
    College Park: Maryland University, College Park Coun-
    seling Center, 1977.

Lichtenstein, H. and J. R. Block. "The 'Middle-Aged' Co-ed
    in Evening Colleges." Adult Education, 13, 4 (Summer,
    1963), 234-239.

Markus, Hazel. "Continuing Education for Women: Factors
    Influencing a Return to School and the School
    Experience." (Unpub. M.S. thesis, University of
    Michigan, 1972.)

McCanne, Lynn P. Fisher, Thomas R. McCanne, and Lou Ann
    Keating. "The Impact of Academic Environment and
    Student Services on the Academic Progress of Women."
    Journal of College Student Personnel, 21 (1980), 74-80.

O'Neil, Sharron. Personal Interview. Tulsa, Oklahoma,
    October 13, 1983.

Parks, Rosemary. "Some Considerations on the Higher
    Education of Women." Higher Education of Women:
    Essays in Honor of Rosemary Parks. Ed. Helen S. Astin
    and Werner Z. Hirsch. New York: Prager Publishers,
    1978, 3-28.

Prager, Karen J. "Educational Aspirations and Self-Esteem in Returning and Traditional Community College Students." Journal of College Student Personnel, 24, 2 (March, 1983), 144-147.

Rice, Joy K. "Spouse Support: Couples in Educational Transition." Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years, 6 (September, 1982), 4-6.

Sanik, Margret M. "Division of Household Work: A Decade Comparison--1967-1977." Home Economics Research Journal, 10, 2 (December, 1981), 175-180.

Smallman, Katie Beckman. "What Do Adult Women College Students Really Need?" Journal of College Student Personnel, 21 (January, 1980), 65-73.

Struggs, Callie Foster. Women In Education. Mesquite, Texas: Ide House Publishers, 1981.

Suchinsky, Richard T. "The Older Female College Student: An Educational Challenge." NASPA, 19, 4 (Spring, 1982), 29-41.

Tittle, Carol Kehr and Elenor Rubin Denker. Returning Women Students in Higher Education: Defining Policy Issues. New York: Prager Publishers, 1980.

U. S. Bureau of the Census Current Population Reports. Educational Attainment in the United States: March, 1981 and 1980. Series P-20, 390. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1984a.

U. S. Bureau of Census Current Population Reports. Household and Family Characteristics: March, 1983. Series P-20, 388. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1984b.

U. S. Bureau of Census Current Population Reports. Statistical Portrait of Women in the United States: 1978. Special Series P-23, 100. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1980.

Weinstein, Loribeth and others. The Counseling Needs of Re-entry Women: Field Evaluation Draft. Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, Women's Equality Act Program, Association of American Colleges, Project on the Status and Education of Women, (August, 1980), 1-10.

Wheaton, Janilee B. and Daniel C. Robinson. "Responding to the Needs of Re-entry Women: A Comprehensive Campus Model." NASPA, 21, 2 (Fall, 1983), 44-51.

APPENDIX

SCRIPT FOR TELEPHONE SURVEY

OF RETURNING WOMEN STUDENTS

AT TULSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

SCRIPT FOR TELEPHONE SURVEY OF RETURNING WOMEN
STUDENTS AT TULSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

Good morning/evening. May I speak to _____?

A.   This is Barbara Slagle from Tulsa Junior College. Do you know when I might be able to call back and reach her?

(_____) Thank you, I will call back then.

B.   Hello, _____, I am Barbara Slagle. I work in Student Activities at Tulsa Junior College. I am doing a telephone survey for the college to try to determine ways TJC can assist women when they come back to school.

1.   Would you be willing to answer a few questions to help me determine whether or not you fit in the group I am sampling?

       1.   Yes

       2.   No

A.   If "no": Thank you for your time.
(Conclude interview.)

B.   If "yes": Continue interview.

2.   Did you enroll in a credit class at TJC for the first time last fall?

       1.   Yes

       2.   No

       3.   Re-enrolled after an absence.

3.   If answer #3: How long an absence?

       0.   Not applicable

       1.   Less than one year

       2.   One or more years

4.   Did your high school class graduate in 1982 or earlier?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

5.   Did you take any college classes in the year immediately preceding your enrollment at TJC last fall?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

A.   If <u>person</u> <u>does</u> <u>not</u> <u>fit</u> <u>criteria</u>:

_____, since you _____ (criteria that eliminates from sample), you do not fit into the sample I am surveying. However, I appreciate the time you took to talk with me today/this evening. Thank you very much. Good bye. (Conclude interview.)

