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ABSTRACT

As a subgroup of all students attending junior colleges, adult students have been rarely studied. The number of students over age 23 is increasing because of more leisure time, rising standards of living, increasing interest in education, and demands for specific job training and re-training. This study focuses on adult women students, defined as women over 25 years old, enrolled in credit courses at the four campuses of Santa Fe Junior College in Florida in the Fall of 1970. First, existing literature on adult women students is reviewed. The second part reports on the results of the questionnaire (a copy is appended) which gathered information on the students' age, marital status, number of children, race, educational interests, outside work, purpose in attending college, problems in attending college, relationship with other students, extra-curricular activities, attitudes toward Santa Fe, and knowledge of and use of services at the college. Sixty-nine percent of the 285 women who received the questionnaire responded; the 285 comprised 13.3 percent of the full-time enrollment. While few generalizations were made about the respondents as a group, the report concludes that many adult women students have special needs and problems that the college could better serve with changes in scheduling and credit arrangements, special orientation programs, and counseling. (LP)

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A STUDY OF MATURE WOMEN
AT SANTA FE JUNIOR COLLEGE

by

Judy Aanstad
IRC Research Assistant

A Topical Paper

The Florida Community Junior College
Inter-institutional Research Council

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

JC 720 034

The Inter-institutional Research Council recently expressed an interest in adult education as related to the community college by voting to undertake a review of related literature. This report by Judy Aanstad, IRC Research Assistant, presents an excellent review of a segment of this literature-- The mature woman in the community college. Also the report presents a study of characteristics of mature women at Santa Fe Junior College and their reactions to various facets of the college. I think you will find this report both informative and thought provoking.

John M. Nickens
Associate Director IRC

Statement of Problem

One characteristic of the junior college that distinguishes it from other institutions of higher education is the diversity of students who attend its classes. While this diversity is welcomed, many administrators, teachers, and counselors want to better understand student sub populations in order to provide programs and classes that will more effectively meet the needs of these students. Adult students comprise one such sub group.

In "The Junior College Student: A Research Description," Patricia Cross said, "We know very little about the adult student who constitutes an extremely important segment of those enrolled in institutions of higher education." (p. 52)

Leonard Koos (1970) described a study which sampled the ages of full-time students in five community colleges and found that "substantial proportions of the full-time enrollments are adults." (p. 385) According to this study, about 13.3% of the full-time students in the junior colleges sampled were 23 years of age or older.

More adults are now seeking admission to institutes of higher education than ever before due to several factors including:

- 1) More leisure time
- 2) The rising standard of living
- 3) The general population shift toward more education
- 4) The demands of a rapidly-changing society

With this in mind, Roueche (1968) stated, "Junior colleges are going to enroll more and more adult students in the future. More viable programs are needed to accommodate this increasing number of students." (no pages)

The focus of this study will be on approximately one-half of the adult population in the junior college - mature women. The terms "mature woman" or "returning woman student" are defined in several different ways. For the purposes of this paper, a "mature woman" is one who is at least 23 years of age, which makes her older than the majority of women in college. The author will clarify the term as it is specifically used in the literature cited and will further define it for her own study.

"Adult education" is another ambiguous term. Because "adult education" has too many limiting connotations, "continuing education" will generally be used in this paper. Most of the literature cited uses "continuing education" to refer to credit college courses which meet the various needs of adult students. These courses may be offered at night or during the day, part-time or full-time.

The value of educated women to our society and economy has been described by several writers (Hardee, 1963; Chamber, 1967). Chambers (1967) and Stephan (1969) also mentioned several ways in which the mature woman returning to school is valuable to the college setting itself. She helps to raise the level of maturity in the class and adds a variety and depth of experience. By providing education to mature women, colleges establish closer ties to the community surrounding the college. Four-year colleges also welcome the extra students to upper division, where enrollment is usually small.

Johnson (1967) and Leopold (1961) have pointed out characteristics of the junior college that seem to fit some of the special needs of the mature woman. In many communities, the junior college is easily accessible to mothers and housewives so a woman can attend some classes even while her

children are in school. Minimal tuition and expenses and an open-door policy makes it easy for a woman to begin classes. Junior colleges often emphasize service to the community and offer part-time education and flexible class schedules that a housewife can fit around her household responsibilities.

It seems that the mature woman has not only shown how she may be valuable to the junior college, but she also is beginning to recognize that the junior college fits her needs too.

What remains, is for the junior college to continue to make itself more available to mature women in the community. In order to do this effectively, junior colleges need to know what mature women are like, what they want, and what they need from the college facilities and staff. It is the purpose of this study to determine general characteristics of the mature woman, specific problems she faces, what services and classes are most meaningful to her, and what additional services she wants.

Review of Literature

Research on the mature woman who returns to school is very limited. Much of the research in this area has focused on the intellectual and academic capabilities of these older women. A few studies have attempted to determine personality and situational characteristics of mature women who return to school. Several articles have been written with a more experimental than research basis describing the reasons mature women return to college and the adjustment difficulties these women encounter. Other writers have described programs in operation which are attempting to meet the needs of these women. A fairly detailed review of the literature on the mature woman returning to school is relevant to the purposes of this study.

A knowledge of the intellectual and academic capabilities of older students is necessary before educational programs for mature women can be widely accepted. Not only do most colleges and administrators wonder if older women can study and do well on tests after many years away from school, but mature women often ask themselves the same question before returning to school. Needless to say, the mature woman generally experiences more anxiety about the answer to this question than college personnel. Research in this area generally offers evidence that older students have the capabilities to do well in college.

