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THE STUDY OF NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES OFFERED AT WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

by

Natalie Morton

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership

ADVISOR: DR. CHARLES C. WARFIELD

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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Natalie Morton

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Higher continuing education in the United States has always been impacted by many economic changes. In the early 1900s, the U.S. economy was known as the Age of Industry (Dolence & Norris, 1995). It was a time when machines were introduced to increase production (Britannica Student Encyclopedia, 2004; Dolence & Norris, 1995). As an industrialized nation, the U.S.'s success depended upon organizations that hired people to operate tools and machinery to mass-produce goods and products (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Rohfeld, 1990). Compulsory and post-secondary education was not a requirement for gainful employment during the Industrial Age (Rohfeld, 1990). However, higher continuing education was involved in training workers to operate the machines and tools (Rohfeld, 1990).

As technological advancements gradually moved us to a more automated and information-based economy, American business and industry began replacing people with machines and computers (Britannica Student Encyclopedia, 2004; Dolence & Norris, 1995; LaDuke, 2004). The increased use of machines and computers in the 1970s marked the beginning of the Information Age (Britannica Student Encyclopedia, 2004; Dolence & Norris, 1995; LaDuke, 2004). The Information Age is defined as the age in which vast amounts of facts and information are gathered due to the impact of computers and the internet (Britannica Student Encyclopedia, 2004; Dolence &
Norris, 1995; LaDuke, 2004). Government, business, and education leaders knew that a more educated and skilled workforce was needed to continue a strong economy (Boyett & Conn, 1992; Rohfeld, 1990). Workers in the Information Age would be required to learn, apply information, deal with change, and think critically (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Norris & Morrison, 1997). Higher continuing education began redesigning the traditional learning model, which focused from the needs of the institution to a learning model focused on the student needs (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Field & Leicester, 2000; Norris & Morrison, 1997). Consequently, there were more opportunities for working adults to return to education for professional development such as evening and weekend courses, satellite and correspondence distance education courses, and expanded support services (Dauphinais, 1998; Frand, 2000; Ross-Gordon, 1998; Terrell, 1990).

The 21st century economy is moving into the Knowledge Age. The distinction between the Information Age and the Knowledge Age is that in the Knowledge Age, facts and information gathered (Information Age) are formed into a knowledge base from which practice takes place. Thus, medicine, technology, scientific investigation is advanced because of the new knowledge generated (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Drucker, 1994; Field & Leicester, 2000). The Knowledge Age began in the late 1990s and is marked by an economy based on the creation of new knowledge. Knowledge Age workers have to advance beyond the education and skills required for the Information Age workers. They must be proficient in synthesizing through the vast amounts of information and create relevant knowledge from it (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Field & Leicester, 2000). Knowledge workers from any profession will require lifelong
learning opportunities to continually build their knowledge skills (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Drucker, 1994; Schlender, 2004; Wagner, 2002). To provide effective lifelong learning opportunities to adult workers in the Knowledge Age, higher continuing education must regularly engage in assessment and evaluation activities. Assessment is the process of gathering data necessary to determine program needs (Cooper & Saunders, 2000). Evaluation is the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object’s value, quality, utility, effectiveness, or significance in relation to those criteria (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Both assessment and evaluation are essential in monitoring effectiveness in providing student support services and student centered learning environments such as asynchronous learning, online distance education, simulated learning (Douglas, 1999; Hill, 1999; Nuckles, 1999; Olcott, 1996; Brookfield, 1986; Evers, Rush & Berdrow; 1998; Cooper & Saunders, 2000).

Climate of Higher Continuing Education

As stated, professional development and skills training became increasingly important as the United States progressed from an industrial-based economy to an information-based economy (Dolence & Norris, 1995). The need for training and development sparked new and lucrative business opportunities for corporate universities and for-profit colleges and universities that include Primerica Financial Services (PFS University); Motorola (Motorola University); McDonald’s (Hamburger University); Federal Express (Federal Express Leadership Institute); and University of Phoenix, Kaplan College (Field & Leicester, 2000). Thus, there is increased
competition between the for-profit institutions of learning and the traditional non-profit colleges and universities.

For-profit institutions attract professional working adults by touting the convenience and accessibility of courses and services to complete programs within a specified time frame (Field & Leicester, 2000). Professional adults are identified as nontraditional students in academia. Nontraditional students are typically 23 years old and older who return to college after a significant break in their education (Malloch & Montgomery, 1996). These students usually return to education while working full-time to earn an advanced degree and to upgrade skills that will advance their careers (Aslanian, 2001; Fischer Zellers, 2003; UCEA, 2002a). Traditional students are defined as students between the ages of 18 and 22 years old who enter higher education right after graduating from high school. These students attend college full-time while being financially supported by their parents (Aslanian, 2001; Bean & Metzner, 1985).

Potential nontraditional students for nonprofit colleges and universities are professional adults who may receive customized training from their employer in either a face-to-face workshop or individually via the web. In large corporations, potential nontraditional students may attend the company’s university (UCEA, 2002c). Corporate universities offer professional development opportunities to employees during their workdays or online at their convenience at the expense of the employer. For many organizations, professional development and training is a part of their goal statement (Field & Leicester, 2000). Motorola is one such example. The goal of Motorola is to instill their entire chain with an understanding of the company’s
quality vision and inspire a passion to continuously learn. Motorola also wants learning to happen as part of each employee’s job, at a computer workstation, working with a team of suppliers, in customer forums, or individually via a self-paced workbook or audio/videotape (Field & Leicester, 2000; Kohl, 1998).

Statistics indicate that nonprofit public and private colleges and universities are no longer the primary providers of professional continuing education and training programs for corporations (UCEA, 2002c). Although nonprofit public and private higher education institutions have expertise in conducting research, teaching theory courses and developing curricula, many of these institutions have not tailored their courses, programs, and services to the nontraditional students (Colgan & Weidemann, 1996; Tierney, 1998). Often times, traditional higher education institutions do not offer appropriate programming for the nontraditional students who may require courses in the evenings, weekends, or online (Dolly, 1995; Kohl, 1998; UCEA, 2002a). Nontraditional students also need the convenience of student services such as course registration and academic advising after standard business office hours (Dauphinais, 1998). Nontraditional students also want to take courses that provide them with relevant and practical information that can be readily applied to work (Cross, 1981; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). For-profit institutions, like Sylvan Learning Systems Inc., offer online graduate degree programs to teachers. These for-profit schools are listening to their customers (nontraditional students) by providing courses through appropriate mediums, along with a student-friendly approach (Blumenstyk, 2003). Hence, traditional nonprofit colleges and universities must be student-focused institutions, providing effective programming and support.
services to nontraditional students to compete with the nonprofit higher education institutions and corporate universities (Matkin, 1998).

**Higher Continuing Education Students of Today**

Therefore, the mission of continuing education at higher education institutions is becoming more critical and challenging as it faces the task of making education and training opportunities more accessible and attractive to a demographically diverse population of students (Hrabowski, 2003; Rohfeld, 1996). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported the total higher education enrollment in the U.S. at 15.6 million students in 2002. The NCES projects that the enrollment of full-time students will increase 16 percent from 9.2 million to 10.9 million between 2002 and 2012. Part-time enrollments are expected to increase nine percent from 6.3 million to 6.9 million over the same time-period. Interestingly, a study published in *The Condition of Education* (2002) reports 73 percent of traditional undergraduate college students in some way fit the profile of a nontraditional student. The study characterizes a traditional student as one who graduates with a high school diploma, immediately enrolls into college after completing high school, depends financially on his/her parents, and either does not work during the academic year or works few part-time hours. The economy, unemployment, and rising tuition rates are largely responsible for fewer numbers of traditional students in college (NCES, 2002; Schuetze & Slowey, 2000).

Women 30 years old and up are the largest demographic group of part-time students in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The second
largest group is women under 30 years, followed by men under 30 years. Men 30 years and older are predicted to have the smallest growth pattern over the next ten years (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). In general, college students are also becoming more ethnically diverse each year. Minorities were 15 percent of the total college student enrollment in 1976 compared to 28 percent in 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Increases were experienced in the three largest minority groups from 1976 to 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Blacks increased from nine percent to 11 percent, Hispanic students increased from four percent to 10 percent, and Asian or Pacific Islander students increased from two percent to six percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The aforementioned national enrollment statistics show that higher education students are looking more nontraditional and diverse. Hence, to attract and retain nontraditional students, recent adult development studies suggest higher education should focus on socio-cultural issues such as race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (Clark & Caffarella, 1999; Field & Leicester, 2000). Socio-cultural issues are critical in serving current college students. A qualitative study by Jovita Ross-Gordon (1998) reported many African American and Hispanic nontraditional students reflected the same concerns and perceived needs as reported by non-minority nontraditional students. Common perceived needs of nontraditional students include opportunities to incorporate their past experiences into course discussions, providing convenient support services, flexible course schedules, and tuition financing programs (Cross, 1981; Knowles et al., 1998; Ross-Gordon, 1998). However, in the study African American and Hispanic nontraditional students also had some unique concerns and needs. Some of these unique concerns and
needs were for faculty to have a greater understanding of cultural backgrounds, more inclusion of ethnic groups in the curriculum, inclusion on campus and in classrooms, and the desire to see more ethnic diversity among students, faculty, and staff (Ross-Gordon, 1998).

It is sometimes difficult for minority students to integrate into a learning environment with values, beliefs, and norms that are from a different ethnic and cultural base (Bierema, 2002; Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Field & Leicester, 2000). These students, many times, endure invisibility in their classes by being ignored or overlooked by instructors and classmates (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Ross-Gordon, 1998, 1999). They also may experience ultra-visibility in their classes by being called on more frequently by instructors or used as an example or expert in class discussions that involve racial or cultural issues (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Ross-Gordon, 1998, 1999). Minority students may perceive that their instructors hold lower expectations for them than for students of European descent, thereby creating a disparity in the extent to which information is explained (Johnson-Bailey & Tisdell, 1998; Ross-Gordon, 1998). Minority students may have to deal with being stereotyped as being less intelligent or gang members (Godina & McCoy, 2000; Ross-Gordon, 1998). Finally, minority students may experience hostility and abuse from faculty, staff, and students in the way of subtle and overt comments and being excluded from activities and information (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999). To be successful, studies indicate minority students have learned to navigate between multiple cultural environments (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Godina & McCoy, 2000; Ziegahn, 2001). This is a
routine practice of people from minority cultures to adjust to the dominant culture (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Godina & McCoy, 2000; Ziegahn, 2001).

Educators and students from European descent also referred to as Euroethnic groups are typically unaware of the need for multicultural educational environments because they have only experienced learning environments based on their own cultural norms (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Ziegahn, 2001). Most often their experience has been being part of the majority group in the classroom setting. As part of the majority culture, Euroethnic people are accustomed to settings where they see people who look and act like them (O’Byrne, 2003). For instance, when Euroethnic students are in a setting, such as in a classroom, and a multicultural environment is created by using learning and communication styles that differ from those of the dominant culture, some Euroethnic individuals are resistant (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999). However, as Euroethnic individuals are exposed more often to multicultural environments, they also learn to negotiate between different cultural norms just as ethnically diverse individuals do (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; Ziegahn, 2001). Learning is enhanced when students of all cultures change their underlying beliefs of different cultures, accept new ways of communicating, and incorporate different learning styles (Chávez & Guido-DeBrito, 1999; O’Byrne, 2003; Ziegahn, 2001).

Gender is another important socio-cultural issue that affects the success of nontraditional students in higher education (Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Field & Leicester, 2000). There are more women enrolled in higher education and continued growth is expected in the upcoming years (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Previous research primarily studied male subjects when studying adult development.
in education (Hansman, 1998; Tisdell, 1993). Traditionally, White males who went to college typically came from affluent families and majored in the fields of science or engineering as full-time students (Schuetze & Slowey, 2000; Tisdell, 1993). Studies indicate that men are primarily independent learners who are oriented toward mastery of information presented in a logical and rational manner (Ross-Gordon, 1999; Tisdell, 1993).

In the last ten years, adult development researchers began looking at the implications of gender and the success of nontraditional students. Studies indicate women and men develop differently and therefore have different needs (Bierema, 2002; Ross-Gordon, 1999). Women are typically relational in nature. Women are inclined to learn more in an environment that embraces collaboration, interdependence, and connectivity between theoretical concepts and real life experiences (Ross-Gordon, 1999; Tisdell, 1993). Women are underrepresented in the hard sciences fields. However, women now make up the majority of part-time college enrollments. Unlike men, women most often have to balance family and employment obligations while taking courses. Thus, there is a need for educators in higher continuing education to offer relevant programs with curricula that aptly represent diversity, and effective services that support and engage both male and female students in the learning process (Hansman, 1998; Ross-Gordon, 1999; Schuetze & Slowey, 2000; Tisdell, 1993).

Just as socio-cultural issues are priority focus areas for the success of higher continuing education in servicing nontraditional students, so are academic support services for this student population. Most nontraditional students are most interested in the logistical ease and administrative efficiency such as course registration and
academic advising (Aslanian, 2001; Schuetze & Slowey, 2000). Nontraditional students are increasingly viewing higher education with the same consumer expectations that they have for other commercial businesses. These students desire higher education institutions to have simple procedures, good service, quality courses, and low costs (Aslanian, 2001).

Technology and distance education are needed to provide flexibility to nontraditional students as the demographic profile of students change (Aslanian, 2001; Flint & Frey, 2003). Information technology has made education more accessible to nontraditional students who do not have geographical access to a campus by providing access to registration for courses, paying tuition, and using library services online (Flint & Frey, 2003). Distance education courses also give nontraditional students access to education. During the 1999-2000 academic year, the U.S. Department of Education released statistics that showed that almost 10 percent of students (24 years old and up) took distance education courses. The majority of these distance education students were women (Carnevale, 2002). Statistics indicate that nontraditional students are attracted to distance education courses because of convenience (Aslanian, 2001). Many students report they prefer face-to-face course instruction; however, they will take a distance education course for flexibility and convenience (Aslanian, 2001; Carnevale & Olsen, 2003; Flint & Frey, 2003).

