

THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT'S DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH HER  
UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is on an expanding and increasingly active sub-group of university students: mature women. For instance, between 1951 and 1970, the number of women college students over the age of 25 has increased from 46,000 to 409,000, an 889 percent rate of increase (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1971, p. 11). This rate exceeds that of any other age group of either sex.

Today, women are being observed more than ever. Experts study them for traditional role playing functions, female characteristics, and cultural and psychological behavior patterns. They are assayed in historical perspectives in terms of their relationships with men, with children, and with society at large.

Women are seeking a new self-image.

They want equal recognition and a hand in pursuing their destiny as individuals, utilizing their uniqueness: their humanity. They are, in fact, part of a total humanistic revolution involving all persons--Black, Brown, Indian, the handicapped of any age--whose potential is denied. Women no longer wish to be isolated from the mainstream of American life. They seek a working model which solves basic problems in human relationships (Richmond, 1972, p. 33).

Sandler (1975, p. 15), Director of the Project on the Status of Women for the Association of American Colleges, explained in a newspaper interview that the appearance of these special needs for women is:



that colleges are trying to enroll new students because of the drop in enrollment caused by such things as the decreased birth rate and the end of the draft. Late bloomers, lifelong learners, retrainees, job-upgrading, housewives, senior citizens, drop-outs, stop-outs are all potential consumers of higher education. Colleges and universities faced with declining enrollments can very well turn to this largely untapped market.

Certainly, these are not the sole reasons why mature women are desirable academic community members. For the mature woman is a highly motivated individual and is seen to be very serious about her academic pursuits (Halfter, 1972, p. 64), and, in terms of grade measurements, she is doing well academically (Richter and Whipple, 1972, p. 37).

Among people 25 years of age or older, there are 71 million high school graduates who either never started or never finished college (Roelfs, 1976, p. 5). Some 25 million people in this age group are already continuing their education on a part-time basis, but fewer than one in nine of them attends a college or university. In fact, only one-sixth of the people who express interest in further education look to universities and colleges for it.

Recent literature suggests that these women students may experience special problems in returning to student life and may have needs for special preventative or developmental outreach programming to facilitate their educational careers. Esperson (1975, p. 3) states:

Mature women have been considered different from the regular college-age population due to the fact that they have a very different lifestyle. College is but one of their occupations: most college-age women see their educations as a full-time commitment. Most mature women approach their educations on a part-time basis, dividing their time between studies, homes and/or jobs. However, they may also differ in other ways. They may have different values, different interests, and different attitudes in regard to their studies and to life in general.

Many mature women, desirous of furthering their education, have difficulties overcoming the many "internal" and "external" obstacles they must face if they are to enter post-secondary occupational and educational programs. In their concern about their age and the "appropriateness" of certain goals, women either limit their expression of career interest or reject the possibility of further schooling for themselves (Chitayat, 1976, p. 4).

Another factor militating against women's pursuit of further education is the dearth of special assistance when they seek admission, financial aid and guidance. Thus the removal of economic, political and legal barriers to women's achievements may be insufficient without simultaneously removing internal and external barriers that prevent women from reaching their full potential (Cohen, 1976, p. 4). It is probable that mature women of high ability are the largest group of well-qualified people who are not attending college. At a time when decreased college enrollments are predicted, there is a need for those in post-secondary education to extend their services to this new and largely untapped group (Eckard, 1977, p. 8).

Insecurity in returning to college, success with her studies, and her ability to compete with younger students are three attitudes which are known of the mature woman student (Taines, 1973, p. 17). As Glass and Harshberger (1974, p. 213) wrote in a recent article:

Psychologically, the middle-age adult student, trying to operate within a youth culture, may develop a general sense of worthlessness. Youth is valued and he does not have it. By his entrance into joint learning ventures with younger people, he feels that he has admitted to his lack of wisdom at a time when he feels he should be shifting his emphasis to valuable wisdom over physical powers.

There are many adult education programs. Such programs might enrich deficit-ridden institutions but are worthless to career aspirants. If a woman desires a serious education she has to attend a conventional university, having no choice but to matriculate in an alien institution, a place designed for the young. College is a lonely place for those who have no peers (Margolis, 1974, p. 36).

The distress which now afflicts so many American women will only be alleviated when they are able to perceive themselves, and to act, as complete human beings with a wide range of acceptable social objectives open to them (Newman et al., 1971, p. 76). Newman further states, "whatever choice a woman makes, she should do so with the confidence that she, not society, is controlling her own life."

Thus, the trend in higher education is that of encouraging mature women to complete their education. A problem that may exist in institutions of higher learning is that there has been little change in courses and programs to accommodate the needs of these returning mature adults. Thus, this research is going to examine the question: Are four regional universities in Oklahoma meeting the needs of the returning mature woman student?

#### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if selected aspects of the undergraduate programs in four Oklahoma regional universities are meeting the needs of the returning mature woman student. More specifically this study will concern itself with the views of students' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the formal higher education programs of their specific universities.

This study will provide data to be used in planning programs to meet the needs for mature woman students returning to universities.

The specific objectives for the study are as follows:

1. To identify mature woman students in four regional universities to provide input for the investigation.
2. To ascertain the degree of satisfaction with the educational environment for the undergraduate mature woman student returning to school and selected personal variables.
3. To analyze data to determine barriers and facilitators in meeting personal and educational goals as expressed by the returning woman student and the degree of satisfaction expressed by them.
4. To determine if differences exist between the degree of satisfaction with college life of the mature woman who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education.
5. To make recommendations for further research and programming.

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are to be tested in the study:

H<sub>1</sub>: There will be no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of the returning mature woman student and selected personal variables as age, marital status, number and ages of children, child care arrangements, income, place of residence, work experience, present work, race, current class level, major, number of years between periods of enrollment, institution, reason for current attendance, and financing education.

H<sub>2</sub>: There will be no significant difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature students and the barriers

and facilitators they identified.

H<sub>3</sub>: There will be no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of the mature woman student who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education.

#### Assumptions

The following conditions are assumed for this study:

1. The participants in the study gave accurate information.
2. Barriers unique to the mature woman students returning to undergraduate school exist due to conjunction of student, family, social, and institutional roles.
3. Barriers and facilitators were identified by investigating and classifying the expressed concerns of a sample of mature woman students.
4. The participants were better able to express a degree of satisfaction with their educational environment as a result of experiencing academia for a full term.

#### Limitations

The following limitations are cited for this study:

1. All participants were women.
2. The conclusions are only valid for the population from which the sample was taken.
3. Implications of this study may not be applicable to the community colleges or to other schools in other regions of the United States due to differences in perceived value of education and types of courses offered.
4. The criteria used for choosing the sample were: (a) enrolled

in six credit hours, (b) age 25 or older, and (c) classified as an undergraduate.

5. The participants were chosen using the criteria by personnel designated by each university.

#### Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for this study. Other terms or phrases were considered to be self-explanatory.

1. Returning Women Students are women students who return to school after an interruption in their formal education. They may be returning to continue college work already begun at a previous time or they may be entering college for the first time since completion of high school. For the purpose of this study, returning women students were defined as those women enrolled at four regional Oklahoma universities during Spring, 1979, who were aged 25 or older (Bonk, 1977, p. 7).

2. Degree of Satisfaction is defined as the level of contentment or enjoyment with one's total education environment. Further, Webster defines satisfaction to be the "relatively quiescent condition resulting from the fulfillment of any need or desire" (Webster, 1948, p. 2220). Therefore, degree of satisfaction is the condition which results from the relative gratification of one's educational goals.

3. Barriers are obstructions or anything that hinders or blocks a person from attaining his or her goals (Webster, 1971, p. 66). Thus, barriers, in terms of this study, represent obstacles which prevent the returning mature woman student from attaining her educational goals.

4. Facilitators are those phenomena which ease and free from

difficulty the performance of specified tasks (Webster, 1971, p. 314). Hence, the facilitators for returning mature women students ease the re-entry into the university environment and the achievement of academic goals.

5. Four-year Colleges and Universities are colleges and universities that offer programs embracing freshman through senior preparation in a particular discipline (Lyman, 1975, p. 6).

6. Regional Universities encompass the four specific universities established by the Oklahoma legislature in the geographically diverse corners of Oklahoma.

7. Initial College Entrance refers to first-time college attendance. Such enrollment may occur immediately after high school or after a period of years following high school graduation.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this review of literature, an attempt was made to uncover writings and research as they applied to mature adult women and their initial or re-entry into the academic environment of higher education. While considerable information was available concerning the general condition of women, there was not an abundance of writings and research relative to women and their re-entry into the academia. The search, therefore, was an attempt to assemble information concerned with the literature relative to studies dealing with (1) contemporary changes in women's roles, (2) priority needs of mature women, (3) barriers to higher education, and (4) counteractant programs.

#### Contemporary Changes in Women's Roles

Women in our society were dramatically influenced by contemporary social and technological changes. These changes altered the role of women and had an impact on college and university enrollment. First, today's women, through the Women's Rights Movement, became conscious of their own right to self-development as persons. The various types of higher status employment, usually gained only after completion of some form of higher education, encouraged women to become more independent or self-supporting (Kelman, 1974, p. 5). The U. S. Department of Labor (1979, p. 5) reported a direct relationship between educational



attainment and labor force participation for women--the higher the educational level attained, the more likely they were to be engaged in paid employment, especially among contemporary women of middle age. Secondly, the idea that career development was a life-long process, that at almost any stage of life educational and vocational changes may be made, had gathered both popular and theoretical support (Super, 1953, p. 5).

There were many technological changes which resulted in smaller families, less time-consuming domestic work, and a longer life span. These facts, when juxtaposed to the lives of men, contributed to the discontinuities of the modern woman's life. Most married women lived one-third of their lives after the youngest child was married (LaFollette, 1956, pp. 513-516). Women felt the need to be productive and creative people during this prolonged adult life when their children were no longer dependent and their husbands were involved in a well-established career pattern (Schade, 1973). One of the major changes in the life styles of American women has been brought about by the dramatic decline of the birth rate. The average total number of births expected by women between the ages of 18 and 24, during their lifetime, was 3.2 in 1965, but only 2.3 in 1972. The nation's birth rate in 1974 was down to 14.8 per thousand of population--lower even than the level reached in the depression of the 1930s. Whereas wives between 18 and 24, in 1950, were most often expected to have four or more children, in 1972 the commonly expected number was two (U. S. Department of Labor, 1975, p. 64). It is evident that non-traditional roles began to manifest themselves more frequently as one of women's traditional roles declined.

Concurrent with the decline in birth rate has been the increase of life expectancy for women, a fact which has increased the number of years women have to contribute to the work force. Historically, the life expectancy of women extended only a short period beyond their child-rearing years. However, the life expectancy of a girl born in 1971 is 74.8 years (U. S. Department of Labor, 1975, p. 64). A longer life certainly allows women to fill many expanded roles in society. For example, by age 32, in 1966, the average woman's last child was in the first grade, and she still had a life expectancy of 43 more years (Lurie, 1974, p. 312).

Stages and shifting roles have governed the typical pattern of feminine educational-career development. Initially, on the average, between the ages of 18 and 21, a young woman attended school or was employed until she got married. Then she generally shifted her lifestyle to domestic role playing and served her family until her youngest child, born by the time she was 30 years old, had few dependency needs. This was, once again, a period of transition and redefinition (Harbeson, 1967; Sharma, 1974, p. 6). Brandenburg (1974, p. 17) stated that "middle motherhood," typically the years between 35 and 40, is a critical period for women, a time of identity crisis and a second chance for career exploration.

For these women, employment is a vehicle to self-development, to paid employment, and to making a contribution to society commensurate with their personal potential. For other women, marital separation and divorce were the propelling forces sending them back to the labor market and back to school to prepare for vocations (Lewis, 1968).

Women in their 30's and 40's were returning to school in large

numbers (Sharma, 1974, p. 2). A survey by Kelman of registrars at several colleges and universities supported this theory. Kelman (1974, p. 6) reported:

The percentage of women students beyond the traditional age at Oregon State University is 6.2; at the University of Arizona, 6.34; Eastern New Mexico University, 6.7; Florida State University, 7.4; California State University at Chico, 7.5; University of Wyoming, 8.15; Indiana State University, 9.9; North Texas State College, 13.2; University of Washington, 13.5.

The average percentage of mature women in the total student population for these nine colleges and universities was 8.89 percent. Thus, older women comprised a large minority group on many campuses.

As a student, the mature woman may be viewed as a "minority" in that she may be institutionally and personally handicapped. Most college programs today were conceived for young students, a conception which suits the male pattern of educational-career development, since men seldom returned to college during their middle years, unless the return was job-related and financed by their employers (Kelman, 1974, p. 6).

The Carnegie Commission (1971, p. 19) emphasized that older students had the potential of contributing positively to the academic and campus community. The Commission has adopted the following attitude concerning mature students in higher education:

Higher education is now prejudiced against older students. They should be welcome instead. Too often they are looked upon as inferior. Yet older students will help end the in loco parentis atmosphere of many campuses, add maturity to discussion, and make a more balanced community out of the college.

Frequently, when women decided to return to school, they experienced certain problems which concerned all members of the academic

community: faculty, counselors, and student personnel administrators (Feldman, 1973, p. 10). However, studies revealed that these mature women students, due to their higher motivation, generally were academically more successful than younger students and were more likely to make immediate use of their training (Lewis, 1968, p. 58).