Birren (1959) described several experiments in animal and human learning and concluded "At the present time there is little evidence to suggest that there is an intrinsic age difference in learning capacity over the employed years; that is, up to age sixty." (p. 169)

Doty (1960) compared 40 younger coeds (median age 20) and 40 older coeds (median age 35) with matched grade point averages on 4 WAIS subtests and found that the mature women were somewhat inferior in abstract reasoning and concentrating on details, but did just as well in verbal reasoning. On a questionnaire the mature women more often reported difficulty in concentrating reading too slow and taking ineffective notes while younger students more often reported poor retention of material. The mature women also reported more time spent studying and better patterns of studying than the younger coeds. In accounting for their grades, the younger women placed more emphasis on their academic ability while the older women emphasized their maturity and appreciation of a college education. Doty concluded that mature women are

"highly motivated to achieve academically and they may overcome their learning handicaps by applying effective study habits." (p. 165)

Halfter (1962) compared the grade point averages of two groups of women in the same undergraduate college degree courses. One group of women were 40 years of age or older and the second group was 18-25 years of age. Halfter found the mature women significantly superior to the younger women in total performance. He also found that 10, 20, or 30 years absence from formal academic study had no effect on the grades or performance of the mature women. Like Doty, he concluded that scholastic motivation and the willingness to spend time in study and preparation were probably factors in the higher achievement of mature women.

Stephen and Wheeler (1969) looked at the grade point averages of students at St. Petersburg Junior College and found that students 24 years of age or older earned better grades than younger students. Students at least 40 years old had the highest level of academic performance.

Lichtenstein (1963) at Hofstra University compared the grade point averages of men and women returning to school in an evening program. He found that the mature women received grades significantly higher than the older men, although the women did not score higher on a reading ability test. Referring to the returning woman student, Lichtenstein stated, "Nevertheless, if the goal of our institutions of higher learning is to educate, and; further, if grades reflect attainment, the fact remains that these women are getting more out of their educational experience than most students." (p. 239)

According to Letchworth (1970) "Each year, more older women enroll in

colleges and universities across the country. The satisfaction felt by so many women is a function of their ability to understand their motivations for returning to college and their resourcefulness in overcoming initial difficulties." (p. 103)

There are many different reasons why more older women are returning to college. In the first place, college is now much more feasible for older women than ever before. Our society is more affluent. Housework demands less time due to more modern conveniences. Education is also much more acceptable for women.

Reasons women give for wanting to return to college are more direct. The most frequent reason, according to Letchworth, is to gain relief from boredom. The woman whose family is grown, who feels her life is dull compared to her husband's, who is tired of the usual clubs and charities, may seek the stimulus of returning to school.

In a study by Doty (1966) 80% of a sample of mature women said an unfulfilled desire for knowledge was a major reason for their return to school. This may be a more positive way than boredom of describing that "missing something."

Other women return to school to escape from responsibilities that have little meaning or from divorce and marriage troubles. For these women, college is not only a respite from troubles, but it is a means of establishing a new pattern of life. In college, these women can meet new people, develop useful skills, and get caught up in new ideas.

Other women return to college in order to gain the background necessary for employment. Education may mean the difference in a routine job and one

that is more appealing to the individual woman. It may also represent a way to increased income for retirement or the children's college education.

Finally some women just want to get a college degree or finish the college work they had started many years earlier.

In order to better understand why mature women return to college, Doty (1966) did a study comparing the personality characteristics and attitudes of women over 23 and in a B.A. degree program in Illinois with women over 23 who were not. The two groups were matched by age, and income. All the women involved were married. Results of this study indicated that women who were students had a more masculine interest pattern, were more intellectually curious, were more active, and were more interested in changing their environment to fit their needs, than the non-student group of mature women. The non-student group also had a greater tendency to avoid social contacts. Surprisingly enough, 95% of the non-students said they had interests which could be furthered by college courses and 70% of the non-students had seriously considered returning to college.

Doty found little difference between the two groups in factors generally associated with a woman's decision to return to school. Equal numbers of women in both groups were financially able to attend college, lived fairly close to a college, had their family's approval, had friends in college, previously had taken non-credit interest courses in college, and had similar prior college achievement records. She concluded that non-students have less motivation to seek social and intellectual

stimulation and may have more conventional attitudes about the role of women than do students. A limitation of this study is that the subjects were all white, middle to upper class women living in the suburbs. The importance of the personality differences in the two groups is undoubtedly related to the constancy of the other factors generally considered basic to returning to college. Further research is needed to determine the relative importance of personality traits compared to financial means, family approval, proximity to a college, and other variables.

Along similar lines, Hembrough (1966) compared student wives who were attending the U. of Illinois with student wives who were not attending. She found 75% of the non-attending group wanted to continue their formal education. Some differences she found between the groups may indicate why the non-students weren't attending school. Fewer of the non-student group said they could attend full-time. More of these women said they would need financial help and more of these non-attending women had more children. The husband of a woman student was more likely to have a full time job while the non-attending woman was more likely herself to work full time. Mature women returning to college have several special adjustment difficulties.

Lichtenstein (1963) found that mature women returning to college express more anxiety than a comparable group of men returning to college. Like the older man returning to school, the mature woman is worried about succeeding academically. Often these returning older students may set unrealistic goals for themselves. Because of their age, they may feel that they "should" be better informed. Tests may be tremendous obstacles which seem to arbitrarily determine if they are capable and intelligent, or not.

In addition, the mature woman may carry with her feelings of guilt. By stepping out of her role as homemaker, she may see herself as neglecting her home, using money selfishly, and aggressively competing with her husband. Since a man can relate college to his job skills and need for advancement, he is less likely to feel guilty about returning to school; he is expected to improve himself.