As demand continues to increase for distance education courses, the challenge for higher continuing education is to offer distance education programming effectively (Aslanian, 2001; Carnevale & Olsen, 2003). A premier distance education model offered from the Open University in the United Kingdom attributes the proficiency of
its model to the following attributes: (1) well-designed multiple media teaching materials; (2) personal academic support to each student; (3) efficient logistics to serve students; and (4) faculty who also conduct research (Daniel, 1998). The attributes of the Open University model can be examined and studied by higher education institutions in the U.S. to see whether a successful distance education model can be replicated here.

The growing numbers of part-time and nontraditional students are encouraging for higher education institutions. However, to attract and keep these growing numbers, higher education needs to provide a flexible, inclusive, and supportive educational environment for all adult women and men (Aslanian, 2001; Chávez & Guido-DíBrito, 1999; Flint & Frey, 2003).

Challenges of Adult Nontraditional Students

As aforementioned, so many college students today have at least one nontraditional characteristic, which means effective programs and services are needed to help nontraditional students succeed (Choy 2002; NCES 2002; Schuetze & Slowey, 2000). However, to provide effective programs and services such as distance education courses and technology enhanced services, a deeper understanding of nontraditional students is necessary. Malcolm Knowles introduced the andragogy model, the art and science of helping adults learn, to the United States (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 1998). The andragogy model distinguishes differences between adults and children in learning settings. Until the introduction of andragogy to adult education in the United States, the pedagogical model, which is the art and science of teaching children, was
the only learning model used in education (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 1998). The core principles of andragogy are as follows: (1) the learner’s need to know, (2) the learner’s self concept, (3) the role of the learner’s experiences, (4) the learner’s readiness to learn, (5) the learner’s orientation to learning, and (6) the learner’s motivation (Knowles et al., 1998). Adults have a need to know why something is necessary to learn. Children will accept whatever the teacher teaches them to pass the class with a good grade. Adults have a self-concept of needing to be in control and responsible for themselves and their decisions. Children depend on the teacher to learn. Adults have experiences that define their lives and affect their learning. The teacher is the voice of experience, as children do not have it to draw upon. Adults enter education ready to learn because they usually attend voluntarily for a purpose. Children are ready to be taught because it is compulsory. Adults have an orientation to learning that is life-centered, task-oriented, or problem-centered. Children’s orientation to learning is subject-centered. Finally, adults are usually internally motivated to learn, whereas children have external factors motivating them to learn, such as parents and grades (Knowles et al., 1998). Principles of the andragogy model are reflected within distance education models like the Open University because distance education students must be self directed, independent learners, and internally motivated to be successful (Aslanian, 2001; Carnevale & Olsen, 2003; Daniel, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003; Knowles et al., 1998). An effective distance education model is one such vehicle from which adult learning can occur.

In addition to understanding how adults learn, administrators of higher continuing education also need to know the characteristics of the adult students to better
serve them. The core principles of adult learning are surrounded by students' individual differences, situational differences, and differences in their goals and purposes of learning (Knowles et al., 1998). K. Patricia Cross (1981) recognized the importance of the above differences between adults and children in her Characteristics of Adult Learners (CAL) model. Adults have particular personal characteristics and situational characteristics that should be recognized by administrators to successfully offer programs such as distance education courses and technology enhanced support services (Aslanian, 2001; Carnevale & Olsen, 2003; Cross, 1981; Daniel, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003). The personal characteristics that describe adult learners include physiological, socio-cultural, and psychological factors (Cross, 1981). The CAL model supports the core principles of the andragogy model (Cross, 1981; Knowles et al., 1998). An in-depth understanding of adult learning models can equip higher continuing education administrators to effectively provide a conducive learning environment that extends beyond the classroom environment (Brookfield, 1984; Cross, 1981; Dolly, 1995; Knowles et al., 1998; MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994; Maehl, 2000).

It is important for higher continuing education administrators to know what attracts nontraditional students to return to a formal learning environment. However, it is also important for these administrators to know what prevents nontraditional students from returning to higher education (Aslanian, 2001; Cross, 1981). Nontraditional students experience barriers that prevent them from positive learning experiences (Aslanian, 2001; Cross, 1981; Dolly, 1995; Kim, 2002; Rohfeld, 1996). Nontraditional students need assistance from higher education institutions to make learning accessible to them (Aslanian, 2001; Dolly, 1995). There are three dimensions of
barriers that prevent nontraditional students from seeking admission and staying in educational courses/programs—situational barriers, institutional barriers, and dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981; Dolly, 1995). Situational barriers are specific situations in one's life at a given time. A few examples are lack of money, lack of time, lack of child-care, lack of transportation. Institutional barriers are policies and procedures at higher education institutions that exclude or discourage adult nontraditional students from beginning or completing an educational course/program. Dispositional barriers are internal perceptions nontraditional students have of themselves and how these perceptions affect their attitudes and motivations. There is an interactive relationship between the barriers to learning, needs of adult students, and the academic support services of higher education institutions. When the needs of adult students and academic support services of the learning institution align, mutual satisfaction is reached (Dolly, 1995). Nontraditional students experience satisfaction from persisting to complete their educational goals, and higher continuing education achieves its mission of effectively serving this student population (Brookfield, 1984; Cross, 1981; Dolly, 1995; Knowles et al., 1998; MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994; Maehl, 2000).

Nontraditional students may be older adults who never completed a college degree or who completed a college degree earlier in life and have returned to earn an advanced degree or certificate (Aslanian, 2001; Dychtwald, 2003). These students desire to accomplish educational goals. Evening and weekend classes should be available for students working during the week in the mornings and afternoons (Dolly, 1995; Wlodkowski, 2003). Online classes are another option for these students (Carnevale & Olsen, 2003; Carr, 2000). Student affairs offices such as financial aid,
bursar, advising and counseling services need extended hours and online access (Dauphinais, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003). Adults who are parents may need child-care services (Ross-Gordon, 1998). Academic advising and psychological counseling services are also critical support areas to returning students (Ayers-Hilliard, 1999; MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994; Malloch & Montgomery, 1996). Higher education institutions must embrace the growing nontraditional student population. One way for higher learning institutions to embrace nontraditional students is for the institutions to regularly assess and evaluate their academic support services (Aslanian, 2001; Dolly, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

This study will address the lack of academic assessment and evaluation and their impact on academic support services in higher continuing education. Assessment and evaluation are a part of a pantheon of practices that can inform in the delivery of better academic support services. Failure to regularly engage in assessment and evaluation leaves higher continuing education administrators uninformed about who their students are and whether they provide them with relevant and effective programs and services. For instance, administrators are unable to specify the nontraditional student characteristics and demographics of their students. Administrators will not know the learning and support needs to provide their students. They will not be sensitive to diversity issues relating to ethnicity and gender. Finally, they will not know the appropriate academic support services to provide for their students, which include technology enhanced services, flexible scheduling, and distance education. In this
contemporary climate in which institutions of higher learning are facing enrollment challenges, it will be critical to address the needs of students and how institutions can address those critical needs.

Background information related to this study dates back to research that was conducted in 1995, which assessed the student service and academic support needs of students attending Campus III/Weekend College at Western Michigan University. The Office of Campus III/Weekend College was responsible for offering academic courses on weekends that led to a general baccalaureate degree, two graduate degrees, and three graduate certificates. There was a variety of course delivery formats available from Friday to Sunday for students to take a part-time course load. The Campus III/Weekend College study identified the students most interested in attending courses held on weekends. The study also identified the academic and student support services which were classified as most important to least important by the students. These desired services aligned with the demographics gathered from the students. Over half of the study’s respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54 years with the majority employed while taking courses. Sixty-eight percent of the 120 students surveyed were female. Descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed these students placed greater emphasis on accessible parking, availability of courses, availability of telephone course registration, flexible course scheduling, and adequate library services. University health care and child care were services deemed not important by the surveyed Weekend College students (Dolly, 1995). These findings were specific for the institution studied. The study provided the institution the opportunity to create data driven policy changes within the Weekend College unit.
However, the implications for higher continuing education institutions, in general, were the importance of regular assessment of student services to better serve the nontraditional students.

Years have passed since the Western Michigan University Campus III/Weekend College study was conducted in 1995. The next formal assessment activity conducted by Continuing Education was in 2002. However, within that relatively short period, dramatic changes have occurred at Western Michigan University and within United States higher education in general. The number of students completing programs while being employed full-time and part-time continues to increase, making it necessary for more courses to be offered during weekday evenings as well as on weekends. In fact, the weekend course delivery format at WMU was so popular with adult students by the mid-nineties that weekend courses could no longer be confined to just one unit. Campus III/Weekend College was disbanded in 1996 and weekend courses became available at all of the University’s branch campus locations. The researcher, being the new Campus III/Weekend College Director, was involved in changing the name of the unit and re-directing its focus. The unit’s focus expanded to offer evening courses during the week and summer two-week intensive courses along with weekend courses. These changes were proposed to the Dean based on the recommendations from Dr. Dolly’s study (Dolly, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived level of satisfaction in the delivery of academic support services for nontraditional students at nonprofit
colleges and universities with the objective of recruitment and retention. This study will sample nontraditional students who attended Western Michigan University branch campuses in the year 2002. This study will be similar to the Campus III/Weekend College study conducted in 1995. However, this study will examine the perceived satisfaction level of part-time graduate and undergraduate nontraditional students from six WMU branch campuses, which includes a larger geographical area. The nontraditional student population takes courses in the evenings, on weekends, and using distance education mediums.

The study will also examine whether changes have occurred in the demographics and characteristics of the nontraditional students since the study conducted in 1995. The intent of this study is to provide an effective checkup for Western Michigan University on its services to nontraditional students and validate the use of the survey instrument as an assessment tool in the future. Finally, the intent of the researcher is for this study to be a useful model for comparable higher education institutions to use in examining their effectiveness and appropriateness in providing academic support services to nontraditional students who will impact the workforce of the new millennium.

Research Questions

1) How has higher continuing education at Western Michigan University made an impact on the development of a skilled workforce?
2) What are the demographics and characteristics of Western Michigan University nontraditional students? Have the demographics and characteristics changed for this population of students?

3) What student academic support services have Western Michigan University nontraditional students attending evening and weekend courses perceived as being satisfied or needed in the year 2002 as compared to the year 1995?

4) What institutional barriers are significant to nontraditional students in the year 2002?

**Definition of Terms**

**Higher Continuing Education**: Educational programs targeted to adult, part-time students at four-year institutions.

**Age of Industry (Industrial Age)**: The economic time period from the early 1900s through the 1960s when machines were used to increase the production of goods and services.

**Information Age**: The economic period beginning in the 1970s through the early 1990s. There was an increase in the use of machines in business and industry. Computers were also introduced as a means of storing volumes of information (Dolence & Norris, 1995).

**Knowledge Age**: The economic period when facts and information are formed into a knowledge base from which practice takes place.
For-profit Institutions: Colleges and universities that are privately owned by an individual or stockholders. These institutions operate to generate a profit like other businesses in corporate America. They do not depend on state or federal funding.

Nontraditional Students: As defined by Malloch and Montgomery (1996), these students are typically 23 years old or older who return to college after a significant break (more than a year after high school graduation) in their education.

Traditional Students: Students between the ages of 18 and 22 years old who enter college the semester after graduating from high school. These students attend college full-time and are fully dependent on their parents for financial support.

Nonprofit Colleges/Universities: Colleges and universities that have nonprofit status by the federal government.

Public Nonprofit Colleges/Universities: Institutions that have the nonprofit status and receive state and federal government funding to operate.

Private Nonprofit Colleges/Universities: Institutions that have the nonprofit status and are privately owned. They do not receive state and federal government funding to operate.

Corporate Universities: Professional development and training units at corporations offered to their employees. Some training may be connected to academic credit.

Support Services (Academic/Student): Services provided by colleges and universities for students which may include course registration, admissions, financial aid, academic advising, counseling, child care, library services, bookstore, computer services, etc.
**Socio-cultural:** Issues that deal with race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

**Euroethnic:** People who are of European descent.

**Andragogy:** An adult development model introduced in the U.S. by Malcolm Knowles (1978). The literal meaning is the art and science of helping adults learn.

**Pedagogical Model (Pedagogy):** The art and science of teaching children.

**Characteristics of Adult Learners (CAL):** A model by K. Patricia Cross (1981) that describes the physiological, socio-cultural, and psychological characteristics of adult learners.

**Barriers:** Hindrances and challenges adult students face when they return to higher education.

**Situational Barriers:** Specific life situations adults encounter such as marriage, births, death, unemployment, lack of money, time, childcare and transportation.

**Institutional Barriers:** Policies, procedures, and services enacted by colleges and universities that create challenges for nontraditional students.

**Dispositional Barriers:** The internal perceptions nontraditional students impose on themselves that create challenges such as low self-esteem and fear.

**Lyceums:** Public lectures and concerts.

**Morrill Land Grant Act:** An Act named after Senator Justin Morrill and passed in 1862 which granted public land to states to support their land grant colleges.
Land Grant Colleges: Public nonprofit colleges established to provide vocational degree programs, (i.e., agriculture) and traditional academic programming, (i.e., liberal arts).

Wisconsin Idea: A state funded collaboration initiative of offering short courses in agriculture and business taught by University of Wisconsin faculty to people from the state of Wisconsin to foster a dialogue between them in order to solve problems and to advance industry and commerce of the state.

Chautauqua Movement: An initiative to provide public service education by offering lyceums and institutes to provide for lifelong learning opportunities that later expanded into academic degree program offerings.

Third-age Students: Students who are at or very near retirement age who return to higher education.