B.   If <u>person</u> <u>does</u> <u>fit</u> <u>criteria</u>:

Great, _____, you do fit into the sample I am surveying. I am also a woman who made a decision to return to school and this telephone survey is a part of my final school project as well as information that will be of help to the college. I hope that you will be interested in helping me. The survey will take about fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. All responses will be coded for the computer and will not be identified with the participant who gave them.

6.   Would you be willing to help me today/this evening?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

    3.   Not now

7.   If this is not a convenient time, may I make an appointment to call back at another time?

      0.   Not applicable

      1.   Yes

      2.   No

      *(Day: Time:)

8.   If you prefer, I would be glad to meet you on campus and visit in person over a cup of coffee--my treat!

      0.   Not applicable

      1.   Yes

      2.   No

      *(Day: Time   Campus:)

A.   If "no": I appreciate your time. (Conclude interview.)

B.   If "yes" or "Not applicable": Contact at appointed time and continue interview.

    Good! I appreciate your agreeing to help me with this project. There are three parts to the survey. Part one is designed to gather some basic information about adult women students at TJC.

9.   On which campus did you take most of your classes last fall?

      1.   Metro

      2.   Northeast

      3.   Southeast

      4.   Classes evenly split

*Not coded information

10. What was your last educational experience before coming
to TJC last fall?

    1.   High school

    2.   Vo-Tech/Trade School

    3.   Junior/Community College

    4.   Four year college or university

    5.   Graduate school

    6.   Other _____

11. Have you ever been a returning woman student at another
institution?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

12. Which of the following describes your marital status?

    1.   Married

    2.   Single

    3.   Divorced

    4.   Separated

    5.   Widowed

    6.   Other

13. Are you employed outside the home?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

14. How many hours per week are you employed?

    0.   Not applicable

    1.   1-10

    2.   11-20

    3.   21-30

4.   31-40

5.   Over 40

15. Which of the following most closely resembles your family's income when you <u>first</u> enrolled at TJC?

    1. $0   - $10,000

    2. $10,000 - $20,000

    3. $20,000 - $30,000

    4. $30,000 - $40,000

    5. $40,000 - $50,000

    6. $50,000 - above

    7.   Decline to answer

16. Do you have any chilldren still living at home?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

17. What is the age of the youngest child?

    0.   Not applicable

    1.   Infant (0-2)

    2.   Preschool (3-5)

    3.   Elementary (6-11)

    4.   Middle school/junior high (12-14)

    5.   High school (15-18)

    6.   College age (18-21)

    7.   Over 21

18. Which of the following types of childcare did you depend on <u>while you were in class last fall</u>?

0.	Not applicable	5.	Close relative
1.	Daycare	6.	Child cares for self
2.	Child in school	7.	Variety of these an-
3.	Older sibling		swers--no consistent
4.	Neighbor		method
		8.	Other _____

19-20. What circumstances prompted you to come back to school? (Read choices. May choose two.)

1. To become self-supporting

2. Add to the family income

3. New skills needed for present job

4. New skills needed for promotion/change vocations

5. Complete a degree

6. Gain personal enrichment

7. Other _____

21. What are your educational goals at TJC? (Read choices.)

1. Two year degree

2. Transfer credit to a four year school

3. Certificate

4. Take one or two classes as related to vocational needs

5. Classes for personal enrichment

6. Other

22. Which of the following responses best describes how you thought you would do academically before you began attending classes last fall: (Read choices.)

1. Very well

2. Well

3. Average

4. Poorly

5. Undecided

23. How do you _now_ view your prospects for succeeding in class: (Read choices.)

1. Very Good

2. Good

3. Average

4. Poor

5. Undecided

24. Along the same lines, which of the following responses best describes how you thought you would "fit in" the college environment _before_ you began classes last fall: (Read choices.)