Older women may also fear being isolated in the college setting. (Buccieri, 1970; Letchworth, 1970). Because they are very aware of their age and absence from school, they tend to expect other students to also be very aware of these differences. They may also fear disapproval of faculty members.

Some of these anxieties are relieved naturally as the mature woman begins school and discovers that she can keep up with her classes, that she is accepted by the faculty and other students, and that her household continues to run fairly smoothly. Teachers, however, can smooth this entry process to the extent that they can convey the excitement of learning and a confidence in the women's ability to learn. (London, 1966) Counselors can help individual women deal with related personal problems and can set up special orientation programs. A variety of such programs will be discussed later in this paper.

Other more concrete adjustment difficulties the mature woman faces if she decides to return to school have been discussed by several writers. (London, 1966, Hembrough, 1966; Tinker, 1965; Buccieri, 1970; Myers, 1964; Blackwell, 1963) When she is applying for admission, the mature woman may have trouble getting the necessary transcripts due to the lapse of time

since she last attended school. She may also lose many of the credits she earned in previous years because of the time lapse and transfer process. A more creative way of evaluating the academic status of the returning older woman may involve a more lenient policy for accepting transfer credits and arrangements for giving credit by examination for past experience and classes.

A second concrete problem the mature woman faces when she returns to college is arranging her class time, homework time, trips to the library, and other course requirements around her household responsibilities. Many accepted college regulations and policies are very inconvenient for a homemaker. For example, classes which meet four days a week for one hour involve many more transportation and babysitter arrangements than classes which meet for four hours on one day. Other arrangements which would help the returning older woman student blend her two roles include an inexpensive nursery or babysitting service, a more flexible library reserve book system, television and correspondence courses, and classes at night or during public school hours. Colleges can also relax non-essential academic regulations such as physical education requirements.

A third area in which the older woman student needs special consideration is finances. Married women and women who attend classes part-time often have difficulty obtaining scholarships and loans. For mature women, scholarships are not only a source of money, but also a great boost for the morale. Lower tuition rates for part-time students would also ease the financial burden.

The first comprehensive plan for women's continuing education was developed in 1960 at the University of Minnesota. According to Buccieri (1970), there are now "Continuing Education for women" programs on at least 300 college and university campuses featuring special programs for women. Many different kinds of focal organizations also offer placement and counseling centers for women with some college education who wish to work part-time.

The basic theme behind continuing educational programs for women is becoming one of understanding the woman's special time pattern of educational and personal growth. This pattern generally involves some education, marriage and a family, and then more education or work during middle age. The old argument of whether the purpose of education for a woman is to become a better housewife vs. to compete with men is out of date. According to Ranshenbush (1961), Koontz (1970), Blackwell (1963) and Lewis (1969) women need help in understanding the life pattern of a woman and how they can use it to plan their own future. Colleges also need to adapt their educational structures to meet the particular needs of women of all ages.

Current educational programs for women seem to be meeting these needs at three levels.

The first level might be represented by a short workshop or weekend program such as "Woman's Day" at Orange County Community College in New York (Novak, 1966) or Oregon's "Campus Day for Women" (Mitchell, 1967). The purpose of these programs and other similar affairs is both to stimulate women to a wider view of their role in the community and to offer information about vocational and educational opportunities in the area. One

Woman taking part in Oregon's "Campus Day for Women", remarked, "It's important to relate to other women. Maybe we're not going whacky. Maybe other people feel the same way." (p.60) The enthusiasm generated can be directed back to school, a job, or the family.

A more involved approach to continuing education for women is one which is set up to meet specific educational needs of the mature woman returning to college. A variety of programs are included in this category. The University of Illinois set up a series of courses to help selected women develop with only the goal of "self actualization." (Kew and Johnson, 1964) The "Radcliffe Institution" was set up by Radcliffe College in 1960 to help keep creative women active in their careers by providing materials, money, and surroundings for qualified women to work on personal projects. (Buccieri, 1970) Goddard College offers a special program for women who dropped out of school after only one year of study and later wish to return (London, 1966).

Orange Coast College in California offered a course for women who wished to resume their education or seek a job. (Hiltunen, 1968) The main purpose of the course was to give individual women insight into their own interests and abilities in relation to vocational and educational opportunities. The course focused around the three themes of knowing yourself-interests, aptitudes and abilities; knowing your community - educational and vocational opportunities; and knowing the facts - truth about women in society. During the course, the women took vocational and aptitude tests, went out into the community to learn about employment opportunities, practiced job interviews, and filling out job applications,

learned about the role of women from psychologists, and listened to a beauty lesson given by a woman from a charm school. A follow-up study showed the majority of women did return to school part-time. Some got jobs and others remained at home.

A one year certificate program was developed at Middlesex County College (Reynolds, 1969) to up-date the clerical skills of women who had been away from work and study for several years and to rebuild their self-confidence and understanding of adjustment problems to work and school. Thirty-two women were involved in this program called "Job Horizons for Women." To meet the special needs of these women, classes were scheduled from 10:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. Study skills were taught along with regular classes during the first few weeks. A lecture series was incorporated into the program to describe the many and conflicting roles of women today. At various times a representative from industry, a charm expert, and a business woman spoke to the women. Personal attention was available in the form of counseling, a coffee hour with the faculty, and special help by instructors. The students themselves expressed a lot of anxiety about returning to school. Twenty-eight out of the original 32 graduated, and of these, 20 got jobs.

At a third level, continuing educational programs for women not only provide educational and vocational opportunities for mature women, but also help orient younger women to an overall developmental approach to education. Many women who begin college as a freshman will not continue for four years until they graduate. An awareness of 1) the general life patterns of women and 2) personal educational and vocational goals can ease the later

re-entry of women who either drop out of school early or wish to go on to graduate work later on in life.