Baby Boom Generation: People born within the years 1946 and 1964.

New-nontraditional Students: Students who are between the ages of 18 and 22 years old who attend college part-time and need academic support services like non-traditional students however they lack life experience.

Graduate Students: Students who have earned a bachelor’s degree and are enrolled in a Master’s or doctoral degree program.

Generation X: People born between the years 1965 and 1976.

Geographical Access: Strategically located offices/buildings that create opportunities and convenience for students who are place bound.

Logistical Access: Procedures and processes that provide convenience for students.
Financial Access: Financing support and opportunities for students which include low cost, grants and loan programs.

Psychological Access: Internal perception students have of being a college student, which is impacted by support from the college/university community, family, and friends.

Household Income: Combined income of all workers in a household (Quicken).
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of higher education at nonprofit colleges and universities in providing appropriate student academic support services that impact student recruitment and retention to ultimately produce a skilled workforce. The review of current and relevant literature will prepare the foundation for this study. A similar study was conducted in the year 1995 at Western Michigan University. It assessed the special service needs of adult student who attended Weekend College at the University (Dolly, 1995). This study will evaluate the changes that occurred between the years 1995 and 2002.

The review of literature will look at the historical perspective of higher continuing education in servicing nontraditional students. Second, it will examine the role higher continuing education played in the social and political reform efforts of the United States from the early 1800s to the present. Third, nontraditional student characteristics and demographics will be identified. Fourth, the chapter will review theories of adult learning and development and the relevance of the body of knowledge on serving nontraditional students. Fifth, the role of student academic support services for recruitment and retention of nontraditional students will be explored. Finally,
this chapter will explore the futurist research on trends in higher education and the
forecasted impact on higher continuing education enrollments.

Historical Perspective of Higher Continuing Education

The earliest record of continuing education activity was in Europe during the
early 1800s (Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982). The first external degree was
offered through the University of London in 1836 (Strother & Klus, 1982). It is also
documented that faculty from Cambridge University held lectures and courses to men
and women who were not formally attending university but were desirous of con­
tinued learning (Rohfeld, 1990). James Stuart, a Cambridge faculty, was recognized for
developing the English model of extension courses. Stuart’s extension course model
consisted of a printed syllabus, written assignments, lectures, and discussion, which
eventually led Cambridge University to establish the first university extension unit in
1873 with the development of an extramural teaching program (Rohfeld, 1990;
Strother & Klus, 1982).

By the 1870s, the United States adapted continuing education activities from
the European model in the form of mechanics’ institutes and lyceums (popular lec­
tures and concerts) (Rohfeld, 1990). These activities were frequently held at public
libraries. Guest speakers were invited to speak on a variety of topics, such as farming.
They provided the audience with practical information. Primarily, topics were chosen
based on interest from the general public. Public lectures were a strong force behind
the formalization of extension education. For example, Massachusetts Institute of
Technology and Johns Hopkins University both offered evening public lectures as
their continuing education activity from the time they were established. The evening public lectures attracted many adults who were interested in topics ranging from practical to civic issues. The lecture method, however, did not provide in-depth study on a subject. This led to many independent speaker bureaus and independent university extension activities that provided in-depth study courses. In-depth courses were designed with measures and outcomes for course participants. Eventually, the National Society for the Extension of University Teaching was formed in 1890 as an advisory and booking agency (Rohfeld, 1990).

Role of Higher Education in U.S. Social and Political Reform

During the post-Civil War period, university enrollments were steadily decreasing in traditional academic fields of study such as clergy, medicine, and law (Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982). By contrast, vocational careers in mechanics, commerce and agriculture were gaining popularity. University Extensions offered public lectures as a form of entertainment and for learning. Many middle class people attended public lectures and they were becoming more interested in vocational careers (Rohfeld, 1990).

Also during this time period, there was growing discontent and disenfranchisement within the nation caused by the monopoly of power governing major industries as the railroad, banks, and manufacturers of agricultural machinery (Rohfeld, 1990). Eventually, reform efforts, headed by citizen groups, established railroad rate regulations, state owned banks and agricultural machinery. Two examples in the reform efforts that involved higher education extension were the Morrill Land Grant Act and
the Wisconsin Idea (Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982). Representatives for the federal government recognized a need for people to receive formal training/education in subjects categorized under vocational or practical education to further the industrialization of the nation. Urban areas were being established around businesses like the banks and factories that manufactured machinery for mass-producing agricultural products. Hence, there was the formulation and passing of the Morrill Land Grant Act in 1862. The Act was named after Senator Justin Morrill. He was a self-educated farmer from Vermont who understood from personal experience the importance of providing educational opportunities to working class people. The Morrill Act granted public land to states to support their land grant colleges because the federal government saw the need for colleges to offer vocational programming alongside their traditional academic programming (Key, 1996; Parker, Greenbaum, & Pister, 2001; Strother & Klus, 1982). Thus, land grant colleges offered subjects in practical (vocational) education subjects such as agriculture, mechanics, and commerce (Key, 1996; Parker et al., 2001; Strother & Klus, 1982). The number of state representatives and senators was used to determine the distribution of land to the states for the colleges. The new law forced the colleges to include vocational programs as part of their academic programming. Since many of the students in the vocational education programs were mature adults, the courses were offered at times and locations convenient to their schedules (Key, 1996; Parker et al., 2001; Rohfeld, 1990).

The Wisconsin Idea is another example of the involvement of higher continuing education in providing public service to the people. The Wisconsin Idea was an initiative sponsored by the University of Wisconsin under the leadership of Charles Van
Hise and the State of Wisconsin Governor, Robert La Follette, which brought expertise from the university to the community to solve problems and to advance industry and commerce (Ohliger & Fewster, 1975; Portman, 1979; Rohfeld, 1990; Scott, 1999). The state government supported the initiative with funding to offer short courses that gave the university faculty, farmers and business people opportunities to dialogue (Rohfeld, 1990). Initiatives like the Wisconsin Idea were adopted across the nation in an effort to revitalize the view of higher education in America, which suffered after the Civil War. After the Civil War many people were attracted to the vocational-type positions, like business, commerce, and agriculture. These fields did not require a traditional college degree. However, skilled workers were needed to fill the available jobs. The purpose of the Wisconsin Idea was to bring the business and commerce and education together (Rohfeld, 1990). Colleges and universities were initially reluctant to consider vocational programs through their extension units as comparable to their traditional academic programs (Rohfeld, 1990). However, once the government allocated funding to colleges and universities for programs like the Morrill Act, vocational programs were considered worthy of research as traditional academic programs (Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982). The federal and state government recognized how important it was for the colleges and universities to fulfill their mission of public responsibility and service to the American people. Acts like the Morrill Land Grant and Wisconsin Idea further demonstrate the important role higher continuing education played in the development of this country (Ohliger & Fewster, 1975; Portman, 1979; Rohfeld, 1990; Scott, 1999).
Chautauqua Movement

Another notable development in the history of higher continuing education was the Chautauqua movement, which began as a summer camp program in 1874 for Sunday School teachers under the Methodist church (Rohfeld, 1990). The co-founders were Bishop John H. Vincent (superintendent) and Lewis Miller (president). Reverend Vincent was a Methodist theologian and Miller was a wealthy Methodist layman. Neither of them earned a college education. However, they believed in educational opportunities for all people throughout their lifetime. The Chautauqua mission to provide public service education was the beginning of the lifelong learning concept and an expansion of the earlier institutes and lyceums (Axford, 1969; Rohfeld, 1990; Scott, 1999).

The Chautauqua Sunday School summer camp was held in Fair Point, New York. The Sunday School program was modeled after courses for the public school teachers of that day offered at universities. The Sunday School program grew so popular that the program was augmented to offer larger, more complex religious and secular programs. As Chautauqua grew, there were many serious students completing formal programs but a larger number of students attended the popular courses, which consisted of general lectures, music, and other entertainment (Axford, 1969; Rohfeld, 1990; Scott, 1999). By 1879, Chautauqua was active year-round via a nationwide network of discussion groups and four-year cycle reading programs offered through the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (CLSC) (Axford, 1969; Scott, 1999; Strother & Klus, 1982). Chautauqua is recognized for establishing the first summer school and
formal correspondence study program in America. In fact, presidents from many of the outstanding universities (i.e., University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin) were affiliated with Chautauqua and subscribed to the Chautauqua mission (Axford, 1969; Portman, 1979; Scott, 1999).

Throughout the history of higher continuing education, there was little support and recognition from mainstream academia because vocational education and training programs were not considered as important to the academic elite (Portman, 1979; Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982). As mentioned earlier, many college and university administrators did not view continuing education activities as an integral part of the mission of the institution. Work completed by continuing education units was viewed as comparable to auxiliary enterprise departments such as campus bookstores or auditoriums (Rohfeld, 1990). However, there was a change in the perception of continuing education in higher education (Ohliger & Fewster, 1975; Portman, 1979; Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982). The historical review of higher education in America revealed the vital presence of continuing education in providing education and training programs targeted to an adult population not typically associated with academia (Ohliger & Fewster, 1975; Portman, 1979). The vocational programs offered by higher continuing education were for the benefit of advancing the economy in the United States (Ohliger & Fewster, 1975; Portman, 1979; Rohfeld, 1990; Strother & Klus, 1982).
Definition and Characteristics of Adult Students

Throughout the history of higher continuing education in the United States, the targeted student population is described as adult or nontraditional students. Academia defines an adult or nontraditional student differently than our nation’s legal definition of an adult, which is a person at least 18 years old (Aslanian, 2001; Bean & Metzner, 1985). In the United States, an adult student in academia is defined differently than the legal definition of a person being at least 18 years old (Aslanian, 2001; Bean & Metzner, 1985). College students between the ages of 18 and 22, following the traditional path of entering college directly from high school, as full-time status and financially dependent on parents, are commonly referred to as traditional students (Aslanian, 1993; Tinto, 1987). However, post-secondary education uses different terms to describe students who do not fit the traditional student definition. Most common in the literature and on college and university campuses, these “different” students are interchangeably called adults or nontraditional students (Aslanian, 2001; Kim, 2002; Malloch & Montgomery, 1996). The definition of nontraditional students for many post-secondary institutions is derived merely from the age of the student. For example, the operational definition of an adult nontraditional student at the University of Wisconsin is age 22 years or older. Western Michigan University defines its adult nontraditional students as being age 25 years or older. The Office of Adult Learning Services at The College Board also defines adult students as being 25 years or older. This study uses the terminology adult students and nontraditional students interchangeably.
In a study conducted by Malloch and Montgomery (1996) on variations of adult student characteristics, another definition of nontraditional students was used that included a specific adult student characteristic. Nontraditional students were defined as students at least 23 years old who had experienced a break in their education (Malloch & Montgomery, 1996). The most significant aspect of this definition as pointed out by Malloch and Montgomery is the acknowledgment of the student experiencing a break in his/her education (Malloch & Montgomery, 1996). The break in education may have occurred between high school graduation and college entrance for reasons such as being gainfully employed or serving in the military (Malloch & Montgomery, 1996). It is assumed that part-time students are nontraditional students. However, nontraditional students do not necessarily attend college on a part-time basis (Aslanian, 2001; Bean & Metzner, 1985).

In its most recent report, the National Center for Education Statistics defined an undergraduate nontraditional student by seven common characteristics (Choy, 2002). The following descriptors are common characteristics of nontraditional students (Choy, 2002):

1) Students who delay enrollment into a post-secondary institution by at least one calendar year;

2) Students who attend part-time for at least part of the academic year;

3) Students who work full-time (at least 35 hours or more per week) while enrolled;

4) Students who are considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid;
5) Students who have dependents other than a spouse (usually children or sometimes others);

6) Students who are a single parent (either not married or married but separated and have dependents);

7) Students who do not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school).

The above descriptors of nontraditional students are further clarified by placing the student characteristics on a continuum. The continuum of nontraditional student characteristics is used to determine the extent to which students are defined as being nontraditional. Students are considered minimally nontraditional if they possess only one nontraditional characteristic, moderately nontraditional with two or three nontraditional characteristics, and highly nontraditional if they possess more than three nontraditional characteristics (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Choy, 2002).

The U.S. Department of Education published an enrollment report classifying students as nontraditional using the above continuum. The report showed that of the 13 million U.S. undergraduate students only 27 percent of them were traditional in the year 2000. The remaining 73 percent of undergraduate students were in some way nontraditional. The breakdown was 17 percent were minimally nontraditional, 28 percent were moderately nontraditional, and 28 percent were highly nontraditional (Choy, 2002).

Continuing education professionals recognize two sub-groups within the nontraditional student population (DeGabriele, 2001; Malloch & Montgomery, 1996;
Miller Brown, 2000; Novak, 2001). The first sub-group nontraditional student is older adults or third-age students. Third-age students usually return to higher education to begin a new career interest or to take courses for pleasure (Miller Brown, 2000; Novak, 2001). These students are usually financially stable and they are seeking self-fulfillment through continued learning (DeGabriele, 2001; Dychtwald, 2003; Miller Brown, 2000). The third age students of today are baby boomers that were born between the years 1946 and 1964 (Dychtwald, 2003). Unlike previous generations, older adults today are maintaining active and productive lives for up to 30 years beyond retirement (Dychtwald, 2003).