#### Priority Needs of Mature Women

The first priority in the nation's commitment to equal educational opportunity for women should be placed on changing policies in pre-elementary, elementary, and secondary school programs that tended to deter women from aspiring to equality with men in their educational and career goals (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, p. 6). In 1971, the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare recommended a national effort be made to broaden and diversify the participation of women in higher education and to make higher education more responsive to women's needs. The first and clearest course of action was to end all discrimination on grounds of sex. Women should be admitted to all levels of academic study in all fields on an equal basis with men (Newman et al., 1971, p. 12). A further statement was:

Women's rights have become a national issue. Consciousness of the extent of discrimination is increasing. Yet our study found that discrimination against women, in contrast to that against minorities, is still overt and socially acceptable within the academic community. We conclude, therefore, that Federal and State governments have a particularly important role to play. Governmental leadership is needed in publicizing information concerning the extent of discrimination. Governmental programs, such as scholarships to students and contracts with institutions, are important vehicles for ending discrimination and should be vigorously employed.

Another course of action required of higher education was to lead the effort to understand and rethink the role of women in American

society. Achieving equality for women involved not only specific institutional changes, but also subtle but fundamental changes in attitudes. Because of the leverage they exert on all of society, colleges and universities have a greater responsibility than other institutions to play an exemplary and leadership role (Newman et al., 1975, p. 35).

More than 35 million women are employed in the United States today. Approximately 60 percent of these women were working for compelling economic reasons, and one in ten women at the national level was listed as a single "head of household." More than 12 million children in America were solely dependent on women for their support (California Commission on the Status of Women, 1976, p. 63).

Today, increasing numbers of women are realizing that there can be an additional stage in their life plans. These were the women who were joining the labor force or entering the college classroom (Durcholz, 1975, p. 68). But today's adult women are part of a new "lost generation." They grew up expecting that home and family would be a satisfying lifetime goal, only to find that somewhere along the way the rules were changed (Zeltner, 1975, p. 24).

Is there a "triggering point"--a crisis, an event, or an influential person--that precipitates enrollment of mature women in school? The most significant factor that was identified, one that was common to women of many ages and lifestyles, was a sense of emptiness, of not fulfilling vocational goals. Most women said that they returned to school when they needed personal stimulation or a change in their daily routine. Some made these decisions out of a need for what they called self-preservation (Folland, Pickett, and Hoeflin, 1977, p. 29).

As women have grown more aware of their common interests, they increasingly have organized to advance them. Many women came to view themselves as an oppressed and exploited minority, sharing the disadvantaged status of racial and ethnic minorities. Other women viewed themselves as essentially privileged, but nonetheless sharing common interests that can be advanced, like those of bankers and businessmen, by moderate forms of collective action (Sexton, 1975, p. 149).

If the American woman is to be prepared for meeting the growing demands of the new roles she must fill, the status of women in our society, especially in the areas of education and occupations, must be raised to the level of status now enjoyed by men (Alexandra, 1976, p. 9). One of the classic passages on the nature of the university is Cardinal Newman's statement (1976, p. 122), "A university is . . . an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill." The same concept was expressed by John Dewey (1916, p. 89), who said, "What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon destroys our democracy."

Most of the growing number of women who return to school after an interruption in their formal education viewed their return as a very serious step. They had distinctive needs on both psychological and practical levels, and meeting those needs required a special effort not only because more women are returning to school, but also because there has been widespread insensitivity to the needs of these women and because these women constitute a valuable resource that no school or society can afford to neglect (Brandenburg, 1974, p. 11).

## Barriers to Higher Education

What barriers do mature women face when entering the higher educational system? There were many which concerned all members of the educational system. Feldman (1973, p. 7) cited the following:

Need for financial aid, institutional barriers to entrance and success, difficulties in managing their traditional domestic roles as they shape new social roles, and personality problems, especially the lack of positive self-concept.

In many institutions, the returning woman student was handicapped by loss of undergraduate credits earned too long ago, scheduling of classes at times which conflicted with family responsibilities, and age limitations on many professional programs (Richter and Whipple, 1972, p. 7).

Career and educational development for women was seldom a simple progression and growth as it generally was for men. Women were expected to give their energies to maintaining the lives of their families rather than creating lives of their own (Verheyden and Hilliard, 1973, p. 15). Women lived with a "cultural mandate to give priority to the family even though they may be working" (Cosser and Rokoff, 1971, p. 15). They further stated that, having been socialized to believe that the needs of others come before theirs, women experienced both guilt and fear when they contemplated taking steps to enhance their education and career potential.

The mature woman who sought to develop her skills and search for a career outside the home frequently contended with a lack of support (usually covertly expressed) from her husband (Entwisely and Greenberger, 1970, p. 15). A significant proportion of males, studied at ages ranging from ninth grade through "married professional," held

negative views towards their wives maintaining the dual roles of career and marriage (Nelson and Goldman, 1971, p. 11).

In addition to obstacles created by sex role socialization, the mature woman faced fundamental barriers when she attempted to re-enter the job market after years of absence. After venturing into the world in low-paying jobs requiring minimal skills, they often found a renewed desire to improve their position through education (Chitayat, 1976, p. 5).

In order to upgrade skills that were lying dormant for many years or to develop new skills, the mature woman turned to the college curriculum, where she faced a series of institutional barriers. Ekstrom (1972, p. 36) summarized some of the problems of re-entry women in post-secondary education. These concerned: inflexible time schedule; lack of child care facilities; lack of special counseling and orientation programs; lack of financial aid for part-time students; negative attitudes toward women generally and the older woman particularly; and, biased counseling.

Chitayat (1975, p. 13) found that the recurring problems of the mature woman participating in their pre-admission counseling program were related to their indecision concerning career goals, anxiety about their capacity to succeed in school while simultaneously managing home responsibilities, and lack of information about career and educational options. Especially important to the fuller and more successful participation of women in educational programs were: (1) class scheduling suited to the needs of housewives; (2) academic and vocational counseling; (3) part-time studies; (4) a standardized system which will permit full transfer of credits earned in other institutions; (5) the



abolition of time limits on credits earned; (6) outreach--to recruit, welcome, and orient women into predominantly male studies; (7) credit for life experience; (8) credit for independent study, correspondence in lieu of class attendance, television instruction; (9) the optional substitution of tests and examinations for class attendance; (10) the organization of women's clubs within the field of study or profession; and (11) the substitution of weekend or one-week seminars for daily or weekly class attendance (Sexton, 1975, p. 319).

Verheyden and Hillard (1975) described some of the issues for re-entry women, and noted that their decisions often included considerations of family responsibility, time, and financing of education. Full financial support and adequate re-entry counseling may be decisive in enabling women to take the first and difficult steps in re-entry (Tittler and Dinkler, 1977, p. 539).

In an earlier review, Ekstrom (1972, p. 577) examined the literature on barriers to women's participation in post-secondary education. In her view on barriers, Ekstrom categorized the causes of women's lower participation rates, compared with men, as institutional, situational, and dispositional. Institutional factors that excluded women from post-secondary education included sex and age quotas in admission practices, financial aid practices, regulations, deficiencies in curriculum planning, insufficient student personnel services, and faculty/staff attitudes. Cross (1976, p. 27) noted that the expansionist years had relatively little effect on the practices of the average faculty member. Most teachers waited patiently for the machinery to move each new wave of students into their relatively unchanging classrooms. As a recent Carnegie report noted, college instruction remained pretty much

as it was 300 years ago (Carnegie Commission, 1977, p. 51).

The second major category Ekstrom (1972, p. 537) dealt with was situational barriers. The situations considered were sociological, familial, financial, residential, and personal. Fewer women from lower socioeconomic groups were likely to participate in post-secondary education than males. The attitudes of husbands and family responsibilities were also likely to deter women's entry to college. For women who were heads of households, financial support was likely to be particularly crucial. Personal circumstances that acted as barriers included lack of qualifications for a particular school, lack of knowledge of available opportunities, and negative attitudes of parents, friends, neighbors, and employers toward continuing education.

The third major category of barriers was labelled dispositional by Ekstrom (1972). These included attitudes, motivation, and personality. Women's views of appropriate sex roles and their ambivalence about education, intellectual activity, and careers were obstacles to re-entering education and adequate planning in the earlier high school years.

Another fundamental barrier may reside in the re-entry woman's basic education. If a woman aspired to a more skilled or responsible job, inadequate basic education proved a serious handicap. Girls were not encouraged or taught to look ahead to the different directions their lives may take (Tittler and Dinkler, 1977, p. 539). Over a third of the participants surveyed in continuing education programs for women reported that inadequate preparation in math and science caused difficulties in academic work (Astin, 1976, p. 395).

Recent federal guidelines, notably Title IX of the Higher Education Amendment Act of 1972, barred sex discrimination in admissions,

financial aid, curriculum, and awards for institutions receiving any federal monies (Federal Register, 1975, p. 537). However, the barriers that affected re-entry women even more directly than these were reactions to their age, lack of financial aid for part-time students, and difficulties in transferring credits and establishing credits for out-of-college experiences (Lockheed, 1975, p. 537).

There were many barriers to re-entering education for the mature woman. Institutions rarely provided climates that assisted the woman who had family responsibilities and who needed financial assistance. Many subcultures frowned on a woman renewing educational interests. Also, women themselves frequently had low aspirations and self-expectations which posed self-inflicted barriers. Feelings of guilt, conflict, and ambivalence about the proper roles for women were major barriers for many women (Leland, 1976, p. 7).

#### Counteractant Programs

A search of the literature revealed several re-entry programs devised to provide supportive and encouraging atmosphere as well as convenient physical arrangements, that enabled mature adult women to return to the classroom. However, more community junior colleges than state and private four-year colleges and universities were recognizing the problem and striving to attract and meet the needs of the returning mature woman student (Margolis, 1977, p. 34).

One program that served as an important support for returning students at Duke University was the tutorial group. It was the program director's dream: low cost, successful, and mutually beneficial to sponsors, teachers, and participants. The program matched typical

undergraduate students' interest in being involved in a noncourse endeavor and the needs of returning students for study skills and acceptance in the classroom (Buckey, Freeark, and O'Barr, 1976, p. 21).

During 1974-1975 the Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education (IRDOE) implemented the New Occupational Student: The Mature Adult Woman (NOSMAW '75, also referred to as "Women in a Changing World" program), at two New York community colleges (Chitayat and Carr, 1975, p. 16). The project was funded by the State Education Department under a Vocational Education Act grant. The purpose of the program was to encourage mature women to explore their educational and vocational potential.

The Women's Re-entry to Education Program (WREP) at San Jose City College was a one-year program designed for urban women who wanted to return to school. It was different from the other stereotyped occupations reserved for women and minority groups. WREP offered a general education that served as a foundation for diverse careers, educational, and/or personal goals. The first semester courses included English, Sociology, Health, Career Planning, and Study Skills. During the second semester, the students were required to take Speech and Biology in addition to one of several electives. The response to this program was overwhelming (Alexandra, 1976, p. 11).

The University of Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women was designed to provide the nation with additional trained manpower (educated women), and to help women find personal happiness through self-development and growth. The plan's three stages were: (1) discussion and preparation for women's multiple roles, at the

undergraduate stage; (2) continuing education individually tailored for the young wife and mother; and (3) vocational and personal guidance for the mature woman, with special scheduling and summer classes emphasized (Sanders, 1961, pp. 270-278).

There were other institutions that developed special programs for women. A partial list has been compiled by the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor (U. S. Department of Labor, 1968, pp. 15-73). In addition to this list, the Women's Bureau lists related services or programs for adult women (U. S. Department of Labor, 1968, pp. 75-86). Higher education and the federal government have shown great concern for the education of adult women.

Driscoll (1975, p. 2) reported on the results of a survey on the assessment of the status of returning women students. She stated:

At colleges and universities with sizeable enrollment or returning women students, these women have banded together to form their own organization. Members of the group help each other with their problems and give each other support. The organization thus receives more formal recognition from other parts of the institution. At Penn State, these returning women have created the group called Returning Women Students. In an effort to better identify the concerns of returning women students, the Career Development and Placement Center surveyed members of the Returning Women Students organization during the Spring term, 1975. Although all women who have returned to school at Penn State may not be members, it was felt that the Returning Women Students organization would contain in its membership a very representative sample.

Driscoll (1975, p. 17) further noted that suggestions aired by the returning women students indicated that they felt some adaption on their part might be necessary. However, the institution also needed to be educated so that it might better adapt to the "new" group of students. The women wanted concrete, practical information and programs. Their input into programs and services should not be overlooked.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### Introduction

This chapter will describe the methods and procedures, including selection of instrument, data collection and statistical procedures for data analysis. The study grew out of a need for more descriptive data concerning the major concerns of returning mature women students and their degree of satisfaction with the formal higher education programs of their specific universities.

The principal objectives of this study were to (1) identify mature women students in four regional universities to provide input for the investigation, (2) ascertain the degree of satisfaction with the educational environment for the undergraduate mature woman student returning to school and selected personal variables, (3) determine barriers and facilitators in meeting personal and educational goals as expressed by the returning woman student and the degree of satisfaction expressed by them, (4) determine if differences exist between the degree of satisfaction of the mature woman student who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education. The fifth objective which was to make recommendations for further research and programming was utilized for long range planning in meeting the needs of this special group.

Officials in the four colleges selected were eager to receive these data. In an interview, they expressed the hope that such information would be useful to them in several ways: (1) planning meaningful programs for returning women students; (2) scheduling particular classes at more appropriate times; (3) evaluating certain aspects of their current programs; (4) suggesting additional services that should be provided; (5) suggesting possible new recruiting and admission procedures; (6) clarifying some of the problems encountered by returning students; and (7) revealing the objectives of these special students and their future needs.

The timing of the questionnaire was also particularly important. Many colleges were beginning to face declining enrollments. The sluggish economy and the declining college-age population were each partially responsible for this continuing phenomenon. Concurrent with the decline in normal student age enrollments is the increase in the number of women returning to school. In view of these recent developments, women returning to college were an asset to their respective institutions. Therefore, their needs were of prime concern to the colleges and universities admitting them.

The methods and procedures used to survey the women in the four regional universities who returned to higher education are presented in the following pages. The following topics are included: (1) Research Design; (2) Population; (3) Instrumentation; (4) Data Collection Process; and (5) Analysis of Data.

