THE NON-TRADITIONAL WOMAN STUDENT

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By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Thesis Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Literature and Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>End Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT
The recognition of a rapid increase in the population of the non-traditional woman student pursuing an undergraduate degree poses many questions. Do institutions of higher learning have in place structures which hinder the education of the non-traditional woman student? How does the non-traditional woman student finance an education? What are the benefits which become available later in life from securing further education? For purposes of this research, the non-traditional woman student will be comprised of women of twenty-five years or older in age.

Before World War II, many women married and bore children at an early age, which tended to limit their educational opportunities. Universities and colleges were more geared toward the needs and desires of men due to society's lack of concern for women's education. This situation had changed so much, that by 1960, bachelor degrees awarded to women had more than doubled. From the 1945 totals, in the United States between 1970-1974, the population of the non-traditional women students increased by thirty percent ($3,013,000 - 3,898,000$).

The results of a recent poll of selected non-traditional women who were entering or re-entering college were as follows: Why did you enter or re-enter higher education? The prominent response given was financial
gains in the work place. Others found free time for educational purposes and are concerned with being "role models".

What caused the delay in entering or re-entering college? The majority indicated marriage and the start of their families. Fear of entrance into higher education had also precipitated the delay, particularly when coupled with financial difficulties created problems for other women.

Ten of the twelve women responded with a definite "yes" when asked, do colleges and universities have a responsibility to the Non-traditional woman student?

How has the institution helped or hindered your education? Flexible class schedules, credit for life experiences, and the opportunity to CLEP classes were beneficial to the majority of women. Special service organizations, academic and career counselors, study areas and child care facilities provided by many institutions were also indicated as a plus. With regards to hindrances, the lack of the availability of class selection was the largest complaint expressed by those surveyed. The most commonly faced obstacle by returning women was the juggling of school, work, and family into a workable schedule. The fear of being an outsider, the lack of scholarships and other financial aid also posed problems for returning
women.

Over three-quarters of those interviewed expressed hopes of financial opportunity and self-improvement when asked, what was the most significant benefit they hoped to receive with advanced education.

It can be seen that universities and colleges are competing for additional student enrollment by enticing the non-traditional student back to school with flexible class schedules, appropriate housing, flexible office hours, better financial assistance, and accessible child care. The benefits which individual students gain by acquiring an advanced education are a better sense of self-esteem, self-improvement opportunity and financial gains by securing new careers or promotion.

However, society in the long run, is the real winner. The educated woman develops a more positive attitude and builds confidence. They are more capable of making decisions that affect local, national, and world affairs. The literature has shown that the educated person is more likely to exercise their voting rights, thus, preserving democracy and becoming role models for future generations. The cycle of welfare and poverty is also broken by securing higher education, thereby, lessening the burden which society must assume in assisting this valuable population resource to achieve their potential.
THESIS STATEMENT
This research involved the non-traditional woman student, her transition into becoming the more traditional student, an investigation as to when this transition began, as well as, the cause and pitfalls of this transition. I attempted to discover what women's expectations are; if they entered or re-entered college, for personal improvement or if they planned for further education to achieve greater financial rewards in their careers. Others aspects researched were the handicaps and hardships that a non-traditional student encounters.

This study attempted to verify that the non-traditional woman student entering or re-entering college suffers hardships and makes many concessions to achieve her ultimate goal of becoming an educated, well rounded individual.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Do institutions of higher learning have in place structures which hinder the education of the non-traditional woman student?

How does the non-traditional woman student plan for financing a education?

Are there benefits which become available, later in life, from securing further education?
INTRODUCTION
Entering school as a mature student, I found to my surprise a large population of other mature women attending college. I was anticipating more students of an age ranging between eighteen and twenty-five, more commonly referred to as the traditional student. The increase in enrollment in higher education in recent years of the non-traditional student, non-traditional defined as students twenty-five years and older, becoming more traditional aroused questions and an interest as to why these women would enter or re-enter the academic scene at this stage in their lives. It is obvious that this distinct population of the student community, many of which are married, married with children, single parents or possessing other distinctions, had quite different needs and goals than the regular traditional student.

