

Trends

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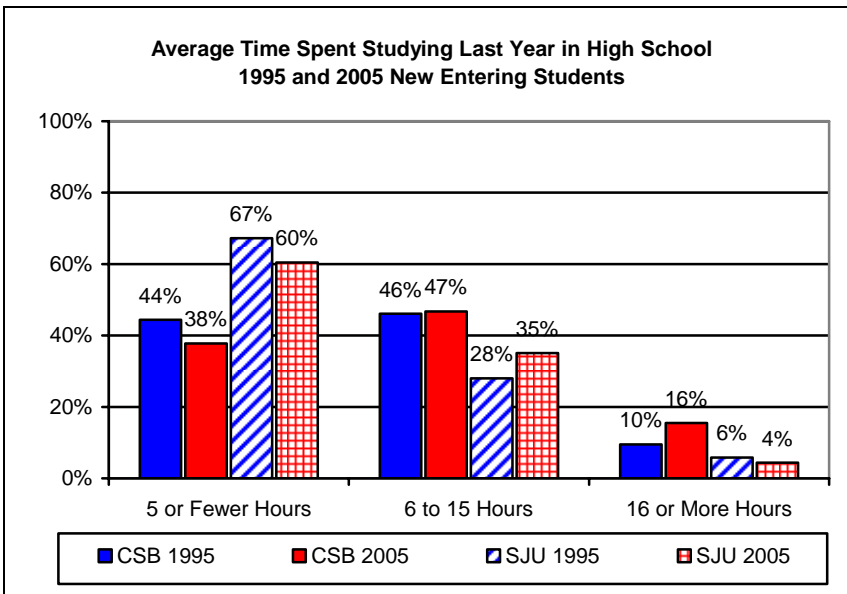
A Research Newsletter Prepared by the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Communication

Pre-College Engagement of New CSB/SJU Students

Academic Engagement

Saint Benedict and Saint John's both enroll high achieving new students. They most often are among the top students in their high schools and in the top college quartile of entrance exam scorers in the country. Nonetheless, a number of key indicators suggest they arrive without a well-developed sense of intellectual engagement. While they expect to excel academically in college and are quite confident of their academic and intellectual ability, a significant number report having been only marginally engaged – or challenged – by their high school academic experience.

- *High school study time remains low.* In fall 2005, 14% of all new CSB students and more than one-third (36%) of all new SJU students said they studied two or fewer hours per week in high school. The study habits of new SJU students are similar to those of men attending highly selective Catholic colleges nationally. New CSB students, on the other hand, report spending more time on academic work than their peers at selective Catholic colleges nationally.



More than 90% of all new students reported that they studied at least occasionally with other students, and more than half said they had tutored another student while in high school. Most were at least somewhat engaged with their teachers, as well. Nearly one-quarter of new students reported frequently discussing ideas with a teacher outside of class and nearly 90% had talked with a teacher about a college or career.

- *Students report frequent boredom in class.* Similar to what new students reported a decade ago, fully one-third of all new CSB/SJU students in fall 2005 said they frequently were bored in their high school classes. The classroom experiences of new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students are similar to those reported by new students attending private colleges nationally. New SJU students were significantly more likely than their CSB peers to report frequent boredom in their

During high school, new CSB/SJU students were highly engaged in community and social activities but only marginally academically engaged.

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high school classes (39% vs. 22%). In total, more than 95% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students reported being at least occasionally bored in class during their senior year in high school.

- Though many said they were often bored in their high school classes, many also reported they were frequently “overwhelmed by all I had to do.” More than 85% of all new students in fall 2005 reported being at least occasionally overwhelmed, and more than one-quarter said they frequently felt overwhelmed. Young women were fully two and a half times as likely as young men to say they frequently felt overwhelmed in high school (39% vs. 15%).

Social and Community Engagement

Though indicators of academic engagement were mixed, new entering CSB and SJU students reported high levels of engagement in social and community activities, including volunteer service, work, and student clubs. In addition, similar to their predecessors throughout the years, new CSB/SJU students last fall were highly engaged in sports and fitness activities while in high school.

- *Most students volunteer regularly.* About 9 in 10 new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students committed time each week to volunteer and community service activities while they were in high school. Among those who reported regular service work, more than half committed between one and five hours every week. Rates of volunteerism have increased in the last decade; in 1995, less than three-quarters of all new CSB/SJU students reported regularly volunteering while in high school. Saint Benedict and Saint John's students are more likely than their peers at private colleges nationally to report regular volunteer service.
- *Most students hold paying jobs.* In fall 2005, 70% of all new CSB/SJU students indicated they worked for pay during their senior year in high school. Among those who reported having a job, 40% worked at least 11 hours per week, and more than 1 in 9 worked at least 20 hours per week. New Saint John's students were somewhat less likely than their Saint Benedict colleagues to report having worked, but SJU students were slightly more likely than CSB students to report working at least 20 hours per week. Interestingly, even though the price of tuition at colleges everywhere has risen dramatically in the last ten years, new CSB and SJU students today are *less* likely than those a decade ago to report having a job in high school. Students today also report having worked fewer hours per week in high school than students ten years ago.
- *Significant engagement in high school activities.* More than 85% of all new CSB/SJU students regularly participated in student clubs or activities in high school. Nearly 60% reported spending at least three hours every week participating in student clubs or groups.
- *Time for exercise and sports still significant.* Athletics and fitness matter to our new students. Over 90% of all new CSB/SJU students dedicated at least some time in high school to sports or fitness activities. Fully three-quarters said they spent at least two hours every day on those activities, and 1 in 7 students said they spent over 20 hours a week exercising or participating in sports. The typical new student devoted between one and two hours per day on sports and fitness. In total, new students here (and nationally) report spending more time on sports-related activities than they do on homework.
- *Spirituality important.* Most new entering CSB and SJU students describe themselves as religious. Fully two-thirds said they frequently attended religious services (only 7% said they never attended). Nearly 40% indicated that they spend at least one hour every week praying or meditating. Less than 1 in 5 new students said they never prayed or meditated. The vast majority of our new students believe spiritual development is important and likely during college. More than 80% of new students in fall 2005 said there was at least some chance they would strengthen their religious beliefs and convictions while in college. More than half said that integrating spirituality into their lives was a very important or essential life objective.
- *Students traveling outside the United States.* Nearly half (45%) of all new CSB/SJU students in fall 2005 reported traveling or studying outside of the United States while in high school. Women were more likely than men to have traveled outside of the country (50% vs. 39%). Those who had traveled abroad as high school students were much more likely to identify opportunities to study abroad as a very important reason for enrolling at CSB/SJU (47% vs. 29%).