#### Research Design

This study was developed as an intercollegiate survey utilizing

descriptive research. Best (1977, p. 116) stated that:

A descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions.

Descriptive research enables the researcher to deal with variable relationships and relate them to present conditions. Descriptive research has various methods available for use in research. The method used by the researcher in this study is the survey method.

Survey research is defined as:

that branch of social scientific investigation that studies large and small populations (or universes) by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables (Kerlinger, 1964, p. 393).

Survey research enables the researcher to select a sample of a population for study and make generalizations to the population from which the sample was drawn. Thus a sampling of a population may provide the same information with more speed and efficiency, less cost and as much or more accuracy as a survey of the entire population would reveal.

Compton and Hall (1972, p. 139) reported that:

purposeful surveys which are well-planned and analyzed have an important place in home economics research. Their principal contribution is in describing current practices or beliefs with the intent of making intelligent plans for improving conditions or processes in a particular local situation.

Good described the primary function of the survey method of research as the collection of information concerning current conditions. "Data are gathered through questionnaires, score cards, interviews, check lists, etc." (Good, 1973, p. 577).



The present study was a survey of returning mature university women students in four regional Oklahoma universities. The persons who participated volunteered to answer the questionnaire distributed by the designated university officials. The criterion variable was the degree of satisfaction with their collegiate environment. This variable was then related to selected variables concerning personal data, family data, data concerning attitudes, barriers and facilitators with the school, and initial or returning college entrance.

#### Population and Sample

The returning women students who participated in this survey, born before January 1, 1952, were enrolled in a selected Oklahoma regional university during the spring term of 1979. A questionnaire seeking basic demographic and sociological information was distributed to selected female students over 25 years of age who were classified as undergraduates and enrolled in six or more semester hours.

With a broad geographic spectrum and with each university located in one of the four corners of the state, the selected regional colleges within the state system of Oklahoma colleges and universities appeared to have the desired location and characteristics (predominantly rural and less than 6,000 population). The four colleges, from which the sample population was selected, alphabetically listed were, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, located at Tahlequah, Oklahoma; Northwestern Oklahoma State University, located at Alva, Oklahoma; Southeastern Oklahoma State University, located at Durant, Oklahoma; and Southwestern Oklahoma State University, located at Weatherford, Oklahoma.

The universities were randomly assigned a letter and will be identified by letter throughout the analysis, as A, B, C, and D.

The sample which was chosen by the designated administration official in each university, using the criteria established by the researcher, encompassed 68 mature women enrolled at one university, 50 enrolled at another university, 105 and 126 enrolled at the two remaining universities. Each of the selected colleges represented similar, yet racially and economically diversified, student populations as well as having varied programs to meet the requirements of the state system of Oklahoma colleges and universities. Additional information about these four institutions is found in Appendix A.

#### Instrumentation

To obtain information about women students returning to college, this investigator decided to use a questionnaire type instrument to study the population within four particular geographic areas. The Returning Mature University Student Questionnaire (RMUS) was designed by the researcher following a review of relevant areas to be assessed and after current research was examined to determine the types of information needed to meet the purposes of the study. The researcher reviewed similar instruments by Page (1972), Olch and Lunneborg (1972), Domingues (1971), and Aguren (1975). Additional references were utilized which related to one or more of the relevant areas (Cope and Hannah, 1975; Doty, 1966; Durcholz and O'Connor, 1973; Epperson, 1975; Geisler and Thrush, 1975; Iffert, 1957; Nisbet and Welsh, 1972; Pace, 1972; Pace, 1974; Ruslink, 1970).

A questionnaire, developed and constructed by the researcher, was the instrument selected for use in this particular study (see Appendix B). The questionnaire is seen as "a list of planned written questions related to a particular topic, with space provided for indicating the response to each question" (Good, 1973, p. 465). Parten (1966, p. 400) suggested that "most mail questionnaires bring so few returns, and these from such a highly selected population, that the findings of such surveys are almost invariably open to question." In addition to anticipated slow response by most mail returns, it was also felt by the researcher that a more valid response could be measured if the responses to the questionnaires were tabulated near the close of a school term. Therefore, to expediate the responses, the questionnaires were distributed and collected by participating university officials. The designated university official distributed the survey, collected the survey, and mailed the completed questionnaires to the researcher near the end of April, 1979.

One of the basic purposes of the study was to develop a demographic profile of women who had returned to various levels of higher education. This information was invaluable for reaching an understanding of the specific needs of this group of mature students. Divided into three major categories, the information selected for use in the survey questionnaire included: (1) personal data and family data; (2) data concerning attitudes, barriers, and facilitators with school; and (3) effects of initial entry and re-entry into academia, as well as questions of specific interest to two of the university program planners. These three categories were particularly important because they provided both data concerning the student's background and the

student's perceptions of and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the school. With the exception of questions 60, 62, and 63, the questions of Part C were utilized only as questions of specific interest for the universities surveyed.

Prior to submitting the questionnaire to this sample, a pilot test was administered to 27 Oklahoma State University students who were members of the Mature Student Organization at Oklahoma State University. The results were used to refine the instrument. Infrequently marked, overlapping and ambiguous items were eliminated in the questionnaire revision. In some cases, items were reworded to clarify meaning.

While basic information sought by the questionnaire was retained after the field test, the questionnaire format was changed, and questions seeking new categories of information were added. The final revision of the questionnaire contained "open-ended" (fill-in-the-blank) questions, Likert scale, and check-list questions for which the respondents were asked to respond (see Appendix B).

In the spring of 1979, the mature women students participating in the survey were given the questionnaires by the university administrator. The questionnaires were distributed to classes which contained a high proportion of mature women students. Out of 485 distributed, a return of 349 usable responses constitutes a return rate of approximately 71 percent. Eighty-five were distributed to University A students. Sixty-eight questionnaires were returned (80 percent). One hundred were distributed at University B with a return of fifty (50 percent). One hundred-fifty were distributed to University C with one hundred-five returned (70 percent). University D had one hundred-fifty

distributed with one hundred twenty-six (84 percent) returned.

#### Data Collection Process

For the purposes of obtaining assistance in administering the questionnaires, a letter of introduction to the researcher was sent by the researcher's university president to the other three university presidents selected for the study asking for their cooperation in the study (Appendix C). The researcher then contacted the specific university presidents and was granted full cooperation for the study. The researcher was also given the name of a specific administrator to administer the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were distributed by the Deans of Academic Affairs or Student Affairs to all department chairmen, who in turn gave them to the teaching personnel who had mature undergraduate women in their classes. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaires explaining the purpose of the research and the time commitment required to complete the questionnaire. The letter further requested that the teacher allow time for each respondent to take and complete the questionnaire.

Each of the women who participated in the study received a letter of instruction (Appendix B) and a copy of the Returning Woman Student Questionnaire (Appendix B). A thank-you statement for participating in the study was also included on the questionnaire.

#### Analysis of Data

Chi-square was used to analyze the data. "The statistic  $X^2$  has been developed for use with data that are not expressed in measurements,

but rather in terms of the number of individuals (or objects) in each of several categories (Kolstoe, 1966, p. 209). Thus chi-square calculations are based on observed frequencies and expected frequencies. The observed frequencies will be the answers to the questionnaire items. Expected frequencies may be determined by adding "within each column, the observed frequencies for the samples to get the marginal column totals" (Spence et al., 1968, p. 202). The theory behind the use of this method is that:

If the null hypothesis is correct, i.e., if the true (expected) frequencies are the same for both samples, then combining the two samples should give us a better estimate of the true frequencies than we could get from either sample alone (pp. 201-202).

The same general method is used if there are more than two groups in the analysis. "Theoretical frequency for each cell is obtained by multiplying the total for the row containing the cell by the total for the column containing the cell and dividing by the total N" (Spence et al., 1968, pp. 203-204).

The formula for chi-square, applicable to this study because it provided a two-way analysis of nominal data, was (Bruning and Kintz, 1968, p. 209):

$$X^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

A probability of .05 was accepted as the criterion of significance for testing the hypothesis.

To analyze the data, in relation to each hypothesis, the following procedures were used. Hypothesis One stated that there will be no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of the returning

mature woman student and the selected personal variables age, marital status, number and ages of children, child care arrangements, income, place of residence, work experience, present work, race, current class level, major, number of years between periods of enrollment, institution, reason for current attendance, and financing education. To evaluate the data, comparisons were drawn for the variables and the chi-square statistical process was used in analysis because of its utility in comparing categories and indicating significant differences.

Hypothesis Two stated that there will be no significant difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature students and the barriers and facilitators they identified. In response to  $H_2$ , the "open-ended" (fill-in-the-blank) questions were sorted into related groups and then analyzed accordingly. Again, comparisons were drawn for the independent variables. The statistical analysis employed was the chi-square as a result of its utility in illustrating significant differences and comparing categories.

Hypothesis Three indicated that there will be no significant difference in the mature woman student who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education. The chi-square statistical analysis was utilized in testing  $H_3$ .

For analysis, a degree of satisfaction score had to be determined. It should be noted, before proceeding, that the questionnaire administered to all the returning mature women university students nowhere mentioned the term "degree of satisfaction." "Degree of satisfaction" was a qualitative concept which was measured in this study on the basis of responses to a number of different questions; the answers to these questions contributed to the total measure. It was therefore necessary

to transform the raw data (responses) in this manner in order to arrive at a single measurement for "degree of satisfaction." Such a transformation is described in the paragraphs below.

To determine a measurement score for degree of satisfaction, Part A of the questionnaire, which consisted of the first 35 statements, with the exception of question 20, was used to determine the respondents' degree of satisfaction with their educational environment and selected personal variables. Question 20 was not included in any of the nine groups since it was a question of specific interest for one of the universities surveyed. Since the 34 statements all related to the respondents' perception of their institution and educational goals, they were analyzed as a whole to give a satisfaction score. The procedure to determine the degree of satisfaction, identified by a statistician, was as follows: each respondent marked the degree of agreement with those statements on a scale of 1 to 8 (1=NA, 2=strongly disagree, . . . , 8=strongly agree) for each of the statements.

After all questionnaires were returned, 1 through 35, minus question 20, were grouped for analysis into nine categories based on similarity of information to be obtained (Appendix D). The nine categories were as follows: (1) campus environment, academic; (2) campus environment, social; (3) university support; (4) social support; (5) perception of self-image; (6) perception of family and personal support; (7) perception of age difference; (8) availability of financial support; (9) freedom of choice or perception of individual freedom. The scores, ranging from one to eight as indicated by each respondent on each question, were tallied for all the questions in each of the nine groups, and the average score for each group was obtained. If the



number one was circled for any reason, that score was regarded as not applicable.

To further calculate and establish a score for degree of satisfaction, a transformation of the average scores for each group was then performed. If the average was greater than or equal to six, it was assigned a value of one. If it was between six and four, not inclusive, a zero was assigned. If it was less than or equal to four, it was assigned a minus one. The result was a series of nine transformed scores for each individual (one for each of the nine groups).

The nine transformed scores were then added for a total transformed score for each individual (see Table I). The degree of satisfaction is based on this total transformed score. If the total score was less than or equal to the amount of minus seven, it was assigned a positive one which was labeled extremely dissatisfied. If the total score was between minus four and minus six, it was assigned a two and was labeled dissatisfied. If the total score was between minus three and positive three, it was given a three and labeled neutral. If the total score was between a positive four and positive six, it was given four and labeled satisfied. If the total score was greater than or equal to a positive seven, it was given a five and called extremely satisfied. This process, which involved the averaging and transformation of scores, allowed for the determination of the degree of satisfaction score. This degree of satisfaction score was then used in the testing of the hypothesis.

In summary, the process used to reach a degree of satisfaction score was as follows:

TABLE I  
ANALYSIS OF TRANSFORMATION SCORES

Total Transformed Score	Degree of Satisfaction Score	Explanation
$\leq 7$	1	Extremely Dissatisfied
$-6 \leq TS^* \leq -4$	2	Dissatisfied
$-3 \leq TS \leq 3$	3	Neutral
$4 \leq TS \leq 6$	4	Satisfied
$\geq 7$	5	Extremely Satisfied

\*TS means total transformed score.

1. Obtain actual (raw) scores (1, 2, 3, . . . , or 8) from each question. (See Appendix E.)
2. Classify each statement into nine groups based on similarity of information which were (1) campus environment, academic; (2) campus environment, social; (3) university support; (4) social support; (5) perception of self-image; (6) perception of family and personal support; (7) perceptions of age difference; (8) availability of financial support; (9) freedom of choice or perception of individual freedom.
3. Add individual scores within each group.
4. Obtain average score for each group by dividing total score by number of responses.
5. Based on the following information, assign the average score its respective value:

If score  $\geq 6$ , assign a value of 1.

If  $4 \leq \text{score} \leq 6$ , assign a value of 0.

If score  $\leq 4$ , assign a value of -1.

6. The newly assigned value becomes the transformed score for each individual group.

7. Add the transformed score to obtain the Total Transformed Score (TS).

8. Employ Table I to determine the degree of satisfaction.

9. This process is performed for each returned questionnaire.

Once the processes needed to evaluate the data were selected, a computer programming method was selected and developed. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) available at Oklahoma State University was used to process the data according to the steps outlined above and to arrive at a "degree of satisfaction" for each response to the questionnaire.

It is important to note that not one individual, based on the development of "degree of satisfaction" by total transformed scores, was determined to be "dissatisfied" or "extremely dissatisfied" with the personal variables. Every person responding was classified, according to their responses, as being "neutral," "satisfied," or "extremely satisfied." See Table II.

All questionnaire items were utilized in the analysis, with the exception of question 20 in Part A and questions 54 through 59 and 61 in Part C. These were questions of specific interest to two of the universities surveyed, and it was requested that they be placed on the questionnaire. See Appendix H.

