

Info:
Women's
Continuing
Education

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE
MINNESOTA PLAN FOR WOMEN'S CONTINUING EDUCATION

In the spring of 1960 the Carnegie Corporation of New York granted \$110,000 to the University of Minnesota for the first three years of a program of continuing education for women. Based on the assumption that most women marry and have children, the program will explore ways of bridging the gap of years between college graduation and a long period of potential productivity - personal or professional - after homemaking responsibilities have diminished.

The Minnesota Plan, as the program is called, is based on the philosophy that education is a continuing process, and that academic skills can and must be protected against deterioration through disuse a philosophy that applies to men as well as women. One of the aims of the plan is to eliminate the old conflict between homemaking and career that so many women have faced. If this is to be accomplished, men as well as women must readjust their thinking about role choice and role conflict. The program is thus of importance to both men and women.

Some Questions and Answers About the Plan

QUESTION: What is the Minnesota Plan?

ANSWER: It is a coordinating, advisory, and planning service designed to help able young women to prepare realistically for the multiple-role lives most of them will lead; to assist them in maintaining intellectual skills and academic competence during the family years; and to help them to secure advanced training, professional up-dating, or education for personal fulfillment during the years of maturity. For the most part, these aims are to be accomplished through the coordination of existing university resources, although some additional facilities will be added.

QUESTION: What are the objectives of the Minnesota Plan?

ANSWER: There are two objectives:

- 1) To return to the nation's manpower pool a large group of intelligent, educated women whose abilities would otherwise be underused during their mature years.
- 2) To increase the personal happiness of many women by opening new doors to them and by making the goals of the more distant future an integral part of their present lives.

QUESTION: How does the plan actually work?

ANSWER: It works in different ways for different women.

For the undergraduate and the graduate student:

- 1) A special counselor is available to help her with long-term life planning as well as with immediate problems of course selection. She and the counselor

will work together to develop ways in which she can systematically continue her education after she leaves the university.

- 2) In addition to, or instead of receiving individual counseling, she may participate in group discussions led by the counselor. Here she has the opportunity to argue out some basic questions about men's and women's roles, the function of educated people in a democratic society, vocational choice, and the like.
- 3) A special honors seminar on women's roles gives a few women each year the opportunity to explore the special needs and special opportunities that women have, and each participant carries out a research project on a vocation of special interest to her.

For the recent graduate or the able young woman whose college career has been interrupted, or the mature woman, who seeks to resume an interrupted career, to prepare for a new one, or to expand and develop new interests at a high level:

- 1) At orientation meetings the organization of the university, its admission and degree requirements, its apparent rigidity and actual flexibility will be explained for the benefit of those who need this information.
- 2) The special counselor will plan with her to continue, augment, or complete her education, working out a time-table that meets her individual needs realistically, and making full use of existing educational resources;
- 3) an expanding slate of offerings in the Extension Division, including both regular and special courses, will be taught in many ways and at many times, and may be taken either for credit or merely "for the record",
- 4) a continuous record of accomplishment is maintained in the Minnesota Plan office. Even if the woman moves to another state and enrolls for extension courses there, these may be part of her continuously growing record.
- 5) She will receive assistance in making use of the university regulation that permits credit by examination. In some cases this will mean that knowledge gained through professional-level work in community (or other) activities can be converted into academic credit.
- 6) Occasional coffee-hours and other social gatherings will give her an opportunity to meet other women with interests and problems like her own.

- 7) Beginning in 1961-62, plans call for a placement worker to discover and develop part-time jobs and at home jobs at a professional level.

QUESTION: You mentioned earlier that some new facilities will be added to those already in existence at the university. What are those?

ANSWER: Several have already been listed: the seminar on women's roles for undergraduates, the record keeping system, and the proposed placement service. Most important, though, will be new courses and seminars developed to meet the special needs of adult women and to implement the philosophy of the plan. Two such seminars are already in progress, one for its second year. More will be developed to meet the expressed needs of the women who use the services of the plan. They may be professional refresher courses or broadly conceived liberal arts offerings; they may meet over extended periods or in concentrated periods of a day or a weekend; they may be at a basic or a postgraduate level; and their content may be similar to that of existing university offerings or may be entirely different from any courses now available.

QUESTION: What's to prevent any woman from planning and carrying out her own educational program right now, without any special plan to help her?

ANSWER: Many women can do it and are doing it. But society in general, and college regulations and schedules in particular, make it difficult. Planning is often done too late, progress is so slow that motivation lags, friends are unsympathetic to the persistent efforts of the lone woman striving toward a goal which they cannot understand. The plan provides an institutional channel, smooths the way, for the kind of effort many individual women are now making on their own.

QUESTION: Is the plan open to any woman?

ANSWER: Among undergraduates and graduate students, the counseling services are available to any woman who sincerely wants to plan ahead for the kind of multiple-role life we have described. But it is especially important that the ablest women know about the ways in which the plan can enable them to protect the investment they and society have made in their education.

The extent to which the older woman, not now in college, can use the services offered by the plan will depend upon her education, accomplishments, problems, and goals. She must be, at the time of applying, a resident of Minnesota, and must be intellectually and academically prepared to do college level work.

QUESTION: Will the plan always be limited to Minnesota?

ANSWER: The University of Minnesota is carrying out a pilot program. If the objectives of the plan are to be realized fully,

many colleges and universities across the country must undertake similar projects, perhaps coordinating their efforts through a central committee.

QUESTION: This is just what I've been looking for! How do I get started?

ANSWER: Get an application blank, fill it out, and return it. This will tell us enough about you for us to take the next step.

Write, phone or come to:

WOMEN'S CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM
106 First-Temporary South of Mines (TSMa)
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis 14, Minnesota

Federal 2-8158, extension 409

Ask for a student application if you are a regularly matriculated graduate or undergraduate student in one of the degree granting colleges of the university.

Ask for an adult application if you don't fit the above description.

For further information about the Plan, consult Dr. Virginia L. Senders, Coordinator, at the above address.

For information about the special seminars and newly developed Extension Division offerings, consult Mrs. Elizabeth Cless, Assistant to the Dean for Liberal Arts Programs, General Extension Division, 153 Nicholson Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota, Federal 8-8791.

VLS/wjm