

# Trends

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

## Collaborative, Integrative, and Experiential Learning

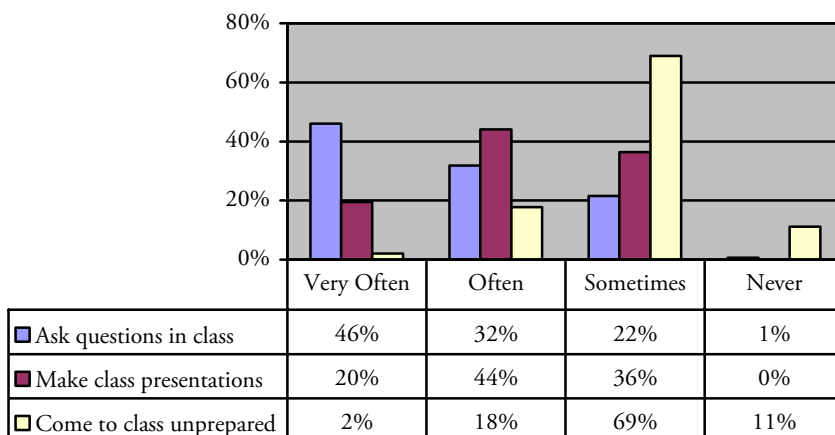
The 2005-2006 CSB/SJU Senior Survey was administered to Saint Benedict and Saint John's seniors in October 2005. Fully 63% of the senior class completed the survey. Modeled in part on the *National Survey of Student Engagement*, the survey is designed to provide students with an opportunity to describe and evaluate their experiences at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. A portion of the survey asked students how often they engaged in different educational activities in order to assess the amount of active and interactive learning in which students partake. This issue of *Trends* summarizes students' responses to those questions.

### Active and Collaborative Learning

- Classroom Participation.** Nearly half of all CSB/SJU seniors indicate that they "very often" ask questions in class or contribute to classroom discussions. CSB/SJU students are as likely as their peers at liberal arts colleges nationally to indicate that they regularly participate in classroom discussions. The vast majority of students report that they typically come to class prepared to contribute, though only 1 in 10 indicate that they always complete their assigned work before coming to class.

About two-thirds of all CSB and SJU seniors say that they frequently ("often" or "very often") make in-class presentations, identical to the response from students attending liberal arts colleges nationally. All CSB/SJU seniors indicate that they had presented in class at least sometimes. Women were more likely than men to describe themselves as active classroom participants.

**Classroom Participation Indicators**



- Collaborative Learning.** Fully three-quarters of all 2005-2006 CSB/SJU seniors indicate that they frequently work in groups or on group projects, though women are nearly twice as likely as men to say that they "very often" do group work. Seven in ten seniors report that they at least sometimes tutor or teach other students. Students majoring in the natural sciences are the most likely to indicate that they frequently tutor or teach other students (29% compared to an average of 16% for all other divisions).

CSB/SJU students are academically engaged and credit the colleges for providing a comprehensive educational experience.

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COLLEGE OF  
Saint Benedict



Saint John's  
UNIVERSITY

- *Engagement with Faculty.* Students describe close and positive relationships with faculty. About 85% of all 2005-2006 CSB/SJU seniors identify a faculty member as a mentor or role model. More than one-third of all CSB and SJU seniors say that they frequently discuss ideas with faculty outside of class, and 48% report that they have worked with faculty on a scholarly task (such as a research project).

Though they describe close and positive associations with faculty, Saint Benedict and Saint John's students are somewhat less likely than their peers nationally to talk with faculty about their career plans. While 55% of all seniors at liberal arts colleges nationally indicate that they frequently discuss career plans with faculty, just 48% of all CSB students and 37% of all SJU students said the same.

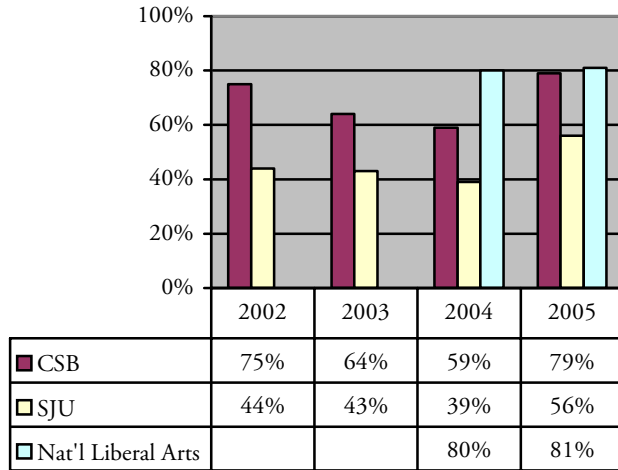
## Integrative Learning

- The coordinate mission of the colleges seeks to provide "an integrative environment for learning which stresses intellectual challenge, open inquiry, collaborative scholarship, and artistic creativity." More than two-thirds of all seniors (69%) say that the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University emphasize learning outside of the classroom or in non-academic experiences.
- Not surprising at residential liberal arts colleges, classroom discussions often continue after class. Nearly three-quarters of all seniors indicate that they frequently discuss ideas from their reading or classes after class. Women and men are equally likely to report that they frequently continue classroom discussions outside of class. The responses from CSB/SJU students match those from students at baccalaureate liberal arts institutions nationally.
- Nearly eight in ten CSB/SJU students indicate that they frequently put together ideas from different courses when completing assignments or discussing in class. About nine in ten students report that they frequently worked on projects that required integrating ideas or information from various sources. Students majoring in the humanities were most likely to indicate that they had integrated ideas (95% compared to 84% for all other divisions.)