TABLE II  
TOTAL RESPONDENTS IN CATEGORIES  
OF DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

Degree of Satisfaction	Total Respondents	Percent
Extremely Dissatisfied	0	0
Dissatisfied	0	0
Neutral	70	20
Satisfied	160	46
Extremely Satisfied	<u>119</u>	<u>34</u>
Total	349	100

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The findings for this research are described in this chapter in view of the problem of this study. The problem was to determine whether four regional universities in Oklahoma were meeting the needs of the returning mature woman student. Participants in the study responded to the Returning Mature University Woman Student Questionnaire. A probability of .05 was accepted as the criterion of significance when testing the null hypotheses. Each analysis was based on the number of women who responded to the specific item; this number varied from item to item. This chapter contains: (1) a description of the data from the instrument used in the study which characterized the total group of returning women students, and (2) a presentation of the results of the statistical analysis of the data regarding each of the null hypotheses.

#### Results Pertaining to Hypothesis One

In order to determine if there was a significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of the returning mature woman student and selected personal variables, chi-square analyses were used to examine  $H_1$ . Results of the analysis determined there was a significant difference in five of the personal variables and degree of satisfaction. No

significant differences were found among 11 of the personal variables and degree of satisfaction. The personal variables that were found not to be significant are presented in Tables III through XII. The percentages in the satisfied and extremely satisfied categories were added together for the discussion of the variables found to be not significant. (See Appendix F.)

$H_1$ : There will be no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of the returning mature woman student and the personal variables of age, marital status, number and ages of children, child care arrangements, income, place of residence, work experience, present work, race, current class level, major, number of years between periods of enrollment, institution, reason for current attendance, and financing education.

#### Age and Degree of Satisfaction

Respondents in this study ranged in age from 25 to over 60 years of age (see Table III). The age group 25-29 accounted for 34.10 percent of the women. More than half of the women, 73.07 percent, were under the age of 40, and only 26.93 percent were 40 years of age or older. Of the total group 79.95 percent indicated satisfaction with their academic environment. (See Appendix F.)

#### Marital Status and Degree of Satisfaction

By far, the majority of the women were married (68%; Table IV). Approximately one-fourth of the respondents were separated or divorced (24.07 percent), and 7.74 percent were single, widowed or other. Of this group, over three-fourths (79.95%) indicated satisfaction.

TABLE III  
 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE: AGE  
 (N=349)

Characteristic	N	%
25-29	119	34.10
30-34	78	22.35
35-39	58	16.62
40-44	46	13.18
45 or older	<u>48</u>	<u>13.75</u>
Total	349	100.00

TABLE IV  
 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE: MARITAL STATUS  
 (N=349)

Characteristic	N	%
Married or Remarried	238	68.19
Separated or Divorced	84	24.07
Widowed, Single, or Other	<u>27</u>	<u>7.74</u>
Total	349	100.00

Class Level and Degree of Satisfaction

The greatest number of responses were from freshmen (56.13 percent) and the fewest number of responses were from seniors (7.06 percent; see Table V). Nineteen percent of the women were sophomores and 17.18 percent were juniors. At all class levels the highest percentage (80.06%) indicated satisfaction. (See Appendix F.)

TABLE V  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE: CLASS LEVEL

Characteristic	N	%
Freshman	183	56.13
Sophomore	64	19.63
Junior	56	17.18
Senior	23	7.06
Nonrespondents	<u>23</u>	<u>        </u>
Total	349	100.00

Work Patterns and Degree of Satisfaction

The greatest number of respondents, 48.99 percent, were homemakers and workers outside the home (see Table VI). Twenty percent of the women worked full time outside the home and almost 10 percent were



homemakers and volunteers. Listing their work pattern as homemaker was almost one-fourth of the respondents. A high percentage (80.12%) of all respondents indicated satisfaction with their academic environment. (See Appendix F.)

TABLE VI  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE: WORK PATTERNS

Characteristic	N	%
Homemaker	80	23.05
Homemaker and worker outside the home	170	48.99
Full time outside home	70	20.17
Homemaker and volunteer	27	7.78
Nonrespondents	<u>2</u>	<u>        </u>
Total	349	100.00

#### Race and Degree of Satisfaction

The racial distribution of the returning students was approximately 91 percent Caucasian and 9 percent other races (see Table VII). The majority of the women from all racial groups indicated a high degree of satisfaction (79.83%) with their educational environment. (See Appendix F.)

TABLE VII  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE: RACE

Characteristic	N	%
Caucasian	311	90.94
Other	31	9.06
Nonrespondents	<u>7</u>	<u>      </u>
Total	349	100.00

Ages of Children and Degree of Satisfaction

A total of one hundred and thirteen or 35.65 percent of the total respondents indicated that the ages of children had no effect on their degree of satisfaction with their educational environment (Table VIII). Of all the respondents, 80.44 percent indicated satisfaction. There were 32 nonrespondents in the total group. (See Appendix F.)

Effect of Number of Children on Degree of Satisfaction

The greatest number of respondents had two children (see Table IX). The largest number of children indicated was ten; one woman responded as having ten children. Respondents totaling 62.66 percent indicated that the number of children had no effect on their educational plans. Respondents totaling 80.38 percent indicated satisfaction with their educational environment. (See Appendix F.) There were 33 women who

TABLE VIII  
EFFECT OF AGE OF CHILDREN ON  
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

Characteristic	N	%
No	113	35.65
Yes	204	64.35
Nonrespondents	<u>32</u>	<u>          </u>
Total	349	100.00

did not respond to this item on the questionnaire.

Child Care Arrangements and Degree of  
Satisfaction

A question concerning the respondents' difficulty in securing satisfactory child care arrangements and the effect of such arrangements on the respondents' educational plans was asked. Of the elicited responses, 71.15 percent indicated that child care arrangements had no effect on their educational plans (Table X). Of this number, 46.84 percent were satisfied. Respondents totaling 17.95 percent answered that child care arrangements did have an effect on their educational plans. Of the total group 80.76 percent indicated satisfaction. Thirty-seven women did not respond to this question. (See Appendix F.)

TABLE IX  
 NUMBER AND EFFECT OF CHILDREN ON SATISFACTION  
 WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Characteristic	N	%
<b>Number of Children</b>		
0	43	12.46
1	62	17.97
2	140	40.58
3	58	16.81
4	28	8.12
5	7	2.03
6	4	1.16
7	2	0.58
8	0	0.00
9	0	0.00
10	1	0.29
Nonrespondents	<u>4</u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Effect of Number of Children on Education</b>		
No	198	62.66
Yes	118	37.34
Nonrespondents	<u>33</u>	<u>          </u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>100.00</b>

TABLE X  
EFFECT OF CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS  
ON EDUCATIONAL PLANS

Characteristic	N	%
No	222	71.15
Not applicable	34	10.90
Yes	56	17.95
Nonrespondents	<u>37</u>	<u>          </u>
Total	349	100.00

Source of Financing Education and  
Degree of Satisfaction

The differences between the financing of the returning mature university students' education and their degree of satisfaction was observed. Table XI shows frequency distribution for individuals who indicated only a single source of educational financing. The largest percentage of respondents utilized spouse's employment as a means of financing their education.

Reason for College Attendance and  
Degree of Satisfaction

The differences between the returning mature university students' reasons for attending college and their degree of satisfaction was observed. Table XII shows frequency and percent for individuals who

TABLE XI  
SOURCE OF FINANCING EDUCATION

Source of Financing	N	%
Own savings	18	8.45
Wages from my job	36	16.90
Spouse's employment	67	31.45
Scholarship and stipend	4	1.88
Loans	31	14.55
Tuition exemption	4	1.88
Reimbursement from my company	6	2.82
Other	<u>47</u>	<u>22.07</u>
Total	213	100.00

indicated only a single reason for attending college. To get an interesting job requiring a college degree and self-fulfillment outweighed all other reasons for attending college.

Tables XIII through XVII present the data for the personal variables which were found to be significant from Hypothesis One.

#### Major and Degree of Satisfaction

The greatest number of respondents (85, or 27.33%) indicated Elementary Education to be their major. Of this group, 57.66 percent were satisfied and 32.93 percent were extremely satisfied. The next greatest number of indicated majors (78) was Business, except

TABLE XII  
REASON FOR COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Reason for College Attendance	N	%
To get an interesting job requiring a college degree	59	31.7
To get promoted in a present job	6	3.2
Unfulfilled desire for knowledge	14	7.5
Relief from boredom	0	0.0
Dissatisfaction with volunteer work	0	0.0
Divorce or marital difficulties	7	3.8
Self-fulfillment	58	31.2
Other	<u>42</u>	<u>22.6</u>
Total	186	100.0

Business Education. Of this group, 44.85 percent were satisfied and 26.91 percent were extremely satisfied. The analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the major and degree of satisfaction at the .05 level of significance ( $X^2=24.880$ , d.f.=14). These findings are presented in Table XIII. (Note: The table is so sparse that the chi-square analysis may not be a valid test.)

#### Residence and Degree of Satisfaction

There is no difference between the personal variable place of residence of the returning mature university students and their degree

TABLE XIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF MAJOR IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Major	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%
Business Except Bus. Educ.	22	7.07	2.4	35	11.25	0.1	21	6.75	0.9	78	25.07
Liberal Arts	7	2.25	0.1	18	5.79	0.0	13	4.18	0.0	38	12.22
Science & Math	4	1.29	1.4	3	0.96	0.9	4	1.29	0.0	11	3.54
Sec. Educ. Includ- ing Business	5	1.61	0.2	14	4.50	0.0	11	3.54	0.1	30	9.65
Elementary Educ.	8	2.57	4.9	49	15.76	2.2	28	9.00	0.0	85	27.33
Home Economics	4	1.29	0.0	8	2.57	0.1	7	2.25	0.1	19	6.11
Professional	7	2.25	2.1	2	0.64	5.8	11	3.54	2.9	20	6.43
Psychology/ Sociology	6	1.93	0.0	16	5.14	0.3	8	2.57	0.4	30	9.65
Nonrespondents										38	
Total	63	20.26		145	46.62		103	33.12		311	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 24.880; \text{d.f.} = 14; p > \chi^2 = 0.0358$$



of satisfaction with their educational environment was tested. By far, the greatest number of respondents were commuters. Of this group, 53.19 percent were satisfied and 29.05 percent were extremely satisfied. The chi-square analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the place of residence and degree of satisfaction at the .05 level of significance ( $X^2=10.709$ , d.f.=4). These findings are presented in Table XIV.

#### Enrollment and Degree of Satisfaction

There is no difference between discontinued enrollment patterns of the returning mature university students and their degree of satisfaction was tested using chi-square. More than one-half (57.56%) of the respondents answered that there existed no period of discontinued enrollment in their college career. The respondents who were satisfied totaled 43.43 percent of this group, and the respondents who were extremely satisfied totaled 39.38 percent. The chi-square analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between discontinued enrollment and degree of satisfaction at the .05 level of significance ( $X^2=13.010$ , d.f.=4). These findings are presented in Table XV.

#### Income and Degree of Satisfaction

There is no difference between the income levels of the returning mature university students and their degree of satisfaction was tested. In general, people with income levels under \$5,000 tended to be much more satisfied than those with income levels above \$25,000. Those with income levels above \$25,000 tended to be much less satisfied than all individuals in other age groups. The chi-square analysis indicated

TABLE XIV

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF RESIDENCE IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Residence	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%
Close to college walking distance	19	5.48	0.7	26	7.49	3.0	34	9.80	1.9	79	22.77
Elsewhere in town	14	4.03	0.1	26	7.49	0.5	25	7.21	0.4	65	18.73
Commuting or other	36	10.37	0.5	108	31.13	2.2	59	17.00	1.5	203	58.50
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Total	69	19.88	—	160	46.11	—	118	34.01	—	347	100.00

$$X^2 = 10.709; \text{d.f.} = 4; p > X^2 = 0.0300$$

TABLE XV

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF ENROLLMENT PATTERNS  
IN RELATION TO DEGREE OF SATISFACTION  
WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Discontinued Enrollment Patterns	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%
No	34	9.88	0.7	86	25.00	0.3	78	22.67	1.5	198	57.56
Yes, Once	18	5.23	0.1	48	13.95	0.1	33	9.59	0.0	99	28.78
Yes, Twice or More	16	4.65	4.8	24	6.98	0.3	7	2.03	5.2	47	13.66
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	—
Total	68	19.77	—	158	45.93	—	118	34.30	—	344	100.00

$\chi^2 = 13.00$ ; d.f. = 4;  $p > \chi^2 = 0.0112$

that there was a significant difference between the level of income and degree of satisfaction at the .05 level of significance ( $X^2=18.715$ , d.f.=10). These findings are presented in Table XVI.

#### Employment and Degree of Satisfaction

There is no difference between the present employment status of the returning mature university students and their degree of satisfaction was tested. Respondents totaling 49.71 percent indicated unemployment as their present work status. Of this group, 52.32 percent were satisfied and 31.4 percent were extremely satisfied. The chi-square analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the present employment status and degree of satisfaction at the .05 level of significance ( $X^2=13.296$ , d.f.=6). These findings are presented in Table XVII.

#### Results Pertaining to Hypothesis Two

In order to determine if there was a significant difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature students and the barriers and facilitators they identified, chi-square analyses were used to examine responses given in the Returning Mature University Woman Student Questionnaire item 62 and item 63. Results of the analyses are presented in Tables XVIII and XIX. The null form of Hypothesis Two stated:

$H_2$ : There will be no significant difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature students and the barriers and facilitators they identified.