There has been an ever increasing demand for education by the non-traditional woman student (here on referred to as N.T.W.S.) in recent years. Since World War II this population has increased at a remarkable pace. Many of these now mature students generally chose to enter the work force or to begin their families immediately after completion of high school. Only later, did they choose to enter or re-enter the academic scene. This late entrance into higher education is regularly accompanied by many more obstacles than those normally faced by the traditional
student. One of these barriers which faces the N.T.W.S. is the financing of education. This hindrance not only places economic, but also, emotional stress on the student.

The returning N.T.W.S. may also have to overcome self-generated inhibitions of inadequacy. The non-traditional woman student will be faced with the fear, and often fact, of being treated as an outsider. This can leave the student feeling even more isolated and alone.

The N.T.W.S. have to constantly juggle schedules. She must adjust employment, education, and family into a workable arrangement.

In order to understand the non-traditional student better the following questions must be answered:

A. Do institutions of higher learning have in place structures which hinder the education of the non-traditional woman student?

B. How does the non-traditional woman student plan to finance an education?

C. Are there benefits which become available, later in life, from securing further education?

Interviews with twelve non-traditional women students were conducted, concentrating on the previous and supporting questions. The results of this survey are presented in the following chapters.
HISTORY
The student population in colleges and universities has undergone a great transition in recent decades. An increasing trend that can be observed is that of what had previously been considered the non-traditional student becoming more and more the dominate student type. The traditional student has previously been defined as: a white male, entering college at approximately eighteen years of age, directly after high school graduation.1 Whereas the non-traditional student can be explained as anyone other than those described above. This can include many aspects. The non-traditional student can be physically limited, of an age of twenty five or older, a minority racially, or female. Women, as a group, are characterized as non-traditional students.2 For the purpose of this study, the N.T.W.S. will be defined as a female student, twenty-five years and older entering or re-entering higher education.

Since the end of World War II, we have seen an ever increasing population of women either entering college for the first time or re-entering college after years of delay. The growth in this new majority-minority student has been accelerated in part by the growth in overall female enrollment during the past two decades.3

Until World War II the woman was considered the nucleus of the home and family; husband, children, and
home depended on this spirited figure to direct the education of the children, provide meals, and the general undertakings of the home and family. The role of "bread winner" was held almost exclusively by the male. The female figure was seldom regarded as the dominate provider.

During the war many cultural changes began to occur. While the males were off to war, it became the woman's responsibility to provide war materials by working in the defense factories. For the first time in history, significant numbers of females left the safety of the home and family and entered the work place. At this particular time in history, it was necessary for her to subsidize the family income with the male population far away on foreign soil fighting to protect and defend the safety of the nation.

With the newly developed technology of mass production, many mothers and wives took their place on the assembly lines, while others became secretaries, or office assistants. This left children to be attended to by older family members or friends.

With the cultural history of the female, many families believed it unnecessary to educate young women. A general consensus was that a girl would marry young and begin to bear children. This trend continued until after the war.
With these beliefs firmly entrenched in the minds of middle America, it can easily be understood why women were late in securing advanced education.

Institutions for higher learning created barriers for the female. Colleges and universities were geared toward the needs and interests of the male population. Woman were often subtly discouraged from pursuing advanced education. Institutions of higher education were not prepared to meet the needs and demands of female students. Their interest in courses of study were quite different from that of the male student. New dormitories and recreational facilities were required to accommodate the female student. Most often faculty were composed primarily of men, therefore, it was increasingly difficult to counsel women with personal and academic problems, in as much, as these areas were somewhat foreign to male instructors.

There were different standards placed on women. In a recent interview with a non-traditional woman student, an experience was provided that she had while attending college immediately following high school in the 1960s. She had completed her first semester with a grade point average of 3.8, and had continued her studies the second semester in accordance with the first. Toward the end of the second semester, the dean of the school invited her to his office. He explained, tht she would have to sign
withdrawal notice from school, due to the fact that it had become evident that she was pregnant and not married. It was absolutely necessary that she withdraw herself from the academic scene. She did as she was directed. She did not re-enter college again until after twenty years had past.