The University of Minnesota's "Plan for Women's Continuing Education" is an example of this overall approach (Senders, 1961). Basically, this program has three parts:

- 1) Orient the undergraduate woman to her life stages and multiple roles in later life so that she can more realistically plan for a career as a woman.
- 2) Provide opportunities for young mothers to remain involved in intellectual and social growth.
- 3) Offer guidance and help for mature women in using the university facilities and special courses to meet her needs.

All of these programs are important in that they are beginning to meet the special educational needs of women. G. Blackwell (1963) suggested a step further in this direction - that statewide coordination of higher education for women be planned. This is feasible in states like Florida, which could coordinate this effort through the Florida Institute for Continuing University Studies.

Procedure

In order to learn more about the mature woman in the junior college, a questionnaire was sent to all women 25 years of age or older enrolled in credit courses fall term, 1970, at Santa Fe Junior College.

Santa Fe Junior College is a comprehensive public community junior college which was established in Gainesville, Florida by the Florida State Legislature in 1965. Currently, Santa Fe has four centers in Gainesville

and one in Starke, Florida. Santa Fe has a student-centered philosophy with a commitment to maximizing the potential of each Santa Fe student.

The Continuing Education Programs at Santa Fe are special credit and non-credit courses designed to meet the cultural and occupational needs of adults in the community. Any student may enroll for both evening and daytime classes in any combination of credit and non-credit classes.

Between September, 1969 and September, 1970, a total of 6,631 students attended Santa Fe. During this same year, 663 credit students graduated with an Associate in Arts degree. For approximately 51% of the students at Santa Fe, there is no time-lapse between high school graduation and attending Santa Fe (Office of Research, Santa Fe).

The questionnaire was sent by mail to 285 women in the beginning of December, 1970 along with a cover letter and a stamped, addressed return envelope. The cover letter explained the purpose of the questionnaire, asked for cooperation of the individual, and assured confidentiality. The cover letter was signed by Dr. Rubye Beal, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and by the author of this paper. A second questionnaire, cover letter, and envelope were sent to all women who had not yet returned the questionnaire approximately 6 weeks later. 69% of the women involved in the study had returned the questionnaire by May, 1971.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain several different kinds of information:

Personal information
 age
 marital status
 number of children
 race

Educational information

type of student (part-time or full-time, day or night classes)
credit load

Outside work commitment

Purpose for attending Santa Fe

Problems at home

Relationship with other students

Significance of BE 100 (core course in behavioral science)

Significance of extra-curricular activities

Anxiety about beginning at Santa Fe

Family or friends at Santa Fe

Attitudes toward Santa Fe

Knowledge and use of services at Santa Fe

Suggestions for ways Santa Fe could be of more service

Some of the questions were based on a questionnaire used at Riverside City College with women students over 25 years of age or married in 1964 (Sensor, 1967). Others were of interest to the Research Office of Santa Fe Junior College and the author. The questionnaire was revised several times, incorporating recommendations of the research committee at Santa Fe, the Director of Research at Santa Fe, Dr. Ann Bromley, the author's advisor, Dr. Robert Stripling, the sponsor of the questionnaire, Dr. Rubye Beal, and others. The instrument was given to five individuals associated with Santa Fe and a few changes were made to clarify some questions. Comments made by some of the mature women in the questionnaire indicate a generally favorable response to the questionnaire and to the opportunity to give personal feedback to Santa Fe about its programs and facilities. Responses to the questionnaire indicated that a couple of questions were yet not clear.

Results

The responses given by the mature women on the 198 questionnaires which were returned were key punched on computer cards and compiled with a tabulation program designed by Dr. Charles M. Bridges, Jr., Associate Professor of Education, University of Florida, and computer consultant. The number of specific responses and percentage of women responding to each category are in the Appendix. The percentages are based on the number of women responding to each question, as some women did not answer all questions.

Personal Data

In looking at the personal data given by the women, over half are between the ages of 25 and 34, with 34 percent between 25 and 29. Seventy-one percent of the women responding to the questionnaire are married, while 29 percent are single--either divorced, separated, widowed, or never married. The most common number of children is two; nearly a third of the women returning the questionnaire reported having two children. Eighteen percent reported three children, and 16 percent reported having none. A fourth of the women have at least one child who has not yet started school.

Eighty-two percent of the women returning the questionnaire are white, while 18 percent are black. These figures probably parallel the ratio of black to white attending Santa Fe.

In looking at attendance patterns at Santa Fe, the mature woman is most likely to be going to school either full time during the day (42%)

or part-time at night (38%).

Sixty-four quarter hours are needed for graduation at Santa Fe. Nine hours is considered a full-time quarter load, although many students take 12 credits a quarter. Many of the courses at Santa Fe are 3 credits. Twenty-four percent of the women were taking 1-3 credits during the Fall Term, 1970. Twenty percent were taking 4-6 credits, most likely two courses. Twenty-two percent were taking 7-9 credits, and 23 percent were taking 10-12 credits. The number of quarters that the women had been attending Santa Fe ranged from one to twelve. The largest group, 23 percent of the women, responded two quarters, while 19 percent had been at Santa Fe three quarters; and 16 percent, only one quarter. Thus, over half of the women returning the questionnaire have been at Santa Fe three quarters or less. Twenty-eight percent have completed 0-9 credit hours; 20 percent, 10-19 credit hours; and 12 percent, 20-29 credit hours.

Fifty-nine percent are working while attending Santa Fe. Of these working, 65 percent work 40 hours a week or more; 13 percent, 10-19 hours; and 13 percent, 20-29 hours.

