

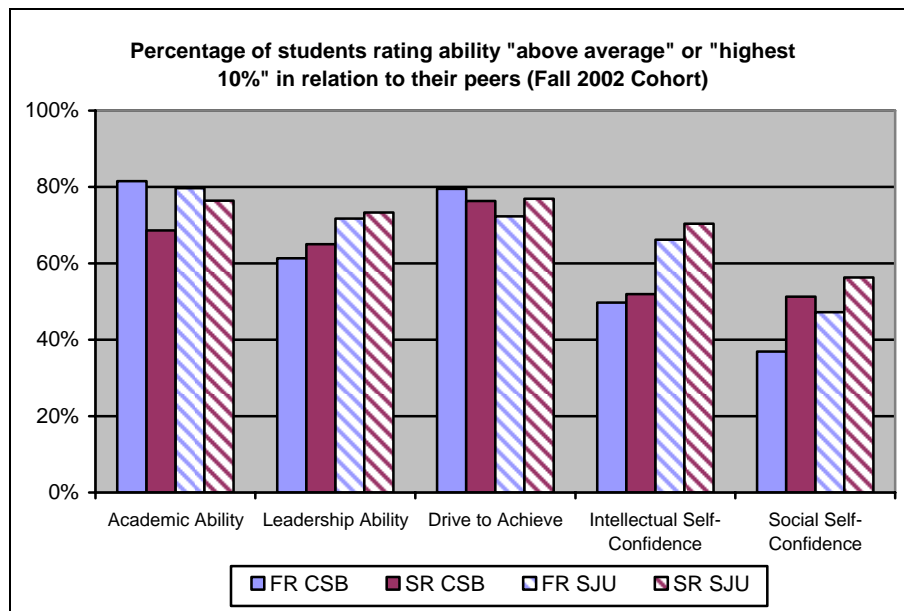
Trends

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CSB/SJU Senior Self-Evaluation

The *CSB/SJU New Entering Student Survey* asks students to rate their abilities in relation to their peers in a number of different areas, including academic ability, leadership, and social and intellectual self-confidence. Similar to prior cohorts of first-year students, the typical new student in fall 2002 rated herself or himself as above average in most areas. Last fall, as part of the *2005-06 CSB/SJU Senior Survey*, these students were again asked to evaluate themselves in relation to their peers. This issue of *Trends* summarizes key findings for the class of 2006.



Academic Ability

- In fall 2002, 8 in 10 new entering students rated their academic ability as above average or in the top 10% when compared to their peers. When asked the same question as seniors in fall 2005, CSB and SJU students were typically more modest in their response. Nonetheless, approximately 70% of seniors still described their academic ability as above average.
- While women rated their academic ability slightly higher than men as first-years, the same women ranked themselves significantly lower than their male peers as seniors. Fully three-quarters of SJU seniors rated their academic abilities as above average, compared to 69% of CSB students. Senior men were much more likely than senior women to rate their academic ability as being among the highest 10% (25% vs. 14%).
- When controlling for grade point average—examining only those with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher—the differences between men and women were even greater. Over half (56%) of all high achieving SJU students rated their academic ability among the highest 10%, compared to only 27% of CSB students. Regardless of gender, the highest achieving students expressed the greatest confidence in their academic ability—though the threshold for placing oneself among the highest 10% was higher for women than for men. The mean grade point average (GPA) for women describing their academic ability as in the top 10% was 3.70, compared to just 3.62 among men.

While most CSB/SJU seniors express confidence in their academic and social abilities, men and women continue to rate themselves differently.

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Leadership Ability

- Approximately 70% of all CSB/SJU seniors rated their leadership ability as above average or in the top 10%. Similar to other self-evaluated abilities, women were less likely than men to rate their leadership abilities as above average or among the highest 10% (65% vs. 73%). Significant gender gaps remained even among the highest achieving students (those with GPAs of 3.5 or above).
- When asked how much their CSB/SJU experience had contributed to the development of their leadership skills, fully three-quarters of all CSB/SJU seniors said “quite a bit” or “very much.” The percentage of students describing their leadership abilities as above average or in the top 10% among their peers grew between their first and fourth years. The change was especially noticeable among women; the number of CSB students giving their leadership abilities the highest marks grew from 17% in their first year to 23% in their senior year.

Intellectual Self-Confidence

- About 60% of all CSB/SJU seniors rated their intellectual self-confidence as above average or in the highest 10% among their peers, a rating similar to their assessment as first-year students.
- Gender differences that existed among new CSB and SJU students in fall 2002 continued through their senior year. Seven in ten senior men rated their intellectual self-confidence as above average, while only about half (52%) of all senior women responded similarly. Gender gaps persisted even among high achieving students. Fully eight in ten (83%) high-achieving SJU students described their intellectual self-confidence as above average or in the top 10%, compared to only six in ten (60%) high-achieving CSB students. Not surprisingly, seniors with lower grade averages were less likely than their high achieving peers to rate their intellectual self-confidence highly.

Drive to Achieve

- CSB and SJU seniors rated themselves highly and similarly in “drive to achieve” on the *2005-06 Senior Survey*. Fully three-quarters (77%) of all seniors rated themselves above average or in the highest 10% in relation to their peers. However, men and women are likely driven to achieve for different reasons. Gender differences were obvious when seniors were asked to rank themselves on “competitiveness.” While less than half of women rated themselves as above average or in the top 10%, nearly 7 in 10 men said the same (69%).

Social Self-Confidence

- Fully half (53%) of all CSB/SJU students consider their social self-confidence to be above average or in the top 10%. Seniors’ assessment of their social self-confidence was twelve percentage points higher than their assessment as first year students.
- Gender gaps in social self-confidence remained from the first-year to the senior year, but the gap did shrink during college. Fifty-six percent of SJU seniors rated their social self-confidence as above average or in the top 10%, compared to 51% of all CSB seniors.

Conclusions and Issues

Data from the *CSB/SJU Senior Survey* do not allow us to determine the cause of gender differences in self-assessment ratings, nor do they make it particularly clear that SJU students systemically overrate their abilities or that CSB students systematically underrate theirs. Nonetheless, the data do raise a number of important questions for us:

1. Given our mission and commitment to gender education, should we expect differences that exist at the time of first enrollment to narrow or disappear over four years?
2. In general, do we expect our students to be more confident about their abilities when they graduate, irrespective of gender?