The second sub-group is new-nontraditional students. New-nontraditional students are age 18 to 22 years working and taking less than a full load of courses per semester (DeGabriele, 2001). New-nontraditional students require the same type of flexibility for scheduling classes and access to student services like nontraditional students. The difference between new-nontraditional students and traditional students is their psychological and motivational needs. For instance, many new-nontraditional students are not interested in the socialization into college life that is important to traditional age students (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1987). New-nontraditional students may commute to campus for classes, carry a part-time course load, have family obligations, work to support themselves, and finance their education (DeGabriele, 2001). However, the major distinction between new-nontraditional students and nontraditional students is their lack of life experience such as gainful employment or military service (DeGabriele, 2001).
Malcolm Knowles identified prior life experience as a core assumption of adult learners (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 1998). Adult students have more experience than traditional age students because of their age (Knowles et al., 1998). They also have a different quality of experience than traditional students (Knowles et al., 1998). Thus, the experience of nontraditional students impacts the learning environment in four ways (Knowles et al., 1998). Classrooms filled with nontraditional students have a wider range of individual differences among the students (Knowles et al., 1998). The experience of nontraditional students offers a rich resource to the learning environment (Knowles et al., 1998; Lowman, 1995). However, nontraditional students may also have biases because of prior experiences that prevent new learning. Finally, nontraditional students identify themselves by their experience, which can impact their success in the learning environment (Knowles et al., 1998).

Historically, graduate students have also been grouped with the nontraditional student population because they are experienced students, meaning they have matured psychologically since receiving their bachelor's degree. The majority of graduate students, in the past, attended class full-time directly after completing an undergraduate degree. After graduating, they sought employment in their field of specialization. Today, graduate students look quite different than in years past as the majority of them attend college part-time and are employed full-time while completing graduate degrees and certificates (Aslanian, 1993). Many graduate students choose to work a year or two after completing their bachelor's degree before returning to complete a master's degree or graduate certificate. The Department of Education reported over half of the graduate student population enrollment status as part-time (NCES, 2002).
This example clearly points to a diverse population of college students today (Aslanian, 2001; NCES, 2002; UCEA, 2002c).

The aforementioned definitions for adult or nontraditional students support the use of classifying students by demographics and characteristics (Aslanian, 1993, 2001; Cross, 1981; Dychtwald, 2003; Knowles et al., 1998). Carol Aslanian (1993) gave a poignant example in her article “Back from the Future, Part Two” of a student named Pat, who goes to college part-time in the evening, goes to work part-time in the day, and lives at home with her/his mother. You would not be able to tell whether Pat was a 31-year-old divorcee, an 18-year-old married man, a 47-year-old single woman, or any of the previous.

The demographic and characteristic differences found in today’s college students may be attributed to the cyclic life stage patterns of adults. It is becoming harder to target students based solely on age (Aslanian, 1993, 2001; Choy, 2002; Dychtwald, 2003). Maddy Dychtwald (2003) explored this new phenomenon of cyclic life patterns in her latest work. Traditionally, adult lifespan theory was linear by age: early adulthood (ages 23-35), mid-life transition (ages 35-45), middle adulthood (ages 45-57), late adult transition (ages 57-65), and late adulthood (ages 65 and older) (Sheehy, 1977). Adults followed the strict map of life events: graduation, first job, marriage, first child, empty nest, retirement, widowhood, and death (Sheehy, 1977). Gail Sheehy’s study was built from the work conducted by a renowned human growth and development researcher, Erik Erikson (Sheehy, 1977, 1995). Erik Erikson developed a linear model where each stage of life is based on psychological struggles that shape major aspects of our personalities (Sheehy; 1977, 1995).

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Arthur Chickering and Robert Havighurst (1981) adapted Sheehy’s adult lifespan model specifically to adult students. Adult students who fell within the early adulthood period most often enrolled part-time in a flexible program to accommodate family and home situations with the purpose of fulfilling their career ambitions. The majority of middle adulthood students returned to school to begin a second career. Late adulthood students returned for courses to enrich their lives. Even considering the adaptation of the linear lifespan for adult students, many adult students are not necessarily fitting into the model (Dychtwald, 2003; Evers, 1998; Field & Leicester, 2000; Malloch & Montgomery, 1996).

In her later work, Gail Sheehy (1995) updated her lifespan model to include provisional adulthood (ages 18-30); first adulthood (ages 30-45); and second adulthood (ages 45-85+). Her research concluded that the sequence of life stages has stretched by five to ten years and the sequence of stages has also changed (Sheehy, 1995). Many of these lifespan changes were influenced by the baby boom generation, which significantly impacts the economy and society due to the large number of people born between the years 1946 and 1964. As baby boomers grow older they are challenging the established lifestyle patterns (Dychtwald, 2003). They want to work beyond the established retirement age, stay active in recreational activities, take part in lifelong learning opportunities, and enjoy quality of life (Dychtwald, 2003; Evers, 1998). Advancements in healthcare and technology have made their desires possible (Dychtwald, 2003). Years ago, another well-respected adult development expert, K. Patricia Cross (1981) predicted these phenomena would occur and it should not be a
surprise that economic changes would be directly affected by the baby boom generation.

The younger generations also benefit from the changes in lifestyle patterns. Younger adults do not feel obligated to follow a prescribed lifestyle (Dychtwald, 2003; Florida, 2002). Young people today have access to more information and technology (Choy, 2002; Frand, 2000; NCES, 2001, 2002). They are better educated than past generations (Florida, 2002; NCES, 2002; Schlender, 2004). Young adults want a better quality of life for themselves (Dychtwald, 2003; Florida, 2002). For instance, if considering relocation for a career opportunity, salary and health and retirement benefit packages are not the only top priority. Richard Florida (2002) groups the Generation X adults as part of the creative class. The creative class consists of people who add economic value through their creativity. Creative Class or Generation X young adults do not plan to settle into a career with one company until retirement (Dychtwald, 2003; Florida, 2002). This was the past norm. Generation X adults will probably change careers at least seven times within their lifetime (Dychtwald, 2003; Engebretson, 2004; Florida, 2002; Reynolds, 2004). Because they are selective, they are also looking for autonomy and control of their career destiny (Florida, 2002). For example, many Generation X’ers feel setting their own work hours is a priority; this is one form of autonomy they consider essential when seeking employment (Florida, 2002). Many of these young people are then opting to forgo careers with large corporations to open small businesses in computer technology or service, (i.e., personal grooming salons, consulting) (Florida, 2002). There are many more examples today of people delaying marriage and family commitments, increases in divorce, multiple
career changes, and later retirements. These demographic changes have added to the complexity of providing appropriate programming and support services for students in higher education (Aslanian, 2001; Dychtwald, 2003; Field & Leicester, 2000; Florida, 2002; Levine, 1989; Schuetze & Slowey, 2000; Tierney, 1998).

**Development of Adult Nontraditional Students**

A distinct characteristic of adult students recognized among notable researchers of adult education is the experience these students bring with them to the classroom (Axford, 1969; Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1978; Silling, 1984). The prior experiences that adults have had impacts their learning by creating a wider range of individual differences, providing a rich resource for learning, creating biases that inhibit or shape new learning, and providing foundation for self-identity (Knowles et al., 1998). Unlike traditional age college students (18-22 years old), nontraditional students have a larger frame of reference for life experiences to better understand their course subjects (Knowles et al., 1998). The majority of adult students have clear goals for what they want to achieve by returning to school (Knowles et al., 1998; Lowman, 1995; Silling 1984). Adults also desire to immediately use the information they receive from the educational experience (Knowles et al., 1998; Silling, 1984). This immediate use of learned information is considered transfer learning (Wlodkowski, 2003).

Adult development and adult learning theory recognize the differences that exist between traditional age students and nontraditional students (Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Cross, 1981; Knowles et al., 1998; Lowman, 1995; Silling 1984). Malcolm Knowles introduced the concept of andragogy to America, which revolutionized the
field of adult education. Andragogy is the art and science of teaching adults (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 1998). The model is based on six assumptions of adult students. First, adult students have the need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking it. Second, they have a self-concept of being responsible for themselves and effective educational programming should encourage self-directed learning. Third, adult students bring prior experience with them into the classroom. Fourth, adult students have a readiness to learn once they recognize a need to learn something. Fifth, adult students have an orientation to learning which is based on solving a problem or meeting a need in their lives. Sixth, the motivation of adult students to learn is internal (satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life) as well as external (promotions, better jobs, money) (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 1998).

The andragogy model depends on the psychological maturity of adults that impacts their learning (Knowles, 1978; Knowles et al., 1998). Not all adults are psychologically mature (Fiske & Chiriboga, 1991; Knowles et al., 1998; Sheehy, 1995). Hence, higher continuing education educators have to assist nontraditional students in recognizing their learning capabilities. For instance, nontraditional students may be self-reliant individuals, but revert back to dependant learners (like children) in an educational setting (Fiske & Chiriboga, 1991; Knowles et al., 1998). They remember being told what to do and how to do it by the teacher (Knowles et al., 1998). Higher continuing educators must empower nontraditional students to develop into independent learners when planning effective educational programming that will attract and retain these students (Knowles et al., 1998; Lowman, 1995; Maehl, 2000).
To empower nontraditional students, higher continuing educators must understand the developmental process of adults (Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Fiske & Chiriboga, 1991; Knowles et al., 1998). Adult development theory, like adult learning theory, recognizes the importance of understanding the psychological growth and development of adults to design effective educational programming (Caffarella & Clark, 1999). Adult development theory helps explain differences in the way adults learn at different life stages (Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Fiske & Chiriboga, 1991; Knowles et al., 1998).

The latest studies in adult development denote attention should be given to socio-cultural issues such as gender, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation that are embedded in the demographic makeup of nontraditional students (Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Edwards & Brooks, 1999; Ross-Gordon; 1999). A qualitative study conducted by Jovita Ross-Gordon demonstrates the importance of race and ethnicity in the development of nontraditional students. Ross-Gordon (1998) studied the needs and concerns of minority nontraditional students from Eastern University. Many of the responses from the African American and Hispanic adult nontraditional students reflected the same concerns and perceived needs as reported in previous studies representing the entire U.S. nontraditional student population. These common concerns and needs of nontraditional students were managing multiple life roles, flexible course scheduling, convenient advising, and adequate financial aid.

However, the study also identified concerns and perceived needs specific to minority nontraditional students. The concerns and needs unique to these students are
the lack of instructional support from instructors, limited inclusion of other cultures in curricula, isolation in the classroom and campus community, being stereotyped, limited ethnic diversity among the student population, faculty, and staff (Ross-Gordon, 1998).

On the other hand, educators and students from White ethnic groups are typically unconscious of the need for multicultural educational environments because they have only experienced learning based on their own cultural norms (Chávez & DiBrito, 1999). These individuals may be resistant to learning in environments that are different to their cultural norm (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Fortunately, once White individuals are exposed to multicultural environments, they also learn to navigate between different cultural norms (Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Overall, learning is enhanced when multicultural learning practices and skills are incorporated (Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Chávez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Ross-Gordon, 1999).

Gender is another increasingly important area in adult development. Since more women are students in higher education, higher education must incorporate policies and learning environments that are conducive to female nontraditional students. Foundational adult development models studied men as representatives for the entire population (Hansman, 1998; Tisdell, 1993). Research that considers both genders has found significant differences between the developmental needs of men and women (Bierema, 2002; Ross-Gordon, 1999). Studies that compare men and women categorize men as being more individualistic with principles based on justice and logic (Bierema, 2002; Hansman, 1998; Tisdell, 1993). Women are most commonly deemed as relationship-oriented with principles based on caring (Ayers-Hilliard, 1999; Ross-
Gordon, 1999). However, the study recognizes that more men do seek to connect through relationships than previously thought (Ross-Gordon, 1999). Higher education has to provide adequate support services that foster inclusion and connection through relationships for the nontraditional students who desire it (Ayers-Hilliard, 1999; Ross-Gordon, 1998, 1999). Administrators have to align academic support services to the needs of nontraditional students to be successful in recruitment and retention efforts (Dolly, 1995).

Factors Determining the Return to College

Through the years, many researchers, via interviews and surveys, have examined the motivations of adults returning to school. The reasons people give for returning to school are predictable to their situations (Cross, 1981). Unemployed people return to school to gain the skills for employment (Aslanian, 2001; Dychtwald, 2003). People who desire career advancement return to receive degrees and certifications. Most responses are action oriented (Darkenwald, Kim, & Stowe, 1998). James Loftus (1998) conducted focus group interviews and individual interviews at five colleges or universities and asked the question “What are the precipitating factors and triggering events that led to your decision to return to college?” The responses were the predicted responses of bettering their life situations and coping with life events such as death of a spouse or divorce. Loftus’ study also concluded that many people are also furthering their education to secure their existing employment (Loftus, 1998). This may be a result of the advancements in technology and economic impacts of downsizing and right sizing of organizations (Loftus, 1998;
Darkenwald et al., 1998). However, some people desire to pursue education merely for the sake of learning, and those persons are usually older adults in an upper income bracket (Aslanian, 2001; Dychtwald, 2003). People 50 years old and older are most likely interested in taking courses for personal growth or to pursue an area of personal interest (Novak, 2001). Older adults continue to show an interest in learning which supports the aforementioned literature on the ambiguity of the adult life span stages and cycles.

Studies in adult education emphasize the importance of the role that colleges and universities play in reducing the difficulties that face adult part-time learners when entering or re-entering to school. K. Patricia Cross (1981) presented a model to study non-participation of adult students in educational programs because she felt knowing why adults did not attend was as equally important as knowing why they did participate in educational programs. The difficulties adults encounter when they return to school were defined as barriers. The barriers formed three general categories. The three categories of barriers are situational barriers, dispositional barriers, and institutional barriers (Cross, 1981).

Situational barriers are the circumstances individuals face such as lack of time and lack of money that would prevent them from participating in educational programs (Cross, 1981). Institutional barriers are the policies and procedures in place at institutions of higher learning that exclude and/or discourage nontraditional students from participating in educational programming (Cross, 1981). Dispositional barriers are perceptions nontraditional students have of themselves as learners (Cross, 1981).
Consider again the study conducted at “Eastern University” by Jovita Ross-Gordon (1998) that assessed the perceived needs and concerns of minority nontraditional students. The perceived needs and concerns of these students could be identified as barriers from each of the categories. The African American and Hispanic students in the study perceived situational barriers of balancing multiple life roles, (i.e., career, parenting) and finances as being the most prevalent deterrent to their return to college (Cross, 1981; Ross-Gordon, 1998). Typically, adults enter or return to higher education because of a life transition (life-altering event) (Flint & Frey, 2003; Reeves, 1999). There are two popular researchers on change theory, Schlossberg and Bridges (Reeves, 1999). Schlossberg developed the transitions model that asserts there are many predictable universal adult experiences, which frequently involve transitions (events that alter lives). Bridges views life transitions as a catalyst for development (Reeves, 1999). Adults move through three phases of change. The phases of change involve ending or leaving the old situation behind, the neutral zone where old situations are no longer adaptive, and finally the start of a new beginning (Reeves, 1999).