TABLE XVI

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF INCOME IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Income	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%
Under \$5,000	12	3.51	2.3	43	12.57	0.0	38	11.11	1.2	93	27.19
\$5,000 to \$9,999	13	3.80	0.0	29	8.48	0.2	26	7.60	0.3	68	19.88
\$10,000 to \$14,999	13	3.80	0.4	24	7.02	0.1	18	5.26	0.0	55	16.08
\$15,000 to \$19,999	9	2.63	0.3	30	8.77	1.1	15	4.39	0.7	54	15.79
\$20,000 to \$24,999	5	1.46	0.3	14	4.09	0.0	13	3.80	0.4	32	9.36
\$25,000 or more	16	4.68	8.1	17	4.97	0.1	7	2.05	3.3	40	11.70
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—
Total	68	19.88	—	157	45.91	—	117	34.21	—	342	100.00

$$X^2 = 18.715; \text{ d.f.} = 10; p > X^2 = 0.0440$$

TABLE XVII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN  
RELATION TO DEGREE OF SATISFACTION  
WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Employment Status	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%
No	28	8.09	1.2	90	26.01	1.4	54	15.61	0.3	172	49.71
Yes Part Time Irregular	7	2.02	0.8	23	6.65	0.0	19	5.49	0.4	49	14.16
Yes Part Time Regular	17	4.91	1.3	20	5.78	3.4	28	8.09	1.6	65	18.79
Yes Full Time	17	4.91	2.1	27	7.80	0.0	16	4.62	0.9	60	17.34
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Total	69	19.94	—	160	46.24	—	117	33.82	—	346	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 13.296; \text{d.f.} = 6; p > \chi^2 = 0.0386$$

### Facilitators and Degree of Satisfaction

There was no significant difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature women students and the facilitators identified was tested. Results of the analysis yielded no significant findings for  $H_2$ . The self-improvement/more education facilitator was the one indicated most frequently by the respondents (27.11%). This was followed by family and friends' support (16.03%). These findings are presented in Table XVIII.

### Barriers and Degree of Satisfaction

There is no difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature women students and the barriers identified was tested. The chi-square analysis indicated no significant difference between degree of satisfaction and barriers identified. Family and home responsibilities was identified as the greatest barrier to degree of satisfaction. These findings are presented in Table XIX.

### Results Pertaining to Hypothesis Three

In order to determine if there was a significant difference in the mature woman student who had never been in college before and those returning to higher education, chi-square analysis was used to examine the response to item 50 on the Returning Mature University Woman Questionnaire. Results of the analysis are presented in Table XX. The null form of Hypothesis Three stated:

$H_3$ : There will be no significant difference in the mature woman student who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education.

TABLE XVIII  
 CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF FACILITATORS IN RELATION  
 TO DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH  
 EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Facilitators	Neutral		Satisfied		Extremely Satisfied		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Husband's support	9	2.62	22	6.41	20	5.83	51	14.87
Other family or friends	9	2.62	23	6.71	23	6.71	55	16.03
Self-improvement/ More education	14	4.08	43	12.54	36	10.50	93	27.11
Something to do or other	10	2.92	12	3.50	7	2.04	29	8.45
Availability of finances or need for more money	11	3.21	24	7.00	15	4.37	50	14.58
Convenience of location	6	1.75	11	3.21	8	2.33	25	7.29
Qualities of university	8	2.33	23	6.71	9	2.62	40	11.66
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	—
Total	67	19.53	158	46.06	118	34.40	343	100.00

$$x^2 = 11.296; \text{ d.f.} = 12; p > x^2 = 0.5037$$



TABLE XIX  
 CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF BARRIERS IN RELATION  
 TO DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH  
 EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Barriers	Neutral		Satisfied		Extremely Satisfied		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family and home responsibilities	25	7.29	52	15.16	36	10.50	113	32.94
Finances	9	2.62	27	7.87	26	7.58	62	18.08
Time	15	4.37	22	6.41	15	4.37	52	15.16
Transportation/ Commuting	5	1.46	10	2.92	11	3.21	26	7.58
Study habits	9	2.62	23	6.71	17	4.96	49	14.29
Other	4	1.17	24	7.00	13	3.79	41	11.95
Nonrespondents							6	
Total	67	19.53	158	46.06	118	34.40	343	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 9.763; \text{ d.f.} = 10; p > \chi^2 = 0.4615$$

TABLE XX

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF FIRST TIME COLLEGE  
ATTENDANCE IN RELATION TO DEGREE OF  
SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT

Effect	Neutral		Satisfied		Extremely Satisfied		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No	45	13.16	98	28.65	64	18.71	207	60.53
Yes	24	7.02	58	16.96	53	15.50	135	39.47
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—
Total	69	20.18	156	45.61	117	34.21	342	100.00

$$X^2 = 2.641; \text{ d.f.} = 2; p > X^2 = 0.2670$$

First Time College Attendance and

Degree of Satisfaction

There is no difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature women students and their state of initial or returning college attendance was tested. The chi-square analysis indicated no significant differences. These findings are presented above in Table XX.

In summary, level of income, place of residence, present employment status, major and discontinued enrollment were found to be significant factors in the returning mature university students' degree of satisfaction with their educational environment.

### Responses to Open-Ended Statement

At the completion of the questionnaire was an open-ended statement which directed respondents to freely express their opinions concerning their academic experiences. A total of 42 comments were received. A great variety of responses were secured; however, several themes did reveal themselves throughout the respondents' comments. The need for adequate career planning and educational advising and counseling was expressed. The desire for financial assistance was articulated. Several students remarked that they would enjoy conversing with other adult women students through some university-supported organization. Other students felt that university officials and personnel should treat students over the age of 25 as adults. Several women remarked that they were pleased with their university and its treatment of them. (See Appendix G for direct comments of respondents.)

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if the undergraduate program in four Oklahoma regional universities was meeting the needs of the returning woman student. This study was concerned specifically with the views of students' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their collegiate environment. This information could be helpful in determining the direction in which universities could plan to more effectively meet the needs of their mature university students. A questionnaire, developed and constructed by the researcher, was utilized to determine the respondents' degree of satisfaction with their educational environment and selected personal variables.

The specific objectives addressed were:

1. To identify mature women students in four regional universities to provide input for the investigations.
2. To ascertain the degree of satisfaction with the educational environment for the undergraduate mature woman student returning to school and selected personal variables.
3. To analyze data to determine barriers and facilitators in meeting personal and educational goals as expressed by the returning woman student and the degree of satisfaction expressed by them.

4. To determine if differences exist between the degree of satisfaction of the mature women who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education.

5. To make recommendations for further research and programming.

The survey sample for this study was identified and limited to mature women students, 25 years of age or older, enrolled in at least six hours of curriculum offerings at one of the four regional Oklahoma universities located geographically in the distant ends of the state.

A probability of .05 was accepted as the criterion of significance when testing the null hypotheses. Three null hypotheses were tested in the study. They are as follows:

$H_1$ : There will be no significant differences in the degree of satisfaction of the returning mature woman student and selected personal variables as age, marital status, number and ages of children, child care arrangements, income, place of residence, work experience, present work, race, current class level, major, number of years between periods of enrollment, institution, reason for current attendance, and financing education.

$H_2$ : There will be no significant difference between the degree of satisfaction expressed by returning mature students and the barriers and facilitators they identified.

$H_3$ : There will be no significant difference in the degree of satisfaction of the mature woman student who has never been in college before and those returning to higher education.

In analyzing the data for  $H_1$ , significant differences were found among degree of satisfaction with educational environment and the variables of major, residence, enrollment patterns, income and

employment status. No significant findings were found in the analysis of the other variables identified in  $H_1$ . And, no significant findings were identified for  $H_2$  and  $H_3$ .

Similar, yet racially and economically different, student populations were represented at each of the four selected universities which offered varied programs to fulfill the requirements of the state system of Oklahoma colleges and universities. They lived mostly in a rural environment; were mostly white and middle class; and the majority were entering academia for the first time. They had, furthermore, chosen a public university with comparable admission procedures, medium cost tuition, no special services for women, and a liberal arts or professional curriculum. Their written comments evidenced to the researcher that they were a group of women who were set on obtaining an education and who were not afraid of tackling their studies in a competitive environment (see Appendix G). It is, therefore, obvious that these women were representative of most mature women returning for undergraduate college degrees at other institutions as confirmed by the literature search. Their expressed problems are similar to those of other women sharing their positions as mothers, wives, and wage earners.

The major findings in this study indicated that the most satisfied respondents were commuters with an annual income level of less than \$5,000. These respondents were not employed and had never discontinued enrollment. They indicated their preference in majors as elementary education and business.

The largest single income group (individual or family income) (63%) fell under \$5,000, followed by the group earning \$10,000. This might seem surprising in view of the higher cost of living, but several

paid for their college expenses in the form of federal and state grants and loans (14.55%). Forty-two percent of the students financed their education, at least in part, through loans, scholarships, and help from their employers and families; the remaining 57 percent paid for their education through their own savings or wages or through their husband's earnings. The largest percentage of respondents utilized their spouse's employment as a means of financing their education (31.45%).

The majority of the returning women students (58.50%) were satisfied commuters. Only 22.77 percent lived within walking distance of the university and 18.73 percent lived elsewhere in town. The greatest commuting distance was 182 miles round trip. Of these percentages, 49.71 percent were unemployed while attending school. Over one-half of this group was satisfied. As unemployed students, these women had more time available for studying and traveling to and from school.

More than half of the respondents (57.56%) indicated that they had no period of discontinued enrollment in their college career. Less people than expected dropped out twice or more and were extremely satisfied and more than expected were neutral; therefore, the trend appeared that people who dropped out more frequently were less satisfied. (This does not mean they were dissatisfied; this means only that they were neutral according to this analysis.) As the largest percentage of students indicated continuous enrollment patterns, the largest percentage of students also indicated a preference for an elementary education or business major. These students evidenced moderate satisfaction with their major.

The data from this study evidenced that the greatest number of respondents were satisfied Caucasian freshmen between 25 and 29 years

of age; they were married and had an average of 2.8 children. However, the largest number of children reported by a returning student was 10. The majority of respondents (62.66%) indicated that the number of children had no effect on their educational plans. Of the women with children, 71.15 percent indicated that child care arrangements had no effect on their educational plans. The highest number of responses in the no effect category came from women where the university had child care facilities on or near the campus. People who thought their educational plans were affected by the number or ages of children in the family were actually no less satisfied with their educational plans and programs than those who did not think their plans were affected.

The largest number of respondents were enrolled at University D. It should be noted here that only a small percentage in all four institutions indicated neutral. Thus, the majority of respondents indicated a high degree of satisfaction with their respective institutions. This high degree of satisfaction evidenced that the respective universities were more than adequately fulfilling the needs of the returning mature women students.

The women chose their respective universities because they believed that each institution was capable of aiding in achieving their major goals: to get an interesting job and self-fulfillment. Other reasons for returning to higher education were: escape from responsibilities, lack of interest in non-college jobs, financial help for children's education, to help humanity, and self-support. Boredom was not mentioned as a reason for returning to school. But, the possibility existed that these women did desire to see their return to college as something positive, not as an escape from anything, and that they



were inclined to say that they had returned for self-fulfillment, indeed what they would have experienced if school made them forget their boredom. The same reasoning could hold true for women with marital problems or breakups, since this was barely mentioned as a primary reason for returning to school.

In answer to the question: What has been the one most important facilitator (helps me) to your returning to school?, there were many answers ranging all the way from employer to the healing therapy of divorce wounds. However, it was possible to group all of the facilitators into the following seven types of facilitators, namely, husband's support, other family or friends, self-improvement/more education, something to do or other, availability of finances, convenience of location, and qualities of university.

The type of facilitator most frequently indicated by the respondents was self-improvement/more education (27.11%). This was followed by family or friends' support and availability of finances. Exactly what the term "self-improvement" meant to these women was unclear. Their additional comments indicated that they seemed to view this concept in many different ways. More than one-third of the comments mentioned that they had gained personal respect from being associated with the university.

Others mentioned that the university enabled them to choose a way of life that would suit them. Learning for its own sake was also mentioned numerous times as a contribution made by the university and that they were not pressured to take any particular subject. This suggested that these women conceived of an education as something much more complicated than as a process of fact-learning. For some of them, it

actually meant re-entering the "mainstream of life" after having been homemakers and child-rearers for many years, perhaps with limited possibilities for out-of-home contacts. When their children had grown up, they needed to find something new to occupy their time and, having chosen education, college was a place where they could test themselves in the world outside of their homes.

It seemed evident that the principal goals of many of the women were to grow as individuals and improve themselves by getting an education and consequently an interesting and rewarding job. Qualities of the university seemed an important facilitator to them as 11.66 percent indicated. Several commented that the undergraduate degree was not a goal in itself and felt that the present university was adequately preparing them for graduate school. Since they failed to finish their degrees when they were younger, they seemed to look on facilitators as a tool towards helping them gain greater self-knowledge, for gaining a clearer picture of themselves, while at the same time promoting them toward a rewarding career.

In answer to the question: What has been the one most difficult barrier (hinders me) to overcome in returning to school?, these returning women students faced numerous barriers upon their return to institutions of higher learning. The barrier most frequently indicated by the respondents was family and home responsibilities (32.94%). A number of the responses indicated feelings of guilt and selfishness for neglecting the full responsibilities for their homes and children. Spending family money on their education was also a source of concern for the adult women students. The second highest listed barrier was finances (18.08%). Since the greatest percentage (27.19%) of women

indicated their annual income to be less than \$5,000, the small annual income, coupled with guilt feelings about spending the money that the family did have, was a barrier. Some indicated guilt for not only leaving the home, but for undertaking such a time-consuming and personally fulfilling venture as continuing education.

It is a strong possibility that these mature adult women who returned to school had special financial problems, which often resulted from such factors as: (1) specific stipulation for various scholarships tend to exclude returning women students; (2) part-time students (a large percentage of returning women students) were not eligible for much of the existing financial assistance; and (3) many women do not qualify for financial assistance because of their husband's income, even though the woman may not be receiving any financial help from her family. Lack of time was also found to be a significant barrier. Over 15 percent of the women experience time pressures. They indicated that finding time for both their studies and their home or job responsibilities was a major barrier.