Many of the pressures facing the academic woman came to the attention of the university as they attempted to recover from the civil rights, anti-war, and student power upheavals of the sixties. Many of these inadequacies have now been overcome. Universities have begun to recognize and address the needs of the female student. They are providing housing for females and their families. Recreational facilities and sports for women are prominent on most campuses. Flexible class schedules are becoming more popular, this helps the N.T.W.S. incorporate busy schedules into a workable reality.

Previously women faced little chance of obtaining a career, other than that of mother, wife, and homemaker, and the woman's likelihood of higher education was slim due to these hindrances. Women were marrying at a very young age and bearing children in large numbers. Although the post war peak in the crude birthrate (26.6 per population) was reached in 1947, the rate remained quite high for the next ten years and then began a steady decline that has characterized it since 1957.
Having been exposed to the workplace during the war, women began to enjoy financial independence and demonstrated an increasing ambition. They began to set higher goals for themselves. With the realization that they must compete with the male population, which for the most part was better educated and definitely had more experience in the professional world, women began to desire and seek increasing educational opportunities. The population of the woman students began a rapid increase with respect to the total student population. By 1960 women had increased their relative representation among college graduates substantially. The number of bachelor's degrees awarded to women more than doubled between 1965 and 1977 increasing from 255,000 to 594,000. Other reasons for the rise in the rate of women's college enrollment, to some extent, was the rise of the age of marriage, the increase in the divorce rate and the decline in the birthrate. Much of this population entering college was of the non-traditional age group. The collection of data according to gender and age by the National Center for Educational Statistics did not begin until 1972.

In the period between 1970-1974, the number of non-traditional women college students in the United States increased by thirty per cent (from 3,013,000 to 3,898,000), and in total accounts for almost sixty-three per cent of
the increase in college enrollments in the past four years (1985-1989). This can be compared to the non-traditional male whose number increased only by twelve per cent over the same period. The percentage of increase from 1972 to 1974 of women of the non-traditional age group are as follows: ages twenty-five to twenty-nine accounted for one hundred and eight per cent increase, and women between the ages of thirty and thirty-four represented a ninety-five per cent increase. This provides evidence that the entry, or re-entry of women in college is increasing in numbers and the greatest proportional increase is among older women aged twenty-five to thirty-four years of age, with those aged thirty-five and older also increasing. The number of women returning to college in the over thirty-five and older age group also outnumbers the increase in the male students.

The Digest of Education Statistics indicates that the enrollment of women have increased fifty-two per cent from 1972 to 1980. The Digest of Education Statistics states, that the total enrollment in higher education for the N.T.W.S. was as follows: The enrollment of women aged twenty-five and above in 1970 was 879,000, in 1975 the enrollment had increased to 1,791,000, in 1980 it had increased to 2,459,000, and in 1985 to 2,895,000.

As the N.T.W.S. began to enter or re-enter the
academic scene, the two year colleges were often better equipped to meet the needs of this student. It was usually located close to home, therefore, presenting less difficulty in commuting. Child care is more easily obtained, some campuses provide child care on campus, or is associated with child care agencies located close to campus. She can secure an associate's degree and transfer credits to a four-year school upon completion of the requirements for the two-year degree. The tuition and general cost of education is usually far less expensive than that of a public or private institution. Thus, again limiting the amount of difficulty for the N.T.W.S.

Community colleges frequently offer special service organizations. These organizations provide counselors equipped with the expertise to direct returning students in class selection and career goals. Instructors and workshops are available to help students to improve basic and necessary skills in the pursuit of an education. The special service organizations helped by securing recreation, study, and women's areas.