As the change model indicates, the entrance or return of many adults to higher education signifies a new beginning (Flint & Frey, 2003; Reeves, 1999). Thus, adult students need assistance in dealing with the logistical issues like their life roles and finances (Flint & Frey, 2003; Miller Brown, 2000).

Students experienced dispositional barriers consisting of fear of returning to school (Cross, 1981; Ross-Gordon, 1998). These students were afraid because they had been out of school for so long and now they would attend classes with much younger students. The andragogy model acknowledges that adult students deal with
psychological issues like fear. Adult educators must provide support and resources to adult students so they can become confident and self-directed learners (Dauphinais, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003; Knowles et al., 1998).

Students also reported institutional barriers in classrooms which included instructors who were inflexible regarding assignments, uninteresting course materials, unclear instructions for assignments, and no opportunities to discuss topics in the courses (Cross, 1981; Knowles et al., 1998; Ross-Gordon, 1998). Adult students identify with their life experiences and they relate their experiences to the new information they receive (Knowles et al., 1998). Instructors of adult learners must understand the value of the life experiences these students have for their own learning and for the benefit of the entire class (Knowles et al., 1998). In addition, adult educators must understand adults have other life responsibilities and they sometimes need flexibility to be successful in their classes (Flint & Frey, 2003; Knowles et al., 1998).

Of the three categories of barriers, institutional barriers can be better managed by higher education institutions than situational and dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981; Miller Brown, 2000). This is because higher education institutions can assess their policies and procedures and make adjustments to the policies and procedures that create challenges or barriers for nontraditional students (Cross, 1981; Dauphinais, 1998; Miller Brown, 2000). Situational and dispositional barriers, however, are more difficult to address because they deal with life circumstances and psychological issues (Cross, 1981; Dauphinais, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003; Ross-Gordon, 1999).

Carol Aslanian identified five areas in which higher education institutions can overcome barriers by creating access for nontraditional students. These five access
areas are geographical, logistical, financial, psychological, and cultural (Aslanian, 1993). Geographical access provides nontraditional students who are place-bound an opportunity to participate in an educational program. Institutions of higher learning must strategically place branch campuses and regional centers close to city business districts or in neighborhoods to make it convenient for part-time adult students who may not be able to attend the main campus (Aslanian, 1993; Flint & Frey, 2003; Wlodkowski, 2003).

Logistical access deals with colleges and universities having procedures and processes that provide convenience to students when they need to attend classes and use academic student services (Aslanian, 1993). For example, a one-stop shopping concept would make it easier for nontraditional students to access advising services, pay tuition and fees, and register for classes (Dauphinais, 1998). Logistical services also include safe and ample vehicle parking in close proximity to buildings.

Financial access deals with more than just low rates of tuition and fees. It also includes providing opportunity cost, which is the amount of money nontraditional students would make if they were not attending class, driving to campus, or studying (Wlodkowski, 2003). Adult students have to feel that completing a degree or taking classes is worthy of them investing their time and finances (Aslanian, 2001; UCEA, 2002c).

Psychological access deals with nontraditional students believing they can succeed in college, feeling comfortable with fellow students and faculty, and having support from their family and the institution (Aslanian, 1992; Cross, 1981). Cultural access deals with the comfort level minority cultures feel in attending a college and
their ability to integrate with the college community (Aslanian, 1992; Caffarella & Clark, 1999; Ross-Gordon, 1999). The types of access are related to the barriers aforementioned that nontraditional students face when returning to higher education. When higher education institutions provide access to nontraditional students it means they provide proactive measures for these students who encounter situational barriers, institutional barriers, and dispositional barriers that may affect their enrollment and overall success in higher education (Aslanian, 1992, 2001; Cross, 1981; Flint & Frey, 2003).

Higher continuing education administrators have to remove the barriers facing nontraditional students when they enter or return to higher education to upgrade their skills and earn degrees with the purpose of progressing in the workforce (Cross, 1981; Flint & Frey, 2003; Miller Brown, 2000; Wlodkowski, 2003). The success of nontraditional students in the workforce is part of the mission of continuing education in the United States (Matkin, 1998; Rohfeld, 1990, 1996). It is a challenge for administrators to remove barriers nontraditional students face in higher education. However, it is possible to create access by changing institutional policies and procedures and by providing support services and resources to nontraditional students (Dauphinais, 1998; Flint & Frey, 2003; Miller Brown, 2000; Wlodkowski, 2003).

Future of Higher Continuing Education

Growing enrollment statistics are causing higher continuing education to better structure student academic support services to serve nontraditional students (NCES, 2002; UCEA, 2002a). Colleges and universities are also becoming more open to
adapting services to accommodate nontraditional students (Dauphinais, 1998; Dolly, 1995; Flint & Frey, 2003; Ross-Gordon, 1998). In the book *Transforming Higher Education: A Vision for Learning in the 21st Century*, the need to create better access to higher education was forecasted (Dolence & Norris, 1995). The new challenge of higher education is to develop learners who can synthesize the information received to make it useful. Thus, the needs of the individual learner and the services offered to them by the educational institutions will be greatly affected (Maehl, 2000; Tonkin, 1998). Individualized learning is an essential factor of the Information Age (Dolence & Norris, 1995). Higher education institutions will need to focus on being learner-centered, offering programs that are self-paced, evaluate on the learner’s personal best, and utilize simulation which replaces many types of research and laboratory work and becomes a critical tool in knowledge seeking (Dolence & Norris, 1995; Norris & Morrison, 1997).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to explore the effectiveness of higher education at nonprofit colleges and universities in providing appropriate student academic support services that impact student recruitment and retention to ultimately produce a skilled workforce. To do this, a comparison will be completed of nontraditional students from Western Michigan University who attended courses offered through the continuing education unit. Students who attended courses from the Weekend College Office in the year 1995 were asked to complete a Confidential Student Services Assessment questionnaire. The Confidential Student Services Assessment will be compared to a similar questionnaire, the Student Satisfaction Survey that was distributed to students attending courses at all of the continuing education branch campuses in the year 2002. As a review, the study will address the research questions below.

1) How has higher continuing education at Western Michigan University made an impact on the development of a skilled workforce?

2) What are the demographics and characteristics of Western Michigan University nontraditional students? Have the demographics and characteristics changed for this population of students?

3) What academic support services have Western Michigan University nontraditional students attending evening and weekend courses perceived
as being satisfied or needed in the year 2002 as compared to the year 1995?

4) What institutional barriers are significant to nontraditional students in the year 2002?

This chapter will depict the methodology procedures used in the study. It is divided into the following sections: research design, rationale of research design, population; instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

Since this study examines a particular unit or group, it is considered a descriptive study (Worthen et al., 1997). Descriptive studies are effective in seeking to explain a problem by drawing inferences and conclusions about a larger population from sample results (Baker, 2002; Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994). In 1995, a descriptive study of Weekend College students at WMU was conducted to develop a rubric for making generalizations for servicing nontraditional students (Dolly, 1995). This study has a similar intent. The study will examine how effectively the entire continuing education unit has provided academic support services to nontraditional students. There will also be a comparison of academic support services offered in 1995 to services offered in 2002. In addition, nontraditional student characteristics will be compared from students enrolled in 1995 to those enrolled in 2002. It is hoped that this case study will serve as a model for comparable continuing education units at other nonprofit, four-year institutions to examine the effectiveness of their academic support services targeting the nontraditional student population.
Rationale of Research Design

The descriptive design for this study utilized survey methodology. The questionnaires used in the study comprised of items (questions) designed to garner quantitative, descriptive, and qualitative data. In descriptive studies, questionnaires are considered appropriate research instruments because they can measure attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and life circumstances of the respondents (Worthen et al., 1997). The previously referenced study by Pat Dolly in 1995 supports the use of a questionnaire as an effective research instrument in assessing the perceptions of nontraditional students pertaining to academic support services (Dolly, 1995). Another study that was conducted by Kenya Ayers-Hilliard also supports the use of questionnaires as an appropriate research tool for evaluating behaviors of female nontraditional students attributing to attrition at urban institutions (Ayers-Hilliard, 1999).

Population

The population for this study consisted of nontraditional students at Western Michigan University attending courses through continuing education branch campuses. The study will examine data from two questionnaires distributed to students who attended courses through continuing education branch campuses. The first questionnaire, the Confidential Needs Assessment (Appendix A), was administered over two semesters to students who attended courses through the continuing education branch Weekend College at Western Michigan University. Dr. Patricia Dolly
developed the survey as part of a study in 1995, which assessed the special service needs of Weekend College students (Dolly, 1995).

One hundred twenty nontraditional students completed the Confidential Needs Assessment questionnaire. These students were enrolled in Weekend College courses from the following academic colleges: Arts and Sciences, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Health and Human Services, and Business. Fifty-five percent of the students were undergraduate level students. The graduate level students either had already earned a bachelor’s or master’s degree. Sixty-eight percent of the students were female. Seventy-one percent of the students were in the age range of 35 to 54 years old and 93 percent of the students were employed either full- or part-time.

The 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey (Appendix B) was administered during the fall semester. There were 1,138 nontraditional students who were enrolled in courses at one of the WMU continuing education branch campus sites. The breakdown of the number of surveys completed by campus site was: Traverse City (42); Muskegon (84); Holland (24); Grand Rapids (463); Lansing (164); Battle Creek (53); Kalamazoo (186); Benton Harbor/St. Joseph (104). The purpose of the survey was to assess the effectiveness of the academic support services offered through the branch campuses to the nontraditional students.

Sixty-six percent of the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey respondents were female. Forty-two percent of the students reporting were between the ages of 26 years and 35 years old. The next largest age group was 21 years to 35 years old. Students between the ages of 36 years and 55 years old were approximately half the percentage of the combined younger age groups.
Eighty-eight percent of the student respondents were employed. The remaining respondents (12 percent) were full-time students. The majority of the students attended courses on a part-time basis, carrying a course load of four and eight credit hours per semester. The demographics of the nontraditional students in this study lend support to the demographic trend in the United States (UCEA, 2002c).

Instrumentation

Dr. Patricia Dolly developed the Confidential Needs Assessment for her study which was conducted in 1995 (Dolly, 1995). The data from Dr. Dolly's study was used in this study. The 1995 questionnaire consists of 35 items. Items 11 through 31 were presented in a Likert-type differential semantic five-point scale. Items 32 and 33 require a yes or no response. The final two questionnaire items were unnumbered. These two items provided respondents the opportunity to write in their suggestions regarding the services provided to them weekends as well as additional comments.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section includes questions 1 through 10 and questions 32 and 33. Section one questions are related to the characteristics and demographics of the participants. The second section consists of questions 11 through 31 and lists a variety of academic support services that were offered the nontraditional students. This study will follow Dr. Dolly's model of grouping the academic support services listed for questions 11 through 31 under three academic support services categories. The categories of academic support services include core academic support (questions 11, 16, 24, and 27), academic logistical support (questions 15, 17, 18, 21, and 22), administrative logistical support (questions
19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31), personal support system (questions 12 and 13),
and academic skill services (question 14). Dr. Dolly further organized the categories of
academic support services by an appropriate nontraditional student barrier: (1) insti­
tutional (core academic support, academic logistical support, and administrative logis­
tical support); (2) situational (personal support system); and (3) dispositional (aca­
demic skills services). The nontraditional student barriers were based on the work by
Patricia Cross, which examined the hindrances and obstacles that often prevented
adult students from returning to college and successfully completing educational goals
(Cross, 1981).

The 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey was developed by the continuing educa­
tion unit at Western Michigan University. There are 16 items on the questionnaire.
Questions 1 through 10 request the survey participants to provide characteristic and
demographic information. Questions 11 through 13 have a total of 36 statements
inquiring about academic support services available to nontraditional students. The
2002 Student Satisfaction Survey questions were grouped under the appropriate aca­
demic support services category as previously described for the 1995 Confidential
Needs Assessment questionnaire. The 2002 questionnaire items were grouped as
follows: core academic support (questions 11(1), 11(2), 11(3), 11(16)); academic
logistical support (questions 11(7), 11(9), 11(10), 11(11), 11(13), 11(18), 11(19),
11(20), 12(6), 12(8)); administrative logistical support (questions 11(4), 11(5), 11(6),
11(8), 11(12), 11(14), 12(1), 12(2), 12(3), 12(4), 12(5), 12(9)); and academic skills
services (questions 12(7), 13(1), 13(2)). Each academic support service category was
also placed with the appropriate nontraditional student barrier following the proce-
dure completed for the 1995 questionnaire. The 2002 questionnaire did not have any questions dealing with situational barriers (personal support system). Thus, there was no comparison for this area.

Survey participants were asked to respond to each of the statements and give their level of satisfaction for each item. Question 14 requires a yes or no (with options) response. Questions 15 and 16 provide the opportunity for participants to write in a response.

Data Collection

The researcher sought permission from Dr. Patricia Dolly, the Vice Provost for Extended University Programs, and the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) at Western Michigan University (Appendix C) to use the data collected from the Confidential Student Services Assessment and the Student Satisfaction Survey questionnaires, respectively.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will consist of quantitative tabulations of data from the 1995 Confidential Needs Assessment and 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey questionnaires. Various tests were tabulated on data from each survey to address the research questions.

