

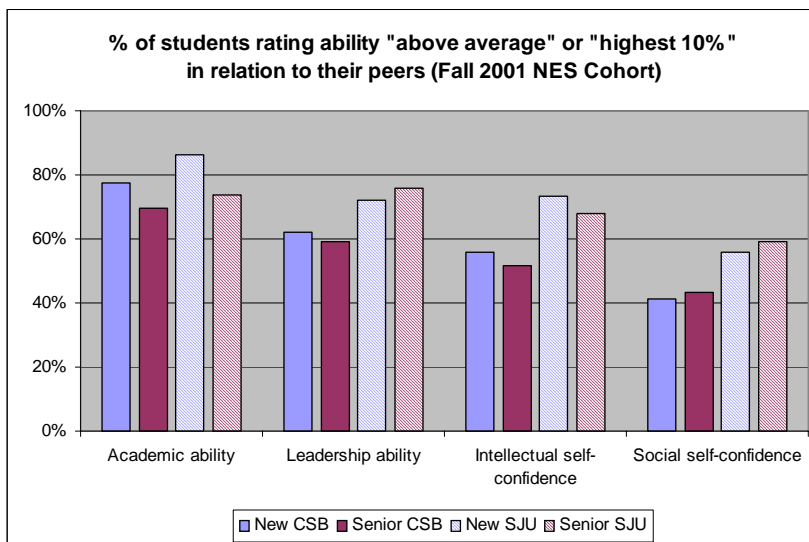
Trends

March 2005
Vol. 5, Issue 14

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

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. With the exception of social self-confidence, the typical new student in fall 2001 rated herself or himself as above average. Last fall, as part of the *2004-05 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 2005 graduating seniors.



Academic Ability

- In fall 2001, 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 last fall, CSB and SJU students were typically more modest in their response. Nonetheless, approximately 70% of seniors still described their academic ability as above average.
- In both their first year and their senior year, there were significant differences between responses given by men and women. Nearly three-quarters of SJU students rated their academic abilities as above average, compared to 69% of CSB students. Senior men were one-third more likely than senior women to rate their academic ability as being among the highest 10% (22% 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. Nearly half (48%) of all high achieving SJU students rated their academic ability among the highest 10%, compared to only 29% 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 considerably higher for women than for men. The mean grade point average (GPA) for women describing their academic ability as in the top 10% was 3.82, compared to just 3.56 among men.

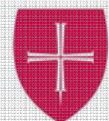
Leadership Ability

- Approximately 70% of all CSB/SJU seniors rated their leadership ability as above average or in the

CSB/SJU seniors continue to express great confidence in their academic and social abilities.

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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 top 10% (59% vs. 76%). 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, nearly 70% of all CSB/SJU seniors said “quite a bit” or “very much.” More women than men said “very much” (30% vs. 22%). Even so, the percentage of women describing their leadership abilities as in the top 10% among their peers remained unchanged between their first-year and their third-year (19% – and those saying “above average” dropped by three percentage points). On the other hand, the number of men giving their leadership abilities the highest marks grew from 27% in their first year to a full one-third in their senior year.

Intellectual Self-Confidence

- Fully 60% of all CSB/SJU seniors rated their intellectual self-confidence as above average or in the highest 10% among their peers, a rating five percentage points lower than their assessment as first-year students.
- Gender differences that existed among new CSB and SJU students in fall 2001 continued through their senior year. Over two-thirds of all 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. Approximately three-quarters of all high-achieving SJU students described their intellectual self-confidence as above average or in the top 10%, compared to only 58% of 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. Nonetheless, among students with grade point averages below 3.5, men were three times as likely as women to describe their intellectual self-confidence as among the top 10% (22% vs. 7%).

Social Self-Confidence

- Fully half (51%) 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 showed little change from their first year, when 49% said the same.
- Gender gaps in social self-confidence remained from the first-year to the senior year. Nearly 6 in 10 SJU seniors rated their social self-confidence as above average or in the top 10%, compared to just 43% of all CSB seniors.
- Fewer seniors in the Class of 2005 rated their social self-confidence as above average than the last two senior classes. While their assessment of social self-confidence was nearly identical as new students, the number of 2005 graduates rating their self-confidence as above average was nearly eight percentage points lower than the Class of 2003, and four percentage points lower than the Class of 2004.

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 either that SJU students systemically overrate their abilities or that CSB students systematically underrate theirs. Nonetheless, again this year, as in previous years, the data do raise a number of important questions for us:

1. Are the gender differences real and meaningful? Are they important in relation to our student's ability to compete for jobs or graduate school placement?
2. Given our mission and commitment to gender education, should we expect differences that exist at the time of first enrollment will narrow or disappear over four years? In general, do we expect our students to be more confident about their abilities when they graduate, irrespective of gender?

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Jon McGee at 5287 (jmcgee@csbsju.edu) or John Schell at 5452 (jschell@csbsju.edu). To read past issues of the *Trends* research newsletter, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/trends/default.htm>.