

Trends

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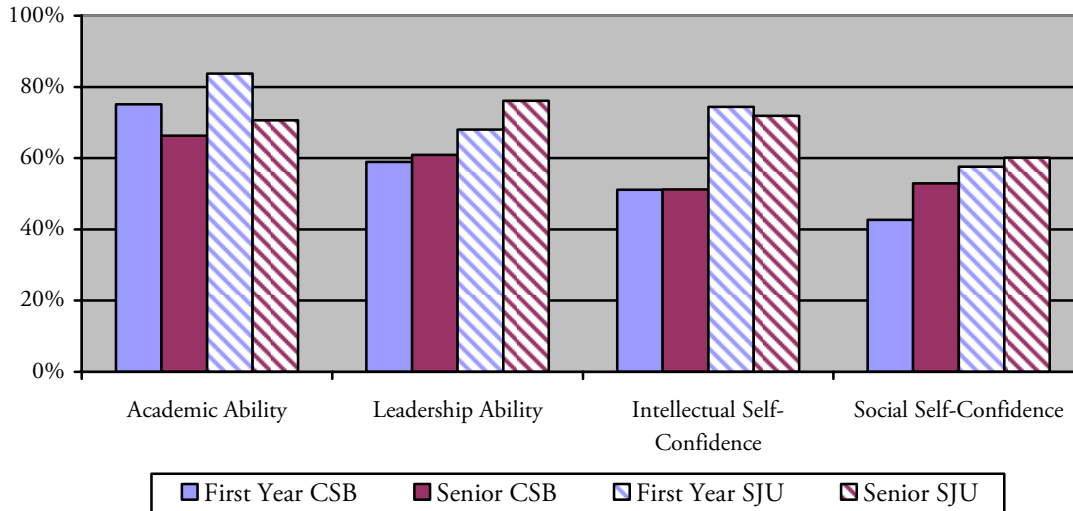
CSB/SJU Seniors' Perceptions of Self

On the 2006-2007 Senior Survey, administered to Saint Benedict and Saint John's seniors in fall 2006, students were asked to assess their abilities and describe themselves using words and phrases from a prescribed list. Most students indicated that they were confident in their academic and social skills, though women and men described themselves differently. Students generally reported gains in leadership ability and social self-confidence during their time at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University, while their perceptions of their academic and intellectual abilities were tempered.

Self-Assessment

On the 2006-2007 Senior Survey, students were asked to rate themselves in relation to their peers in different areas of ability. These same students were asked similar questions as first year students in fall 2003.

**Percentage of students rating ability "above average" or "highest 10%"
in relation to their peers (fall 2003 cohort)**



- ❑ **Academic Ability.** In fall 2003, nearly 8 in 10 new entering students (79%) 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 2006, Saint Benedict and Saint John's students were typically more modest in their responses. Nonetheless, 68% of seniors still described their academic ability as above average.

Women rated their academic ability lower than men as first year students and as seniors four years later. Fully seven in ten SJU seniors (71%) rated their academic abilities as above average, compared to two-thirds of CSB students. Senior men were much more likely than senior women to rate their academic ability as being among the highest 10% (27% vs. 14%).

Most CSB/SJU seniors are confident in their academic and social skills, though men and women describe themselves differently.

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COLLEGE OF
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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. Six in ten (61%) high achieving Saint John’s students rated their academic ability among the highest 10%, compared to only 30% of Saint Benedict 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 for women describing their academic ability as in the top 10% was 3.52, compared to just 3.37 among men.

- ❑ **Leadership Ability.** Sixty-eight percent 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% (61% vs. 76%).

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. SJU students identified a greater growth in leadership ability during the college experience.

When asked how much their CSB/SJU experience had contributed to the development of leadership skills, 69% of all seniors said “quite a bit” or “very much.” Men and women were equally likely to credit the college and university with helping them develop leadership skills.

- ❑ **Intellectual Self-Confidence.** Sixty-one percent 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 Saint Benedict and Saint John’s students in fall 2003 continued through their senior year. Seven in ten senior men (71%) rated their intellectual self-confidence as above average, while only about half of all senior women (51%) responded similarly. Gender gaps persisted even among high achieving students. Eighty-four percent of high-achieving Saint John’s students described their intellectual self-confidence as above average or in the top 10%, compared to only 65% of ten high-achieving Saint Benedict students. Not surprisingly, seniors with lower grade averages were less likely than their high achieving peers to rate their intellectual self-confidence highly.
- ❑ **Social Self-Confidence.** Fully half (56%) 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 seven 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. Sixty percent of Saint John’s seniors rated their social self-confidence as above average or in the top 10%, compared to 53% of all Saint Benedict seniors.