The first research question asked: How has higher continuing education at Western Michigan University made an impact on the development of a skilled workforce? This question was addressed by computing descriptive statistics from the
Student Satisfaction Survey (2002 questionnaire). Frequency tabulations were performed for current occupation (Item 7) and the variable was placed in rank order. Cross tabulations were completed for household income and occupation and household income and education financing. This was completed to depict the roles and impact that current WMU students play in the workforce.

The second research question asked: What are the demographics and characteristics of Western Michigan University nontraditional students? Have the demographics and characteristics changed for this population of students? Part one of question two was answered by performing frequency tabulations and medians. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the 1995 survey (Items 1-10 and the 2002 survey for Items 1-9). The aforementioned items from both surveys deal with the demographics and characteristics of the students. The response to part two of question two is answered by comparing the percentages of student characteristics and from the 1995 and 2002 survey. Specifically, gender, age, and source of tuition (financing) was compared to portray changes that have occurred within the seven-year period.

The third research question asked: What academic support services have Western Michigan University nontraditional students attending evening and weekend courses perceived as being satisfied or needed in the year 2002 as compared to the year 1995? The academic support services variables from both surveys were displayed in table charts in rank order by mean with standard deviations. The number of responses for each item is also provided in the table. Where appropriate, the academic
support services variables from the 1995 survey were matched to the academic support services on the 2002 survey to measure changes.

The final research question was: What institutional barriers are significant to nontraditional students in the year 2002? This question focuses on institutional barriers, which are policies and procedures instituted by college and university administrators that create difficulties for nontraditional students. In order to identify significant institutional barriers, academic support services listed in questions 11 and 12 on the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey were placed into the following categories: core academic support, academic logistical support, and academic logistical support. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were performed to determine whether differences were present between and within the variables. In instances where ANOVA results showed a significant difference, a Tukey test was performed. Tables were created to graphically display the data.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In this chapter, the four research questions were addressed by quantitative analysis of the data. The research questions are consistent with the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceived level of satisfaction in the delivery of academic support services for nontraditional students at nonprofit colleges and universities with the objective of recruitment and retention.

Question 1: How has higher continuing education at Western Michigan University made an impact on the development of a skilled workforce in America?

To answer the first research question descriptive statistics were used for the data collected from the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix 2). The three questionnaire items examined were number seven, which requested participants to indicate their current occupation; number eight, annual household income; and number nine, method of financing their education. Item number seven of the questionnaire asked for the respondent’s occupation.

The data for item seven on the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey is placed in a frequency table (Table 1) and ranked in descending order. The questionnaire listed 14 occupation fields. A total of 1,111 participants responded to this questionnaire item. The occupation “Education” received the highest number of responses (442). The second highest ranked occupation is “Full-time student” (130). The third highest
ranked occupation is “Other” (104). The lowest ranked occupation is “Military” receiving two responses.

Table 1
Occupations of Students in 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time student</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Marketing/Sales</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety/Law Enforcement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data displays that the majority of the nontraditional students taking courses at the institution through the continuing education units are working professionals. The UCEA (2002c) reported that people in professional or managerial positions receive the most financial assistance from employers for professional development. The enrollment of so many employed students further reveals the need people in the workforce have for professional development, certifications, and skills upgrades as supported in the research (Aslanian, 2001; UCEA, 2003c; Wlodkowski, 2003).

A contingency table displaying cross-tabulations for questionnaire items eight (household income) and nine (method of financing education) is displayed in Table 2.
Household income is presented in intervals of $20,000 ranging from under $10,000 to over $110,000. Item nine on the survey (method of financing education) is categorical data. Thus, nominal measurement is assigned to the data. The tuition financing method data is categorized as: Self, Employer (Entire), Employer (Partial), or Loans/Grants. Four hundred three students responded “Self”, 97 students responded Employer (Entire), 194 students responded Employer (Partial), and 226 students responded Loans/Grants for financing their tuition.

Table 2

Students’ Household Income Compared to Tuition Financing Methods in 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Employer (Entire)</th>
<th>Employer (Partial)</th>
<th>Loans/Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$29,999</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$49,999</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$69,999</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000-$89,999</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000-$109,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $110,000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing Cells 1

A national study on adult student demographics reported that approximately 60 percent of nontraditional students in the U.S. pay for their tuition without any assistance; 36 percent received loans, grants, or scholarships; and 20 percent received tuition assistance from their employer (Aslanian, 2001). The findings from this study show that 44 percent of the WMU nontraditional students pay for their own tuition without assistance; 25 percent received loans or grants; and 31 percent received
tuition assistance from their employer. The percentage of WMU nontraditional students receiving tuition assistance from their employer is higher than the national average. Two factors may contribute to this higher percentage. Michigan employers may value their employees and invest in their education and training. The second factor may be that since the majority of WMU nontraditional students are graduate level students they earn more than the average nontraditional students in the national study. The second factor would also support the research that the higher a person's income the more likelihood their employer will invest in their education and training activities (Aslanian, 2001).

Household income as referred to in Table 2 may include living expenses for possibly two adults plus children. From this perspective, an income range of $30,000 to $49,999 would not be very much. Table 3 and Figure 1 demonstrate this point specifically for students working in Education (the field in which most students are employed). Of students employed in education, 221 students paid their own tuition without financial assistance (Table 3). In addition, Figure 1 shows that 27.6 percent of these students had an annual household income between $30,000 and $49,999. Tuition payments would be a considerable financial commitment for these students. This finding lends support to the research that states that many working adults are in need of certification and advanced degrees to be promoted and receive higher pay (Aslanian, 2001; Drucker, 2004; Dychtwald, 2003; Field & Leicester, 2000; Wlodkowski, 2003). Continuing education is more of a necessary expenditure for teachers than a luxury (UCEA, 2002c). Higher continuing education at WMU has provided opportunities for
working adults, especially for those in the field of education, to further their education and advance in their careers.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Employer (Entire)</th>
<th>Employer (Partial)</th>
<th>Loans/Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$29,999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$49,999</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$69,999</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000-$89,999</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000-$109,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $110,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing Cells 3

Figure 1. 2002 Students Employed in Education by Household Income.
Question 2: What are the demographics and characteristics of Western Michigan University nontraditional students? Have the demographics and characteristics changed for this population of students?

This question compared the demographics of WMU nontraditional students who attended courses in 1995 to the demographics of nontraditional students who attended courses in 2002. The following demographics were compared: age, gender, and tuition financing methods used by students.

Figure 2 displays the age range information that was collected from the 1995 Confidential Student Assessment (see Appendix A). Item two on the 1995 Confidential Student Assessment asked students to indicate their age. Figure 3 shows that 43 percent of the students were age 25 years and under, 43 percent of the students were ages 35 to 44 years, 34 percent of the students were ages 25 to 34 years, and 18 percent of the students were ages 45 to 54 years.

![Figure 2. Percentage of 1995 Students by Age.](image-url)
Figure 3 was compiled from questionnaire item four on the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey (Appendix B), which asked, "How old are you?" Ages were given in the following categories: under 21 years, 21-25 years, 26 to 35 years, 36 to 45 years, 46 to 55 years, 56 to 62 years, and over 62 years. Students within the age range of 26 to 35 years ranked the highest with 42 percent. The second largest percentage of students was in the age range of 21 to 25 years with 21 percent. The third and fourth percentage rank of students was ages 36 to 45 years and 46 to 55 years with 17 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

Although the age ranges differed on the two surveys, the data shows the majority of nontraditional students surveyed in 2002 were younger than students from the 1995 study. This finding follows the national trend of more students having characteristics of nontraditional students (Choy, 2002; NCES, 2002). The growing number of younger nontraditional students prompted the need for a sub-group called new-nontraditional students as stated previously (DeGabriele, 2001).
Figure 4 shows that 69 percent of the nontraditional students in the 1995 study were female. Similarly, Figure 5 displays that 66 percent of the nontraditional students who responded to the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey were female. The gender distribution has not significantly changed over the seven-year period. For more than seven years, the national enrollment trend has shown a higher number of non-traditional female students enrolled in higher education (Aslanian, 2001; NCES, 2002; UCEA, 2002b). The gender trend in this study is comparable to national statistics.

Figure 4. Percentage of 1995 Students by Gender.

Figure 5. Percentage of 2002 Students by Gender.
In 1995, 15 percent of the students had their tuition partially paid by their employer and 10 percent had their entire tuition paid by their employer (see Figure 6). In comparison, 20 percent of the students reported their tuition was partially paid by their employer and 11 percent of the students had their tuition entirely paid by their employer in 2002 (see Figure 7). This information signals employers to support and value higher continuing education for their employees by providing at least partial tuition assistance for them. However, employers in 2002 were more supportive with

Figure 6. Tuition Financing Methods by 1995 Students.

Figure 7. Tuition Financing Methods by 2002 Students.
tuition assistance than employers in 1995. The national trend is that employers use professional development in the form of continuing education and training as part of their benefits package to attract employees (Aslanian, 2001). The growing perspective of employers is that continuing education and training for their employees is an investment instead of a cost (UCEA, 2002c).

A high percentage of nontraditional students are willing to pay for their tuition without financial assistance. In 2002, 44 percent of the students paid their own tuition without financial assistance (Figure 7) while 68 percent of the students paid their own tuition in 1995 (Figure 6). The decrease in this area may be attributed to the different response categories provided on the two surveys. Students who responded to the 1995 survey did not have an option for financial aid or loans. Students who may have received some type of financial aid, scholarship or loan may have responded “Self” for their method of tuition financing. At any rate, nontraditional students value continuing education and they are willing to invest their money and time (Aslanian, 2001; UCEA, 2002c; Wlodkowski, 2003).

Question 3: What academic support services have Western Michigan University nontraditional students attending evening and weekend courses perceived as satisfied or needed in the year 2002 as compared to the year 1995?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were computed for questionnaire items on the 1995 Confidential Needs Assessment (Appendix A) and the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey (Appendix B) that dealt with specific academic support services. Table 4 and Table 5 display the means of the academic support services as perceived by students in rank order. The following two comparisons are...
Table 4
1995 Academic Support Services Perceived as Needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible parking</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone registration</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible schedule</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library services</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete program</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend schedule booklet</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central location</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby food services</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early morning library hours</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising services</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills services</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site coordinator</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary refreshments</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend facilitator on site</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk-in registration</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional activities</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care services</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care services</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

made from the two surveys: (1) comparison of the top five most needed academic support services reported in 1995 to the top five academic support services students were most satisfied with as reported in 2002, and (2) the five top ranked most needed academic support services in 1995 and where the equivalent academic support services were ranked as reported by the 2002 survey.

The 1995 Confidential Needs Assessment questionnaire used a Likert scale for items 11 through 31 (Appendix A). The Likert scale for these items measured the perceived needs students had for particular academic support services. The response statements on the 1995 questionnaire were: definitely not needed, not needed, somewhat needed, needed, and definitely needed.
Table 5

2002 Academic Support Services Perceived as Satisfied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration process convenience</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy/helpfulness EUP staff</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance local campus</td>
<td>1112</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location local campus</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use course schedule booklet</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty high expectations/students</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition payment process</td>
<td>1099</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommending EUP to Colleagues</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience attending EUP/WMU</td>
<td>1109</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academically challenging EUP courses</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of Faculty Members</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days of week when Courses Offered</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer accessibility</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of parking</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer reliability</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions process</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Registrar</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advisor</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety course offerings in program</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy/helpfulness of WMU staff (KZ)</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing satisfaction in courses</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit evaluation (undergraduate)</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of library services</td>
<td>1112</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Westcat</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer dial-in access</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of document delivery service</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with academic department</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student financial/payment services</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation audit process</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid process</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMU Computer Help Desk</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing course packets</td>
<td>1116</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of course offerings</td>
<td>1114</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing textbooks</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of library materials</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with ITV courses</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The top five most needed academic support services as perceived by students in 1995 were accessible parking (mean 4.76), courses (mean 4.63), phone registration (mean 4.52), flexible schedule (mean 4.51) and library services (mean 4.49) (see Table 4). The top five academic support services students were most satisfied with in 2002 were registration process convenience (mean 4.18), courtesy/helpfulness EUP staff (mean 4.18), appearance local campus (mean 4.12), geographical location local campus (mean 4.11), and ease of use course schedule booklet (mean 4.10).

The first comparison highlights that the two questionnaires were not identical. This imposes a limitation for this study. However, the support services on the surveys are looked at collectively, thus making general comparisons possible. The 1995 questionnaire was distributed to students attending one unit within the continuing education division, while the 2002 questionnaire polled students attending any one of the seven units within the division. There is also a difference in the terminology used on the instruments such as the phrase phone registration in 1995 was changed to registration process. This may be due to the additional registration method of online registration. Regularly scheduled assessments would permit a clearer picture of the nontraditional students at the institution (Brookfield, 1986; Cooper & Saunders, 2000; Evers et al., 1998).

In the second comparison, the 2002 students ranked their level of satisfaction to the aforementioned top five most needed academic support services from 1995 as: ease of parking, fourteenth place; academically challenging EUP courses, tenth place; registration process convenience, first place; days of week when courses offered, twelfth place; and presentation of library services, twenty-third place.
The students attending in the year 2002 indicated higher levels of satisfaction with academic support services in relation to the registration process and library services, which shows that the institution made some changes since the 1995 study. Lower rankings given by the 2002 students for parking, challenging courses, and flexible course schedules indicates the students had some level of dissatisfaction with those support services. The institution can use this information to consider making some changes in these support services in the future as these services are important to their nontraditional students.

Question 4: What institutional barriers are significant to nontraditional students in the year 2002?