It was evident that once they had returned to institutions of higher learning, adult women students did face barriers, many of which were peculiar to their unique situation. It was also apparent from their comments that they had returned to school with dogged determination to reach their goals in the face of what appeared to be insurmountable obstacles.

The degree of satisfaction of those mature women students who were attending college for the first time and those who were returning after a period of absence was examined. The adult women students in the study returned to an educational environment for reasons ranging from

program availability to their dissatisfaction with the present situation at home or at work. Entering the college classroom for the first time after an extended absence from academic life could have been a traumatic experience. However, the degree of satisfaction expressed by those having previously been in college and those making the initial entry indicated that all were either neutral, satisfied or extremely satisfied. It was apparent that the four regional universities in the study appeared to respond adequately to the special needs of mature women in both categories.

#### Recommendations

Recommendations for programming based upon the research findings shall be discussed.

To establish educational programs, faculties and administrators need to plan carefully. Individual colleges should (1) first determine the long-range and short-range goals of each specific program, (2) establish necessary guidelines for these programs, and (3) set up programs that will more than adequately fulfill the needs of their participants.

Common interests, objectives and goals are shared by the four regional Oklahoma institutions. In a similar manner, the needs and interests of the returning mature women students enrolled at these institutions appear to be shared. The following are examples of institutional goals: (1) service to the community; (2) increase in enrollment; and (3) diversification of student population. Since the four institutions have similar goals, the following recommendations can be applied to programming.

The suggestions for program-establishment are presented in two parts, pre-enrollment and post-enrollment, and are obtained from survey results. The information concerning programming suggestions depicts the differences between the returning mature student at various levels and also evidences the enormous similarities. The women of this study (1) had similar age ranges, (2) were mostly married, (3) were mostly white, (4) were mostly degree candidates, (5) had as their major source of financial support either their own or their spouse's income, (6) were part-time students with children of all ages, and (7) had similar reasons for returning to school and experienced similar problems in returning.

These similarities and differences should be considered in planning programs for returning mature students. Each institution should develop responsive programs to fulfill the needs of both currently enrolled and prospective returning mature students. Colleges can also attempt to obtain more students by adding programs that will answer the needs of those students who have not yet returned in significant numbers: (1) older women, age 40 and above; (2) black women; (3) more women with children. Following are specific program recommendations.

#### Pre-enrollment (Orientation to University Environment

Career Development Course. This course could emphasize students' interests and introduce students to university offices and agencies which would help them plan, train, and obtain possible careers. Recruitment for this course, open to all community members, could be through church and women's organizations and any other organizations

which would have access to prospective returning women students.

Dissemination of Admission Procedures. The following might appeal to returning women students:

1. part-time student financial aid
2. readily transferred college credits
3. flexible admission standards
4. flexible test-score interpretation.

Free Seminars. Emphasis at these seminars could be placed on the incorporation of returning to college and current lifestyle and responsibilities by the adult woman. Such seminars, featuring films, discussion and lectures, could last 2-3 hours and could be conducted at both on and off campus sites.

Publicize Services Available for Returning Women Students. (See post-enrollment services.)

#### Post-enrollment

Post-enrollment Services. The following are suggested:

1. life planning workshops
2. courses offered at satellite campus sites
3. individualized majors
4. facilities for child care
5. credit by examination
6. socialization center for returning women students
7. orientation programs
8. a 3-credit career planning course
9. both non-degree and degree programs

10. group counseling periods for returning women students
11. independent study
12. consortium programs
13. class hours which are not rigidly structured

This study has led the researcher to identify areas of concern which need researching in order for the mature returning woman to reach her goals.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Following are recommendations for further research:

1. This study should be replicated with samples of returning women students at similar institutions and at differing institutions.
2. Compare and contrast the needs of returning women students to those of returning men students.
3. Compare and contrast returning women students to younger students.
4. Conduct study on a longitudinal basis so that women are interviewed and tested at their initial college entrance to a specific institution and followed through for a specified number of years or until graduation from the institution.
5. A multiple regression equation should be developed so that predictions can be made at initial college enrollment as to which women are more likely to continue their education and which women would benefit more from special programs in order to effectively continue their education.
6. Study the attitudes projected by academic personnel and university administrators toward older women students.

7. Study the effect of available child care facilities on the enrollment of returning women students.
8. Examine the present legal initiatives toward breaking down the barriers which prohibit women from returning to school. Suggest new legislation.
9. Scrutinize the effects of student development courses on returning women students.
10. Study the inconveniences experienced by families as a result of wives or mothers returning to school.
11. Study the societal effects and forces that influence women's roles and their subsequent effects on higher education.
12. Study the vocational interests of women returning to school and how these interests evolved.
13. Examine the relationship between entrance examination scores and academic progress made by returning women students.
14. Determine the processes used by women to establish career goals.

The researcher believes that one will never completely identify all the pertinent factors that affect mature university students, but in this time of dwindling enrollments nationally and increasing operational expenses, it is more crucial than ever before that administrators continually search for pertinent information that will be useful in implementing future policies that may affect the returning women students' degree of satisfaction with their educational environment.



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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

HISTORY AND PURPOSES OF THE INSTITUTIONS



## HISTORY AND PURPOSES OF THE INSTITUTIONS

The four institutions selected for this study have interesting histories and purposes. Each of the universities can trace their origin back to acts of the Oklahoma legislature in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These acts created public institutions which are supported by the State of Oklahoma under direction of a governor-appointed State Board of Regents for Higher Education. Student population in each of these four institutions is principally white middle class. Of the minority races in attendance, blacks prevail and Indians account for a small percentage of student enrollment. International students also account for a small percentage of the enrollment.

### Northwestern Oklahoma State University

Alva, Oklahoma is the home of Northwestern Oklahoma State University. Located in the mouth of the Oklahoma Panhandle, Alva is 156 miles northwest of Oklahoma City, 70 miles northwest of Enid, 120 miles southwest of Wichita, Kansas, 150 miles southeast of Dodge City, Kansas, and 14 miles south of the Kansas-Oklahoma border. As a trade and cultural center, Alva is rapidly increasing in importance. Agriculture remains the primary industry in this northwestern Oklahoma city; however, light manufacturing is playing a significantly increasing role in its economy.

Northwestern Oklahoma State University was established in 1897 with the passing of a law by the Legislature of Oklahoma. It was

designated as a state normal school and has the distinction of being the second such school in the state.

The philosophical basis underlying the services of this university subscribes to the belief that each individual in our society is a person of worth and dignity. The individual, as a member of our society, holds certain privileges and responsibilities and should have the opportunity to better himself and to improve his opportunity to fulfill his responsibilities. Northwestern endeavors to provide those services to the individual for which it has the necessary resources which will help him to become an effective member of society. A self-concept of dignity and worth and a concept of others will permit him to grant his fellow man the same opportunities. (Northwestern Oklahoma State University, General Bulletin, 1978-1980, p. 17).

#### Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Southwestern Oklahoma State University is located in Weatherford, Oklahoma, 75 miles west of Oklahoma City on Interstate 40 and on the Memphis to Amarillo division of the Rock Island Railway. It is accredited and authorized to offer curricula in teacher education, pharmacy, and the arts and sciences.

The university was established by an act of the Oklahoma territorial legislature in 1901 as the Southwestern Normal School, authorized to offer two years' training for public school teachers. The first classes were conducted in 1903.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University has as its aim the establishment and maintenance of well-rounded education for all students who are admitted to its various programs. The university recognizes that

society possesses a body of knowledge which is the foundation of civilization and from which any future progress must come. It also recognizes the university as an institution responsible for keeping this knowledge viable and available for future generations. SWOSU attempts to provide this body of knowledge to enlarge the perspective of the student, regardless of his chosen specialty, to provide him with an understanding of his cultural heritage, and to give him an opportunity to develop the pertinent skills which will aid him in later study and development. (Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Catalog 1978-80, pp. 28-32).

#### Northeastern Oklahoma State University

Northeastern Oklahoma State University is located in northeastern Oklahoma at Tahlequah, a small city of unique spirit and individuality which lies cradled in the scenic foothills of the Ozarks. Surrounded by several of Oklahoma's most beautiful lakes, Tahlequah provides year around recreational facilities such as hunting, fishing, boating, and other water sports.

On March 6, 1909, the State Legislature of Oklahoma passed an act providing for the creation and location of Northeastern State Normal School at Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The educational program consisted of four years of high school study and two years at the college level.

In response to the purposes for which it was established, Northeastern Oklahoma State University endeavors to provide a program of general education designed to encourage educational experiences of all students in developing a foundation for advanced and specialized training, to provide educational opportunities for students desiring a basic

liberal arts education, to maintain an educational environment that will equip students to adapt to a complex and rapidly changing society as they seek career direction, and to provide an on-going process of comprehensive study to evaluate all of the major aspects of the instructional and academic programs in order to give direction for needed changes. (Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Catalog 1977-79, p. 7).

#### Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Located in the southeastern part of Oklahoma in the city of Durant, the university is 15 miles from the Oklahoma-Texas border; 90 miles north of Dallas, Texas; 160 miles south of Oklahoma City; and 15 miles east of Lake Texoma. Durant is a city in excess of 12,000 people. The economy of Durant is changing from one that has been primarily agricultural to one that is more diverse. This change has been influenced by the recreational opportunities at nearby Lake Texoma which serves more than 10,000,000 visitors annually and by the presence of more than 40 industrial firms.

On March 6, 1909, the Second Oklahoma State Legislature approved an act designating Durant as the location for a normal school. Southeastern Oklahoma State University first opened its doors to students on June 13, 1909, as Southeastern State Normal School.

In the approved "Plan for the Seventies", Southeastern was designated as a mission oriented institution of higher education. This term defines the process and the method in which the university responded to societal needs by creating new programs in business, technology, aviation, and conservation, to highlight a few. Southeastern is committed

to providing a strong liberal studies core for its academic programs, to constantly evaluating and modernizing its curriculum as a society changes, to equipping its students to live effectively and productively in a rapidly changing world, and, finally, to developing an organizational structure that is viable and problem focused in imagination, evolution, and function. (Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Catalog 1978-80, pp. 2-4).

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE AND COVER LETTERS

The questionnaire was used during the Spring, 1979, semester at four Oklahoma state university regional campuses. Attached to each questionnaire was a cover letter to the student. In addition to the student cover letter, a faculty memo of instructions was distributed.

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Dear Student:

Your university is one of several Oklahoma universities participating in a study concerning "The Returning Women Students on Oklahoma Campuses."

The attached questionnaire requires about 15-20 minutes of your time. It is requested that you respond during the time arranged by you and the faculty member that presents you with this material. The questionnaire is to be returned to this faculty member.

We at this university feel the results locally and state-wide will enable us to be of more service to you.

The questionnaire is not to be identified with you personally and the number on the questionnaire will be used only as an aid to achieve as near 100% response as possible.

Your cooperation is requested and it is our hope your participation will be helpful to you, your university, and higher education in Oklahoma.

---

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Member \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: Administration

SUBJECT: Study Concerning "Returning Women Students on Oklahoma Campuses"

This university is participating in a state-wide study which will necessitate the responding to a questionnaire of undergraduate women

students who have interrupted their formal education. This will require 15-20 minutes of the respondent's time.

This will involve undergraduate women students that are at least 25 years of age and currently enrolled for at least six semester hours of work.

The questionnaire is NOT to be identified with the respondent and the number on the questionnaire is used only as an aid in achieving as near a 100% response as possible.

It is our hope, at this university, that the results locally and state-wide will enable us to be of more service to our students.

It is requested that you distribute the envelopes given to you, arrange for the students to have class, laboratory, or other time to respond, and then collect the completed questionnaires for return to the researcher.



NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

## RETURNING MATURE UNIVERSITY STUDENT (RMUS)

## SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

You, personally, are asked to complete this questionnaire because of your position and the unique perspective it provides for viewing your degree of satisfactions as a returning woman student in the academic community. Will you help, please?

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.

Please circle the degree of agreement or disagreement you feel about the following statements.

PART A	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Indicate how much you agree with the following statements:								
1. This university has an intellectual and scholarly environment, valuing the pursuit of knowledge.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. This university stresses awareness of society, and of societal issues.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. This university has a congenial atmosphere: it is friendly, cohesive, and group oriented.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. In the campus environment there is evidence of consideration, thoughtfulness, and politeness.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. The environment encourages enterprise, material benefits, and vocational emphasis.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. Overall, this institution has fulfilled my expectations of it as an educational environment.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. When first enrolling in this university, an orientation meeting on academic matters and regulations would have been helpful.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. When first enrolling, some informal gatherings with other women of my own age to discuss mutual problems and to ask questions would have been helpful.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
9. It would be helpful to meet regularly with other returning students to discuss common problems.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. Participating in extra curricular activities such as student organizations, major/minor field organizations would be beneficial to the returning student.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. Competition with younger students is a problem to the older woman student.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. Social contacts (out of the classroom) with other students are of importance.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. An adviser of one's own age is preferable.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. It is important to have an adviser, someone from the Dean's office, teacher, or someone who understands my needs.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. Classes with a mixture of all age students makes them more interesting.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
16. Instructors appear positive to the more mature students.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
17. A course in study habits, reading skills, and term paper writing would be helpful.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
18. A feeling of apprehension influenced my ability to successfully "compete".	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
19. Being a student does not interfere with family and work responsibilities.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
20. A method of evaluation and assessment preferred by me is written examinations.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. A feeling of happiness is evident in once again being a student.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
22. The movement toward more freedom of choice for women is a factor in my decision to return to college.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
23. Earning a diploma will raise my status with others.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
24. Financing education is a problem to my returning to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
25. Being in college has increased confidence in my academic ability.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
26. Being in college has increased my self-confidence.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
27. The degree of emotional support received from the people most important to me has been very satisfying.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
28. Emotional support from the people most important to me has remained positive as I progress through school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
29. The support received from others has been very important to my staying in school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
30. My husband has been very supportive of my return to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
31. My children have been very supportive of my return to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
32. My parents have been very supportive of my return to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
33. My in-laws have been supportive of my return to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
34. My friends have been very supportive of my return to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
35. My instructors have been very supportive of my return to school.	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

## PART B

Directions: Please check (✓) or fill in the response which best answers the question for you.

