

Four Northshore women, all "housewives" with children, have been, in their view, "revitalized" by their experience in the Capilano College special General Studies Program. Tia Strachan, Alexis Musson, "Jimmy" Tait, and Julie Thrift, have all been part-time "mature" students in the two semester "CAP A" general studies program. This program, which is similar to the Arts I Program at UBC and the new General Studies degree program at SFU, carries a bundle of academic credits transferable to the universities.

However, university transfer was not the main motive of these women in registering the program. Like many others over the age of 25 who signed up -- the 45 students in the program ranged evenly from 18 to 55 -- they were timidly looking for some stimulation and new horizons in reading. The result? Jimmy Tait, one of the older of the "mature" students exclaimed, "the program has given me a tremendous amount of confidence in myself. I had left school at 16 and soon was into marriage and children. Ever since I have felt thwarted regarding my education and my ability. But this experience has solved all that. Now I am propagandizing everyone I meet about the College program and urging them not to wait to go back to school." Alexis Musson put it this way. "I didn't even think I was smart enough to write an essay as it was so many years since I had gone to school. Now I know that I can write a good essay and can read and discuss things I never dreamed of tackling before."

The four women were part of the total of seven in the program including a 50 year old businessman, who registered as "mature" students. Capilano College encourages the registration of such students, regardless of previous school standing or non-standing, as long as they are over 19 years of age and "in the opinion of the Registrar can benefit from instruction." In this regard Tia Strachan, who felt the program and the reading had changed her attitudes and outlook, explained "I had been wanting to go back to school for years. I had always regretted not having gone to high school, thinking all along that I had to have at least my grade 12 before the College would touch me. I never knew such a thing as a mature student existed.

The General Studies "CAP A" Program was offered for the first time



this last Fall. It is a one year, two semester program consisting of nine hours of instruction-discussion each week, mainly related to a series of readings from Plato through to the present and all geared to exposing the student to a variety of different life styles and ideas. One of the instructors in the program, Dr. Francis Burstein, indicated that next year the central theme would be the images of man. In an interview along with the four students she also spoke with warm enthusiasm of the contribution of the mature students to the success of the CAP A program. "The mature students became completely integrated into the group at an early point, with age becoming of no importance. I also was delighted at the markedly high level of achievement of the mature entry students, who received all of the 5 As given in the first semester of the program."

Now that they have completed the two semester program all the women are eager to do more work and reading. All of them were keenly disappointed that the College does not yet offer a 2nd year of this special program, claiming they wouldn't hesitate to sign up for it. Two of the women now plan to take other courses at the College next semester. Alexis Musson, the one who originally felt she couldn't write an essay and incidentally got an A in the program, hopes to transfer into the General Studies degree program at SFU. Julie Thrift another A student has no definite plans for future courses; " I just want to do a lot more reading. I am now reading things I would never dared try before and enjoying them tremendously. I have kept lists of all the books referred to in the program that looked interesting and now I just can't wait to get at them."

So how about you out there? There is another "CAP A" program starting at Capilano College this September.