Vocational and Educational Plans

In the first six months after high school, nearly half of these mature women obtained jobs (47 percent). Forty-one percent of them were involved in college or a specialized school, and 21 percent were married. Seventy-one percent of them planned at that time to continue their education. The two most common reasons for attending Santa Fe were to get a degree (65 percent) and for personal satisfaction (35 percent).

Fifty-nine percent indicated they are planning to transfer to a senior college, while 19 percent are planning employment after receiving their A.A. degree. Only 132 women indicated an occupational goal on the questionnaire. Of these women, 28 percent indicated the nursing profession, and 18 percent indicated teaching. The rest of the women indicated a wide variety of goals, including data processing, journalism, interior design, engineering, social work, and advertising.

Attitudes and Problems

The largest group of women, 40 percent, responded that they have no problems as a result of returning to school. The two problems most often checked were "lack of time for household duties" and "not enough time to be with my family."

Close to three fourths of the women found other students at least friendly. Twenty-eight percent of the women were surprised that they were so well accepted. No mature woman found other students unfriendly, although 16 percent felt they were not part of the younger groups.

BE 100, "The Individual in a Changing Environment," is a core course at Santa Fe designed to allow students to learn more about themselves and others in a personal way through class discussion and a group experience. A fourth of the women indicated BE 100 was "More significant in my personal growth than other classes." Fourteen percent responded that it wasn't very helpful personally for a variety of reasons ranging from "already progressed farther in personal awareness" to "poor teacher." Twenty-two percent of the women had not yet taken BE 100.

An overwhelming majority of the women, 80 percent, responded that activities outside of the classroom are basically unimportant because of other demands on their time. This factor (lack of time and commitments outside of the junior college) is important to remember when planning relevant student activities.

Research indicates that mature women face much anxiety when planning to return to college. Approximately half of those in this study indicated a concern about how they would do academically, and another 16 percent were concerned about both academic and social adjustment. From the questionnaire it is impossible to tell the intensity of anxiety expressed. Obviously the anxiety felt by the women in this study didn't keep them from returning to school. A fourth of the women were excited and confident in their ability to return to school. As a contrast to this initial anxiety, three fourths indicated that they now feel comfortable, both socially and academically at Santa Fe. Only 14 percent indicated that they are concerned about classwork and grades in particular.

Close to half, 45 percent, of the mature women had a relative or close friend associated with Santa Fe before they began classes. This associate may have made the introduction to Santa Fe easier.

The attitudes of these women toward Santa Fe is overwhelmingly positive. The main reasons they indicated they would recommend Santa Fe are available help and assistance, informal atmosphere, and an interested faculty and staff. When asked why they wouldn't recommend Santa Fe, 84 percent of the women replied that none of the possible criticisms applied. Six percent indicated that programs and course offerings are too limited.

Many women failed to follow the directions for question 23, so there are no specific results to present from that question.

Personal Reactions to Santa Fe

The last three questions were open-ended, allowing the women to suggest specific things about Santa Fe which they like and specific changes they would suggest. The responses were grouped by the author in one logical manner. When asked how Santa Fe could be of more service, 90 women failed to make any suggestions at all, probably indicating satisfaction rather than lack of thought, since many of these women expressed appreciation for the overall Santa Fe experience. The most frequent suggestions tended to be changes in class logistics such as additional classes, more classes at specific locations, and more convenient class times and locations. The second most frequent set of comments centered around increased and improved personnel services. These suggestions included better informed counselors, better communication between counselors and students, special help for older students and more available vocational counseling. A third area of service suggested is that of improved facilities and employees. The women asked for guards in the parking lot, better parking arrangements, a quiet place to eat and study, and more courteous employees.

When asked what they liked most about Santa Fe, 45 percent of the women mentioned some personal qualities of the teachers including willingness to help, flexibility, patience, interest in own field, and positive student-teacher relations. Thirty percent of the women described the social atmosphere of Santa Fe--the acceptance of an individual, the informality, the opportunity for contact with other students, and the people in general

at Santa Fe. Several other factors, including the academic atmosphere and class arrangements, were also mentioned.

The women responded in a wide variety of ways to the last question which asked for one factor which might have made a difference in whether she began classes at Santa Fe or not. It seems that the mechanics of returning to school were mentioned most often: 18 percent of the women mentioned location, 14 percent mentioned financial and job arrangements, 12 percent mentioned class scheduling, and 10 percent mentioned specific job or course needs. Attitudinal factors were mentioned by fewer students: 10 percent mentioned acceptance by family and friends, 8 percent mentioned initial friendliness met at Santa Fe, and informality and acceptance of the social atmosphere was mentioned by 6 percent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study describes a segment of the junior college population which is similar in many respects to the general junior college population, while at the same time showing special characteristics and needs which the junior college can use in planning programs for mature women. The results of this study support the idea that mature women face some anxiety when they consider returning to college. The women, however, when asked what factor made a difference in their return to school, mentioned mainly mechanical arrangements such as location and time factors. The relationship between these two factors--anxiety and mechanical arrangements--seems to be an important and yet elusive one.

The author hypothesizes that if a woman has a relatively low anxiety level in regards to returning to college, the mechanical arrangements may

not be as important a consideration--those can be worked out. On the other hand, a woman with a higher anxiety level may need more smooth mechanical arrangements in order to take the steps necessary in returning to school. Traditionally the junior college has encouraged people in the community to enroll at the junior college by smoothing the mechanics--offering special class times, low tuition, convenient locations. Another approach to encouraging mature women to begin at the junior college might be to deal in a direct way with some of the anxieties and questions these women face while they consider beginning college.

