

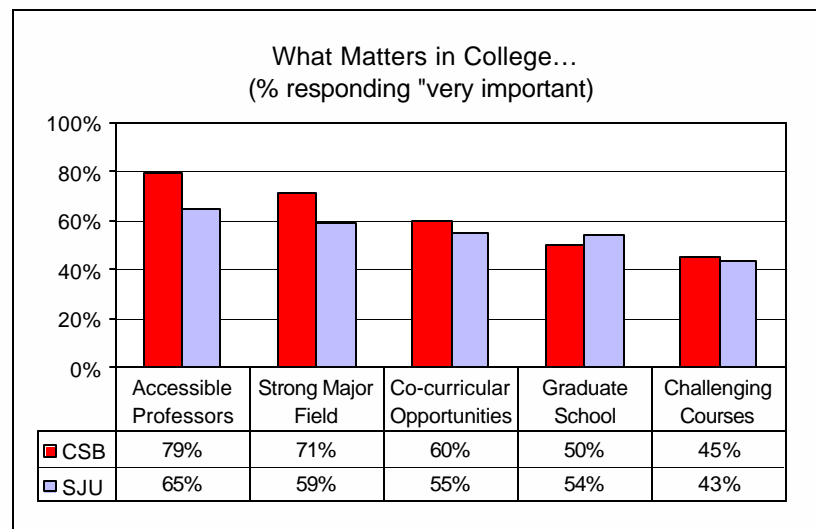
Most new CSB/SJU students expect to have a positive and academically successful experience.

Collegiate Expectations of new CSB/SJU Students

Last fall, 765 new CSB and SJU students, representing nearly 80% of the new entering class, completed the ACE-sponsored *American Freshman* survey. Nationally, new students at more than 400 colleges completed the survey, the longest running student research project in American higher education. This issue of *Trends*, the second of a two-part series summarizing new student characteristics, examines the collegiate expectations of our new students before they began classes last fall. A complete profile of new CSB/SJU students will be available at the end of January.

Key College Expectations

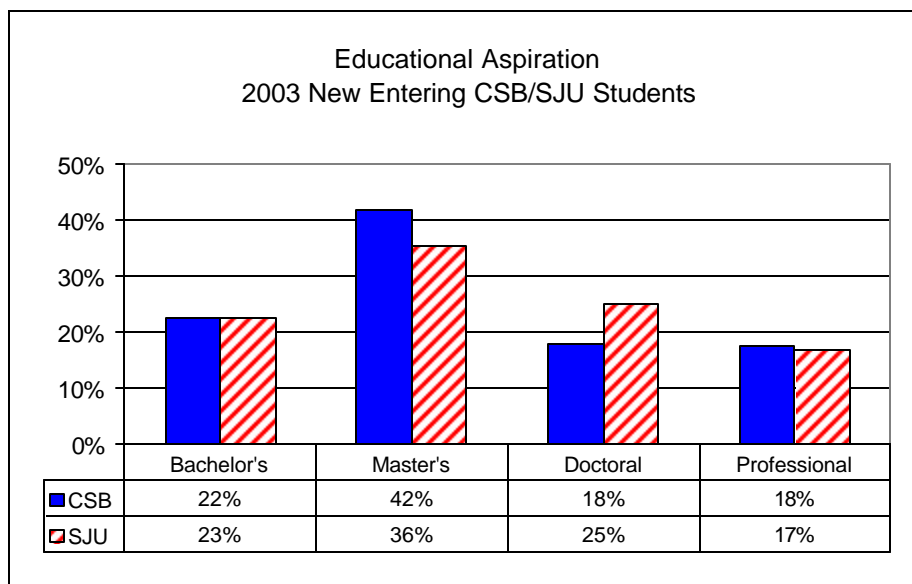
- Most new entering CSB and SJU students expect to have a positive experience at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Nearly two-thirds of all new students last fall indicated that chances were "very good" they would be satisfied with their undergraduate experience here. CSB/SJU students are more likely than their peers at highly selective Catholic colleges nationally to expect a positive experience. Nationally, fewer than 6 in 10 new Catholic college students expect to be satisfied with their college. Our students' apparent pre-disposition to expect a positive experience at CSB/SJU surely supports the colleges' higher than average retention and completion rates. Last fall, 97% of all 2003-04 CSB/SJU seniors rated their experience at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University as good or excellent.
- New students were provided with a list of college characteristics and asked to indicate how important they were to them at CSB and SJU. Accessible professors was the most important characteristic cited by both Saint Benedict and Saint John's students. In total, 72% of all new students identified accessible faculty as very important. Two-thirds of all new students also said that a strong department in their major field of study was a very important expectation. Interestingly, in spite of their interest in the accessibility of their professors and a strong major field of study, only 42% also indicated that chances were "very good" that they would regularly communicate with faculty. And only 44% described challenging academic courses as very important.



- The typical new Saint Benedict and Saint John's student in fall 2003 graduated in the top 25% of her or his high school class, had a high school grade average of nearly 3.6, and earned a composite ACT college entrance exam score of 24.9. In addition, almost two-thirds described their

intellectual self-confidence as above average in relation to their peers, and nearly 80% rated their academic ability as above average. It is not surprising, then, that most new students said they expected to earn good grades while at CSB/SJU. Two-thirds of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students last fall reported that they expected to achieve at least a "B" grade average while in college. Their expectations as new students are well founded. The mean cumulative grade point average among 2003-04 CSB and SJU seniors, who had similar expectations as new students three falls earlier, was 3.31.

- Similar to new four-year college students across the country, fully three-quarters of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students in fall 2003 indicated that they expected to eventually complete a graduate or professional degree. Men and women were about equally likely to say they would earn an advanced degree. Among those expecting to complete a graduate degree, almost 40% identified a Master's degree as their objective. Though the overwhelming majority of new students cited a graduate school aspiration, only 52% said that academic advising in support of graduate school placement was very important. Our students' graduate school aspiration remains strong through their undergraduate experience. Last fall, more than 80% of all CSB/SJU seniors indicated that they planned to eventually obtain a graduate or professional degree (though each year fewer than 20% of all graduates immediately enroll in graduate school).



- Only 35% of all new entering Saint Benedict and Saint John's students viewed the opportunity to attend a single gender college as a positive factor influencing their enrollment decision – and 40% said it had a negative influence. However, 43% of all new students (52% of women and 33% of men) indicated that opportunities to participate in gender-focused educational, social, and spiritual programs at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University were very important (nearly 90% described those opportunities as important or very important).
- Fully 80% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students said there was at least some chance that they would participate in a study abroad program at CSB/SJU – 49% indicated they were very likely to do so. More than two-thirds reported that study abroad opportunities at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University positively influenced their decision to enroll here. Nationally, only one-third of all new students attending highly selective Catholic colleges last fall indicated they were likely to participate in a study abroad program. Study abroad participation rates at CSB/SJU are significantly higher than national averages. Fully half of the senior class this year has studied abroad, compared to just 36% of all seniors at baccalaureate liberal arts colleges nationally.

Departments identified as a probable major by at least 10 new entering students may request detailed summary data comparing their students' characteristics with all new entering students. For additional information, please contact Jon McGee at 5287 or at jmcgee@csbsju.edu. If you would like to read past issues of *Trends*, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/Trends/trends.htm>.