Women form 41.5 per cent of the students in private two-year colleges and 41.2 per cent of the students in public two-year college.
LITERATURE AND ANALYSIS
The student population has made drastic and rapid changes in recent years with the non-traditional women students now becoming the non-traditional student. With this transition, it became obvious that the N.T.W.S. would face unique and distinctive barriers. In order to better understand the obstacles and feelings of the non-traditional women student a survey was conducted of twelve women. All of these women were of the non-traditional age group (twenty-five years and older) and pursuing undergraduate degrees either at the university level or just beginning the educational process and presently attending a two-year college. These women came from various backgrounds. They have come from different ethnic cultures ranging from Caucasian, Black, Oriental, Mexican, and American Indian. Some were married, married with children, and single parents with ages varying from twenty-five years of age to the mid fifties. They are or have attended colleges and universities throughout the United States and their economic status was just as diversified. It encompassed upperclass professional women, middle class homemakers and welfare recipients. This was as a diversified student population that could be located. Seven women of the sample had entered college immediately after high school, dropping out after a limited period and then returning to the academic scene after years of delay.
The delays ranged from as little as two and one-half years to over twenty years. The remaining five subjects did not enter college after high school, but chose instead to start families and careers. The lapse of time between high school completion and entrance into college ranged from six years to twenty-two years. These women with all their differences still held in common high expectations and faced many similar problems as non-traditional students. These women, along with thousands of other women in college are the pioneers of the non-traditional woman's education. They are paving the way for future generations struggling with fears, inhibitions, and constant barriers placed before them by society.

The main focus of this paper addresses the following questions: Do institutions of higher learning have in place structures which hinder the education of the non-traditional woman student? How does the non-traditional woman student plan to finance an education? And, what are the benefits which become available later in life from securing further education? In order to receive a more detailed understanding from the subjects interviewed each question was divided into two parts, making a total of six questions presented before the twelve women.

The first of these questions presented to the subjects was: Why did you enter or re-enter higher education? The
majority of the women were found to be pursuing higher education in hopes of long term financial stability. Most recognized that it is still a "man's world", and to compete in this world women must have adequate credentials, as well as, a knowledge of many subjects. The majority of the students polled have hopes of securing either a new career or increasing their earning potential with job advancement. The experience one receives in the academic arena coupled with a degree in higher education, makes the mature woman a more desirable employee, therefore, enriching chances of job promotions, and career changes.

Four respondents found that they had more available time and wanted to use this new found time wisely and creatively, thus, they decided to pursue higher education. As their dependent children matured, entered school, and became more independent, the woman, in her mid-life often finds that she has more free time than ever before. Her duties of mother and homemaker are less demanding and she finds herself bored and dissatisfied with her life. She often develops the attitude of not being needed and undergoes a great transition during these years of her life. Children have, by this time, left the home to seek career and school opportunities of their own. Spouses are involved with careers and activities, leaving the middle-aged women potentially isolated, alone, depressed, and with
a strong sense of inadequacy.

This transitional period can often be overcome with the entrance into college. The college experience builds self-esteem, confidence, and encourages the individual to set goals and work diligently toward personal accomplishments. This often results in a new found interests and changed career goals.

Another concern that can not be overlooked is that of a "role model". One woman interviewed expressed hope that her young daughter would pursue higher education. She recognized that the chance would be limited if she (the mother) did not achieve an advanced education. She stated, "children are products of their environment and they will conduct themselves in such a fashion as they are accustomed to." The non-traditional woman student represents role models to her children and others caught-up in society's bureaucracy. Many single mothers find themselves living in sub-standard conditions, depending on minimum wage jobs or welfare to support themselves and their families. This cycle of poverty is not easily broken. It has been said, "welfare breeds welfare". Education for the mature woman is indeed a tool to help break this devastating cycle. The student educates herself, secures a career, and escapes housing projects and slums that have been her existence, providing more comfort and a more
positive attitude for herself and children.