Two possible approaches to dealing with this anxiety would involve special programs--one a well-publicized all-day program, and one a credit course scheduled over a quarter.

The purpose of the all-day program would be to reach women who might not otherwise decide to return to school. The course would not be for publicity, but rather to add structure to the educational experience of women who have made the move to return to school. The functions of the all-day program would be to

1. Discuss educational opportunities available at Santa Fe, including specific course offerings.
2. Discuss facts about the capabilities of mature women and how they generally do academically.
3. Discuss problems of mature women which they face in returning to school and how other women have solved these problems.
4. Describe employment opportunities which are available for women in this community and what education they may need to qualify, like "Campus Day for Women" in Oregon, (Mitchell, 1967).

This all-day program could also incorporate a broader look at women and their role in society. It could thus serve a second function of building up a spirit of kinship and enthusiasm among the women involved.

The special class for mature women would include all of these purposes while going into more detail with the women about their particular abilities, interests, and questions. This course might be patterned after the course Orange Coast College in California offered, (Hiltunen, 1968). It would not only deal with anxiety and questions these women face when returning to school or work, but would also give them some structure for making the adjustment to school or work. A special section of BE 100 might be one way of setting up this class for mature women within the framework of Santa Fe. This approach has the drawback of limiting the student contact available through the BE experience to only other mature women.

The response of many of the women who returned questionnaires to Santa Fe was positive. One woman commented, "Attending Santa Fe has been an exciting, stimulating experience." Another said, "This has been a challenge at my age, but I've enjoyed it." Perhaps individual women who are having a good experience at Santa Fe are the best means of publicizing the value of returning to school.

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A P P E N D I C E S

SANTA FE JUNIOR COLLEGE
723 West University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Participating Counties
Alachua-Bradford

December 5, 1970

Dear

You are one of a group of several hundred Santa Fe students who are women twenty-five years of age or older. We would like to improve the services and programs of Santa Fe Junior College to better meet your particular needs and interests. To do this, we need your help.

Enclosed with this letter is a questionnaire which will give us a start in this direction. We would greatly appreciate the time and consideration necessary for you to fill out the questionnaire and return it in the stamped envelope as soon as possible. Your responses are confidential. Please be as frank as you can and add any comments you wish to add at the end of the questionnaire.

Again, thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Ruby Beal, Associate Vice President
for Student Affairs
Santa Fe Junior College

Judy Aanstad, Graduate Student
Counselor Education
University of Florida

If you have a major field or a specific vocational program, please specify below. Otherwise skip to the next question.

13. My major field or specific vocational area is _____.
14. As a result of returning to school, I have problems at home with: (Please check any problems that apply to you. If one is most important, please star it.)
- A. No problems
 - B. Lack of time for household duties
 - C. Not enough time to be with my family
 - D. Opposition from relatives
 - E. Childcare while at school
 - F. Being too tired from the extra work
 - G. Other (Please specify) _____
15. In my relationships with other students: (Choose one)
- A. As expected, I find myself well accepted
 - B. I was surprised to find myself so well accepted
 - C. Other students are friendly, but I am not a part of younger groups
 - D. Other students are not friendly
 - E. I have no time for pursuing relationships with other students
 - G. Other (Please specify) _____
16. I found BE 100 to be: (Choose one)
- A. I have not taken it yet
 - B. More significant in my personal growth than other classes
 - C. One of many helpful classes
 - D. Not very helpful to me personally because _____
 - E. Other (Please specify) _____
17. Activities outside of the classroom at Santa Fe: (Choose one)
- A. Are basically unimportant to me because of other demands on my time.
 - B. Offer me the type of involvement with other students and activities that I enjoy.
 - C. Offer me the type of involvement with activities that I enjoy, but fail to offer me as much social contact with other students in my age group as I would like.
 - D. Offer me social contacts that I like, but not the right activities.
 - E. Fail to offer the social contacts or activities I like.
 - F. Other (Please specify) _____
18. Before beginning at Santa Fe: (Choose one)
- A. I was excited and confident in my ability to adjust well to both the academic requirements and social environment at Santa Fe
 - B. Although I was fairly confident that I could handle the homework I worried about fitting into the college setting as a whole

18. (Continued)

- C. I didn't worry much about how I would fit into the college setting, but I was concerned about how I would do academically
- D. I was really concerned about my adjustment to Santa Fe, both socially and academically

19. At the present time: (Choose one)

- A. I feel comfortable both socially and academically at Santa Fe
- B. I feel comfortable in the college environment, but am concerned about my classwork and grades
- C. I feel that I'm doing all right with my classwork, but am still not at ease in the college environment
- D. I'm really concerned about both not feeling comfortable at Santa Fe and not doing as well academically as I would like

20. I have a family member or relative associated with Santa Fe: (Check those answers which apply.)

- A. On the staff
- B. As a student
- C. As a teacher
- D. I have no relatives associated with Santa Fe, but did have one or more close friends associated with Santa Fe before I began classes.
- E. I have no relatives associated with Santa Fe and had no close friends associated with the college before I began classes here.

21. At the present time I would recommend Santa Fe because: (Check those answers which apply. If one answer stands out as most important, star it.)

- A. Faculty and staff are interested in me
- B. Help and assistance are available when needed
- C. It is near the university
- D. The grading system helps me
- E. The college treats me like a person
- F. The college atmosphere is informal
- G. Other (Please specify) _____

22. At the present time I would not recommend Santa Fe because: (Check those answers which apply. If one answer stands out as most important, star it.)