1. Very Well

2. Well

3. Average

4. Poorly

5. Undecided

25. How do you _now_ view your chances of "fitting in" the college environment: (Read choices.)

1. Very Good

2. Good

3. Average

4. Poor

5. Undecided

For the second part of the survey I would like for you to take a moment and think back to the day you came to enroll at TJC for the first time. Visualizing that experience, please answer the following questions about enrollment:

26. Which of the following best describes your perception of the enrollment process last fall: (Read choices.)

    1.   Very easy

    2.   Easy

    3.   Acceptable

    4.   Difficult

    5.   Undecided

27. What aspects of the enrollment process did you feel the college handled particularly well? (Feel free not to list any points.)

    1.   No response

    2.   Response

28. What aspects of the enrollment process at TJC did you feel needed improvement? (Again, feel free not to list points.)

    1.   No response

    2.   Response

29-30. Were there any people, offices, publications or procedures that were of particular help to you during the enrollment process? (Feel free not to respond.) (Wait for their response and if hesitant say, "I have some options from which you might want to choose, but feel free to reject them if they don't fit." May choose two.)

1. Registration	6. Catalog
2. Counseling	7. Student Handbook
3. Campus Nurse	8. Schedule
4. Student Activities Office	9. Can't think of any
	A. Other _____
5. Telephone registration	

31-33. What additional resources could we offer to assist returning women when they enroll for the first time? (Wait for their responses. If hesitant, then say "Again, I have some options for you. Feel free to reject them if they are not appropriate." May choose three.)

1. Childcare

2. Counselor for returning women students

3. Special enrollment or information area

4. Orientation for returning women students

5. Maps/Guides

6. Financial Information

7. Enrolling with other returning women students

8. Step-by-step explanation of enrollment

9. More convenient hours for enrollment

A. More convenient locations for enrollment

B. Easier parking/transportation

C. Cannot think of any additional resources

D. Other _____

34. What advice would you give to a friend who was coming to enroll for the first time to help them get through the enrollment process easily? (Feel free not to respond.)

1. No response

2. Response

Now I would like for you to think back to your experience last fall <u>as a new student</u>. Visualizing that experience, please answer the following questions about what it was like to take on once again the role of student.

35. Which of the following best describes your perception of your experience as a student last fall: (Read choices.)

1. Very easy

2. Easy

3. Average

4. Difficult

5. Undecided

36. What aspects of your experience as a student last fall were particularly productive or positive? (Feel free not to list points.)

1. No response

2. Response

37. What aspects of your experience as a student did you feel were not productive or perhaps even detrimental? (Again, feel free not to list points.)

1. No response

2. Response

38-39. Were there any people, offices, publications or procedures that were of particular help to you during that first semester? (Again feel free not to respond if that is appropriate.) (Wait for their response. If hesitant, then

say, "I have some possibilities for you that may or may not fit." May choose two.)

1.	Registration	7.	Faculty
2.	Counseling	8.	Staff
3.	Campus Nurse	9.	Other students
4.	Student Activities Office	A.	Labs (Developmental)
		B.	Cannot think of any resource
5.	LRC (Library)		
6.	Division Offices	C.	Other _____

40-42. What additional resources would be of significant assistance to the adult woman during her first semester as a returning woman student? (Wait for their responses. If hesitant, then say, "Again, I have some options for you to consider." May choose three.)

1. Childcare

2. Counselor for returning women students

3. Special area or room for returning women students

4. Orientation program for returning women students

5. Financial aid

6. More convenient class times

7. More convenient class locations

8. More sections offered of desired classes

9. Easier parking/transportation

A. More convenient office hours

B. Security assistance

C. Cannot think of any resources

D. Other _____

43. What advice would you give to other returning women students to help them complete their first semester back in school? (Feel free not to respond.)

    1. No response

    2. Response

The last part of the survey addresses a variety of areas, but covers several points I feel are important to this study.

44. How many classes did you enroll in last fall?

    1. One   4. Four

    2. Two   5. Five

    3. Three   6. Six or more

45. Did you find it necessary to drop or withdraw from any of those classes?

    1. Yes

    2. No

46. Was there anything the college could have done to prevent that drop or withdrawal from class?

    0. Not applicable

    1. No

    2. Yes _____

47. What adjustments did you have to make in your daily routine in order to return to school?

    1. No response

    2. Response

48. How did your family and friends feel about your return to school when you first came to TJC? (Read choices.)

1. Very Supportive   4. Negative

2. Supportive   5. Undecided

3. "O.K."   6. Other _____

49. Has there been a change in their opinion?

1. Yes

2. No

50. What was the change in view? (Read choices if hesitant.)

0. Not applicable   4. Negative

1. Very supportive   5. Undecided

2. Supportive   6. Other _____

51-52. What group or person has provided you the most "moral support" in your decision to become a student once again? (Read choices. May choose two.)

