

Program and was accepted to start in the Fall of 2006. I was so nervous the first day of classes, after all I had been out of school for a long time. I questioned if I was going to be able to do the work along with juggling a full-time job and family. My apprehensions were soon set at ease when I realized the support that Meredith offers their students, young and old! This is my second year at Meredith and I am so glad that I am part of the Meredith family. The professors and fellow students in the Social Work program are helpful and supportive. I would not be a successful student without them.

Caroline Warren

When I first decided to come back to school as a non-traditional student, many questions flooded my mind. Am I too old? Will I be able to handle the course load? Do I have the time? How will I juggle school, work, and the kids? What sacrifices will I have to make? These questions and others constantly plagued me until I attended a 23+ Information Session here at Meredith. After listening to the positive experiences of the non-traditional students at the session, I gained the courage needed to enroll in the program. Now that I am a senior, graduating in May 2008, being a non-traditional student means to me having the courage, determination, and perseverance to accomplish a life long goal.

By facing my fears head on, I have encouraged myself to build new friendships with traditional as well as non-traditional students here at Meredith. Relationships with the traditional stu-

dents on campus have been rewarding and have helped me to bridge the generation gap. The non-traditional students have been supportive, enriching, and a source of inspiration. I value these relationships because they have been the driving force that has furthered my dream of obtaining a degree in Social Work.

My life experiences were beneficial in helping me overcome the day-to-day barriers and obstacles as a non-traditional student. These experiences have prepared me and given me the determination and perseverance needed to succeed at Meredith. Being a non-traditional student has also given my daughters a tangible role model that they can emulate. They now see that if they set their minds on a goal, no matter how arduous, they can accomplish it.

Although the path of a non-traditional student is demanding, the pride, self-worth, dignity and respect gained are worth the journey. I will forever be proud of my accomplishments and treasure this experience for life.



-Nikki Hicks

What does it mean to be a nontraditional student? It really depends on how you define the concept of a traditional student. The goals of both the traditional and nontraditional student are essentially the same – garner an education that will afford them better opportunities in their future personal and professional lives. It isn't

necessarily age that separates them, but rather the source of their motivations.

Early spring of 2005, having been recently laid off from my job, I began to do some introspection and realized that there was more that I wanted out of life. The IT boom of the late 90s was over and the chances of me returning to that arena were highly unlikely without going back to school. Truth be told, I had no desire to return. Life has taught me that just because you have the aptitude to do a thing, it doesn't mean you necessarily have the desire. Armed with that knowledge, and acceptance of the fact that I have always wanted to study Spanish, I decided to seek a second degree here at Meredith College.

It wasn't until I began the application process that I became fully acquainted with the idea of the "nontraditional student". However, it didn't take long to realize that there can be an immense difference in the dynamics faced by these students. Older students, mothers, etc. all have to deal with not only the pressures of everyday life, but they must now shoulder the burden of academic life. As an older student who already has a degree, getting acclimated to being in a collegiate environment again didn't take long. However, because of my choice of major, Spanish, finding a job that fit my skill set and worked around my class schedule, was tricky. At one point, I was a part time student with three classes and three part time jobs. Add the stress of health issues without having health insurance (unable to work a full time job). I mention this to demonstrate that

the concerns of most traditional students are greater than what will I wear to formal, will daddy get me the red car or the blue one, etc. There have been times when I have been frustrated with some of my experiences at Meredith, but I can attribute some of that to an old saying learned from my mother, "I can see further than any stone you can throw, baby." There are some lessons (e.g., what's really important in life) that will only come with time, not necessarily with age.

Coming from a coed, public institution (I love you, College of Charleston!) to a private, all girl school has been an interesting experience. Meredith College offers opportunities for its nontraditional students to become involved in school traditions and organizations. The 23+ Program, WINGS, and AMC provide us with invaluable information related to our needs as nontraditional students. Understanding that there is room for improvement in everything, as a nontraditional student, I would really like to see a greater representation of nontraditional students at campus events. The reality is that a mother with small children isn't likely to be able to attend a meeting in the parlor at 9pm. It's also unlikely that the commuter from Knightsdale or Zebulon wants to leave that same meeting and drive home after 10pm.

As we celebrate non-traditional students and their contributions to the diversity of our great campus, I am hopeful that everyone from faculty and staff to class and organization presidents will consider ways in which to make these valuable members of our academic community

feel more welcome and included in their activity planning. Lip service is a disservice to all. And to my fellow nontraditional students, and I am also preaching to myself, when you get the opportunity to participate, do so. You owe it to yourself to get the full collegiate experience. Stop living on the periphery and get in the game. You're an Angel now. SOAR!!!



-Antoinette Dickson

I enrolled in Meredith College six years ago through the 23+ program. I was welcomed with open arms by LeNelle Patrick and Donna Pilkington, who, to this day, are women who I can talk to about any concern or need. The staff and faculty at Meredith College have always embraced the non-traditional students; I have never been treated "special" by any of my teachers.

I wanted to have the "Meredith Experience" so I immersed myself into the community. I went on a service trip to Belize, I joined the Psychology Club, and I became President of the Communication Club. The age difference was never an issue with my newly made friends on campus; in fact, when they heard that I was 34 several people did not believe me; maybe it's my youthful spirit or my baby face! I have always loved the intimate classroom setting, and I