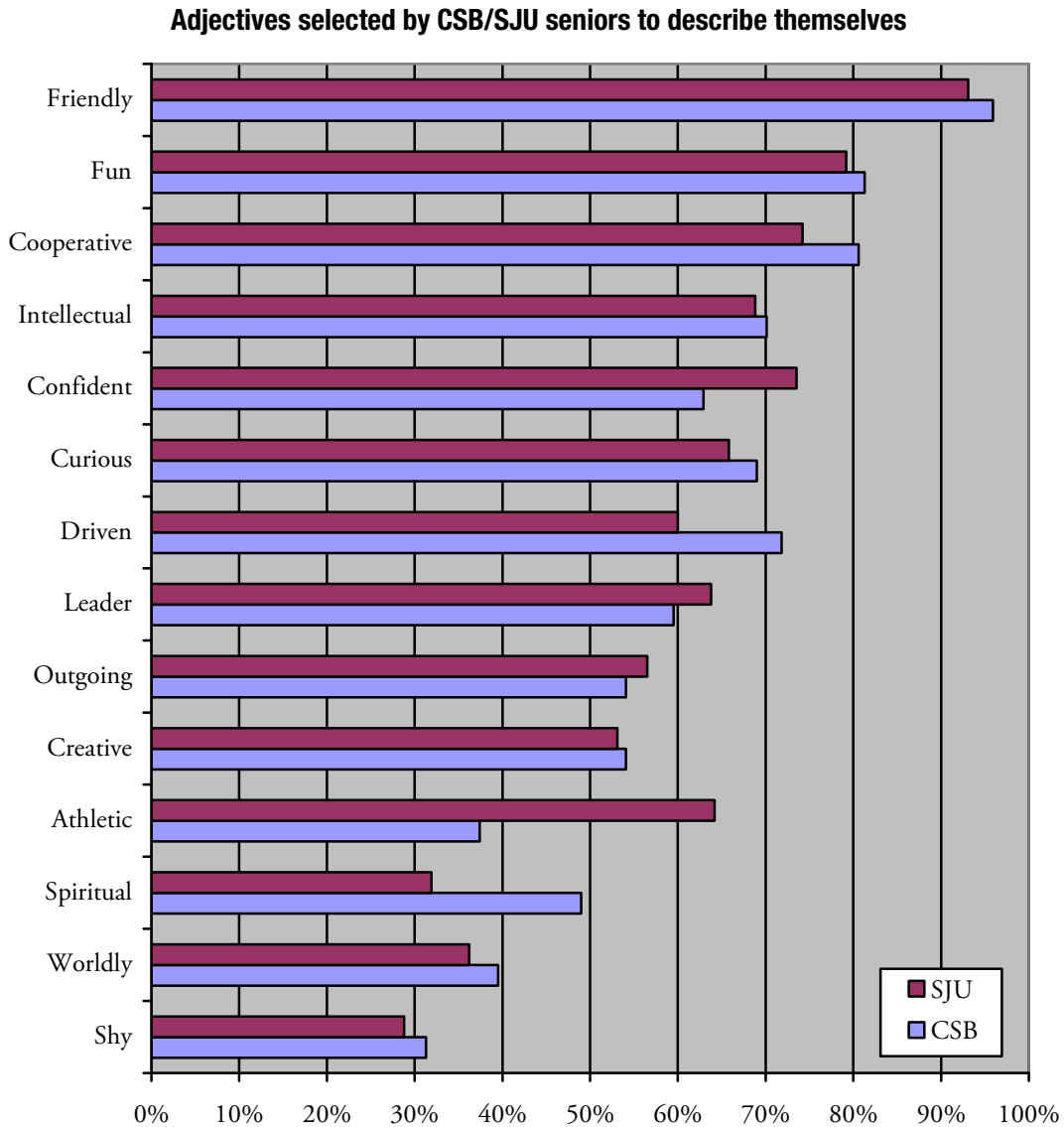
Eight in ten students (81%) credited the colleges with developing their intellectual and social self-confidence.

Self Descriptors

On the *2006-2007 Senior Survey*, students were also asked to select words to describe themselves from a list of fourteen adjectives. Saint Benedict and Saint John’s students most often described themselves as friendly, fun and cooperative. (These adjectives are similar to those most often selected by seniors to describe the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University – friendly, community and comfortable.) Men and women selected many similar descriptors, as noted in the chart below. They did, however, differ in their selection of four particular adjectives:

- ❑ **Confident.** Reflecting their answers above, Saint John’s students were statistically more likely than Saint Benedict students to describe themselves as confident. Nearly three-quarters of men (74%) selected this adjective, compared to 63% of women.
- ❑ **Driven.** Women were statistically more likely than men to describe themselves as driven. Fully seven in ten women (72%) selected this adjective, compared to six in ten men.

- ❑ **Athletic.** Men were much more likely than women to describe themselves as athletic. Nearly two thirds of men (64%) and only one-third of women (37%) selected this adjective. Men also indicated that they spent more time per week playing sports and exercising than did women.
- ❑ **Spiritual.** As noted above, more women than men credited the colleges with contributing to their spiritual growth. Senior women were more likely than senior men to describe themselves as spiritual; nearly half of women (49%) and only one-third of men (32%) selected this adjective.



For additional information about the *2006-2007 CSB/SJU Senior Survey*, please contact Kathryn Enger at 5452 or kenger@csbsju.edu. Past issues of the *Trends* research newsletter are available at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/trends/>.