This question is addressed by examining the characteristics of nontraditional students related to their perceived satisfaction level of academic support services provided by the institution to eliminate institutional barriers. As previously defined, institutional barriers are procedures and policies in place at higher educational institutions that prohibit nontraditional students from succeeding in educational programs (Dolly, 1995). The 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey items asked nontraditional students to respond to the effectiveness of the academic support services offered by the continuing education branches and main campus offices to eliminate institutional barriers they faced while taking courses. The academic support services in questions 11 and 12 on the 2002 Survey were placed into one of the following three categories: core academic support services, academic logistical support services, and administrative support services modeling the study by Patricia Dolly (1995).
Table 6 consists of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical test results that were computed to analyze 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey data for equal population means among academic support services and student characteristics. The student characteristics used in the ANOVA tests were chosen from items two through nine on the 2002 survey (see Appendix A). The student characteristics used in this research question were degree level, gender, age, home campus, credit hours enrolled, current occupation, household income, and tuition financing.

Table 6

Summary of Differences Between Student Characteristics and Academic Student Support Services in 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Institutional Educational Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core academics support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMU alumnus</td>
<td>4.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree level</td>
<td>1.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home campus</td>
<td>7.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit hours enrolled</td>
<td>1.997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Occupation</td>
<td>1.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>0.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Financing</td>
<td>2.556</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F= F statistic, p=probability
*Significant at .05 level

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The support services placed under the core academic services category are variety of course offerings in my degree program; frequency with which a course is repeated at my local campus; the days of the week when courses are offered; and overall courtesy and helpfulness of local campus staff.

The support services placed under the category academic logistical support are ease of use of off-campus course schedule booklet; knowledge, skill, availability and responsiveness of academic advisor, convenience of purchasing textbooks; convenience of purchasing course packets; access to computer classroom/lab facility at the local campus; availability of academic library materials locally; availability of WMU Direct Document Delivery Service; access to Westcat Library catalog, databases, indexes and abstracts; Office of the Registrar concerning registration; the graduation audit process; and my program's academic department in Kalamazoo.

The academic support services placed under the third category, administrative logistical support, are the geographical location of the local campus; ease of parking; convenience of the WMU registration process; convenience of the tuition payment process; appearance of local campus facilities/classrooms; usefulness of computers, printers, and software at the local campus; Office of Admissions concerning the admission process; Office of Admissions concerning your initial WMU credit evaluation; services of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships associated with obtaining loans, grants or scholarships; client services regarding the processes and services associated with tuition payment, financial “holds,” or other student financial services; Office of the Registrar concerning registration, drop, add, or withdrawal
procedures and deadlines; and overall courtesy and helpfulness of WMU staff in Kalamazoo.

The ANOVA statistical tests in Table 6 revealed differences between the following student characteristics and core academic support for age (F statistic-2.476, p value-.022), home campus (F statistic-7.220, p value-.000), and credit hours enrolled (F statistic-1.997, p value-.031). Post hoc Tukey tests showed differences within the following two characteristics: age and home campus. Students ages 36 to 45 years were more satisfied with the core academic support provided by continuing education units than students from ages 21 to 25 years old. The results show that core academic support services were effective in removing institutional barriers for the older nontraditional students. However, the younger nontraditional students have different needs and desires, which affects their priorities and responsibilities in life (Aslanian, 2001; Dychtwald, 2003; Ross-Gordon, 1998). For instance, the students from ages 21 to 25 years old could have been single adults who were teaching and needed to complete certification requirements to receive a raise in their pay. These younger students may have desired to take more courses each semester to finish their program in less time. This finding supports the acknowledgment of different characteristics and demographics present within the various sub-groups, (i.e., new nontraditional, third-age students) in the nontraditional student population (Aslanian, 2001; Choy, 2002; DeGabriele, 2001; Malloch & Montgomery, 1996; Miller Brown, 2000; Novak, 2001).

Tukey results also showed students taking courses at the Grand Rapids (Beltline), Lansing, and Traverse City campuses were more satisfied with core academic
support services. For instance, the students who attended the aforementioned campuses may have been pleased with the variety and scheduling of the courses offered at the campus. They also may have been satisfied with the assistance they received from the local campus staff. Students who attended the Kalamazoo, Muskegon, and Benton Harbor/St. Joseph campuses were not as satisfied with the core academic support services at those locations. There were no post hoc tests performed for the variable credit hours enrolled because at least one cell had less than two cases.

Academic logistical support services displayed differences among the following variables: home campus ($F$ statistic=8.661, $p$ value=.000), credit hours enrolled ($F$ statistic=3.326, $p$ value=.000), current occupation ($F$ statistic=2.345, $p$ value=.004), household income ($F$ statistic=2.912, $p$ value=.008), and tuition financing method ($F$ statistic=7.400, $p$ value=.000).

Tukey tests revealed three significant differences. Students were more satisfied with academic logistical support services at the campuses in Holland, Kalamazoo, Lansing, and Traverse City than students at the Battle Creek, Grand Rapids (down-town), Grand Rapids (Beltline), Muskegon, and Benton Harbor/St. Joseph campuses. The results again display that some branch campuses were more effective than others in offering academic logistical services to their students. Second, students employed in the field of Education were less satisfied with academic logistical services than students employed in other fields. Students who are educators may need extended service hours, convenient procedures, or special considerations when taking courses than students working in other fields because of after-school obligations during the academic year such as parent/teacher conferences. Third, students who received loans or
grants were more satisfied with academic logistical support services than students who either paid for tuition themselves or the student's employer (fully or partially) paid their tuition. The students who pay their own tuition or receive some tuition assistance from their employer may need more convenient payment procedures. The services, however, are effective for students who receive loans or grants to pay their tuition.

Administrative logistical support services have differences among degree level (F statistic-22.359, p value-.000), home campus (F statistic-4.814, p value-.000), credit hours enrolled (F statistic-5.038, p value-.000), current occupation (F statistic-2.844, p value-.000), and tuition financing methods (F statistic-9.345, p value-.000).

Tukey tests display results indicate that graduate level students were less satisfied with administrative logistical support services than undergraduate students. Students from the Lansing campus were more satisfied with administrative logistical support than students from the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Benton Harbor/St. Joseph campuses. Also, students who receive loans or grants to pay their tuition are more satisfied with the administrative logistical services than students who pay their own tuition or have tuition reimbursement from their employer.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A discussion of the major findings, conclusions, study limitations, and recommenda­
tions is presented in this chapter. Each research question is addressed individ­
ually as it relates to the level of satisfaction or need of academic support services.

The study will explore the perceived level of satisfaction in the delivery of academic support services for nontraditional students at nonprofit colleges and uni­
versities to ultimately impact recruitment and retention. The following discussion section examines the effectiveness of academic support services within the seven-year period at Western Michigan University in light of the research questions.

Discussion of Major Findings

Research Question 1: How has higher continuing education at Western Michi­
gan University made an impact on the development of a skilled workforce?

Three items on the Student Satisfaction Survey were identified as appropriate characteristics for identifying a skilled workforce: current occupation, household income, and method of tuition financing (see Appendix B). Of the 1,111 Student Satisfaction survey respondents, 974 respondents indicated a current occupation. The remaining 137 respondents were either full-time students or retired (see Table 1 in Chapter IV). The majority of the enrolled students are currently a part of the
workforce. Research purports that nontraditional students attending higher continuing education have historically been employed full-time while attending courses to upgrade their skills or earn advanced degrees (NCES, 1996, 2002; Rohfeld, 1990).

The current occupation fields indicated by the students in rank order were education, full-time student, other, social services, and business/marketingsales. Nationally, the five most popular degree programs among adult students are business, education, health, engineering, and computers (Aslanian, 2001). This information shows that the majority of Western Michigan University students were employed in the field of education. There were also many students who identified themselves as full-time students or selected “other” suggesting that their current occupation field was not listed.

The findings for this question suggest that the institution is making the biggest impact on people employed in the field of education. Interestingly, the second and third most popular current occupation indicated was “full-time student” and “other,” respectively. This information can help the institution in planning and scheduling courses to accommodate the lifestyles of the students. For instance, full-time students may be available to take morning and afternoon courses. Future assessment can better determine whether the students who indicated full-time student and “other” are taking courses to enter the workforce. These students may be completing a program in education, social services, or business with the intention of entering the workforce when their program is completed. The data analyzed for this question suggests that continuing education at Western Michigan University offers programming in disciplines that are of interest to people desiring professional development within their current
occupation area. These students are advancing their skills and knowledge to receive promotions and to advance in their career field.

The second and third student characteristic examined for question one was household income and method of tuition financing. The findings of the cross-tabulations suggest WMU continuing education students whose household income was within the range of $30,000 to $49,999 were most likely to pay their own tuition or received tuition financing from loans and/or grants. The majority of continuing education students, who were employed in field of education, had household incomes within the above range and were willing to pay their own tuition to meet certification requirements and to receive a raise.

In contrast, results revealed that students who reported higher household incomes were most likely to receive tuition assistance from their employer. The University Continuing Education Association (2002c) reported that 64 percent of employee training in the United States is spent on employees in professional and manager positions. Increasingly, employers are viewing training and professional education activities for employees as an investment (UCEA, 2002c). By providing programming for occupations in disciplines with continuing licensure requirements and promotion opportunities for advanced degrees, WMU positively impacts the development of a skilled workforce.

Question 2: What are the demographics and characteristics of Western Michigan University nontraditional students? Have the demographics and characteristics changed for this population?
The study findings revealed the majority of students in 2002 were within the age range of 26 to 35 years old. In 1995, the majority of students were older, 35 to 44 years old. This suggests that the age of nontraditional students at the institution is getting younger. A recent study reports that college students with nontraditional student characteristics are becoming more common in higher education than students with traditional student characteristics (Aslanian, 2001; Choy, 2002). For instance, more students have to work while attending school. These students need courses to be offered at various times to accommodate their schedules.

Results from the Student Satisfaction Survey (2002) also show the majority of the students as female. The student population ratio by gender has remained the same since 1995. National statistics show that women account for the majority of higher education and higher continuing education enrollments in the United States (NCES, 1996, 2002). The UCEA (2002b) predicts women will continue to dominate higher continuing education for the next 10 years. This information regarding gender can be useful to higher continuing education administrators in developing their marketing and recruitment strategies.

The top method of tuition financing, students paying their own tuition, did not change from 1995 to 2002. However, there was an increase in students securing loans and grants to finance their education in 2002. In 1995, more students received either partial or full tuition remission from their employer than the use of loans and grants for payment. The changes in tuition financing methods may be due to a declining economy, which may impact employer benefit packages.
These findings again suggest the importance adult students place on continuing their education. The majority of adult students will attend courses on a part-time basis because they pay for their tuition without any assistance. This pay-as-you-go method could affect the enrollment of nontraditional students each semester. Nontraditional students may stop-out and not enroll for a semester because of a financial situation (Ayers-Hilliard, 1999). Thus, nontraditional students may need a payment plan for paying tuition. They may also need enrollment policies that do not penalize students for not enrolling for a semester(s) and that permit an extended timeframe for students to complete their degree program without penalty. University administrators should consider whether these types of issues would create barriers for nontraditional students before implementing policies regarding tuition and enrollment.

Question 3: What academic support services have Western Michigan University nontraditional students attending evening and weekend courses perceived as satisfied or needed in the year 2002 as compared to the year 1995?

Students surveyed in 1995 indicated the following services as the five most needed: ample and accessible parking, courses (variety), phone registration, flexible (course) schedules, and library services. Except for parking services, the most desired needs in 1995 have been positively affected by advancements in technology. Technology has impacted the variety and flexibility of courses offered to students. Distance education capabilities make it possible to offer a larger variety of courses through different delivery modes, (e.g., interactive video, internet). Students have the option of online course registration in addition to telephone registration. Technology has also impacted library services offered to students. Students have online access to
such services as research databases and book renewal. Technology has made it possible for higher education to deliver academic support services to nontraditional students anywhere at anytime (Dolence & Morris, 1995).

Students surveyed in 2002 indicated the top five services they were most satisfied with were the convenience of the registration process, the courtesy and helpfulness of the branch campus staff, the appearance of the local (branch) campus, the geographical location of the (branch) campus, and the ease in using the course schedule booklet. Students were most satisfied with the course registration process. Online course schedules and registration enable students to register for courses at their convenience. Online access also permits students to check course information such as added sections or changes in dates and times. Interestingly, the second through fourth top support services in 2002 did not involve the impact of technology. Students were satisfied with the customer service they received from the staff at the local continuing education office. Technology features do not substitute for personal interactions students have with university personnel. Nontraditional students are more successful when they receive support from their advisors, instructors, and other university staff (Aslanian, 2001; Ayers-Hilliard, 1999; Burton & Wellington, 1998; Miller Brown, 2000; Ross-Gordon, 1998). Nontraditional students also want a pleasant atmosphere and accessible locations for classes (Aslanian, 2001). The WMU branch office locations resemble corporate office buildings strategically located in convenient locations for ease and accessibility to adult students who attend courses in the evenings after work.
The academic support services identified by both sets of students dealt with services and processes that were under the control of the educational institution. Regular assessment of nontraditional student needs and the evaluation of services provided to nontraditional students is critical for retaining current students and attracting new students to higher continuing education programming (Cooper & Saunders, 2000; Kasworm & Marienau, 1997; Walvoord, 2003). Higher education institutions must support nontraditional students by providing them with academic support services they perceive as important in eliminating or reducing barriers created by procedures or physical structures.

Question 4: What institutional barriers are significant to nontraditional students in the year 2002?

Results showed that students perceive satisfaction with support services differently based on their demographics or characteristics. There were three significant findings from this question. First, the younger nontraditional students perceived institutional barriers or challenges with the core academic support services. These students felt challenged by the courses planned and their sequence for delivery. They also viewed lack of customer service from the continuing education campus as a barrier. These results are indicative of the changing demographics within the nontraditional student population. Increasingly, college students have nontraditional student characteristics thus the age of nontraditional students is getting younger (Choy, 2002; DeGabriele, 2001).