- A. Too few student activities exist
- B. Faculty and staff are not interested in me
- C. Programs and course offerings are too limited
- D. The grading system gives me problems
- E. The courses are too "Mickey Mouse"
- F. It does not seem like college
- G. It is too difficult
- H. Other (Please specify) _____
- I. None of these apply

23. Within the Office of Student Affairs there are a number of specific student services offered. Please place a "1" beside any service with which you are familiar or a "2" if you have used the service. Otherwise place a "3" in the space provided.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Academic Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Personal Counseling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. Career Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> F. Financial Aid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. Job Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> G. Student Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. Specific course advisement | |

24. If I could suggest some way Santa Fe could be of more service to me, I would like _____
- _____
- _____

25. The thing I like most about Santa Fe is _____
- _____
- _____

26. If I could point to one factor that made the difference in whether I began classes at Santa Fe or not, that factor would be _____
- _____
- _____

Thank-you for your help in completing this questionnaire. If you have any additional comments about Santa Fe or reactions to this questionnaire. Write them below. Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed stamped envelope as soon as possible.

1. Age of Respondents

25-29	66	34%
30-34	45	23%
35-39	32	17%
40-44	16	8%
45-49	18	9%
50-54	9	5%
55-59	4	2%
60-64	2	1%
	<u>192</u>	<u>99%</u>

2. Marital Status

Married	140	71%
Divorced	26	13%
Separated	7	4%
Single, never married	13	7%
Widowed	10	5%
	<u>196</u>	<u>99%</u>

3. Number of Children

none	32	16%
one	29	15%
two	62	32%
three	35	18%
four	20	10%
five	11	6%
six	5	3%
seven	2	1%
	<u>196</u>	<u>101%</u>

4. Pre-school children indicated by respondents

one	35	18%
two	11	6%
three	1	.5%
four	0	
five	0	
six	1	.5%
none or blank	148	76%
	<u>196</u>	<u>101%</u>

5. Race

white	159	82%
black	35	18%
oriental	0	0%
other	1	.5%
	<u>196</u>	<u>100.5%</u>

6. Attendance at Santa Fe (full-time is 9 hours or more)

Part-time in the day	18	9%
Part-time at night	74	38%
Full-time in the day	81	42%
Full-time at night	8	4%
Combination	<u>13</u>	<u>7%</u>
	194	100%

7a. Number of quarters of attendance at Santa Fe

one	25	16%
two	36	23%
three	30	19%
four	15	10%
five	15	10%
six	6	4%
seven	10	6%
eight	10	6%
nine	5	3%
ten	2	1%
eleven	2	1%
twelve	<u>1</u>	<u>.5%</u>
	157	99.5%

7b. Credits taken this quarter

0	8	5%
1-3	42	24%
4-6	35	20%
7-9	40	22%
10-12	41	23%
13-18	<u>13</u>	<u>7%</u>
	179	101%

7c. Quarter hours completed at Santa Fe by respondents

0-0	56	28%
10-19	40	20%
20-29	24	12%
30-39	14	7%
40-49	15	8%
50-59	14	7%
60-69	15	8%
over 69	5	3%
no answer	<u>15</u>	<u>8%</u>
	198	101%

8a. Work status of respondents, while attending school

not working	78	41%
working	<u>113</u>	<u>59%</u>
	191	100%

8b. Hours of work/week

0-9	2	2%
10-19	15	13%
20-29	14	13%
30-39	8	7%
40-49	68	61%
50 or more	<u>5</u>	<u>5%</u>
	112	101%

9. First six months after leaving high school

Attended college	46	23%
Got married	40	21%
Worked	92	47%
Attended a specialized school such as nursing or business	36	18%
Other	<u>12</u>	<u>6%</u>
	195	115%*

10. Number planning, at time of leaving high school, to continue education

Yes	140	71%
No	<u>56</u>	<u>29%</u>
	196	100%

11. Main reason for attending Santa Fe at the present time

To prepare for employment or a career for which a degree is not required	15	8%
To get a degree	127	65%
Personal satisfaction	69	35%
To finish training begun earlier	14	7%
To contribute to mankind	26	13%
Other	<u>27</u>	<u>14%</u>
	196	142%

12. Number taking courses

Leading to a two-year A.A. degree and immediate employment	37	19%
Leading to the A.A. degree for transfer to a senior college	116	59%

*Respondents may answer more than once

12. Number taking courses (continued)

Leading to employment, but not to an A.A. degree	8	4%
Leading to the A.A. degree with no specific employment plans in mind	12	6%
Without any specific plans in mind	19	10%
Specified other answers	<u>4</u>	<u>2%</u>
	196	100%

13. Occupational goals

Nursing	37	28%
Teaching	25	18%
Special Education	5	4%
Early Childhood	4	3%
Business	10	7%
Psychology	5	4%
Counseling	4	3%
Radiological technol- ogist	3	2%
Teacher's aide	3	2%
Art	3	2%
21 Other occupations	<u>33</u>	<u>25%</u>
	132	98%

14. Problems at home as a result of returning to school

No problems	76	40%
Lack of time for house - hold duties	67	36%
Not enough time to be with my family	46	25%
Opposition from relatives	5	3%
Childcare while at school	33	18%
Being too tired from the extra work	28	15%
Other	<u>24</u>	<u>13%</u>
	188	150%*

*Respondents may answer more than once.