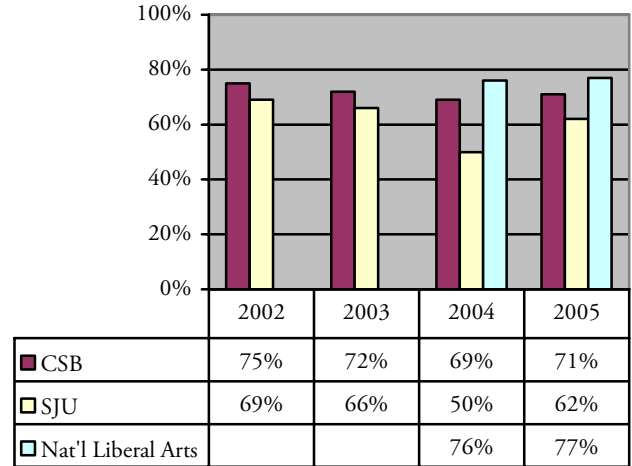
## Experiential Learning

- Fully two-thirds of all seniors report that they have completed an internship, practicum, field experience, or clinical assignment. This percentage is slightly less than the response from seniors at other liberal arts colleges nationally (77%). Internships are increasingly important to college students nationally. This fall, 95% of all new entering CSB/SJU students described the availability of internships as an important college characteristic.
- Two-thirds of all CSB/SJU seniors have participated in a community service or volunteer activity and 44% took a course with a service learning component.
- Sixty percent of all CSB/SJU seniors indicate that they studied abroad, significantly higher than the national average for study abroad participation. The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University are ranked number three nationally among baccalaureate institutions for total number of study abroad students in the annual report on international education, *Open Doors 2005*, published by the Institute of International Education. This fall, eight in ten new entering students reported that study abroad opportunities at CSB/SJU were an important factor in deciding to enroll here.
- Fully 85% of all seniors report that they regularly participate in co-curricular activities like student clubs, student government, or campus publications. A similar percentage indicates that they spend time each week exercising or participating in intercollegiate athletics or intramurals.
- About one quarter of CSB/SJU seniors indicate that they engaged in a semester-long research or creative activity – and more than 80% say that they typically spend at least some time every week engaged in activities developing new knowledge or original creative work. Nearly 60% of all seniors indicate that they participated in a culminating senior experience such as a capstone course or senior thesis project.

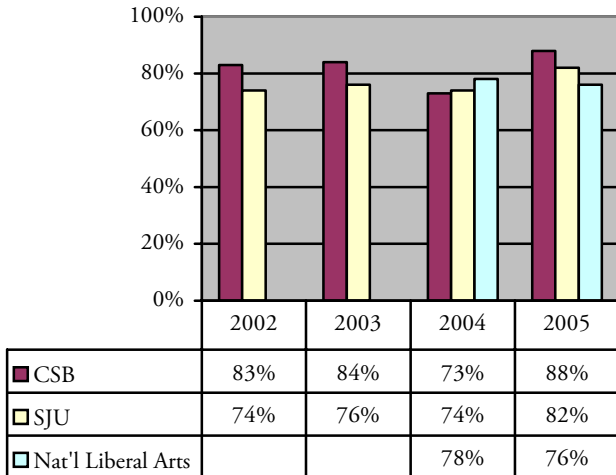
**Percentage of Students who Participated in...  
Community Service or Volunteer Work**



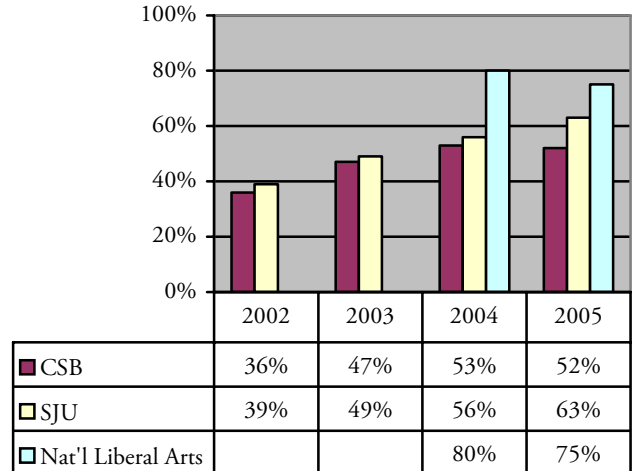
**Practicum, Internship, Field Experience  
or Clinical Assignment**



**Co-curricular Activities  
(student clubs, campus publications, etc.)**



**Culminating Senior Experience  
(capstone course, senior thesis, etc.)**



The *CSB/SJU Senior Survey* is conducted annually by the Office of Planning, Research and Communication. 478 seniors completed the online survey in fall 2005. The sampling error was +/-2.7% (95% confidence interval) for the overall data. This sample contains representations from all majors as well as a wide range of GPAs. Department and division summary data from the 2005 survey is available by contacting Jon McGee at 5287 ([jmcgee@csbsju.edu](mailto:jmcgee@csbsju.edu)) or Kathryn Enger at 5452 ([kenger@csbsju.edu](mailto:kenger@csbsju.edu)). Past issues of the *Trends* research newsletter are available at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/trends/>.