This "role model" will represent success and encourage the next generation to seek education and pursue a better life - a life that can be productive and beneficial for all. It was stated in a recent study on education for women that "the university is providing not only an education, but a way out of poverty and a way to help their children".16

There was yet another attitude explored concerning "role models", and that was that she (one non-traditional woman student interviewed) was perceived uneducated, while the remainder of her family had pursued advanced degrees. She felt insecure and inadequate, and wanted to maintain the family tradition of educational excellence. It was important for this student to establish respect for herself and gain the approval of family and friends. This woman has expectations of being accepted into a Master's program upon completion of her undergraduate studies.

Some non-traditional students return to higher education because they want to add another dimension to their lives, and want to develop themselves further. They seek additional interests, or they have additional interests which they wish to follow. Some return because they had always wanted to complete their studies. Other students see a direct and developing relationship between
employment and education.18

When asked, what caused the delay for entering or re-entering college? Eight of the twelve women had married, seven of these eight had began their families and attributed the lack of available time for education as the main reason for delaying their educational process. This verifies what was stated previously, that it seems likely that "the failure of the representation of women among college students during its pre-war level and gained enrollment and continued with a slow increase until 1960, was associated with early marriages and child bearing that was characterized by the first fifteen years after the war".18

Financial difficulties have always created problems for the student. This is especially true of the non-traditional woman. *Time Magazine* recently stated that, "money is perhaps the most serious obstacle for the older student, who are often ineligible for college scholarships because of part-time enrollment status."19 Financial aid is more accessible now than when many of these women were graduating from high school. However, financial aid eligibility is determined by Congressional Methodology, and is based on financial need according to federal regulations. This often leaves the non-traditional woman ineligible for federal financial aid because of her
employment status. Many students work at least part-time or more, and many have spouses that also contribute to the income of the home. With these combined incomes, it become almost impossible for the N.T.W.S. to become eligible for financial aid. Also a student must maintain an enrollment of six credit hours per semester in order to be considered eligible for financial aid.

Scholarships are limited for the non-traditional woman student. Most scholarships are used as tools to encourage enrollment by the eighteen year old student just beginning college. "The notion of the "full-time" student has penalized both women and the poor. The student with a full-time job and full-time academic program is obviously more handicapped than the student who can afford to go to college without working".20

Another financial problem that has been encountered by the N.T.W.S. was the resentment of spouse and family for resources spent for education. One woman confessed that her husband not only resented the money spent on her education, but was confused as to why any woman would feel the need for or want an education. He believed that the education of a mature woman was a waste of time and money.

Corporations and businesses have began to contribute to their employees education, thus, encouraging continuing educational opportunities and lessening the burden placed
on the student by the payment of tuition. Corporate educational support thereby fills some of the gap by subsidizing at least part of their employees educational cost allowing many students the ability to re-enter or enter college who would not be able to enroll without this assistance.21

Another common response for delaying advanced education was that of difficulties created in their career. Some faced financial problems, specifically the inability to pay tuition and costs of education immediately after high school. These women secured employment with the sole purpose in mind to save for education. These early careers often sky-rocketed, securing for the woman financial security, position, and prestige. Therefore, some women stated, "there was really no reason for education."

Immaturity, indecision as to future goals, and lack of ambition were also roadblocks in education. One woman admitted thinking, "education was a waste of time and energy". Now, she recognizes the importance of further degrees and is currently pursuing a college career. This behavior was responsible for the discontinuance of the educational process of four of the twelve women interviewed.

Anna Mae Burke wrote in her book, Are you Ready? A
Survival Manual for Returning to School, "that returning to school is a thing you will do with both joy and fear. She suggests that you try to spend more time working and less time worrying."22 This was true with one of the women interviewed. She was afraid to enter higher education because she believed that the lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and inability to interact with intellectuals, would not only embarrass her, but cause failure of her studies. Thus, she decided to remain out of college, only beginning her college career twenty-two years after high school graduation.

A famous author once said, "You can't go home again, meaning, all things change. The same is true of education."23 After delays in education the student loses confidences in abilities and is often left "to learn the ropes" on her own. The non-traditional student knows loneliness, not so much in a social sense, as in the sense of identity as a learner.24 So, the fear of being an outsider, financial upheavals, marriage, and the beginning of families has often delayed the educational process of these women.