15. Relationships with other students		
As expected, I find myself well accepted	56	30%
I was surprised to find myself so well accepted	52	28%
Other students are friendly, but I am not a part of younger groups	30	16%
Other students are not friendly	0	0%
I have no time for pursuing relationships with other students	23	12%
I never thought about it	12	6%
Other	<u>14</u>	<u>7%</u>
	187	99%

16. Attitude toward BE 100		
I have not taken it yet	41	22%
More significant in my personal growth than other classes	44	24%
One of many helpful classes	59	32%
Not very helpful to me personally	27	14%
Other	<u>16</u>	<u>9%</u>
	187	101%

17. Activities outside the classroom at Santa Fe		
Are basically unimportant to me because of other demands on my time	150	80%
Offer me the type of involvement with other students and activities that I enjoy	10	5%
Offer me the type of involvement with activities that I enjoy, but fail to offer me as much social contact with other students in my age group as I would like	7	4%
Offer me social contacts that I like, but not the right activities	3	2%
Fail to offer the social contacts or activities I like	4	2%
Other	<u>14</u>	<u>7%</u>
	188	100%

18. Before beginning at Santa Fe

I was excited and confident in my ability to adjust well to both the academic requirements and social environment of Santa Fe	48	25%
Although I was fairly confident that I could handle the homework I worried about fitting into the college setting as a whole	21	11%
I didn't worry much about how I would fit into the college setting, but I was concerned about how I would do academically	90	47%
I was really concerned about my adjustment to Santa Fe, both socially and academically	<u>30</u>	<u>16%</u>
	190	99%

19. At the present time

I feel comfortable both socially and academically at Santa Fe	145	76%
I feel comfortable in the college environment, but am concerned about my classwork and grades	26	14%
I feel that I'm doing all right with my classwork, but am still not at ease in the college environment	13	7%
I'm really concerned about both not feeling comfortable at Santa Fe and not doing as well academically as I would like	<u>7</u>	<u>4%</u>
	192	101%

20. I have a family member or relative associated with Santa Fe

On the staff	6	3%
As a student	36	19%
As a teacher	4	2%
I have no relatives associated with Santa Fe, but did have one or more close friends associated with Santa Fe before I began classes	41	21%
I have no relatives associated with Santa Fe and had no close friends associated with the college before I began classes here	<u>107</u>	<u>55%</u>
	193	100%

21. At the present time I would recommend Santa Fe because

Faculty and staff are interested in me	114	59%
Help and assistance are available when needed	129	67%
It is near the university	37	19%
The grading system helps me	46	24%
The college treats me like a person	85	44%
The college atmosphere is informal	123	64%
Other	26	14%
	<u>192</u>	<u>291%*</u>

22. At the present time I would not recommend Santa Fe because

Too few student activities exist	3	2%
Faculty and staff are not interested in me	1	.5%
Programs and course offerings are too limited	11	6%
The grading system gives me problems	0	0%
The courses are too "Mickey Mouse"	8	4%
It does not seem like college	3	2%
It is too difficult	0	0%
Other	13	7%
None of these apply	161	84%
	<u>193</u>	<u>105.5%*</u>

24. If I could suggest some way Santa Fe could be of more service to me, I would like

a. Changes in class logistics: additional courses, more classes at specific locations, more convenient class times and locations	45	42%
b. Improved personnel services: counselors better informed, special help for older women, vocational counseling more available, better communication with counselors	19	18%
c. Better facilities and employees: guards in parking lot, better parking arrangements, quiet place to study and eat, more courteous employees	12	11%

*Respondents may answer more than once.

24. If I could suggest some way Santa Fe could be of more service to me, I would like (continued)

d. Improvements in financial assistance: student aid and jobs distributed more fairly, more aid available, scholarships for mature women	9	8%
e. Improvements in registration	8	7%
f. Babysitting and child care services made available	6	6%
g. More structure in class, better teachers, more difficult class work	4	4%
h. Extra help with school work: tutoring and background preparation	3	3%
i. Easier transfer arrangements to University	1	1%
j. More personal classes	1	1%
	<u>108</u>	<u>101%</u>

Ninety left question blank or indicated "nothing."

25. The thing I like most about Santa Fe is

a. Personal qualities of teachers: willingness to help, flexibility, patience, interest in own field, student-teacher relations	71	45%
b. Social atmosphere: Acceptance of individual, informal atmosphere, people at Santa Fe, contact with other student	47	30%
c. Academic atmosphere: grading system, flexible class requirements and structure	18	12%
d. Class logistics: variety, availability, size, time, structure	16	10%
e. Chance to do "own" thing	10	6%
f. Specific teachers and classes	7	5%
g. Good location	7	5%
h. Chance to improve self and learn	5	3%
i. Low tuition and opportunity to learn	4	3%
j. Learning labs	2	1%
k. Quarter system	2	1%
l. Fits community	1	.5%
Forty-one left question blank.	<u>157</u>	<u>121.5%*</u>

*Some respondents mentioned more than one thing.

26. If I could point to one factor that made the difference in whether I began classes at Santa Fe or not, that factor would be

a. Convenient location	20	18%
b. Financial feasibility and special arrangements at job	16	14%
c. Class logistics: night classes, good times, small classes	14	12%
d. Specific courses or job needs	11	10%
e. Acceptance by family and friends, more free time	11	10%
f. Easy admission procedures, open-door policy	10	9%
g. Initial friendliness and helpfulness at Santa Fe	9	8%
h. Academic atmosphere: small classes, individual attention, grading system, good instructor-student relations	7	6%
i. Social atmosphere: informality, acceptance, orientation toward students	7	6%
j. Personal desire: strong motivation to complete education, to improve self, to keep up with husband	5	4%
k. Child care available	4	4%
l. Good connections with University	3	3%
m. Recommendation of other students, Santa Fe materials, experience in non-credit courses	2	2%
n. Needed financial security	<u>2</u>	<u>2%</u>
	113	108%*

Eighty-five respondents left question blank or answered "nothing."

*Some respondents mentioned more than one thing.