36. What is your present age?

1. \_\_\_ 25-29

3. \_\_\_ 35-39

5. \_\_\_ 45-49

7. \_\_\_ 55-59

2. \_\_\_ 30-34

4. \_\_\_ 40-44

6. \_\_\_ 50-54

8. \_\_\_ 60 and over

37. What is your present marital status?

- |                                       |                                       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Married   | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Remarried | How many years? |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Separated | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Single    | _____           |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced  | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Other     |                 |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed   |                                       |                 |

38. To which group do you belong?

1.  Caucasian    2.  Black    3.  Oriental  
 4.  Chicano or Latino    5.  Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

39. Do you have children? If the answer is yes, complete items 40, 41, 42, 43. If no, go directly to item 44.  yes  no

40. If you have children, please indicate the following:

Ages (in years)	Number living at home	Number living away
under 3	_____	_____
3-6	_____	_____
7-12	_____	_____
13-18	_____	_____
over 18	_____	_____

41. Have the ages of your children had an effect on your educational plans? 1.  Yes    2.  No    Comments:

42. Has the number of children in your family had an effect on your educational plans? 1.  Yes    2.  No  
 Comments:

43. Do (did) you have difficulty making satisfactory child care arrangements? 1.  Yes    2.  No    0  n/a  
 If yes, please identify the problem \_\_\_\_\_

44. What is the income of your family unit? (If married, yours and your husband's. If unmarried, your own income.)

1.  under \$5,000    4.  \$15,000-\$19,999    7.  \$30,000-\$34,999  
 2.  \$5,000-\$9,999    5.  \$20,000-\$24,999    8.  \$35,000-\$39,999  
 3.  \$10,000-\$14,999    6.  \$25,000-\$29,999    9.  \$40,000 and over

45. Where do you presently reside?

1.  Close to college (within walking distance)  
 2.  Elsewhere in the city  
 3.  Within commuting distance. Number of miles \_\_\_\_\_.  
 4.  Other \_\_\_\_\_

46. For the past 5 years, what has your work pattern been?

1. \_\_\_ Homemaker
2. \_\_\_ Homemaker and worker outside the home
3. \_\_\_ Full-time worker outside the home
4. \_\_\_ Homemaker and volunteer

47. Are you employed during this recent school experience?

1. \_\_\_ Not at all
2. \_\_\_ Part-time, irregular basis
3. \_\_\_ Part-time, regular basis
4. \_\_\_ Full-time

If employed, please give the job title or a brief description of your job.

48. How do you finance your education?

1. \_\_\_ Own savings
2. \_\_\_ Wages from my job
3. \_\_\_ Spouse's employment
4. \_\_\_ Scholarship and stipend
5. \_\_\_ Loan(s)
6. \_\_\_ Tuition exemption
7. \_\_\_ Reimbursement from my company
8. \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

49. Why are you coming to college for a degree now?

1. \_\_\_ To get an interesting job requiring a college degree
2. \_\_\_ To get promoted in a present job
3. \_\_\_ Unfulfilled desire for knowledge
4. \_\_\_ Relief from boredom
5. \_\_\_ Dissatisfaction with volunteer work
6. \_\_\_ Divorce or marital difficulties
7. \_\_\_ Self-fulfillment
8. \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

50. In what category were you first admitted to college?

1. \_\_\_ Degree candidate
2. \_\_\_ Provisional degree candidate
3. \_\_\_ Validation student
4. \_\_\_ Special student

Is this the first time you have ever attended college?

1. \_\_\_ Yes
2. \_\_\_ No

If no, when was the last time you attended? \_\_\_\_\_

51. At what class level did you reenter?

1. \_\_\_ Freshman
2. \_\_\_ Sophomore
3. \_\_\_ Junior
4. \_\_\_ Senior
5. \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

52. What is your most recent major? \_\_\_\_\_

53. How many semesters have you been enrolled since your return to school? \_\_\_\_\_

## PART C

54. What is (are) your main reason(s) for deciding on the college in which you are now enrolled?
1. \_\_\_ Convenient location
  2. \_\_\_ The institution's reputation
  3. \_\_\_ The type of educational program I was looking for
  4. \_\_\_ Earning a degree on part-time basis
  5. \_\_\_ Adult environment
  6. \_\_\_ Tuition exemption
  7. \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
55. How many credits do you usually take per semester?
1. \_\_\_ Less than 6
  2. \_\_\_ 6 to 9
  3. \_\_\_ 10 to 12
  4. \_\_\_ 13 to 15
  5. \_\_\_ 16 or more
56. What are the most convenient times for you to take courses?
1. \_\_\_ Any time
  2. \_\_\_ Morning (before noon)
  3. \_\_\_ Early p.m. (12 to 3)
  4. \_\_\_ Late p.m. (after 6)
57. How often do you prefer a 3-hour course to meet?
1. \_\_\_ Twice a week
  2. \_\_\_ Once a week
  3. \_\_\_ Three times a week
  4. \_\_\_ No opinion
  5. \_\_\_ Other, please designate \_\_\_\_\_
58. What college curriculum would be most beneficial to your needs?
1. \_\_\_ Liberal arts curriculum.
  2. \_\_\_ A degree that can be directly applied to a job (nursing, teaching, accounting, etc.)
  3. \_\_\_ A combination of professional and liberal arts curriculum.
  4. \_\_\_ Other, please designate \_\_\_\_\_
59. Nowadays certain colleges offer degrees based on life and work experience as well as course work. Others give degrees based on self-study through an examination system. How would you ideally like to have your degree awarded?
1. \_\_\_ Course work done at a college or university
  2. \_\_\_ Course work as well as life and work experience
  3. \_\_\_ Self-study through an examination system and course work
  4. \_\_\_ Self-study (Correspondence study and course work)
  5. \_\_\_ Other, please designate \_\_\_\_\_
60. Since you first enrolled at an undergraduate university, have you discontinued your enrollment for one or more semesters?
1. \_\_\_ No
  2. \_\_\_ Yes, once
  3. \_\_\_ Yes, twice or more

61. How does your most recent grade point average compare to your previous college record (before reentry)
1. \_\_\_ Higher    2. \_\_\_ Same    3. \_\_\_ Lower    4. \_\_\_ Not applicable
62. What has been the one most important facilitator (helps me) to your returning to school?
- 
63. What has been the one most difficult barrier (hinders me) to overcome in returning to school?
- 

Please feel free to write additional comments below or on the back of this questionnaire.

I WISH TO EXTEND MY THANKS TO EACH OF YOU WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. YOUR ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

**APPENDIX C**

**CORRESPONDENCE**





NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Alva, Oklahoma 73717

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 13, 1979

President Leonard Campbell  
Southwestern Oklahoma State University  
Weatherford, OK 73096

Dear President Campbell:

Mrs. Coeta Evans, a faculty member at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, is doing a doctoral study; Returning Woman Student: An Important Minority Group on Four Regional Campuses. She will be examining the campuses at Southeastern, Southwestern, Northeastern, and Northwestern. She will be on your campus in April. She is looking forward to visiting your campus, and I am sure that you will delight in her bubbling personality. Any assistance you can give to her will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joe J. Struckle

Joe J. Struckle  
President

JJS:bw



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



March 20, 1979

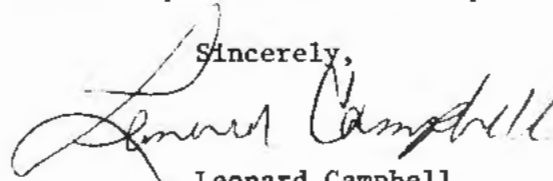
Mrs. Coeta Evans  
2824 Mark Circle  
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Mrs. Evans:

Southwestern Oklahoma State University is pleased to cooperate with you and provide access to information necessary for your doctoral study: *The Returning Woman Student: An Important Minority Group on Four Oklahoma Regional University Campuses.*

Permission is granted to include this University in the above study.

Sincerely,



Leonard Campbell  
President

LC:sv



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NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Alva, Oklahoma 73717

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 13, 1979

President Leon Hibbs  
Southeastern Oklahoma State University  
Durant, OK 74701

Dear President Hibbs:

Mrs. Coeta Evans, a faculty member at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, is doing a doctoral study; Returning Woman Student: An Important Minority Group on Four Regional Campuses. She will be examining the campuses at Southeastern, Southwestern, Northeastern, and Northwestern. She will be on your campus in April. She is looking forward to visiting your campus, and I am sure that you will delight in her bubbling personality. Any assistance you can give to her will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joe J. Struckle

Joe J. Struckle  
President

JJS:bw

Southeastern Oklahoma State University  
DURANT, OKLAHOMA

April 3, 1979

LEON HIBBS  
PRESIDENT

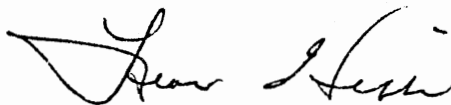
Mrs. Coeta Evans  
2824 Mark Circle  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Dear Mrs. Evans:

You certainly may use Southeastern  
in your study of The Returning Woman Student.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely yours,



pn



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NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Alva, Oklahoma 73717

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 13, 1979

President Roger Webb  
Northeastern Oklahoma State University  
Tahlequah, OK 74464

Dear President Webb:

Mrs. Coeta Evans, a faculty member at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, is doing a doctoral study; Returning Woman Student: An Important Minority Group On Four Regional Campuses. She will be examining the campuses at Southeastern, Southwestern, Northeastern, and Northwestern. She will be on your campus in April. She is looking forward to visiting your campus, and I am sure that you will delight in her bubbling personality. Any assistance you can give to her will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joe J. Struckle

Joe J. Struckle  
President

JJS:bw

Northeastern State University  
Office of the President

Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74464  
Telephone: (918)456-5511

March 22, 1979

Ms. Coeta Evans, Assistant Professor  
Home Economics Education  
Northwestern Oklahoma State University  
Alva, OK 73717

Dear Ms. Evans:

Confirming our recent telephone conversation regarding your doctoral study, this communication shall serve as authorization for you to assess the needs, problems, and satisfactions of the older women on the Northeastern campus relevant to the study.

You are welcome to come to Northeastern and this office will be pleased to offer any assistance possible.

Sincerely,

/s/ Roger Webb

W. Roger Webb  
President

lc

Northeastern State University



NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Alva, Oklahoma 73717

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 21, 1979

Mrs. Coeta Evans  
2824 Mark Circle  
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Mrs. Evans:

In response to a verbal conversation, we will be glad to have Northwestern Oklahoma State University included in your study of the Returning Woman Student: An Important Minority Group On Four Regional Campuses.

If we can be of assistance in any way while you are on campus, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Joe J. Struckle  
President

JJS:BW

APPENDIX D

GROUPINGS FOR DEGREE OF SATISFACTION



## GROUPINGS FOR DEGREE OF SATISFACTION

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Subject	Corresponding Statement Number
(1) Campus Environment, Academic	1, 2, 5, 6
(2) Campus Environment, Social	3, 4
(3) University Support	7, 13, 14, 17, 35
(4) Social Support	8, 9, 10, 12, 18
(5) Perception of Self-Image	21, 23, 25, 26
(6) Perception of Family and Personal Support	19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34
(7) Perceptions of Age Difference	11, 15, 16
(8) Availability of Financial Support	24
(9) Freedom of Choice or Perception of Individual Freedom	22

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APPENDIX E

SAMPLE COMPUTATION OF AN  
INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

SAMPLE COMPUTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL  
QUESTIONNAIRE

Group	Question	Score	Assigned Value
Campus Academic Environment	1	5	
	2	6	
	5	2	
		Total 13	
		Mean Total 4.3	0
Campus Social Environment	3	7	
	4	8	
		Total 15	
		Mean Total 7.5	1
University Support	7	2	
	14	3	
	17	4	
	35	3	
		Total 12	
	Mean Total 3	-1	
Social Support	8	5	
	9	6	
	10	2	
	12	7	
	18	8	
		Total 28	
	Mean Total 5.6	0	
Self-Image	21	2	
	23	4	
	25	6	
	26	7	
		Total 19	
	Mean Total 4.75	0	
Family and Personal Support	19	2	
	27	2	
	30	2	
	31	3	
	32	3	
	33	4	
	34	4	
	Total 20		
	Mean Total 2.85	1	

Group	Question	Score	Assigned Value
Age Difference	11	7	
	15	6	
	16	7	
		Total	20
	Mean Total	6.6	1
Financial Support	24	7	
		Total	7
		Mean Total	7
Individual Freedom	22	2	
		Total	2
		Mean Total	2
TOTAL:			2

Explanation of Total Score: Since the total score of this questionnaire was 2 which fell between a minus three and a positive three, it was given a three and labeled "neutral."