Second, students who received loans or grants to finance their tuition were satisfied with the academic logistical and administrative support services, which
included bursar policies and procedures. However, students who paid their own tuition or received tuition assistance from their employer where dissatisfied (or perceived barriers). Further investigation of these students is warranted to find out whether there are policies and procedures that make it difficult for them to make their tuition payments and if they receive information regarding available financing sources such as scholarships, grants and loans. Finally, the findings indicate that the students perceive differences in the academic support services offered by continuing education campus units. This lends support to importance of assessment and evaluation activities for individual continuing education units (Dolly, 1995).

Recommendations

To provide better academic support services to nontraditional students attending courses through WMU Extended University Programs and to ultimately impact enrollment management, the following recommendations should be considered by administrators.

1. Annually engage in an assessment or evaluation activity over the next three years to create trend data for the nontraditional student demographics and their perceived satisfaction with academic support services.

2. Commit to a plan for making long range and immediate changes based on the survey findings.

3. Consider diversity issues, which include gender, culture, and ethnicity in planning academic support services and academic programs.
4. Be flexible. The institution must be receptive to providing courses, policies, procedures, and services that support the needs of their nontraditional students.

Study Limitations

The surveys distributed in years 1995 and 2002 were not identical instruments. The 2002 survey reflects changes that include technological advancements for course registration and library services that were not available seven years ago. A future study should be conducted using the 2002 Student Satisfaction Survey as a benchmark. Also, the 2002 survey did not include ethnicity or marital status data. This additional demographic information would provide the institution important information for future program planning and appropriate support services. Future research should consider the impact of ethnicity and other demographic information to better understand the nontraditional student population attending the different WMU continuing education units and forecast programmatic and support services needs.

Conclusion

Western Michigan University has an impressive continuing education operation, which includes nine units plus distance education. The continuing education division, Extended University Programs (EUP), is responsible for over half of the institution's graduate enrollments. The majority of the graduate students attending EUP courses are working professionals who are part-time students. Assessment and evaluation activities will assist WMU in continuing to successfully serve this growing
student population. Western Michigan University is a model for comparable higher continuing education units at other institutions. This study hopes to serve as a valuable check-up model for other institutions to reference in exploring perceived student satisfaction of support services and for planning and evaluating their programs and services to nontraditional students.
Appendix A

1995 Confidential Student Services Assessment
August 4, 1993

Dear Colleague:

Western Michigan University launched the Campus III/Weekend College during Winter Semester, 1992, and since that time there have been many changes in its mode of operation. Many of these changes have occurred as a result of the feedback obtained from the Student Services Assessment Questionnaire which has been administered each semester since the program's inception.

This session, Summer 1993, the data collected from the Student Services Assessment Questionnaire will be included in a dissertation that may enable the University to further understand and facilitate student needs. Surveys are coded for the purpose of a follow-up only. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Participants may receive a report on the survey results by contacting the Office of Adult Learning Services (616) 387-4167.

Enclosed is a business reply envelope for your convenience. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Dolly
Director
c3
Enclosure
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT SERVICES ASSESSMENT

Please circle your response.

1. What is your reason for returning to school?
   A) Career Preparation
   B) Professional Transition
   C) Personal Crisis
   D) Personal Enrichment
   E) Other

2. Age?
   A) Under 25
   B) 25-34
   C) 35-44
   D) 45-54
   E) 55 and over

3. Sex?
   A) Male
   B) Female

4. Race?
   A) White (not of Hispanic origin)
   B) Black (not of Hispanic origin)
   C) Hispanic
   D) Asian/Pacific Islander
   E) Native American
   F) Other

5. Marital Status?
   A) Single
   B) Married
   C) Divorced
   D) Widow/Widower
   E) Other

6. Highest Degree?
   A) Associate
   B) Bachelor of Science or Art
   C) Master of Science or Art
   D) Other

7. What is your program affiliation?
   A) Education & Professional Development
   B) Educational Leadership
   C) Specialty Program/Alcohol and Drug Abuse
   D) General University Studies
   E) Other (please specify)

8. Miles traveled to class?
   A) Under 14
   B) 15-29
   C) 30-44
   D) 45-59
   E) Over 59

9. Employed?
   A) Full-time
   B) Part time
   C) Other

10. What is the primary source for your tuition?
    A) Self
    B) Family
    C) Full reimbursement by employer
    D) Partial reimbursement by employer
    E) Other
Services Needed on Weekends...
Read each of the following statements, and circle your response according to this scale.

1 = Definitely not needed
2 = Not needed
3 = Somewhat needed
4 = Needed
5 = Definitely needed

1. Courses
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Childcare service
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Health Center services
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Academic skills service (Areas include English, Math, Study Skills, Orientation, Campus facilities, i.e., library, computer lab)
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Library services
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Flexible schedule (Alternative to semester/term format)
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Academic advising services
   1 2 3 4 5

Services Needed on Weekends...
Read each of the following statements, and circle your response according to this scale.

1 = Definitely not needed
2 = Not needed
3 = Somewhat needed
4 = Needed
5 = Definitely needed

8. Weekend Facilitator on site (to accommodate student needs in areas such as admissions, registration, tuition and financial aid)
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Walk-in registration
   1 2 3 4 5

10. Phone registration
    1 2 3 4 5

11. Weekend schedule booklet (more information on policies, courses, registration, services and programs)
    1 2 3 4 5
Services needed on weekends...

Read each of the following statements, and circle your response according to this scale.

1 = Definitely not needed
2 = Not needed
3 = Somewhat needed
4 = Needed
5 = Definitely needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. Early morning library hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Promotional activities (Activities include media, college fairs and mailings.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Complete program (leading to degree or certificate programs)</td>
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<td>25. Central location (such as Sangren Hall)</td>
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<td>26. On-site Coordinator (to answer questions about weekend college program)</td>
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<td>27. Faculty/staff (knowledgeable about adult learners)</td>
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<td>28. Complimentary refreshments</td>
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<td>29. Nearby food services</td>
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<td>30. Accessible Parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. Financial Aid</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I am available to attend class only.</td>
<td>Yes □ No □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I am available to attend class any evening Monday-Thursday</td>
<td>Yes □ No □</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What other services would you like to see offered on weekends?

Additional Comments

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please return this form to the Office of Adult Learning Services by June 15, 1993.
Office of Adult Learning Services
D-212 Ellicott Hall
Western Michigan University

Revised 3/24/93
Appendix B

2002 Student Satisfaction Survey
October 11, 2002

Dear Student:

Extended University Programs is committed to continuous quality improvement in the delivery of degree and certificate programs at every Western Michigan University branch campus. With that goal in mind, I need your help.

A student satisfaction survey will soon be distributed in every off-campus course. I ask you to take the questionnaire home, complete it when you have a few spare minutes, and then drop it off at any campus by the deadline. The time allotted for distribution and collection of every survey is only three weeks, and I ask you to give it your thoughtful and prompt attention.

We hope to learn more about the demographics of our student body, the level of satisfaction with their degree programs, and what new programs may be needed in their geographic areas. We will tabulate every response and then decide which improvements deserve priority attention. Although the survey is intended for program improvement and is not for external publication, I will summarize what we learned and tell you how we plan to respond.

Before I close, I would like to emphasize that the survey you will receive is not a course evaluation or a faculty member evaluation. Nor is it a survey of your experiences on WMU's main campus in Kalamazoo. Rather, it is your assessment of how we, Extended University Programs, are serving you at branch campuses and how you feel about the program in which you are currently enrolled or plan to enroll. (PTC and PTG students are also encouraged to respond.)

In advance, thank you for participating in the survey. Please watch for its arrival soon.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Alan G. Walker, Ph.D.
Vice Provost
STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY
### MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use number 2 pencil only.
- Make dark marks that fill the oval completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks.

- **Correct Mark**
- **Incorrect Marks**

1. Are you an alumna or alumnus of Western Michigan University?
   - Yes
   - No

2. At what level are you currently taking courses at WMU?
   - Undergraduate
   - Graduate Certificate Program

3. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

4. How old are you?
   - Under 21 years
   - 21-25 years
   - 26-33 years
   - 34-45 years
   - over 45 years

5. Which WMU campus do you consider your “home” campus where you take most of your courses?
   - Battle Creek
   - Grand Rapids Downtown
   - Grand Rapids Belding
   - Holland
   - Kalamazoo
   - Traverse City

6. For how many credit hours are you currently enrolled?
   - 0
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
   - 8
   - 9
   - 10+

7. What is your current occupation?
   - Education
   - Public Administration
   - Health Care
   - Social Services
   - Engineering
   - Public Safety/Law Enforcement
   - Corrections
   - Other

8. OPTIONAL: What is your annual household income?
   - Under $10,000
   - $10,000 to $29,999
   - $30,000 to $49,999
   - $50,000 to $69,999
   - $70,000 to $89,999
   - $90,000 to $109,999
   - Over $110,000

9. Which of the following best describes your method of financing your education at Western Michigan University?
   - Tuition paid entirely by self
   - Tuition paid entirely by employer
   - Tuition paid partially by employer
   - Tuition paid through loans or grants

10. In which of the following degree or certificate programs are you currently formally admitted or seeking admission?
    - Communication (MA)
    - Industrial Psychology (MA)
    - Nonprofit Leadership & Administration
    - Public Administration (MPA)
    - Public Administration/Health Care (MPA/HCA)
    - Health Care Administration (Certificate)
    - Science Education (MA)
    - Public Affairs and Administration (PhD/DPA)
    - Business Administration (MBA)
    - Career & Technical Education (MS)
    - Counseling Education/Co-op Psychology (MA)
    - Educational Leadership (MA)
    - Educational Leadership (EdD)
    - Educational Leadership CTE Concentration (EdD)
    - Educational Technology Certificate (online)
    - Early Childhood Education (MA)
    - Elementary Education (MA)
    - Family and Consumer Sciences (MA)
    - Human Resource Development (MA)
    - Reading (MA)
    - Special Education Endorsement
    - Teaching the Middle School (MA)
    - 18-hour Prof. Teacher Certification Requirement
    - Electrical Engineering (MS)
    - Engineering Management (MS)
    - Industrial Engineering (MS)
    - Alcohol and Drug Abuse (Certificate)
    - Holistic Health Care (Certificate)
    - Master of Social Work (MSW)
    - Student Integrated Curriculum
    - Student Planned Curriculum (BA or BS)
    - Applied Liberal Studies (BA)
    - Social Science Studies (BS)
    - Professional Studies (BA)
    - Elementary Education (BA)
    - Family Studies/Child Develop Emphasis (BS)
    - Occupational Education Studies (BA)
    - Engineering Management Technology (BS)
    - Manufacturing Engineering (BS)
    - Health Studies (BS)
    - Interdisciplinary Health Services (BS)
    - Nursing (BSN)
    - Other

---

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11. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with your experience at the Western Michigan University campus where you take most of your courses. If an item does not apply to you, please select #3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety of course offerings in my degree program</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency with which a course is offered at my local campus</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The days of the week when courses are offered</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The geographical location of the local campus</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of parking</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of the WMU registration process</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case file of off-campus course schedule books</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of the tuition payment process</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, skill, availability, and responsiveness of academic advisors</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of purchasing textbooks</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of purchasing course packets</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of local campus facilities/classrooms</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to computer lab/cluster facility at the local campus</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of computers, printers, and software at the local campus</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease and reliability of computer dial-in access to WMU from home or office</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall courtesy and helpfulness of local campus staff</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on library services by a WMU librarian</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of academic library materials locally</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of WMU Direct Document Delivery Service</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Western library catalog, databases, indexes and abstracts</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with services provided by the following WMU offices or departments located on the WMU campus in Kalamazoo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office of Admissions concerning the admission process</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(For undergraduate students only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Admissions concerning your initial WMU credit evaluation</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships associated with obtaining loans, grants, or scholarships</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Services regarding the processes and services associated with tuition payment, financial &quot;holds&quot; or other student financial services</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Registrar concerning registration, drop, add or withdrawal procedures and deadlines</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Registrar concerning the graduation audit process</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMU Solutions Center (Help Desk) for solving computer-related problems</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My program's academic department in Kalamazoo</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall courtesy and helpfulness of WMU staff in Kalamazoo</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements as they pertain to your experience in courses taken through WMU Extended University Programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members who teach in Extended University Programs generally maintain high expectations of their students.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members are generally available for consultation if I need them.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken a WMU interactive television (ITV) course and would not hesitate to take another.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, my courses in Extended University Programs have been academically challenging.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am pleased with the overall quality of my experience at Western Michigan University.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more satisfied now than when I first began taking courses through Extended University Programs.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend WMU's Extended University Programs to a colleague.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Do you plan to continue taking courses at Western Michigan University after this semester?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No, I am graduating this semester.
   ○ No, for other reasons.

15. In the space below, please identify one or more degree programs NOT CURRENTLY OFFERED BY WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY IN YOUR HOME AREA that the University might consider introducing. (See degree choices in #10 for reference.)
   Your first recommendation ______________________________________________________________
   Your second recommendation ______________________________________________________________
   Your third recommendation ______________________________________________________________

16. Finally, do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements that will enable Western Michigan University to serve you and/or other students better?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   Please return your completed survey to your nearest WMU branch campus no later than November 20, 2003.

   Thank you very much for your response to this WMU Extended University Programs student satisfaction survey.

   Our analysis of students' responses will help Extended University Programs grow and improve.

   Please do not write in this area.
Appendix C

Research Approval From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Date: January 16, 2004

To: Charles Warfield, Principal Investigator
   Natalie Morton, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 04-01-10

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Academic Support Services Needs of Adult Nontraditional Students Attending Extended University Programs at Western Michigan University” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: January 16, 2005
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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University Continuing Education Association. (2002b, September). In depth trends. *In focus newsletter. 7*(7), 3.