An additional question posed to the subjects was: Do colleges and universities have a responsibility to the N.T.W.S.? Eleven of the twelve answered with a definite "yes". One emphatically stated "no"! She believed that it
was the students responsibility, not the institutions to
provide for their education.

Institutions have been indifferent, if not hostile to
older students, but are now actively recruiting non-
traditional learners and designing special programs for
their diverse needs. They are competing for this large
portion of the student population in higher education to
fill half-empty lecture halls and depleted coffers.
Finally schools have actively begun to court members of the
over twenty-five set. With the shrinking population of
high school graduates and the strong competition among
college and universities the services being offered by
higher education include evening and week-end classes, and
family housing. These have become important recruiting
devices when competing for a population in need of these
additional amenities.

As the non-traditional women began their rapid
increase in enrollment, they faced inadequate
accommodations. The curriculum was primarily designed to
fit the male students' interests and needs. Humanities and
Fine Arts classes were few. There were no dormitories and
housing facilities for women, especially for the mature
woman with a spouse or children. There were few central
gathering places for students, inadequate parking, limited
social and recreational facilities, minimal library
services, and almost no career or academic counseling specifically devoted to their needs. 28 This for the most part left the student to make arrangements and decisions for housing, child care, research and advisement on career and academic goals on their own.

Adult students often believe that the institutional administration does not care about them. 29 Professors often resent being away from their families in the evening when adult students need courses offered, as well as, the time lost from research and writing upon which promotions and tenure decisions are generally based. 30 Faculty are generally geared toward the education habits of the eighteen year old student, attending classes mostly in the day. Night and week-end class creates antagonism and resentment toward the non-traditional student. A New England fellow muttered, "We don't want these programs. You people don't understand, we have a tradition of academic excellence here!" 31

The need for accomplished counselors was the greatest concern indicated by the interviews. The women believed that academic advise, particularly help and guidance in their class selection was most important. They reported that provision of this could eliminate a lot of confusion, stress, and pressure. It would not only save time, but money as well. Selection of incorrect classes, classes
unrelated to the course of study resulted in loss of money, time and energy involved in attending and preparing for a class that will have limited effect on the degree.

Many of these women have left the work force for long periods of time. Career counseling, was found by many to be limited. It is essential for the non-traditional student to be focused on a specific goal and career and this can be expedited through good counseling.

Colleges and universities in recent decades have begun try to meet the increasing demands and needs of the N.T.W.S. Institutions have incorporated women's centers, special service organizations that deal with tutoring in the basic skills, and evening and week-end classes. According to Dr. Phyllis O'Callaghan, Dean of the Liberal Studies Program, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, the Liberal Studies Program was established to accommodate the needs of non-traditional students participating in continuing educational programs, which offer a degree. Institutions are also addressing the housing issue by providing married and single parent housing in addition to child care opportunities.

Learning assessment programs for adult students have been developed which grant college credits for previous life experience. This is another incentive program for the non-traditional woman student.
Colleges and universities have tried to address the housing issue in various ways. Some have provided separate residence halls for adults (affordable for a mother and child which also includes day care). The Texas Women's College has such a program in place aimed at the single parent. Mary Hufford Hall on the Texas Women's campus was specifically designed to accommodate the needs of the single parent with children. The amenities that are included are low cost housing ranging between $290.00 and $380.00 a month including utilities. This includes one meal a day for both mother and child, as well as low cost after school care for student's children, a playground, and a family recreation room. Students also have access to a nearby, university run, day care center. Rates are comparable to similar programs in the community, however, this center offers flexible hours and close proximity to the student's apartment. The program also includes family counseling and free weekend field trips. Mrs. Sander, spokesperson for the college states, "that the eighteen to twenty year old isn't the only one going to college nowadays. By helping not only with housing, but good day care and after school programs, the university is alleviating a great source of worry and concern so that the women can pay attention to their studies."34

Godsen College has developed a similar plan. They
have made living arrangements (small apartments) for a limited number of single parents that are living on welfare. Chathan College also has developed a special student residence hall specifically for the adult non-traditional woman.35 Many of these universities provide subsidized family housing for married students and married students with children.36

The fourth question presented to the subjects of the survey was: How have institutions of higher learning helped or hindered the education the N.T.W.S.? The majority of the population of those surveyed indicated that flexible class schedules (night and week-end classes) were most important. Several of those polled were Georgetown Liberal Studies students. They found classes were less rigid by being designed to permit attendance at fewer classes per week, less homework, and fewer exams, while still being challenged to their limits by professors and competitive classmates.

The availability of financial aid made it possible for two of the women interviewed to begin their education. One student remarked, that even though scholarships were scarce, she has been able to secure several scholarships during her college years, decreasing her indebtedness (due to student loans) after college.
The Life Experience program was helpful for another student attending an institution in Massachusetts. Through the Life Experience program she was able to accrue many college credits lowering the cost of education as well as, the time period involved in the undertaking of securing an education. The ability to College Entrance Placement (CLEP) out of classes has proven beneficial to many non-traditional women students. "This also was a time and cost saver", admitted one student.

For as much help as institutions provide for the student, obstacles are also present. This may not always be recognized by the institution or be consistent within higher education, but obstacles for the non-traditional student always will exist.

The most frequent complaint provided by the students was that there was no one there to lead and guide when they first began their process of education. One woman remarked, that if you had never had prior experience with college you needed someone there to help show you the ropes.

An additional group voiced displeasure with class selections, even though class schedules were flexible, class selection during these flexible hours were limited. The vast majority of classes are still geared toward the traditional age groups of students. The mature working
person or mother is prohibited from taking advantage of the classes presented during the day. "I wonder if the variety and selection of classes will ever change", stated one woman student.

The classes are limited due to lack of faculty and the university's resources, yet institutions are continually trying to increase both class selection and variety. It is believed that this trend will continue to develop and improve in the years to come.

The availability of scholarships for the non-traditional students posed annoyances for others. This problem is being recognized by corporations and organizations with greater frequency. Clariol Hair Products gives scholarships each year for the educational endeavors of the non-traditional woman student. Employers also are providing incentive programs for employees that help defer the cost of education. The financial issue for the N.T.W.S. is slowly being addressed by both institutions and outside sources. The future is more promising than ever before. More resource dollars are becoming available for the financing of advanced education of the mature student.

The women interviewed had interesting remarks when they were asked: What is the most significant benefit that you hope to reap by securing an education later in life?
Eleven of the twelve women hope to have financial gains involving new careers and job promotions. One woman remarked, "that she hoped to gain financial independence from her husband." Another found a degree necessary in order to make herself employable at mid-life. All eleven respondents were looking for financial security in some fashion.

Five students hoped for self-improvement. The educational experience and the new found knowledge produced greater self-esteem. Education promotes new ideas and open-mindness which helps to reduce prejudicial attitudes.

One student commented that all she hoped to gain from all the hours of study was, "Confidence. With self-confidence, she continued, everything else will fall into place. The job, money, position, and power will find its' way into my life, if I can just gain the confidence to realize that I am competent and educated!"

The final question on the survey was: What obstacles did you have to overcome in order to secure advanced education? The most drastic barrier faced by the students was that of juggling schedules to accommodate education, job, and family. It is difficult for a mother or wife to have a manageable schedule for all her duties. Her school schedule constantly changes from semester to semester, therefore creating discontent among family members. Their
dependence on her on a particular night or week-end, then the change of school schedules prohibits her from her duties may create hard feelings and misunderstandings. Families often feel neglected by a woman pursuing a degree. Additional responsibilities are often placed on families due to the limited free time of the student. Families often resent this extra effort on the student's part.

Others had difficulties adjusting to no free personal time. "There is no time for friends, family, recreation, or fun - just study," stated one woman. Another student resented the "sacrifice of a normal life".

Many found it inconvenient to take care of business at the university. The hours that offices are open, parking, and transportation, all have presented problems for a large portion of the population.

One student found that she was fearful and apprehensive upon entering higher learning due to her lack of understanding of new technology. "Even the library was different than it had been when I was in high school, it was necessary to ask assistance in the explanation of the new system." This was embarrassing and intimidating for the student, it created low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

Three had a fear of being considered an "outsider".
With age and inappropriate housing as a factor, the student felt isolated and alone, left to face problems of study and education alone. One student responded that, "even to find someone to have dinner with became a real problem".

Three women found it difficult to develop the self-discipline to study. After a long day at work, coupled with family duties, motivation for the preparation for class was often difficult to muster.

The university created difficulties for two. The prominence of day classes with only limited class selection placed a hindrance on woman. The inability of faculty to address the new population presented yet another problem for another returning student.

No matter how insignificant many of these problems may seem, they were and are real to those faced with the situation. They were compounded with additional responsibilities and stress created by the every day world. With a combination of many of these things, the N.T.W.S. is placed in a highly confusing, complex, and stressful situation. As one woman stated, "I asked myself, many times, why am I doing this to myself"?
CONCLUSION
It has been said that "there are risk associated with changing direction in life with doing, thinking, and feeling in different ways and with relating differently to the environment". This is certainly true of the non-traditional woman student. She is exposed to new thought, new ideas and a new way of doing things. Often she must change her daily habits and this is a fearful discovery.

There are several reasons for the rapid increase in the population of enrollment in higher education by the non-traditional woman student. It is believed that an attempt to recover from civil rights, anti-war, and student power upheavals in the sixties had an affect on the increase of enrollment. Another point of view expressed was that the rise in per capita income, the favorable job market for college graduates, the increase in the availability of student financial aid, and the spread of low cost public colleges were factors in encouraging increased enrollments of women at a non-traditional age in college. These trends in enrollment it is believed will continue at ever increasing rates.

Universities are competing for a new majority population of enrollment. They are using child care, housing, special services, and flexible class schedules to entice the non-traditional woman student.

The non-traditional woman student faces many more
obstacles than that of the traditional student. Financing education, juggling schedules between school, work, and family are difficult problems to resolve. Housing, child care, and problems posed by the universities i.e. office hours, faculty resentment, and transportation and parking are all great hindrances to the student. She also may encounter resentment from family members. She faces intimidation of feeling like an "outsider" in the academic world, leaving her alone and with low self-esteem.

Regardless of how difficult it may seem at times, the benefits the non-traditional woman student receives, makes all the sacrifices worthwhile. The N.T.W.S. is more likely to reach financial security through career and work related promotions. The woman gains self-esteem and self-confidence and becomes a more well rounded individual.

Society however, is the real winner. The non-traditional woman student develops a more positive attitude and broadens her mind, eliminating prejudices. Capable decisions are more likely to result with the education of the woman. Literature has shown that the educated person is more likely to exercise their rights to vote and become role models for future generations. The cycle of poverty and welfare is also broken with education of the non-traditional woman student, lessening the burden which society must assume in assisting this valuable
population resource to achieve their potential in the world. These women will take their place in society with pride and confidence striving to make the world a better place in which to live.

2. Perun; page 53.


5. Perun; pages 35-36.

6. Perun; page 53.

7. Perun; page 36.


11. Burke; page 5.


13. Burke; page 5.


15. Perun; page 53.


17. Burke; page 6.

18. Perun; page 36.


20. Howe; page 38.
21. **Time Magazine.** October 24, 1988

22. Burke; page 139.

23. Burke; page 4.


28. Rocco; page 19.

29. Rocco; page 19.

30. Rocco; page 19.

31. Rocco; page 19.


33. **Time Magazine.** October 24, 1990.


37. Rocco; page 41.

38. Howe; page 9.

39. Perun; page 36.
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