APPENDIX F

DATA FOR PERSONAL VARIABLES NOT FOUND  
TO BE SIGNIFICANT

TABLE XXI

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF AGE IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Ages	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%
25-29	29	8.31	1.1	50	14.33	0.4	40	11.46	0.0	119	34.10
30-34	11	3.15	1.4	41	11.75	0.8	26	7.45	0.0	78	22.35
35-39	13	3.72	0.2	24	6.88	0.3	21	6.02	0.1	58	16.62
40-44	11	3.15	0.3	15	4.30	1.8	20	5.73	1.2	46	13.18
45 or older	<u>6</u>	<u>1.72</u>	1.4	<u>30</u>	<u>8.60</u>	2.9	<u>12</u>	<u>3.44</u>	1.2	<u>48</u>	<u>13.75</u>
Total	70	20.06		160	45.84		119	34.10		349	100.00

X<sup>2</sup> = 12.863; d.f. = 8; p > X<sup>2</sup> = 0.1166

TABLE XXII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF MARITAL STATUS IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Marital Status	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$X^2$	No.	%	$X^2$	No.	%	$X^2$	No.	%
Married or Remarried	55	15.76	1.1	110	31.52	0.0	73	20.92	0.8	238	68.19
Separated or Divorced	11	3.15	2.0	36	10.32	0.2	37	10.60	2.4	84	24.07
Widowed, Single, or Other	<u>4</u>	<u>1.15</u>	0.4	<u>14</u>	<u>4.01</u>	0.2	<u>9</u>	<u>2.58</u>	0.0	<u>27</u>	<u>7.74</u>
Total	70	20.06		160	45.85		119	34.10		349	100.00

$$X^2 = 7.151; \text{ d.f.} = 4; p > X^2 = 0.1281$$

TABLE XXIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF CLASS LEVEL IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Class	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%
Freshman	32	9.82	0.6	80	24.54	0.2	71	21.78	1.2	183	56.13
Sophomore	13	3.99	0.0	31	9.51	0.1	20	6.13	0.1	64	19.63
Junior	15	4.60	1.3	26	7.98	0.0	15	4.60	0.9	56	17.18
Senior	5	1.53	0.0	13	3.99	0.6	5	1.53	1.0	23	7.06
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23	—
Total	65	19.94	—	150	46.01	—	111	34.05	—	326	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 6.007; \text{d.f.} = 6; p > \chi^2 = 0.4224$$



TABLE XXIV

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF WORK PATTERN IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Work Pattern	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%
Homemaker	13	3.75	0.5	46	13.26	2.3	21	6.05	1.4	80	23.05
Homemaker and Worker Outside Home or Any Combination	38	10.95	0.5	73	21.04	0.4	59	17.00	0.0	170	48.99
Full Time Outside Home	12	3.46	0.3	33	9.51	0.0	25	7.20	0.1	70	20.17
Homemaker and Volunteer	6	1.73	0.1	8	2.31	1.6	13	3.75	1.6	27	7.78
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Total	69	19.88	—	160	46.11	—	118	34.01	—	347	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 8.707; \text{d.f.} = 6; p > \chi^2 = 0.1908$$

TABLE XXV

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF RACE IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Race	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%
Caucasian	60	17.54	0.1	147	42.98	0.1	104	30.41	0.0	311	90.94
Other	9	2.63	1.2	10	2.92	1.3	12	3.51	0.2	31	9.06
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—
Total	69	20.18	—	157	45.91	—	116	33.92	—	342	100.00

X<sup>2</sup> = 2.939; d.f. = 2; p > X<sup>2</sup> = 0.2300

TABLE XXVI

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF EFFECT OF AGES OF CHILDREN IN RELATION TO  
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Effect	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$X^2$	No.	%	$X^2$	No.	%	$X^2$	No.	%
No	20	6.31	0.2	55	17.35	0.1	38	11.99	0.0	113	35.65
Yes	42	13.25	0.1	93	29.34	0.1	69	21.77	0.0	204	64.35
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	32	—
Total	62	19.56	—	148	46.69	—	107	33.75	—	317	100.00

$X^2 = 0.459$ ; d.f. = 2;  $p > X^2 = 0.7948$

TABLE XXVII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF EFFECT OF NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON  
EDUCATIONAL PLANS IN RELATION TO DEGREE OF  
SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Effect	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%	$\chi^2$	No.	%
No	39	12.34	0.0	91	28.80	0.0	68	21.52	0.0	198	62.66
Yes	23	7.28	0.0	57	18.04	0.1	38	12.03	0.1	118	37.34
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	33	—
Total	62	19.62	—	148	46.84	—	106	33.54	—	316	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 0.189; \text{ d.f.} = 2; p > \chi^2 = 0.9097$$

TABLE XXVIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS IN RELATION TO  
DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Effect	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%
No	43	13.78	0.0	104	33.33	0.0	75	24.04	0.0	222	71.15
Not Applicable	5	1.60	0.4	17	5.45	0.1	12	3.85	0.0	34	10.90
Yes	12	3.85	0.1	25	8.01	0.1	19	6.09	0.0	56	17.95
Nonrespondents	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	37	—
Total	60	19.23	—	146	46.79	—	106	33.97	—	312	100.00

X<sup>2</sup> = 0.655; d.f. = 4; p > X<sup>2</sup> = 0.9568

TABLE XXIX  
TOTAL RESPONDENTS WITH ONE SOURCE  
OF FINANCING EDUCATION

Source	Total Respondents	Percent
Own savings	18	8.45
Wages from my job	36	16.90
Spouse's employment	67	31.45
Scholarship and stipend	4	1.88
Loans	31	14.55
Tuition exemption	4	1.88
Reimbursement from my company	6	2.82
Other	<u>47</u>	<u>22.07</u>
Total	213	100.00

TABLE XXX  
 TOTAL RESPONDENTS WITH ONE REASON  
 FOR COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Reason	Total Respondents	Percent
To get an interesting job requiring a college degree	59	31.7
To get promoted in a present job	6	3.2
Unfulfilled desire for knowledge	14	7.5
Relief from boredom	0	0.0
Dissatisfaction with volunteer work	0	0.0
Divorce or marital difficulties	7	3.8
Self-fulfillment	58	31.2
Other	<u>42</u>	<u>22.6</u>
Total	186	100.0

TABLE XXXI

CHI-SQUARE VALUES OF SCHOOL IN RELATION TO DEGREE  
OF SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

School	Neutral			Satisfied			Extremely Satisfied			Total	
	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%	X <sup>2</sup>	No.	%
University C	18	5.16	0.4	49	14.04	0.0	38	10.89	0.1	105	30.09
University A	16	4.58	0.4	26	7.45	0.9	26	7.45	0.3	68	19.48
University D	21	6.02	0.7	66	18.91	1.2	39	11.17	0.4	126	36.10
University B	<u>15</u>	<u>4.30</u>	2.5	<u>19</u>	<u>5.44</u>	0.7	<u>16</u>	<u>4.58</u>	0.1	<u>50</u>	<u>14.33</u>
Total	70	20.06		160	45.85		119	34.10		349	100.00

$$X^2 = 7.666; \text{ d.f.} = 6; p > X^2 = 0.2636$$



APPENDIX G

STUDENTS' COMMENTS

The following are quotes taken directly from comments written by returning mature women students:

"The administration here is great. I think the fact they are giving us this test and trying to find out about our needs speaks well of them."

"I have no complaints about the college. They have treated me very well. My problem is my husband and his family."

"Coming to college hasn't been easy. I don't know what I'm doing half of the time; but everyone here tries to help, from the President to the custodian."

"I am definitely in middle motherhood and wonder sometimes what I am doing here; however, something tells me that I need more than I can get at home."

"Predicted changes in women's life-styles have forced me to get in-the-swing of things. This survey is a good way to tell someone how I feel about things around here."

"I would never have come back to college if NWOSU had not offered extension classes to let me prove I could make it."

"The 'empty nest' syndrome is being alleviated for me due to college attendance. I'm glad I came."

"Being in college has made life more interesting and meaningful for 'me'."

"College is helping me re-assess my life."

"This college has helped me grow intellectually and personally."

"This college seems to be preparing me for graduate school."

"My self-esteem has improved 100% since coming to this college."

"I am grateful for the alternatives this college training has provided."

"I'm just afraid I will not be able to get a job after all the time and work spent here. There are few employment opportunities for a person with a degree in my community and my husband refuses to leave his 'mother'. The way my in-laws and even my parents feel about educated persons makes me sick--I don't want my children to grow up with this attitude."

"This is the first time I've been able to tell someone on paper how I feel about education at this college. It can stand some improvement."

"The thing this college needs is better programs and courses for women."

"I appreciate this college because they just let me learn and do not pressure me to get a degree."

"I am glad to be here and can educate myself for a way of life that will suit me--not my parents, as was the case when I was here before."

"I need this college experience to test myself and see if I can make it outside my own home."

"I'm glad someone is interested in the woman student--graduate school is my next goal because I have done well here."

"I feel guilty sometimes for spending all the extra family money on me; but I'm glad I came and hope to repay everyone that has helped me including this college."

"I feel guilty sometimes because I have let other things go to come to this college; so, it had better pay off."

"I just came from a class and was put down by a male instructor-- he is a real clod and needs to be gotten out of here (about 100 other people agree with me.)"

"The most important question asked was the effect of ages and number of children. This is my biggest problem--if this college provided child care facilities, I could at least be with my children on the road and spend more time with them as well as feeling that they were being well taken care of."

"I heard there is a person at this college who is supposed to assist adult women--so far I have seen no one."

"I like this questionnaire--it's about time someone thought about us!"

"If this college would take care of the shortage of child care facilities and inflexible class hours--we would have it made. I have friends who would like to come to school if they had somewhere to leave their children."

"They need to work at building up the older woman's 'ego' around here. I feel like a 2nd class citizen sometimes."

"I was feeling stagnant and wanted to feel that I was doing something worthwhile. This college experience has been good for me."

"My home responsibilities seem to have multiplied. Perhaps this is because I have so little time."

"I may be wasting my time because I realize my future occupation will have to be reconciled with my husband's geographic mobility."

"I am sick of sex-typed occupations and would like a non-traditional career."

"Money, competition and being a woman is a handicap at this college. Glad to let you know about it on this questionnaire."

"We have a role conflict in our relationship. My husband refuses to help with anything, particularly the children and housework."

"Geographic immobility will cause me to not realize my potential."

"Career and marriage will be a double stress for me when I graduate."

"I am glad you are interested in the feminist viewpoint by giving us this questionnaire."

"It would be nice if the faculty on this campus would recognize that students over the age of 25 are adults and should be respected and treated as adults."

"It would be nice to know and talk with more people my age; and, who has some of the same problems I have. The student union is the only place we have and the young college kids are so silly at times."

"I was talking with the women in my car pool this morning and we all expressed a desire for more financial assistance to be made available through the college, particularly for the part-time student and for the woman student who is married."

"I haven't had a problem; but many of my friends could use some help with advising, counseling and career planning. This would be a problem for me except my husband helps me plan my schedule. I know one person who has had to come an extra year because of poor 'advising'."

"Social contact with my peers would be helpful if we had a place to go."

APPENDIX H

DATA FOR SPECIFIC UNIVERSITIES

## MOST BENEFICIAL COLLEGE CURRICULUM

<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Liberal arts	18	5.20
2. Degree that can be directly applied to a job	205	59.25
3. Combination of professional and liberal arts	115	33.24
4. Other	8	2.31

## IDEAL METHOD OF AWARDING DEGREES

<u>Method</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Course work done at a college or university	115	33.24
2. Course work plus life and work experience	210	60.7
3. Self-study through exams and course work	18	5.20
4. Self-study through correspondence and course work	10	2.9
5. Other	6	1.74

## MOST CONVENIENT TIMES TO TAKE COURSES

<u>Time</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Any time	47	13.66
2. Morning (before noon)	192	55.81
3. Early p.m. (12-3)	13	3.78
4. Late p.m. (after 6)	33	9.59
5. Morning and early p.m.	43	12.5
6. Morning and late p.m.	12	3.49
7. Early and late p.m.	4	1.16

## MEETING PREFERENCE OF 3 CREDIT COURSE

<u>Times per Week</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Twice per week	56	16.19
2. Once per week	44	12.71
3. Three times per week	206	59.54
4. No opinion	26	7.51
5. Other	6	1.73
6. Twice and once per week	5	1.45
7. Twice and three times per week	3	0.87



## MAIN REASON FOR CHOICE OF SPECIFIC INSTITUTION

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Convenient location	285	81.66
2. Institution's reputation	62	17.77
3. Type of educational program respondent desired	94	26.93
4. Earning degree on part- time basis	47	13.47
5. Adult environment	15	4.3
6. Tuition exemption	10	2.87
7. Other	30	8.6

## AVERAGE CREDITS PER SEMESTER

<u>Average Credits</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Less than 6 credits	33	9.62
2. 6-9	37	10.79
3. 10-12	67	19.53
4. 13-15	137	39.94
5. More than 16	62	18.08
6. 13-15 or more than 16	3	0.88
7. 10-12 or 13-15	4	1.17

## COMPARISON OF MOST RECENT GPA TO PREVIOUS GPA

<u>GPA</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Higher	145	44.62
2. Same	57	17.54
3. Lower	23	7.08
4. NA	100	30.77

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VITA<sup>2</sup>

Coeta Grimes Evans

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis:** THE RETURNING WOMAN STUDENT'S DEGREE OF SATISFACTION WITH HER UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

**Major Field:** Home Economics Education

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Lenora, Oklahoma, September 8, 1928, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Crayton Grimes; married to Earl Evans; four children, Kendall, born February 21, 1953, Kerry, born October 20, 1954, Karyl Kay, born April 21, 1956, and Kevin, born March 31, 1958.

**Education:** Received the Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma in 1951 with a major in Vocational Home Economics Education; received the Master of Arts degree in Education from Phillips University in 1959; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1980.

**Professional Experience:** Home economics teacher in the Putnam City, Oklahoma, Public Schools, 1948-1949, and 1950-1951; Hunter, Oklahoma, Public Schools, 1951-1953; Pond Creek, Oklahoma, Public Schools, 1953-1954; Vocational Home Economics, Medford, Oklahoma, Public Schools, 1960-1962; Social worker, Department of Public Welfare, 1962-1965; Vocational Home Economics, Dover, Oklahoma, Public Schools, 1965-1971; Asst. Professor of Home Economics, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, 1971-1980.

**Professional Organizations:** American Home Economics Association, Oklahoma Home Economics Association, American Association of University Women, Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society.