1. Husband   7. Significant other

2. Children   8. Faculty (TJC)

3. Friends   9. Staff (TJC)

4. Classmates   A. Co-workers

5. Parents   B. Boss

6. Self   C. Other _____

53. Are there special ways that you feel you were supported that you would like to share? (Feel free not to respond if appropriate.)

1. No response

2. Response

54. Are there areas where you expected to receive support but did not find it or got a negative response instead? (Again, feel free not to respond.)

1.   No response

2.   Response

55.   Have you observed any difference, positive or negative, in the response of faculty and staff at TJC to you as an adult female student versus their response to an eighteen-year-old student?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

56.   If "yes", what was the difference in treatment?

    0.   Not applicable

    1.   Better treatment

    2.   Worse treatment

    3.   Other _____

57.   If an orientation program for returning women students had been offered to you when you first returned to school, would you have attended?

    1.   Yes

    2.   No

    3.   Undecided

58.   If "no" or "undecided": Why would you have chosen not to attend?

    0.   Not applicable

    1.   Didn't feel needed help

    2.   Too busy

    3.   Someone "showed me the ropes"

    4.   Didn't want to be labeled or given special treatment

5.   Other _____

59. If "yes": Which format for the orientation program do you think would be most beneficial to you and to other women? (Read choices.)

  0.   Not applicable

  1.   A half-day session

  2.   A day-long session

  3.   A one hour semester credit class

  4.   A one hour noncredit class held before enrollment

  5.   Other _____

60. Do you have other ideas about information that should be included in an orientation program that you would like to suggest?

  1.   No response

  2.   Response

61. Have you met other returning women students who did not complete their coursework for the semester?

  1.   Yes

  2.   No

  3.   Do not know

62-63. Could you identify reasons they dropped their classes at TJC? (If hesitant, read choices. May choose two.)

  1.   Work schedule changed

  2.   No childcare

  3.   Financial problems

  4.   Classes did not meet needs

  5.   Did not like instructor

6. Transportation problems

7. Lacked background needed for classes

8. School took more time than anticipated

9. Felt intimidated by other students

A. Enrolled in too many hours

B. Family disapproval

C. Do not know

D. Other _____

64-66. What other things would you like to suggest to me as areas of concern for returning women at TJC. If hesitant, say "Again, I have some possibilities that may or may not fit.") (Read choices. May choose three.)

1. Safety

2. Parking/Transportation

3. Making friends with peers

4. Financial aid

5. Career Counseling

6. Family approval/involvement

7. Being accepted by younger students

8. Being accepted by faculty/staff

9. Learning to set priorities

A. Developing study skills

B. Comfortable place to study

C. Help getting a job

D. "Learning the ropes"

E. All/several of these areas

F. No suggestions

G.   Other _____

I certainly appreciate the time you took to talk with me
today/this evening. If you would like a copy of the survey
results, stop by the Student Activities Office on any TJC
campus during the second week in June.

If I can be of assistance to you in your future
contacts with the college, feel free to let me know. Thank
you again for your help. Good bye.

VITA

Barbara Claire Slagle

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: FIRST SEMESTER NEEDS OF REENTRY FEMALE
STUDENTS AT TULSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Seminole, Oklahoma, September 19, 1947, the daughter of Donald and Joyce Slagle.

Education: Graduated from Memorial High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in May, 1965; received Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education from the University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in May, 1970; completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in July, 1985.

Professional Experience: Teacher of speech and drama, Edison Junior High School, 1970-1979; Business and Industry Representative, Tulsa Junior College, 1979-1982; Assistant to the Director of Student Activities, Metro Campus, Tulsa Junior College, 1983-1984; Director of Student Activities, Southeast Campus, Tulsa Junior College, 1984-1985.

Professional Organizations: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators; National Council on Student Development, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges; Southwest Association of Student Personnel Administrators; and Oklahoma College Personnel Association.

Honor Society: National Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi