

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE OF THE ADULT WOMAN

by

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally most women have not planned for their futures beyond marriage and family. Women are realizing there is an additional stage to life planning as they are re-entering education and the labor force in ever-increasing numbers (Stone 1975, Zeltner 1975).

Universities are experiencing or anticipating lower enrollments. Adult women students may be the largest source of new students to offset declining enrollments. Numbers alone cannot be the only purpose for understanding these students. The quality of student experiences is a mutual concern of adult students and the university.

Literature highlights many problems that may affect performance of women students. Helping the adult woman mediate concerns for her private life with her own career goals will be a major role of Home Economics in the future. Combining career and marriage has been a source of strain for many women (Coser and Rokoff 1971). Many women experience conflict between roles of wife and full-time graduate student (Feldman 1973).

Other problems beside the one of role conflict have been documented. Women's aspirations are limited and they are often uninformed of what employers want (O'Leary 1974, Tomita 1975). Women account for about 40% of the undergraduate population in colleges and universities. As the level of education increases, the percentage of women applying, enrolling and graduating decreases (Intellect 1974). Tomita (1975) said women want to do something "meaningful" or "creative," but employers want more concrete evidence of job skills. Sometimes people invest time and money in training without understanding job opportunities and pay scales.

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Lack of self-esteem is often found in re-entering students. The Women's Re-entry Program at De Anza College in California found "all women—even the few who had been in college before—felt paralyzed by a fear of college entry requirements. Characteristically they have been out of school for from ten to as many as 40 years, the result being such deep attrition of their confidence that they found it almost impossible to take the first step toward returning to the classroom" (Anderson 1974, p. 30).

Presently there are 432 women students at Kansas State University who are 30 years of age and older. An understanding of the goals and concerns of these women will aid the College of Home Economics in easing re-entry of its mature students into academic life. To accomplish this purpose, the research focused on the following questions:

1. Is there a "triggering point" at which adult women enroll?
2. What are the educational and career goals of adult women students?
3. What are the primary concerns of adult women students?
4. What suggestions can be made to aid adult women students?

This thesis consists of two parts. Part one is a complete paper submitted for journal publication. Part two consists of a more extensive review of the literature, a detailed account of the procedures, results, acknowledgments, and an abstract.

PART I

Paper for Publication

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COLLEGE: THE DUAL-ROLE TESTING GROUND

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HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

Subjects for this study were a stratified sample of all women 30 years of age and older enrolled at Kansas State University the fall semester, 1975. From an official printout of 432 women, 110 were selected. The sample resulted in 35 of 137 undergraduates, 41 of 162 master's degree candidates, 24 of 93 doctoral degree candidates, and 10 of 40 "special students."

Demographic data and a range of existing attitudes as reflected by a sentence-completion instrument patterned after the Kell-Hoeflin Incomplete Sentence Blank (1) were collected before the personal interviews. This advance feedback was helpful in preparing for the individual interviews, some of which lasted more than an hour.

Interview data were recorded using an interview schedule with 39 questions, six of them being equal-interval, five-point scale items. Questions were based on a review of the literature, suggestions from home economics faculty, and personal experiences and insights of the two researchers. Interviews, taped on cassettes for later review, were concluded with 107 subjects providing data.

Women past 30 are returning to campus, or they are going there for the first time, in significantly increasing numbers. Who are they? What motivates them? And how is their intellectual build-up working? Kansas State University may have moved closer to a better understanding of this new source of clientele as enrollment of typical college-age students levels off or decreases.

A woman's future beyond marriage and the nuclear family was a matter of little concern until recent years. Even after the frontier had been tamed, traditional concepts of the place of the homemaker in the scheme of things changed little, more in lip service than in fact. Today, women are realizing an additional stage in life planning as they join the labor force or try the college classroom in increasing numbers (2, 3).

For publicly supported colleges or universities, the movement has more than the usual social implications. It relates to legislatively determined budgets, the accompanying survival of academic programs, and other "gut-level" issues increasingly important to administrators. For all the importance of adequate legislative appropriations to higher education, numbers alone are not the issue. The quality of student experiences is a mutual concern of students and the university.

Briefly put, the situation might be summarized this way:

--Earlier generations produced homemakers who expected to stay home with dishes, diapers, and dusting.

--Tomorrow's generations will be populated by women who clearly expect to have both a career and family.

--Today's middle-aged woman, as one of our respondents told us, is part of a new "lost generation" that 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. This article describes this group and their feelings of frustration.

Typical Subject - A Composite

Kansas State's typical adult woman student is carrying 6 to 11 semester hours. She is now working on, and planning to achieve, an advanced degree, and is more apt to be studying in traditional women's fields of education and home economics if she is a graduate student than if she is an undergraduate.

She names herself as the one who finances her education. If she works, it is probably full time. She is about as likely to be employed as not. She is 30 to 34 years old, married with two children, one boy and one girl. She is married to a college teacher, or a local business or professional man. Her husband has a college degree plus some graduate work.

However, the total sample of 107 was a complex group. We identified three general categories of students. One group appeared to be in college for the degree or course work that would enable them to advance in already established careers. They know what they want and how to get it. They are apt to be most vocal about university rules that waste their time or slow their progress toward a degree. They are either impatient with questions about how the university can help them and seem to think a person with enough perseverance can make the grade; or they disclaim difficulties other than petty annoyances, but are warmly sympathetic to problems of initiates of college life.

Another group is enrolled for special interest courses, usually one or two. If they could only have a parking place outside the classroom door, or some other minor conveniences, they'd never ask for another thing. They are pleased that the university offers them the opportunity to exercise their

talents, and they're enjoying college life immensely.

A final group, the largest and perhaps the most interesting, included those making important changes and decisions affecting their lives and the lives of their families. An understanding of this last group is important because home economics has a continuing interest in the family. Today it may be mothers, more than other family members, who need guidance and understanding.

Triggering Point

Is there a "triggering point"--a crisis, an event, or an influential person--precipitating enrollment of mature women? The outstanding factor researchers identified, which connected many ages and lifestyles, was a sense of emptiness that had to be dealt with.

Most felt they returned to school when they needed personal intellectual stimulation or a change in their daily routine. Some decisions were motivated strongly by feelings of self-preservation. One said that she was rotting in front of the television set; another, that she had placed too much emphasis on her children's accomplishments and her husband's career. Her decision to return came when she became "too pushy" in seeking to make successes of her family her own successes. Another was frustrated by her daughter's disinterest in college and decided that if she wanted college so much for her daughter, she must really want an education for herself. She enrolled.

One fourth of the sample completed the sentence "Staying at home..." with some form of the word "boring." This emptiness at home was best described by one subject who said, "You can run into such a rut in home life that you don't know what you want to do. You could go see a psychiatrist--that's \$50 an hour. Going to school is \$265 for 5 months. Everything you need to see a psychiatrist about I have found here, and it's much more

satisfactory."

Educational achievements of husbands were a factor in the return of women. Sixty-five of the subjects' husbands had completed some graduate work. Only nine subjects' husbands had no college. The small, university community may explain partially the high level of education of husbands.

One woman had been a high-school dropout. She felt uncomfortable with her husband's "highly educated" colleagues and had spent several years catching up. She is now taking graduate courses. Another with a bachelor's degree, the wife of a professor, commented that she felt socially uncomfortable in conversations with people more well read than she.

The person most influential in a woman's decision to return to school was herself. The decision was not a light one, but one she had pondered for several years or as long as she had been out of school. The reason most often given for the lapse in educational pursuit was family responsibilities. Indecision about the benefits versus the sacrifice explained many delays. In addition to the question, "Will an education really prepare me for a career in which I can work?", sacrifices also were viewed in terms of their impact on family and children.

"Will I have time to do all the things my family is accustomed to; will I feel guilty about neglecting them? Will I be able to handle school work? Do I want to continue what I was taking years ago or is something else better for me now? How do I find out?" These are typical questions many women asked themselves. One commented, "It's inappropriate to be my age and acting like an 18-year-old who doesn't know the answers."

Husbands ranked second as the most influential persons in decisions to return. Their encouragement and understanding often were deciding factors. One said her husband pushed her to enroll. She had not thought of returning.

She enjoyed being at home, but realized her children no longer needed her. Her husband kept reminding her to get her transcripts in order. She enrolled in classes that meet at noon every day. "The children eat at school, but my husband has to fix his own lunch--he outsmarted himself," she laughingly explained.

Time of re-entry did not appear to be related significantly to age of children. Demographic data indicated that mothers are not waiting for children to leave home, the so-called empty-nest stage, or even for children to start school. Their children's ages ranged from less than 1 to 34 years old. Although many are returning to school when family responsibilities permit, each woman's interpretation of the "right time" is slightly different. "Emptiness," or not fulfilling vocational goals, rather than "empty nest" motivates women to enroll in college.

Some women were satisfied with their lifestyles, but returned to school when they realized the need to prepare for a career. Some returned in the natural sequence of furthering or maintaining already initiated careers, i.e., teachers qualifying for certification.

Others, already competent in their professions, returned for the degree needed to "prove" their competence. One subject was aware of the danger of "being bumped" by someone younger with the "Ph.D. paper." Another said, "I decided to get my Ph.D. to use as a club. Often, when I presented an idea to administrative officials, their attitude was, 'Well, you're just the teacher--we have experts at the university who know what's going on here.' I decided to become one of the experts."

Some women enrolled just for fun. For them, attending classes was more enjoyable than attending bridge luncheons. One related, "Coming to school

was just one of my impulses and I haven't regretted this one." Another said, "School has become a part of my life. I don't know what I'll do when I'm finished."

Goals

Two thirds of the sample were seeking advanced degrees; 30 stated that they will seek a Ph.D.

Before starting to class, some adult women fear competing with today's "bright young students," but after attending classes, most think their experience and maturity give them an advantage over younger students. Some expressed impatience with younger students who were "spending dad's money" and yet were not serious about their classroom effort. They complained that students were rude, often talking, smoking, or reading while an instructor lectured. Others found the younger students delightful, stimulating, friendly, and helpful.

The interview schedule contained no questions about grades, but comments such as "I make all A's," or "I should be able to settle for a B, but I just can't" indicated that good grades represent "strokes"--a measure of success that women have found fulfilling.

The answers given most often to complete the statement "The thing I would most like to do..." were: be successful in home, vocation, life, family life; or "to finish my degree and work." Others said that they would like to do "what I am doing now," but some added "without guilt."

Although a large majority (62.6%) say they are in college to prepare for a career, they are aware that their careers often will rank after husbands' jobs and family responsibilities. At the same time some suspect that they may not find jobs in the fields they are preparing to enter. About one fourth

of the subjects indicated they were concerned about lack of definite career goals. But more women were hoping it would "all fall into place later on."

More than half the sample (57%) said they plan to work full time after graduation; one fourth wanted to find part-time work. Thirty-three stated they did not have a specific job in mind; 40 plan to teach, the remaining 34 were preparing for specific careers.

Most of the sample plan to remain in the local community to work or cannot predict where their husband's careers will take them. Only seven said their locations would depend on job opportunities. Four of the seven were heads of families. Only one married woman volunteered that she would choose the place the family would live.

The picture emerging from this sample is of a group of dedicated family women who do not intend to neglect their home lives to further their own educational or career goals. This choice is often a "tightrope" they walk, however, as 22 said they might have to make a final choice between school and private life.

The lack of mobility and definite career goals, preparation for already over-filled positions, and university policy not to hire its own graduates, suggest that this group might profit from more career counseling than they are receiving.

Concerns

On the Re-entry Concerns Scale, "Time" was the concern most often rated as definitely very important. Usually comments on time were related to the adult woman's diverse roles. One said, "I just feel like a big old pie. I'm trying to give a piece to the school where I teach, a piece to my classes and a piece at home, and you just don't end up with enough left for yourself."

Another lamented, "I arranged with the kids to do the dishes and the laundry and I had a woman to clean house once a week. I thought I had all the time I needed--except my cleaning woman quit and the kids won't do it anymore. Now I'm giving my house less time and it's working to my satisfaction, but not my husband's."

On the same scale, 58 rated "Role Conflict" an important concern. "The thing that irks me about believing in both career and family is that the conflict occupies me--sometimes to the point of not performing well," one explained. "I am hung up on how well I do both and don't do either very well." Others stated: "My mother's proud I'm working on my doctorate, but she simply can't understand why I don't write letters to her." "Sometimes somebody really takes a crack at you about why you're not satisfied to stay at home with husband and family." "No one is thrilled at home. It's taken three or four years for everyone to get used to it. I've had a lot of guilt about doing something I wanted to do."

Some suggestions from the interviews were:

Women would appreciate more contact with their peers and other adults on campus.

They want more assistance in planning their programs of study and more assurance that they are selecting the best career options.

They see a place to get together with other women as important and would also like to have one central location to seek information, which could perhaps be part of such a center.

Although the interview schedule focused principally on services that adult women might find helpful, subjects consistently requested altering coursework to provide more relevance and allowing more options in programs of

study. Complaints were numerous about quality of teaching and university regulations that women believe are not suited to their level of maturity and experience.

Registration and enrollment procedures ranged from a "pet peeve" to an important barrier for some women. One said, "Registration is a giant pain in the neck." Another called it "playing an Uncle Wiggly Game." She said she just went to whichever "square" she was sent.

Doctoral candidates leveled more serious charges of male chauvinism, sexism, unfair assignments, and use of graduate students as "pawns" in departmental feuds. They disliked the inflexible residency requirements and the "politics" of being a graduate student. "At this level you can't afford to push," one stated.

Implications and Recommendations

Women returning to college offer an important reservoir of future professionals in home economics. Most of them are looking for career opportunities that will give significance and purpose to their lives. They want outlets beyond their families for creativity. They want to make a difference in society.

Several recommendations for our university setting should be useful to other colleges accepting an increasing number of adult women.

1. Counseling for careers in home economics is the number one implication. Many have only antiquated views of the home economics profession. They are unaware of leadership roles emerging for our profession in health, family service, family courts, counseling in consumerism, and as staff in continuing education--from preschool to parent education to gerontological education. The wide array of managerial and consultative positions in marketing, food services, and home care are further examples that can build on mature women's

family experiences and their motivation for service to families and community.

2. Mature women students provide a rich opportunity for home economics to influence family units profoundly. Our subjects often saw "trying harder" as the only route to meeting all their responsibilities. Because of the importance of "time" and family "support," revised home management courses may become "rising stars" in home economics. We cannot give women more time, but we can help them with priorities and managing their time.

Family women may turn a lesson learned in class into same-day use in their homes. In the same manner, they offer home economics a generative resource by way of first-hand observations of how women manage difficulties and solutions they encounter in dual roles. One subject was concerned for today's youth who "just expect to have both career and family, without any realization that there may be conflict involved."

3. A women's center is necessary for guiding women through re-entry. However, there is a continuing need for assistance throughout the educational period. The focus of a women's center needs to be broad enough to help women in their college careers, and in their careers beyond college. On one scale, mature students rated a central source of information the most important benefit the university could provide. Impromptu comments revealed their inability to acquire information through usual channels of peer or dorm contact or bulletin boards. Some expressed the need for stimulating peer relationships, a place to get together and meet other women. Others said they would help re-entrants adjust to student life. All of the suggestions might be accommodated through a room on campus--staffed by someone aware of women's informational and supportive needs, and comfortably furnished as a place to relax and socialize.

4. Faculty-student communications need to be improved. It is important that specifically trained staff have responsibility for listening and helping solve special problems of mature women. Women, themselves, are aware that assertiveness training might help them secure the direction and assistance necessary to reach their goals. Several of our respondents reported being "kept" in curricula they were dissatisfied with, by advisers who did not "hear" them. Others reported being unable to win understanding from instructors for the special restrictions their dual lifestyles force on them.

5. Child care facilities should be a part of the university and not something depending on off-campus support. Our children certainly are as important as the animals treated at the veterinary clinic on campus. Such a facility might also provide a means to employment for women studying child development. What a marvel of social leadership to provide a modern, well-run facility for children of faculty, personnel, and students. One of our subjects commented that she would like to see a place her children enjoyed as much as she enjoyed school.

Kansas State's President Duane Acker (4), in a recent address to home economists offered two challenges relevant to this research. He noted MAV (5)--the "motive to avoid success" in women--and called for home economists to take action among students, parents, and society to change this to the "motivation to achieve success." Secondly, he urged strengthening research and understanding of human development throughout the life cycle.

Home economics has the expertise to meet those challenges through a more active interest in adult women students who are predictors of the future. The college campus may be the testing ground for women's success in handling dual professional roles. How well they succeed may determine whether they later attempt careers outside the home.

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PART II

Appendix

Figure 6.10 is reprinted from Wesley R. Burr's Theory Construction and the Sociology of the Family, 1973, with permission from John R. Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Women who return to school already may be involved in several social roles. Role, a highly controversial term, is defined for the purpose of this review of the literature as a set of behaviors one is expected to play in a given situation. Nye and Gecas (1976) stated that the concept of role is so significant and conceptualization so diverse that no fewer than six books are devoted to its discussion.

In addition to their social roles of mothers, wives, homemakers, and employees, women who re-enter education are assuming a new one, the student role. Burr (1973, p. 124) used the concept of role transition (Cottrell 1942) defined as the process of entering or leaving a role, to devise theory for the ease of making role transitions. He stated the dependent variable of making role transitions as "the degree to which there is freedom from difficulty and the presence of easily available resources." The many factors that influence role-transition ease were diagrammed by Burr (1973, p. 141) in the following figure:

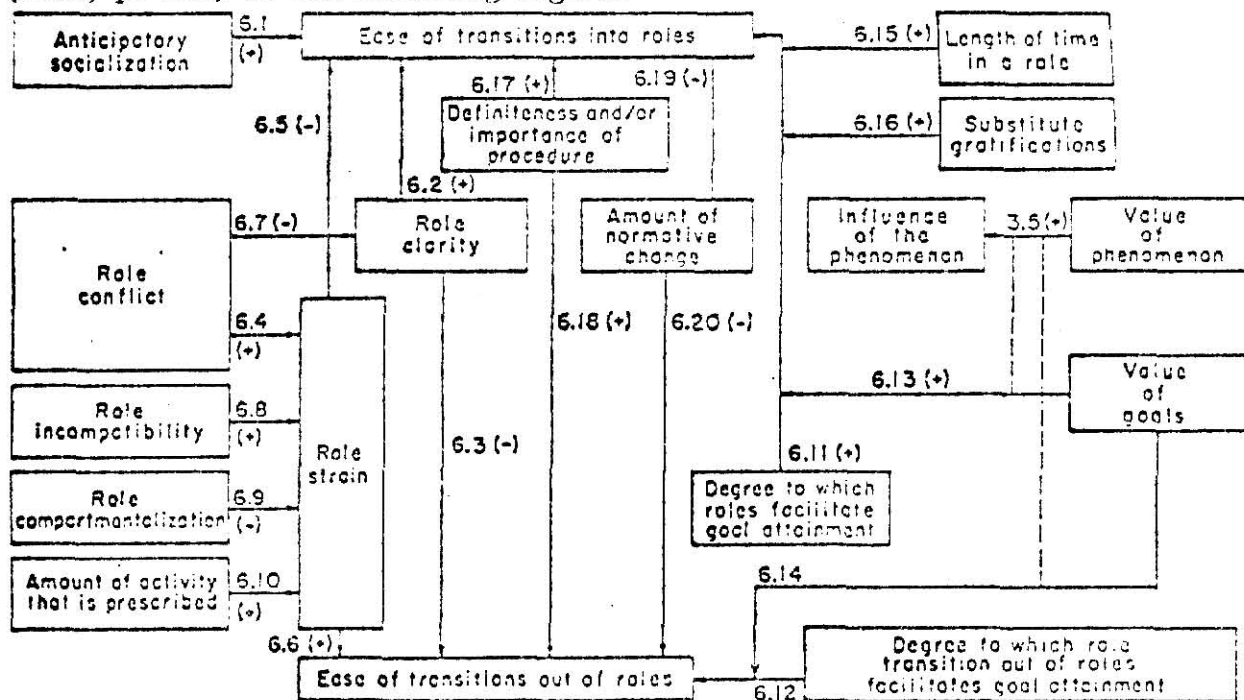


Figure 6.10 Propositions about role transitions.

Those terms that will be covered in more detail in this review are:

anticipatory socialization, role clarity, role strain, and goal attainment.

ANTICIPATORY SOCIALIZATION

Burr (1973, p. 125) discussed the positive relationship between the amount of anticipatory socialization and ease of transitions into roles. He defined Merton's (1968) term for anticipatory socialization as "learning the norms of a role before being in a social situation where it is appropriate to actually behave in that role."

A number of socialization methods have been implemented at colleges and universities for women who are anticipating re-entrance. Recognized as the first, the Minnesota Plan for Women was conceived to provide individual guidance and special curricular offerings. It was a "pilot project" in American higher education (Schletzer, Cless, McCune, Mantini, and Loeffler, 1967).

Other examples of programs initiated to help women anticipate their student roles follow: The Women's Re-entry Program at Diablo Valley College begun in 1972 attracted women who had lived in the community for years but had not entered before this special program (Taines 1973). Anderson (1974) stated the critical test of DeAnza College's re-entry program for women was their transfer into, and coping with, regular college classes. The University of Colorado's "Mini-College" (1975) was designed in the belief that many women would be interested in pursuing college work if they could do so in a non-threatening atmosphere easily accommodated into their lifestyle. Women may take 12 hours in the program, but must then seek regular admittance as degree students.

One of the subjects in this research attributed her return to the university to seek a degree to her preparation through the University of Virginia's Continuing Education program called "Breakthrough--Recognition and Attainment for Women," designed by Rappaport (1971). Many such "anticipatory socialization" programs for adult women are described in the literature (Brandenburg 1974, Mullaney 1975, Ricklefs 1974, Watkins 1974).

ROLE CLARITY

The clarity with which women define their own roles will influence their ability to adjust to transitions in these roles. Educators experienced with adult students have observed the insecurity and fears present in these students (Anderson 1974, Brandenburg 1974, Cross 1974, Singleton 1974, Taines 1973).

Scientists investigated the stages of human development beyond adolescence (Havighurst 1954, Kennedy forthcoming, Neugarten 1973). They described a stage of role clarification during the middle adult years.

Chickering (1975) stated that the "existential questions of meaning, purpose, vocation, social responsibility, dependence, human relationships, which so many adolescents face with difficulty, are reconfronted by many 30, 40 and 60 year olds." Kennedy (forthcoming, p. 337) stated that the "emergence of a psychosocial condition of middlecence may well reflect the social evolution going on in our society." Women no longer go directly from child-rearing to old-age, just as children no longer go directly from childhood into work roles of adulthood. Women now live three decades after the child-bearing years are over and this requires them to give new con-

sideration to life goals, he concluded.

Singleton (1974, p. 74) said, "I have never met a woman returning to school after some years away who was not afraid that she was too old, that she could never pass a test or write a paper after so many years, that she could never keep up with today's bright students." She observed that this is almost always altered after the woman becomes involved in the new role and discovers what she brings to it.

Anderson (1974) stated that all women whether they are in school for pragmatic or personal improvement reasons fear taking that first step to be admitted. An orientation session planned especially for adult women drew 60 immediate responses from one mailing at William Rainey Harper College. An additional session was planned and drew 40 more (Powell and Rodgers 1975). Fears of women that they will not be able to handle school, but their strong response to offers of help to clarify their student role is an indication of lack of role clarity.

Other social struggles are affecting the role of all individuals in our modern society. Toffler (1970) predicted conflict in the individual role in a rapidly changing industrial society. Meyer (1973) spoke on the difficulty of grasping and understanding one's role and importance when society is complex and industrialized. Lifton and Olson (1974, p. 25) stated the "people in advanced societies have become so mobile, so rootless, so cut off from traditional sources of meaning that life appears to hold no certainties or reliable values." The adult woman, then, is apt to be caught in one or several forms of role clarification--home, school, life-stage, or social--when she attempts the transition involved in becoming a student.

ROLE STRAIN

Ease of transition is influenced by role strain or not handling a role or roles well. Several factors cited by Burr (1973) that can affect role strain are role conflict, role incompatibility, role compartmentalization, and amount of activity prescribed for the individual.

Lopata (1976) distinguished between strain and conflict by characterizing strain as occurring within a role and conflict being between roles. Strain is intrarole and conflict inter-role. Two roles are considered incompatible when they cannot be performed simultaneously. Compartmentalization or keeping the performance of roles separated by time or space can serve to diminish or eliminate role strain. Finally, by way of definition of terms, individual differences will affect the amount of new activity women are able to assume without role strain.

Of all the problems for the woman returning to work or school, role conflict is predominant in the literature. Coser and Rokoff (1971) identified this conflict as one of allegiance. They stated that women are culturally mandated to give priority to their families.

Women also are motivated to give priority to self-development. Hendin (1975, p. 335-336), in a six-year study of college students, found many suffering painful emotions. He attributed this to difficulties within students' families. One factor he observed was a conflict in those women who thought the way they were as mothers was crucial to their children and at the same time were educated to fulfill their own aspirations. He stated that ". . . balance between a child's needs and a woman's aspirations is a dilemma to which neither psychoanalysts nor feminists have yet found adequate solutions".

Aries called the family a "prison of love" and described the women's movement as "tearing the woman away from the home where the 19th century had imprisoned her and where the baby boom had chained her even more tightly" (Mousseau 1975, p. 57). The societal tug of war exerted on women has been accentuated by the popular press. Two authors have made their fortunes encouraging women to maintain dependent little-girl roles (Andelin 1965, Morgan 1974). Others recommend taking new risks, leaving the drudgery behind (Friedan 1963, McGrady 1976). McGrady completed an extensive research project by actually assuming the homemaker role for a year and recorded this in The Kitchen Sink Papers--My Life As a Househusband (1975).

Women are beginning to see home and career as a combination rather than mutually exclusive activities. Wilson (1975) found that there is change in women and men's attitudes at earlier ages. Surveys conducted periodically over the past decade in liberal arts colleges revealed, between 1970 and 1973, an 18% decrease in freshmen women and a 16% decrease in freshmen men who believed, "Women's activities are best confined to the home." Home-only for women is now a minority view among college-age youth.

Arnott and Bengtson (1970) used the "distributive justice" concept in a study of educated homemakers. In this country, where occupation and salary are symbols of status, they found educated women likely to perceive homemaking as an unrewarding role and to be involved in work outside the home.

However, in research with 1400 families, Walker (1973) found that the greatest inequalities in work times arise when wives become employed outside the home. Women continue to do more of the household work than other family members after they become employed.

When one is unable to fulfill the expectations for important roles simultaneously role incompatibility exists, and this will contribute to role strain. As an example, Curtis (1976, p.42) interviewed 200 working mothers and found them unable to escape fears about assumed duties and cares of parenting. She called this the "psychological parenthood"--being "the one who is always mindful and feels a direct personal responsibility" for the safety and emotional well-being of the children.

Married women, who are unable to satisfy child-care needs to some degree, still are unlikely to return to college without the support and understanding of their husbands. More than three-fourths of respondents in a study of adult college women termed their husbands' attitudes as favorable or very favorable (Durcholz and O'Connor 1975).

Those who encounter family conflict in their return to school are apt to alleviate role strain by dropping out or reducing hours (Bowe 1970). According to Janeway (1975), women who do not have family support, stay home.

Feldman (1972) found that sex and marital status influence motivation to enter graduate school and pressures to drop out. He found more married women enrolled as part-time students and divorced women more highly committed graduate students. He stated the higher age of women graduate students indicates they are more constrained by their family role than men who do not wait for children to reach a certain stage of development before pursuing their educations. Divorced women are able to commit themselves to school, because of the removal of role incompatibility, he concluded.

GOAL ATTAINMENT

Education that facilitates attainment of a goal will influence ease of transitions positively. Many women aspire to a career as a goal. Women

coming back to college at an earlier time may have "dabbled in enrichment," but today's woman is doing degree work that she plans to use in a career, according to Watkins (1974). Durcholz and O'Connor (1975) found women in their survey making steady progress toward degrees and 71% stated they definitely planned to work after graduation. Earlier, Okun (1970) found the main reason for return to work was a sense of achievement.

Although many women claim career aspirations as a purpose for pursuing their educations, commitment to this goal varies. Ginzberg and Yohalem (1966, pp. 8,9) detected strong individual differences in their interviews of 311 highly educated women. Four main patterns emerged:

1. "planners," who have known all along what they wished to achieve and have arranged their lives to attain these whether career, family, or both;
2. "recasters," who have definite goals, but may alter them as new opportunities arise;
3. "adapters," who plan to reset their goals as they go along; and
4. "the unsettled," who have abandoned goals they have not accomplished and are searching for new ones.

In reviewing 84 references covering the last quarter century, O'Leary (1974) divided barriers into internal and external factors that are attitudinal restrictions on women's career aspirations. Some internal factors she cited are fear of failure, low self-esteem, and role conflict. External factors she noted are societal sex role stereotypes and attitudes toward competency in women.

The latter were discussed by Rosen, Jerdee and Prestwich (1975). They surveyed a national sample of managers and executives to examine how stereo-

types are reflected in managerial decisions that discriminated against female employees. The same in-basket letters and memos, with male and female names reversed for two versions of the survey questionnaire, were mailed to subjects. Results reflected discrimination in positions that require extensive travel, geographic relocation, and greater dedication on the job. Management expected women to make greater sacrifices than men in supporting a spouse's career and management of child care responsibilities.

Attitudes toward competency in women may be affected by their choice of careers (Coser and Rokoff 1971). Women are more apt to choose occupations where they are replaceable--where someone else may step in at a moment's notice when there's a family crisis--and not occupations that require full commitment. This is more apt to be true for married women and women with children. Coser and Rokoff compared two professions, teaching and medicine, and concluded it is not the job requirements, but the social definition of replaceability and commitment, that account for the wide discrepancies in the number of women in the two professions.

Horner (1969) found women conspicuously absent from achievement studies. She explored sex differences in achievement motivation. When she found that women had higher test-anxiety scores, she concluded intellectual women pay a price in anxiety. "If she fails, she is not living up to her own standards of performance; if she succeeds, she is not living up to societal expectations about the female role." Horner tested hypotheses about the "motive to avoid success" or the "fear that success in competitive achievement situations will lead to negative consequences," (p. 38) with a sample of 90 women and 88 men undergraduates at the University of Michigan. Differences between sexes in evidence of the motive to avoid success were significant at the .0005 level. Women in the sample who feared success

also tended to have high intellectual ability and high grade points, and all but two were majoring in the humanities and aspiring to traditional female careers.

Rossi (1973) noted that women in academe have lost ground in absolute numbers and relative proportion of doctorates earned over the past 40 years, and that women have been consistently under-represented in non-traditional fields of study. Almquist and Angrist (1971) distinguished between career-salient and non-career salient women in their study of undergraduate women. In their sample, the major with the highest percentage of non-career oriented students was home economics.

Burr's (1973, p. 124) dependent variable stated as "the degree to which there is freedom from difficulty and the presence of easily available resources" is continuous and "varies in degree from its lowest point of a role transition being impossible to the opposite extreme of a transition being highly easy."

While the transition into the role of student may be highly easy for some, the large number of programs in this country planned to aid adult women in education seem to prove that there is strong recognition that it is a difficult transition for many. At the time this research was begun, Kansas State University had no organized program to encourage adult women entering its classrooms.

This research, conducted through the College of Home Economics, is an initial step in determining what needs to be done at this university to ease adult women into student life. The fact that many women are non-career salient, inhibited by the "motive to avoid success," and also enrolled in home economics, may be a mutually advantageous combination for women and home economics. Home economics with its traditional focus on the family

can offer women the discipline most clearly related to their other roles. It can provide the most non-threatening atmosphere for women as they begin to investigate their futures and make self-determined decisions. O'Leary (1974, p. 817) proposed that "organizational concern should not be on how to motivate her to achieve occupationally, but rather on how to help her to cope with her role conflicts, thereby removing obstacles to effective performance."

In the concluding paragraph of Women and the Power to Change, a volume of essays sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Howe (1975, p. 169) stated the most important strategy for the coming decade will be to "urge development of women's power in those areas where they are most numerous—teaching, nursing, social work." She suggested in this way women may begin to change the institutions in which they work and their students learn. Home economics as the field most heavily populated by women has been challenged to take the responsibility for developing leadership among women.

DETAILS OF PROCEDURES

THE SAMPLE

Thirty years of age was selected as the minimum age for subjects as women any younger might not have had time away from the university and could not be classified as re-entering students. A complete print-out of registration information of women, 30 and older, attending classes at Kansas State University during fall semester, 1975, was obtained from the Office of Admissions and Records.

From this list of 432 women a large representation of 110 was chosen as the sample size. The sample was stratified to allow for differences in responses of women at different levels of education. The stratified sample included 35 of 137 undergraduates, 41 of 162 master's degree candidates, 24 of 93 doctoral degree candidates, and 10 of 40 special students.

Prospective participants were contacted by letter and invited to attend a meeting for further explanation of the research project. A second meeting was planned to accommodate those who wished to participate, but had conflicting schedules. Only 46 of 150 invited attended these meetings and scheduled appointments for personal interviews. Later appointments were scheduled for those who did not attend, through a second letter and telephone contacts; and the preliminary forms were mailed for subjects to complete before the interviews.

INSTRUMENTS

The researchers designed four types of instruments to gather factual and personal information from subjects: a demographic facesheet, an incomplete sentence blank, a personal interview schedule, and six rating scales. Samples of the instruments are on pages 37-43.

The demographic facesheet, administered at the group meetings or mailed to interviewees, elicited data on subjects' current status as students, level of education planned, financing of education; and employment, residential, and marital status information.

The second form, patterned after the Kell-Hoefflin Incomplete Sentence Blank (1959), asked subjects to complete 12 sentences with their real feelings. This instrument gave the researchers an opportunity before the interview to acquaint themselves with subjects' feelings about the decision to return to school and perceptions of home, university, and self.

Personal interview questions were gathered from the literature on re-entering women, from researchers' personal experiences, and from suggestions from the faculty. Interspersed within the personal interview questions were six rating scales: Decision on Major, Re-entry Concerns, Study Skill Concerns, Understanding and Support from Others, Campus Social Life, and University Services. Items were rated on a five-point scale: definitely very important, very important, important, not important, and definitely not important.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The demographic facesheet and incomplete sentence questionnaire were completed by subjects before their personal interviews. Appointments for the interviews were made by phone or at group meetings, but many appointments were rescheduled because of a snowstorm, sick children, final exams, or semester break. Because of the inconvenience of scheduling, interviews were concluded in early February with the original sample number short three interviews. Interviews were tape recorded so that researchers could review statements of subjects and code the answers at a later time.

Samples of correspondence mailed to subjects and the informed consent form, questionnaires, rating scales and personal interview schedule are presented on the following pages.



Office of the Dean
College of Home Economics
Justin Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
Phone: 913 532-5500

October 1975

Dear Over-29 Student:

You belong to our age group! We are quite aware of the problems that we have encountered in our return to school. In talking with some of you we have found reason to think there is some commonality in the concerns we have in our attempts to re-enter education at this point in our lives. Therefore, we are planning a research project that may help us find some ways to make re-entry easier for other adult women.

We need your help. Will you please join us for lunch Wednesday, November 5, at 11:30 in Justin 251. Bring your own sack lunch. We will supply coffee and cookies. At that time, we will explain our plans to you and ask you to fill out a preliminary questionnaire. Then if you are willing to cooperate further, we will set up a convenient appointment for a personal interview. All the information you give us will be kept strictly confidential.

Will you please complete the enclosed postcard to indicate your willingness in helping us and whether you can attend our meeting.

Sincerely,

Eunice Pickett
Research Assistant

Laura Folland
Graduate Research Assistant

Please complete and return card by mail.

Name _____

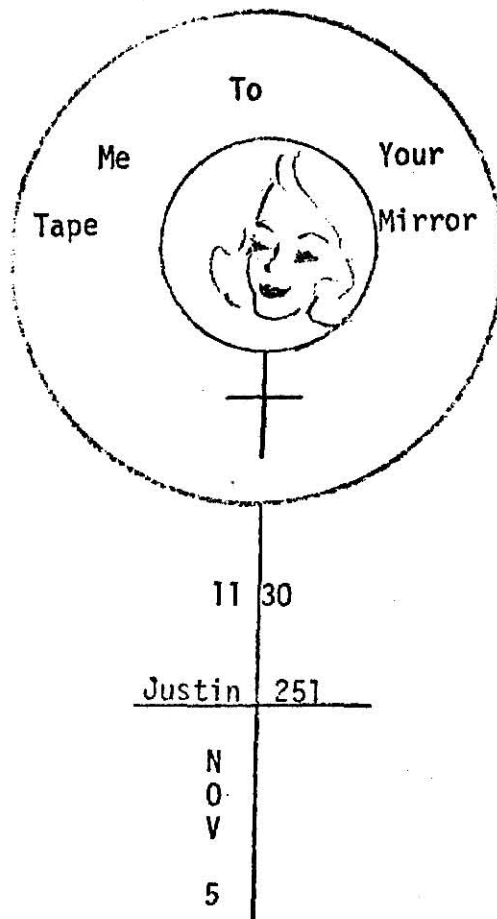
Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Degree _____

Check one:

- ☐ I will participate in the research project for adult women in college and can come to the meeting in Justin 251 on November 5.
- ☐ I will participate in the research project but cannot attend the meeting. Please call me to discuss your plans.
- ☐ I am unable to participate in the research project at this time.





Office of the Dean
College of Home Economics
Justin Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
Phone: 913 532-5500

November 13, 1975

You have agreed to help us with our research into "Factors Influencing the College Entrance of the Adult Woman". We are very grateful for your participation. There are 432 adult women (30 and over) on campus this year. We have selected a sample of 110 and you are in this group. We hope to conduct a personal interview with each of you to understand your special needs and concerns in order that we may propose changes to benefit you and other returning women.

The enclosed forms will help us to be a little acquainted with you. It will save us all time if we may have them before the interview. Will you please fill out the data sheet and incomplete sentence blank and bring them with you to your interview. We will be calling soon to set up an appointment time that will be convenient for you.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Eunice Pickett
Research Assistant

Laura Folland
Graduate Research Assistant

Dear Mature Student:

During the interviews many of you expressed a desire to hear the results of our study and to meet with other adult students. Come to Justin 256 on Wednesday, April 28 or to Justin 249 on Thursday, April 29 at 11:30 a.m. and we will share our conclusions with you.

**Laura Folland
Eunice Pickett**



Office of the Dean
College of Home Economics
Justin Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
Phone: 913 532-5500

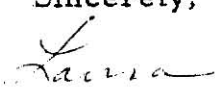
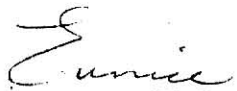
May 7, 1976

We enjoyed talking with you and hearing how returning to school is important to you. We have begun using the results from our talks in several ways: a UFM class, a woman's study group, a radio talk, a Collegian article, a Home Economics faculty forum, a journal article, a thesis, and two meetings for our subjects. We also have prepared a brochure to aid entering adult students.

Your direct quotes have been used to make these presentations more interesting. We see other ways in which your comments could be very useful to others. You say it so well! Several of you also expressed willingness to help other incoming adult students. If you would be willing to help in either of these ways, please sign the enclosed forms and return to the Dean's Office, Justin Hall 119. Only excerpts of the tape--with all names bleeped--will be used.

Our research tells us that time is your most limited resource. Thank you for sharing it with us.

Sincerely,

 
Laura Folland and Eunice Pickett

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RELEASE FORM

Title of Research: Factors Influencing the College Entrance of the Adult Woman

Name of Subject: _____

I _____ hereby give permission to the College of Home Economics at Kansas State University, its agents, successors, clients, purchasers and its products to use and edit my taped interview for educational purposes.

Signed _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

I would be interested in helping other adult women students in their return to school I would like to help by:

Serving as a registration guide _____

Helping with special orientation _____

Participating on a panel for discussion
with women preparing to return _____

Acting as a "big sister" for a semester _____

or

I think it would be more helpful if I _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

SURVEY OF ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS

Fall 1975

Your major:

Number of hours enrolled this semester.

A. Hours for college credit.

- (2-1) _____ 5 hours and under
 (2-2) _____ 6 to 11 hours
 (2-3) _____ 12 hours or more
 (2-4) _____ Non-credit hours

- B. (2-5) _____ Total credit hours completed
 (2-6) _____ Total non-credit hours completed

Education of your family. Check the last grade completed for each member.

3. MOTHER 4. FATHER 5. HUSBAND

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| (3-0) _____ | (4-0) _____ | (5-0) _____ | 0-7th grade |
| (3-1) _____ | (4-1) _____ | (5-1) _____ | 8th grade |
| (3-2) _____ | (4-2) _____ | (5-2) _____ | Some high school |
| (3-3) _____ | (4-3) _____ | (5-3) _____ | High school graduate |
| (3-4) _____ | (4-4) _____ | (5-4) _____ | Training beyond high school |
| (3-5) _____ | (4-5) _____ | (5-5) _____ | Some college |
| (3-6) _____ | (4-6) _____ | (5-6) _____ | Junior college graduate |
| (3-7) _____ | (4-7) _____ | (5-7) _____ | 4-yr. college graduate |
| (3-8) _____ | (4-8) _____ | (5-8) _____ | Graduate work |

Number of years you were out of school? _____

When did you re-enter college?

- (7-1) _____ this semester
 (7-2) _____ last year
 (7-3) _____ within last 5 years
 (7-4) _____ earlier

Level of education planned.

- (8-1) _____ Take a few courses
 (8-2) _____ Complete 1-2 years of college with no degree
 (8-3) _____ Associate Degree (2 yrs.)
 (8-4) _____ Bachelor's Degree
 (8-5) _____ Master's Degree
 (8-6) _____ Other (explain) _____

What is your permanent home address? _____

How far do you live from college?

- (10-1) _____ within 5 miles
 (10-2) _____ 6-50 miles
 (10-3) _____ 51-100 miles
 (10-4) _____ 101-300 miles
 (10-5) _____ over 300 miles

How is your education financed? _____

12. Were you previously employed?

- (12-1) _____ Yes.
 (12-2) _____ No.

13. Are you currently employed?

- (13-1) _____ Yes
 (13-2) _____ No

If yes, how many hours per week do you work on the average?

- (13-3) _____ 1-8 hours (13-6) _____ 25-30 hours
 (13-4) _____ 9-16 hours (13-7) _____ 31 or more
 (13-5) _____ 17-24 hours

Describe your job _____

14. If married, what is your husband's occupation _____

15. Were you born in this country?

- (15-1) _____ Yes
 (15-2) _____ No

16. Your age.

- (16-1) _____ 30-34 (16-5) _____ 50-54
 (16-2) _____ 35-39 (16-6) _____ 55-59
 (16-3) _____ 40-44 (16-7) _____ 60 and older
 (16-4) _____ 45-49

17. Your current marital status.

- (17-1) _____ Single
 (17-2) _____ Married
 (17-3) _____ Widowed
 (17-4) _____ Divorced
 (17-5) _____ Separated

18. How many years have you been married? _____

19. and 20. Answer if you have children.

	No.	Ages
--	-----	------

Boys(19-1) _____

Girls(20-1) _____

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feeling. Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. The most influential person in my decision to return to school
2. I decided to come back to school when
3. My age
4. Kansas State University should
5. The thing I would most like to do is
6. I would have returned to school sooner except
7. My family
8. Home Economics is
9. Making decisions
10. Other women are
11. Staying at home
12. The most difficult thing about school is

Number _____

Definitely				Definitely
Very	Very		Not	Not
Important	Important	Important	Important	Important

1. Did any of the following influence your decision?

Job opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Knew other people in this field	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Non-traditional women's field	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Previous experience	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Salaries	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Someone recommended it to you	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Special aptitude	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Traditional women's field	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Were any of the following concerns of importance to you when re-entering?

Admissions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Age	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Competing with younger students	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Intelligence	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Previous experience in school	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Role conflict	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Selecting a different area of study	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Self-esteem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Study skills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Support from others	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Time	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Understanding the system (hours, credits, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (please list)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Are you presently concerned with the following study skills?

Class discussion	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Completing assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Oral presentations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Study habits	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Taking tests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Children
Husband
Peers
Relatives
Society
University

Children
Husband
Peers
Relatives
Society
University

[illegible]

ILLEGIBLE DOCUMENT

**THE FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S) IS OF
POOR LEGIBILITY IN
THE ORIGINAL**

**THIS IS THE BEST
COPY AVAILABLE**

	Definitely Very Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Definitely Not Important
4. Do you feel the lack of the following in the university community?					
Close friendships	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Extra curricular activities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Male companionship	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Social life	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Women's support groups	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. If the university could provide more help in these areas, do you think it would be of benefit to you?					
Assertiveness training	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Childcare	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Credit for life experiences	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Credit - No Credit classes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Counseling for career objectives	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Information Center about help offered	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Off campus programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Orientation session	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parking	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Part time jobs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Remedial courses	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Schedule of classes	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Scholarships	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Study skills training	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Special classes about women	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Support groups	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (please list)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

PERSONAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Explain your educational history.
2. How long did you think about coming to college before you actually enrolled?
3. What was the reason for your lapse in education?
4. Was there a person or event that made you want to come back?
5. What was the most soul searching or painful period of coming back?
6. How do you plan to use your college education in the future? Do you know what job you want?
7. Are you seeking a degree? Do you plan to get another degree? Or, if not, why are you taking classes?
8. Are you planning to seek employment after graduation? Full or part time?
9. How did you choose your major?
10. Did any of the following influence your decision? RATING SCALE
11. Are you planning to stay in Manhattan to work or go elsewhere?
12. Do you think you will have any difficulties finding a position after graduation? Why?
13. What did you find difficult about re-entering school?
14. Were any of the following concerns of importance to you when re-entering?
RATING SCALE
15. Are you presently concerned with the following study skills? RATING SCALE
16. If you have a conflict in commitment between school and private life which has priority? How did you decide that?
17. Do you ever feel that you will have to make a final choice between student and private roles?
18. Do other people seem to expect more or less of you than you think you can do?
19. Did your years at home build or lower your confidence?
20. Do you think your age is an advantage or a disadvantage? Why?

21. Do you think your assessment of your abilities is a realistic one?
22. Do you think your knowledge is outdated? How?
23. How do you perceive other's support for what you are doing? RATING SCALE
24. Is there anything the university does not offer to the adult woman student?
25. Do you feel the lack of the following in the university community?
RATING SCALE
26. Who on campus could you turn to when a problem arises in course work?
in planning for the future? in personal problems?
27. On the previous questions, do you think you are the only one who feels
this way, many women feel this way, or most other students feel this way?
28. Are you concerned that you may not know enough about what you want to do
with your education or do you think that it will fall into place later on?
29. How could the university be of more help to you?
30. If the university could provide more help in these areas, do you think
it would be of benefit to you? RATING SCALE
31. If classes were offered in a block of time--all day Monday and Tuesday,
for example, would you have re-entered sooner?
32. Have you or are you planning to take any women's study courses?
33. Would you choose women's studies as a major if it were offered? Why?
34. Do you have a female role model? Who?
35. How do you visualize the place of women in the university five years
from now?
36. What is your biggest gripe about attending school?
37. If you could, what would you most like to change?
38. Is there anything we haven't mentioned that you think is important?
39. As you look back, do you want to elaborate on any of the questions?

RESULTS

The frequency of response of subjects on all written forms in the study is presented in Tables 1 to 8.

TABLE 1. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

.. Your major: 36 Education 25 Home Economics 46 Other	12. Were you previously employed? (12-1) 85 Yes. (12-2) 19 No.
1. Number of hours enrolled this semester.	13. Are you currently employed? (13-1) 51 Yes (13-2) 56 No
A. Hours for college credit. (2-1) 26 5 hours and under (2-2) 52 6 to 11 hours (2-3) 23 12 hours or more (2-4) 1 Non-credit hours	If yes, how many hours per week do you work on the average? (13-3) 3 1-8 hours (13-6) 1 25-30 hours (13-4) 13 9-16 hours (13-7) 23 31 or more (13-5) 11 17-24 hours
B. (2-5) _____ Total credit hours completed (2-6) _____ Total non-credit hours completed	
2. Education of your family. Check the last grade completed for each member.	
3. MOTHER 4. FATHER 5. HUSBAND	
(3-0) 3 (4-0) 8 (5-0) 0 0-7th grade (3-1) 10 (4-1) 15 (5-1) 0 8th grade (3-2) 14 (4-2) 7 (5-2) 1 Some high school (3-3) 29 (4-3) 25 (5-3) 5 High school graduate (3-4) 5 (4-4) 7 (5-4) 3 Training beyond high school (3-5) 16 (4-5) 8 (5-5) 10 Some college (3-6) 6 (4-6) 3 (5-6) 1 Junior college graduate (3-7) 17 (4-7) 15 (5-7) 9 4-yr. college graduate (3-8) 2 (4-8) 2 (5-8) 65 Graduate work	Describe your job 20 teacher 8 graduate assistants 5 secretary 3 dietitian 3 counselor 1 nurse
.. Number of years you were out of school? 0 to 40 years Mode: 10	14. If married, what is your husband's occupation? 27 KSU teacher 8 military 13 professional man 5 KSU employee 11 businessman 21 other
.. When did you re-enter college? (7-1) 15 this semester (7-2) 32 last year (7-3) 12 within last 5 years (7-4) 18 earlier	15. Were you born in this country? (15-1) 95 Yes (15-2) 11 No
.. Level of education planned. (8-1) 5 Take a few courses (8-2) _____ Complete 1-2 years of college with no degree (8-3) 2 Associate Degree (2 yrs.) (8-4) 27 Bachelor's Degree (8-5) 35 Master's Degree (8-6) 38 Other (explain) 30 will seek Ph. D.	16. Your age. (16-1) 41 30-34 (16-5) 6 50-54 (16-2) 32 35-39 (16-6) 3 55-59 (16-3) 18 40-44 (16-7) 2 60 and older (16-4) 5 45-49
.. What is your permanent home address? _____ 72 Manhattan 35 elsewhere	17. Your current marital status. (17-1) 9 Single (17-2) 84 Married (17-3) 3 Widowed (17-4) 10 Divorced (17-5) 1 Separated
.. How far do you live from college? (10-1) 76 within 5 miles (10-2) 20 6-50 miles (10-3) 7 51-100 miles (10-4) 3 101-300 miles (10-5) 1 over 300 miles	18. How many years have you been married? 0-32 years Mode: 14 years
.. How is your education financed? 50 self 27 husband 12 combination 11 family 4 GI or veterans' bill 1 loan	19. and 20. Answer if you have children. No. Ages Boys(19-1) _____ Girls(20-1) _____

N= 107

TABLE 2. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' CATEGORIZED RESPONSES TO INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

				NO ANSWER	n= 107
1. The most influential person in my decision to return to school					
47 myself	5 employer			2	
30 husband	4 teacher				
9 friend	10 other--minister, another student, parent, counselor				
2. I decided to come back to school when					
22 wanting stimulation and change	5 location	18 other		4	
22 youngest child in school	5 divorce				
13 needing to improve skills	5 pressure from another person				
9 needing insurance for earning	4 opportunity				
3. My age					
65 numerical answer	3 is disadvantage			0	
22 makes no difference	2 is time for coming back				
13 is an asset	1 made me have doubts about coming back				
	1 surprises me				
4. Kansas State University should					
14 continue to do well	6 offer more advising and counseling			21	
14 have more flexible requirements	5 provide childcare				
9 encourage older women to return	5 have programs for older women				
8 upgrade academically	5 help a specific department	20 other			
5. The thing I would most like to do is					
31 be successful	8 travel or move	8 other		2	
31 finish degree and work	4 help others				
12 complete education					
11 what I am doing					
6. I would have returned to school sooner except					
32 family reasons	9 distance, location	10 other		5	
21 indecision about benefit	7 lack of interest				
13 satisfied with status quo					
10 financial reasons					
7. My family					
53 supports me	7 other			2	
20 is important to me					
18 general positive feelings					
7 description					
8. Home Economics is					
34 general positive answers	6 irrelevant to me	9 other		8	
24 not a major interest	5 my field				
8 description	5 undesirable to me				
8 field important to all women					
9. Making decisions					
32 is difficult	8 is challenging	6 other		1	
32 is easy	4 is a family matter				
13 I've improved					
11 is a part of life					
10. Other women are					
22 interesting	6 not using full capabilities			11	
22 what they are	5 necessary, important				
19 growing	15 other--boring, helpful, struggling				
7 influential or intruding					
11. Staying at home					
26 is boring	6 is a luxury	7 other		3	
25 is satisfying					
22 is good, if not done too much					
18 is not for me					
12. The most difficult thing about school is					
46 time	7 physical complaints	5 other		1	
13 classes	7 time and role conflict				
8 concentration, studying	5 role conflict				
7 professors, complaints about	4 competing with youth				
	4 finding childcare				

TABLE 3. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS INFLUENCES IN THEIR SELECTION OF A MAJOR

	Definitely Very Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Definitely Not Important	N/A	TOTAL
Job Opportunities	15	22	31	23	12	4	107
Knew other people in this field	14	17	21	29	22	4	107
Non-traditional women's field	1	3	6	32	60	4	106
Previous experience	21	21	23	18	20	4	107
Salaries	11	8	26	33	24	4	106
Someone recommended it to you	7	13	18	25	38	4	105
Special aptitude	26	33	29	9	6	4	107
Traditional women's field	2	0	4	41	55	4	106

TABLE 4. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RATINGS OF CONCERNS BEFORE RE-ENTRY

	Definitely		Very		Important		Not		Definitely		N/A	TOTAL
	Very	Important	Very	Important	Important	Important	Important	Not	Not	Important		
Admissions	18		14		12		31		29		1	105
Age	7		4		24		32		39		1	107
Competing with younger students	2		11		18		35		39		1	106
Intelligence	6		24		29		19		28		1	107
Previous experience in school	10		18		28		23		26		1	106
Role conflict	15		13		30		20		25		1	104
Selecting a different area of study	12		15		22		29		27		1	106
Self-esteem	15		19		36		18		18		1	107
Study skills	19		27		20		23		17		1	107
Support from others	25		26		27		14		14		1	107
Time	38		22		22		12		10		1	105
Understanding the system (hours credits, etc.)	10		9		16		22		38		1	96

TABLE 5. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RATINGS OF CONCERNS ABOUT CLASSROOM AND STUDY SKILLS

	Definitely Very Important		Very Important	Important	Not Important	Definitely Not Important	N/A	TOTAL
Class discussion	5		9	17	37	37	2	107
Completing assignments	6		13	24	28	34	2	107
Oral presentations	9		13	23	26	34	2	107
Study habits	10		15	24	26	30	2	107
Taking tests	9		17	32	22	25	2	107
								403

TABLE 6. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RATINGS OF UNDERSTANDING AND HELP FOR ATTENDING COLLEGE WHICH THEY RECEIVE FROM OTHERS

	Definitely Very Under- Standing	Very Under- Standing	Under- Standing	Not Under- Standing	Definitely Not Under- Standing	Not Applicable	TOTAL
Children	30	25	26	6	5	14	106
Husband	53	15	12	6	3	18	107
Peers	16	42	37	9	1	2	107
Relatives	16	30	41	11	4	5	107
Society	6	25	33	11	6		81
University	26	33	35	6	4		104

50

	Definitely Very Helpful	Very Helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	Definitely Not Helpful	Not Applicable	TOTAL
Children	25	27	30	7	3	14	106
Husband	41	22	18	5	5	17	108
Peers	9	30	51	10	3	2	105
Relatives	11	21	40	19	5	7	103
Society	5	10	46	30	2	3	96
University	18	27	44	12	4		105

TABLE 7. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RATINGS OF LACK OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

	Definitely Very Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Definitely Not Important	N/A Not Applicable	TOTAL
Close friendships	9	12	18	43	22	2	106
Extra curricular activities	3	7	14	37	42	2	105
Male companionship	4	5	8	35	50	3	105
Social life	3	9	12	43	37	2	106
Women's support groups	8	17	18	29	32	2	106
							51

TABLE 8. ADULT WOMEN STUDENTS' RATINGS OF IMPORTANT BENEFITS THE UNIVERSITY COULD PROVIDE WHICH THEY WOULD FIND HELPFUL

	Definitely Very Important	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Definitely Not Important	N/A Not Applicable	TOTAL
Assertiveness training	20	17	24	29	15	1	106
Childcare	27	4	9	24	37	6	107
Credit for life experiences	27	21	25	24	9	1	107
Credit - No Credit classes	8	13	27	31	26	1	106
Counseling for career objectives	27	22	25	19	12	1	106
Information Center about help offered	26	24	28	16	11	1	106
Off campus programs	12	13	19	35	26	1	106
Orientation session	19	18	22	25	19	1	104
Parking	45	16	16	18	10	2	107
Part time jobs	18	18	18	19	28	2	103
Remedial courses	7	11	19	37	30	2	106
Schedule of classes	23	20	19	25	17	1	105
Scholarships	22	18	18	30	17	1	106
Study skills training	12	15	21	30	25	2	105
Special classes about women	14	15	25	29	21	1	105
Support groups	14	18	28	22	17	1	100
Other (please list)							

Some additional comments and conclusions from the taped interviews, not included in the journal article, are presented in the following sections: orientation, financial aid, advising-counseling, studying, teaching, courses, younger students, physical, childcare, support from others, and role conflict.

ORIENTATION

Subjects thought K.S.U. should provide orientation and courses for gradual re-entry. Fifty-eight women rated orientation as an important benefit the university could provide and many added that it should be especially planned for adult students who have been away from school.

Several subjects said they would be glad to help other adult students in their return to school, possibly through a special orientation program for women. On the question "K.S.U. should . . .", 20 women said, "Encourage older women to return," "provide programs for older students," or "continue interest in women."

FINANCIAL AID

Many women commented on the six-hour limitation for part-time students. They would like to see this changed so that they can take more hours without paying for the full course load.

A strong need is being overlooked in relation to single parents and heads of households. One subject had a civil service rating, but could not work at the civil service pay rate as a student. She was sole support for herself and two children.

On the University Benefit scale, 58 women rated scholarships important and 54 rated part-time jobs important. Fifty subjects said their educations

are self-financed. One stated, "So many scholarships you're not eligible for as part-time or older student. It may also be harder to borrow money—more demands on time and money and fewer resources to meet demands."

ADVISING-COUNSELING

Although in answer to specific questions women did not indicate they use counseling services very much, 28 did express the desire for more for themselves or others. Women students seek most advising and counseling from teachers and advisers in their fields and do not use other existing counseling services. On the question, "Who could you turn to when a problem arises in course work?", 89% would talk to an instructor or adviser. No one would visit counseling services. In "planning for the future," eight would consult counseling services. In "personal problems," 12 would.

Areas in which women think the university could be more helpful are: career objectives training, career placement, planning Ph. D. programs, selecting curriculum, assertiveness training, and "helping me find my place." Time was an important factor. One said she wished adult staff had more time for conversation. Another thought there was no way she could fit her life experiences onto a form and wished there were an opportunity for more personal interviews in re-entry.

STUDYING

On the Study Skills rating scale, "taking tests" was of most concern. Several women expressed nervous tension connected with exams and "blanking out." Fourteen women said using study skills or learning to study again was the most difficult thing about their re-entry. Such expressions as: "Can I still learn? I'm out of practice." "I have trouble remembering, concentrating, reading, taking tests." "I wondered if my brain was rusty."

were typical comments about relearning to study. Not enough time to do research for writing papers, for studying, and for busywork was also a complaint.

TEACHING

No questions in the interview were about teachers or courses, but many subjects commented on good and bad teaching methods. More than one subject called instructors "the untouchables." Several subjects named specific professors who had shown understanding and who had given them extra help in deciding on their major and coursework. Some comments were:

"I went to the instructor and asked if I had to miss class because of a sick child, would there be some way to make it up. His answer—
'No.' "

"I'm not concerned with my intelligence; I'm concerned with the intelligence of those who will be instructing me."

"It seems to be accepted procedure here for an instructor to call off a class. They (teachers) preach there are things you never do with a class, yet they don't practice it."

"I asked one instructor what I could do with a B.S. in psychology. Reply--'Work as a waitress.' "

"I've never, ever been encouraged to aspire to a higher degree."

"Class gets started, instructor vanishes."

COURSES

"I've been impressed by being able to get so many graduate hours in Topeka by Extension."

"We have a class with undergraduates and it just isn't relevant to those of us who have had experience."

"Credit-no credit classes are very helpful to a person who feels insecure about her intelligence."

"There should be a lot more diagnostic interviews at beginning of class to determine what is there. There is a lot of resource in students, particularly older students."

YOUNGER STUDENTS

"I become their mother."

"Younger students had copies of the tests."

"Why can't we take classes at the hours we want them? Younger students drop and add to get what they want."

"Felt like Rip Van Winkle coming back to school."

"I still think they're going to school to find a husband."

"I'm not 18; there is no daddy that pays for education."

"My age didn't bother me until one of the students called me 'Ma'am.' "

"I felt like a statistic the minute I came back to campus."

"I feel like getting up and screaming, 'Shut up.' "

"I'm very competitive. It's tough on them. I go to learn and get a good grade, and 'Tough, kid!' "

"Students confide in me. We talk out problems. Helps us both--I know what my children will go through shortly."

"I feel division between older students and younger, and between students and faculty. It's difficult to relate to younger ones in the same way as older ones. I don't know why I should regret that, but I do."

"Amazed how well accepted I am by younger people in class."

"Twenty years ahead of your peers, you are a little King's X."

"I've been 'Dear Abby' a lot of times, but that was fine. Kids today are great!"

PHYSICAL

"Parking" was a very popular item on the University Benefit Scale.

Registration and enrollment ranged from a "pet peeve" to an important barrier for some women. One subject commented, "At the time I thought I ought to get at least an hour credit for it (registration)." Other complaints were: climbing stairs, sitting on hard chairs, commuting, having no lockers and no place to go between classes.

CHILDCARE

On the University Benefit Scale, 40 said childcare was important to them. Eight answered "Is there anything the university does not offer the adult woman student?" with "childcare." When there is a "conflict in commitment, 48 subjects said private life has priority. Thirty-two said, "It depends,"--with a child with fever having priority over an exam. Some commented:

"Everything is on such a schedule and has to be done that I forget to laugh with my kids. Everything is so serious."

"I think they have a childcare program here, but I'm not familiar with it."

"I found no literature on university childcare."

"I want my kids to be happy when I'm gone--like they're going to school, too."

"I wish I had a place to leave my kids in the evening for evening classes or going to the library."

"The nursery program doesn't allow enough time. I can only bring my child, go to class and come back. There's no time for study and library work."

SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

Subjects talked about the need for:

peer support within the university,
more integration of older students,
models to follow,
a place to get together,
women to talk over problems together,
friendships with other adults,
support groups,
and, encouragement to aspire.

On Support from Others Scale, women rated all "others" more helpful and understanding than not. Husbands rated highest, and society received the most outstanding negative rating. Comments about society were:

"Who cares what society thinks, I don't."

"What is society?"

"What does society have to do with it?"

"Society vs. Me!"

"I don't give a damn what society thinks."

"Society is helpful."

"Society is not helpful."

"I don't know what society wants."

"Society is pushing women out of the home."

ROLE CONFLICT

On Re-entry Concerns Scale, 58 rated "role conflict" an important concern. Some said:

"How well you cope with going back to school depends on how well you cope with having a lot of extra demands."

"I'm not the kind of person who can worry about things; I consider it a total waste of energy. If anything needs worrying about, I can count on my mother-in-law to do it."

"For myself, I have no time anymore."

"After the women get here and begin to experience success, what do you do with them? Self-actualization occurs--marriages dissolve."

"Sometimes somebody really takes a crack at you about why you're not satisfied to stay at home with husband and family."

"The children have been very understanding since I brought them to school a couple days."

"If my family weren't supportive, it wouldn't work."

"Relatives see education as a luxury; they think the role as mother is more important, or even work is more important."

"What happens to you after divorce?"

"My husband is opposed to my continuing in graduate school. He feels the children are neglected."

"School happens between 8 and 5 o'clock. When I get home, we all re-enter our world there."

"There is no way you can take care of time and role conflict; that is a personal problem."

One answered that her "worst gripe about attending school" was "having to go home and fix supper every night."

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of their own busy schedules and role conflicts, women in college are aware of the difficulties they have and are willing to share information and help with others. In response to the final letter of the project, 60 subjects signed and returned release forms giving permission for the use of their taped interviews. Thirty-eight subjects also volunteered to help other new students in the following manner:

- 14 registration guides,
- 21 orientation helpers,
- 22 panel discussion members,
- 22 "big sisters".

Others thought they would be more helpful in part-time jobs and practicums in this area. One woman volunteered to organize social activities for the older students.

As a result of frequent questions of "Where do I go for that?" during the interviews, the researchers concluded that more capsulized information about available help was needed. As a result, the researchers prepared a brief brochure for older students to supplement larger university catalogs and publications. A sample of this brochure appears on the following page.

How to go Back to School
When You Don't Know
Where to Begin, You Don't
Know Who to Ask, and
You're Not Eighteen
Anymore.



"It's inappropriate to be my age and acting like an 18-year old who doesn't know the answers."

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS PAGES
THAT WERE
BOUND WITHOUT
PAGE NUMBERS.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**

How to go Back to School When You Don't Know Where to Begin, You Don't Know Who to Ask, and You're Not Eighteen Anymore.

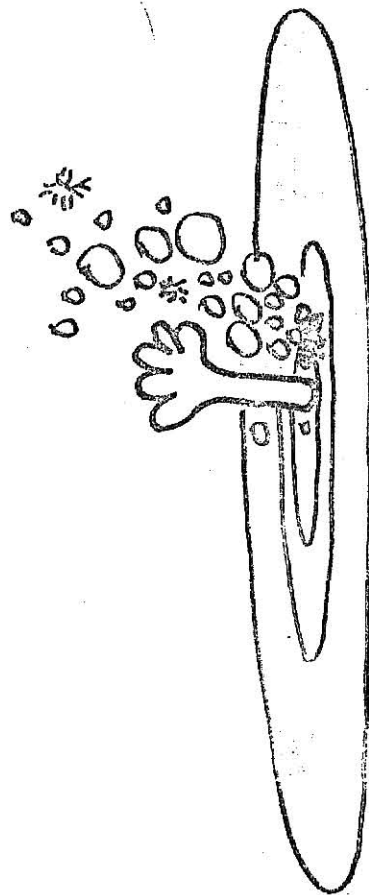
First of all, you have to get in. Call Admissions and Records (532-6250). Tell them whether you are a high school graduate or have had some college work at K-State or elsewhere. The proper admission form and a school catalog will be mailed to you. Request a campus map and housing information be sent at the same time. Housing is hard to find. Start early. If you're in a hurry, visit Anderson Hall 118 and pick up the information.

If you have completed a college degree and want to work on an advanced degree, contact the department in which you wish to be enrolled. For the phone number call KSU Information (532-6011). You must be accepted by a department to enroll but if you are undecided about your commitment to a certain field you can enroll as a special non-degree student and take up to 9 hours in various departments before deciding. Each department has its own requirements. Departments may or may not ask for letters of recommendation, transcripts, and statement of objectives.

The exception to contacting the department first is if you have done graduate work at K-State within the last five years. Call the Graduate School (532-6191) and they will update your records.

Prepared by Laura Folland and Eunice Pickett, College of Home Economics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

*Quoted from a fall 1975 research project with 107 adult women students.
"Factors Influencing the College Entrance of the Adult Woman."



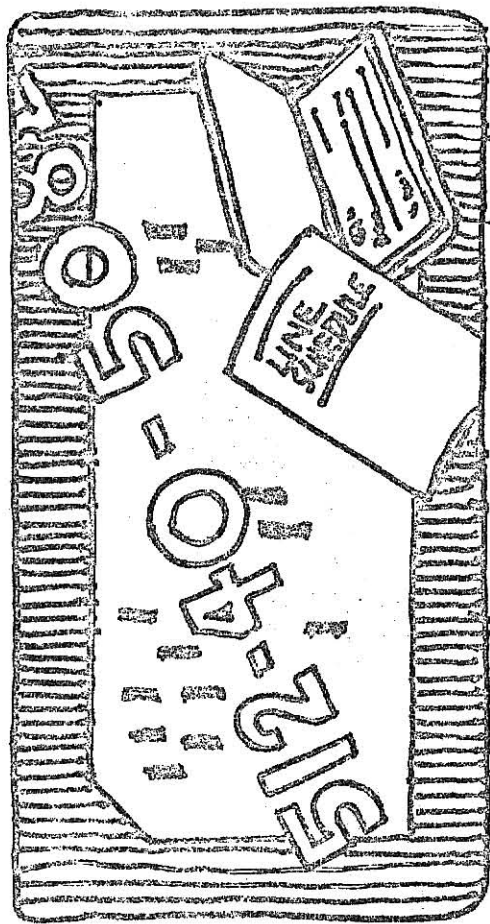
How to get into the swim of things...

Second, you need to get your feet wet. Your department will assign an adviser who will help you with what classes to take. Your adviser is an important person and if you do not feel comfortable with the one you're assigned, ask for another adviser at department/dean's office.

If you have financial worries one of your stops will be the Office of Aids, Awards and Veteran Service, Fairchild 104. Set up an appointment by calling 532-6420. They can tell you about loans, scholarships, grants, and part-time work. There is help for mature students. Don't miss it.

Childcare may be available for you. Call the Department of Family and Child Development, Justin Hall 206, (532-5510). Two programs are available. The Child Development Laboratory is a two-hour program for 3- to 5-year-olds. The Infant and Child Care Center is for children 6 months to 5 years and is arranged in accordance with parent's class schedule. Applications must be renewed each year, as no waiting list is maintained.

The Social and Rehabilitation Services (776-4011) will provide you with a list of licensed day care centers and sitters available in the community.



How to forge ahead...

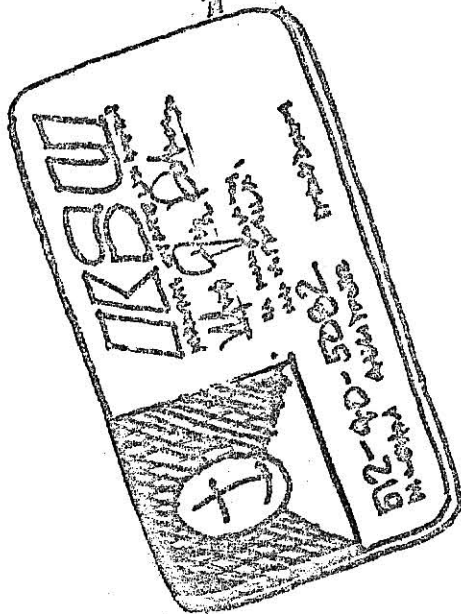
Third—Don't let this scare you—Registration and Enrollment.* Ask your adviser to go over each step of the procedure with you. If you have not done this, buy a Line Schedule (Schedule of Classes and Enrollment Procedures). These cost 26¢ and are available from the K-State Union Bookstore or Varney's Bookstore in Aggieville. Read the first few pages carefully.

Enrollment takes place in Ahearn Fieldhouse. (Summer enrollment is in the Union). Sometimes you may walk right through. Other times the lines are lengthy. If your feet are tired, the kids are hanging on you, your dinner is burning, it may be worth \$2.50 to register late. Refer to the Line Schedule for time and place.

Get your hair done. Wear a smile. Your picture will be taken for your ID card.

Your social security number is used as your student identification number. Memorize it or bring it with you. Plan to register your car at this time too. Know your license plate number. Don't forget your checkbook.

*"I think I should get at least an hour's credit for this."

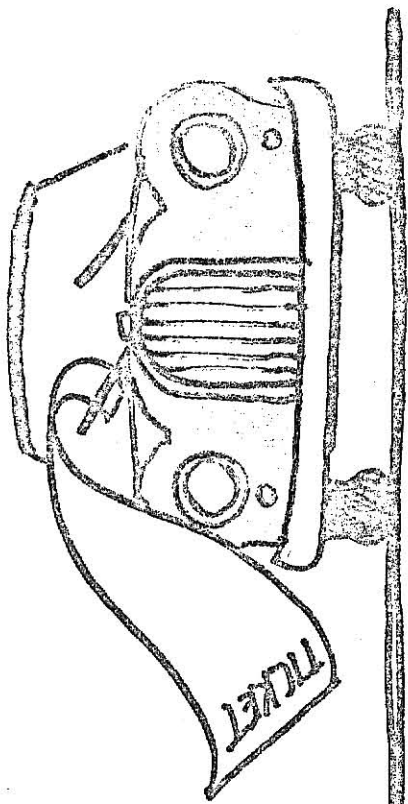


How to use your ticket to success . . .

Here At Last!

What's this ID card good for?

- ☐ Checking out library books. Ask for the Library User's Guide and sign up for a free tour at the General Reference Desk, Farrell Library.
- ☐ Using recreational facilities. You can play tennis, swim in the natatorium pools, or jog over the noon hour.
- ☐ Cashing checks in the Union.
- ☐ Attending university events. Reduced rates at movies in the Union Theatres, Auditorium Productions (if you are a full-time student and have your fee card with you), Basketball games, Football games.



How to stay within the law . . .

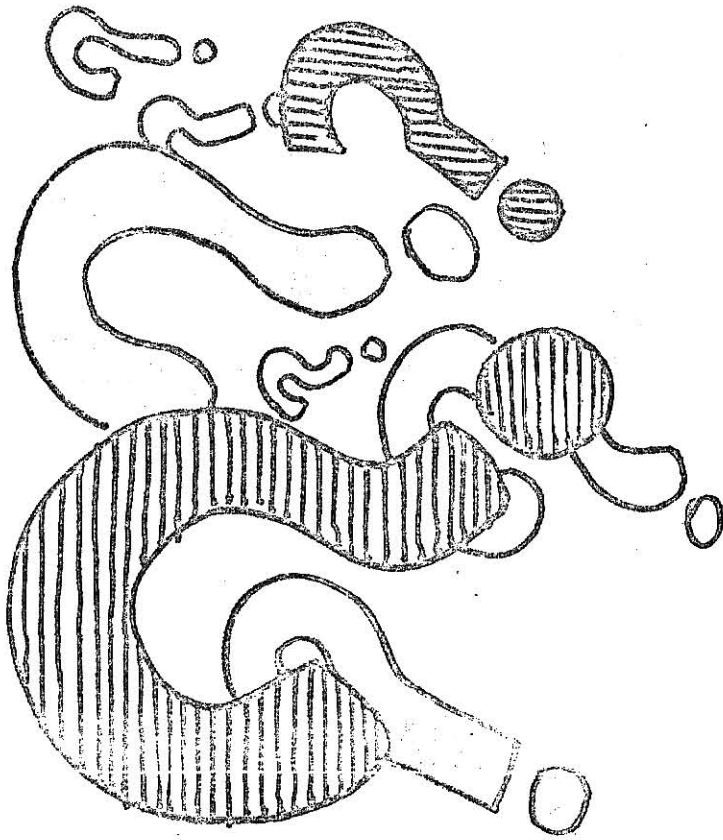
Why do I keep getting all these parking tickets?

Get an ID sticker! Apply in rear window of your car immediately. One free warning ticket is allowed per year. Successive tickets cost you \$15 if paid within 48 hours and \$25 if not paid within 48 hours. Know your license plate number and pick up a Traffic and Parking Regulations brochure when you get your sticker in registration line. If you forget your number, you'll have to make an extra trip to the Traffic and Security Office at the rear of Anderson Hall, 118E. (532-6412) **STICKERS MUST BE ON YOUR CAR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES.**

... Or a parking permit. The only place the ID sticker entitles you to park is the gravel section of the lot west of the old stadium.* Or you may park anywhere on campus, except in reserved spots, after 3:30 p.m. Time zones are in effect 24 hours a day. As a freshman, an ID sticker is all you can get. Others may buy parking permits for \$10 which entitles them to look for a parking place in certain lots. Be sure you park in lots that have the same letter as your permit has. After the free warning the next two tickets cost \$3, and after that it's \$5 per ticket.

If you have a physical disability which makes walking difficult, a medical permit may be obtained by presenting a signed approval from Lafene Health Center (532-6544) at the traffic office.

*"Walking is the best form of exercise."



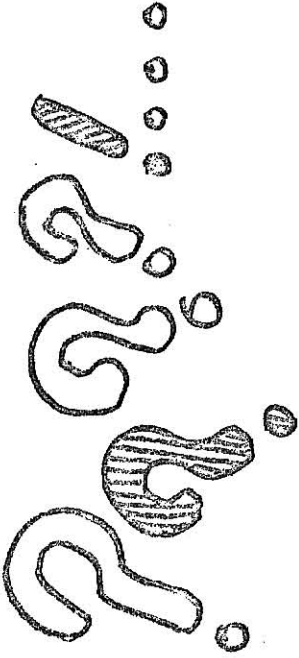
Where are those kids getting those books?

Two stores stock the books required for your classes—K-State Union Bookstore and Varney's Bookstore in Aggieville. Books are shelved by departments and there are catalogs listing texts by line number of the courses. Ask for assistance in the store.

What's that card they're handing out with the test?

Many tests are computer-graded. Test answers are not written on the test, but are marked on the computer card. Ask the instructor to explain. You'll need your social security number for identification on the card. Test questions are usually handed back.*

*"I was too embarrassed to tell the instructor I had taken the test home with me. Now we number our tests."



How to find first aid for your psyche...

What if I work and can't take classes just any old time?

Have your employer outline the hours that you work on letterhead stationery and bring this with you when you enroll to block off time in your schedule.

What if I need to take a course at another hour?

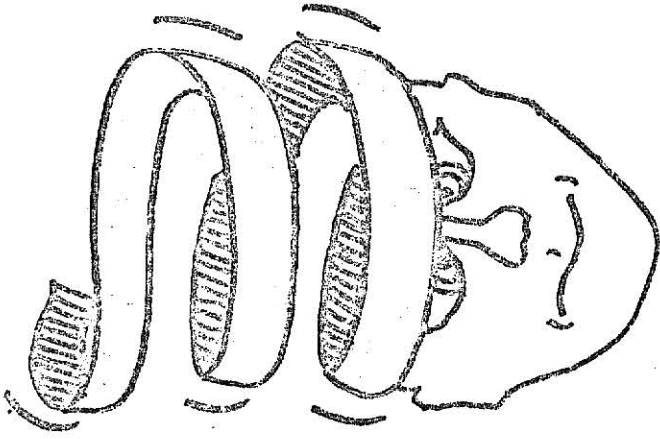
See your adviser and ask to fill out a reassignment form. You may be able to drop your class and add it at another time.

What do I say when I'm asked, "What's your major?"

If you're still looking, say so. If you are having difficulty deciding where you fit in best, you will be able to get advising and take interest or aptitude tests at the Center for Student Development, Holtz Hall (532-6432). Job opportunities information is available at Career Placement Office, Anderson Hall, rm. 8 (532-6506). These services are available before you are admitted.

Can't somebody help me?

If you're feeling insecure about your ability to make it in school or have other emotional problems, counseling is available at the Center for Student Development, Holtz Hall (532-6432) or Lafene Health Center (532-6544).



Feeling dizzy?

- ☐ Lafene Student Health Center (532-6544) provides the following:

Free office visits with physicians at any time during the semester.

- ☐ Pharmacy, laboratory, and X-ray services at reduced rates.
- ☐ Physical therapy and mental health services are free for the first five visits and cost \$1 per visit thereafter.
- ☐ Cost of allergy shots is for the allergin only.
- ☐ Hospitalization room and board is \$25 per day. Student Governing Association—SGA (532-6541) can tell you about student hospitalization insurance.

These services are available for you—not for your family.

→ If you are taking 6 hours or less, paying the student health fee at registration is optional. For any other questions, pick up the Lafene Student Health and University Hospital brochure.

How to find physical comfort...

My stomach is growling. Where can I find a snack?

The library basement and several other buildings have candy, sandwich and drink machines. The Union has machines in several locations and a cafeteria with full meal service at noon and evening. The Dairy Bar at Call Hall has yummy meals—other things, too. (How's your figure?)

What else can I buy here?

- ☐ Meat at Weber Hall 103 on Friday afternoons 2:30 to 4:30. (532-6131)
- ☐ Milk, Ice Cream, Cheese, Butter at Call Hall Dairy Bar 155. (532-6146)
- ☐ Apples in season at Waters Hall.
- ☐ Flour—whole wheat, wheat germ, rye, bran, pancake, fast-rising with recipes. Cereal—farina, cracked wheat at Shellenberger Hall 201 (532-6161).
- ☐ Baked products—cookies, breads—may be ordered from the Union Food Service (532-6580).

Pick up supper on the way home!

Where can I sit down and collect my thoughts?

The second floor of the Union has comfortable chairs somewhat removed from noise. Hoffman Lounge in Justin Hall is beautifully and comfortably furnished for your relaxation. Religious centers near campus have lounge and study facilities.

What if I have other questions?

The University Learning Network (532-6442) or Women's Resource Center (532-6541 or 532-6432) will have the answers or find them if they don't.

Use your map.

Use your phone. Make appointments, don't just show up.

Ask someone. Anyone.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Kansas State University is committed to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sex in admissions, educational activities, and employment, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Any individual who wishes to file a complaint should contact Dorothy Thompson, Director, Administrative Action for Women, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506, 913 332 6220 or Director, Office of Civil Rights, HEW, Wash., D.C. 20201.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE OF THE ADULT WOMAN

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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Women's perceptions of their specific needs in the adjustment to student life were explored through personal interviews with 107 adult students at Kansas State University. There are services for adult women at Kansas State, but no unified program of assistance has been designed to aid them in their re-entry. Written and verbal responses were gathered from subjects to assess just what help they think the university could provide. The sample was university-wide and included students at all levels, from undergraduates to doctoral candidates. Results indicated that a majority of adult women are preparing for a career to be combined with family. They are most concerned with the scheduling of their time to achieve this goal. Return to school is part of an evolutionary process of self-development for many women rather than the occurrence of a crisis or an event. It is not the "empty nest" but the "emptiness" that triggers their return. Researchers concluded that the College of Home Economics, who initiated this investigation, also has the expertise to contribute to lessening difficulties for future adult women students.