

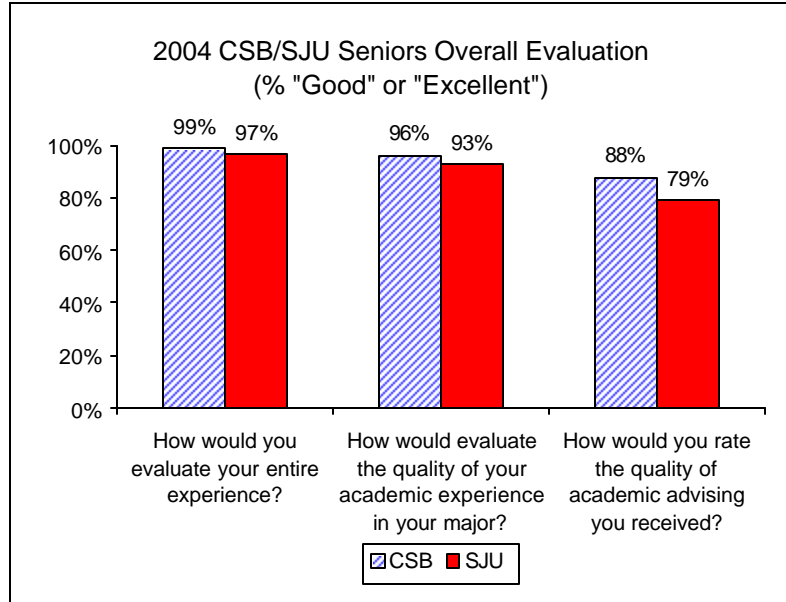
The overwhelming majority of CSB/SJU seniors highly rate the value of their educational experience

### CSB/SJU seniors evaluate their experiences

The 2003-2004 CSB/SJU Senior Survey was administered to Saint Benedict and Saint John's seniors in October 2003. Modeled in part on the *National Survey of Student Engagement*, the survey provides students with an opportunity to describe and evaluate their experiences at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. Last fall, more than 500 students, representing 62% of the senior class, completed the on-line survey. The data that follow summarize how students evaluated and described their CSB/SJU experience.

#### Overall Evaluation

- The overwhelming majority of Saint Benedict and Saint John's seniors – 98% – rated their educational experience here as “good” or “excellent.” Nearly six in ten CSB/SJU students (and two-thirds of all CSB students) described their experience as “excellent.” Ratings from the class of 2004 were nearly identical to those provided by the classes of 2003 and 2002.
- Similar to their evaluation of their overall experience, CSB and SJU seniors also gave high marks to their experience in their academic major. More than 90% of all students rated the quality of the experience in their academic major as “good” or “excellent.” Nearly 9 in 10 said they would select the same major again if they could start over. Not surprising given their satisfaction with their academic experience, more than 80% of all seniors also described the quality of the academic advice they had received as “good” or “excellent.”



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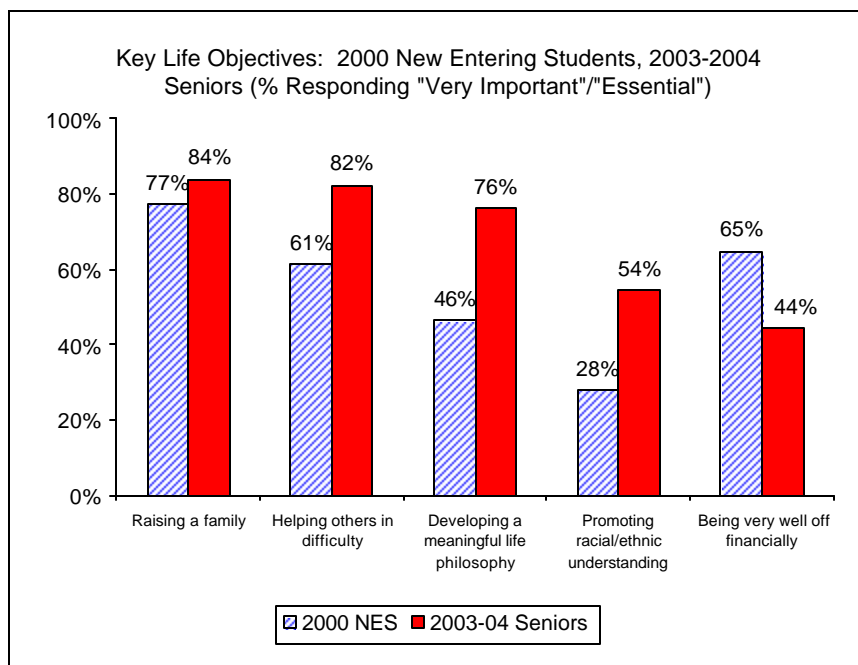
- For the first time, the 2003-2004 CSB/SJU Senior Survey included a list of words and phrases seniors could select to characterize the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. A similar list is provided to accepted admission applicants each year. The five most frequently cited characteristics by the class of 2004 were friendly (85%), community (82%), comfortable (81%), fun (75%), and academically challenging/intellectual (71%) – nearly identical to the list and order of characteristics cited by accepted admission applicants. Among the least often cited descriptors (less than one-third of all seniors identified them as characteristic of CSB/SJU) were average, diverse, elitist, global, and exciting.
- The *Senior Survey* also asked students to indicate the extent to which their experiences at the College of

Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University contributed to their knowledge, skills, or personal development in a number of broad areas. The areas in which students indicated the most development were generally those most closely associated with a liberal arts education:

- In total, 91% of all 2003-2004 CSB/SJU seniors said their experiences here contributed significantly (“very much” or “quite a bit”) to their ability to think critically and analytically.
- Fully 8 in 10 seniors reported significant gains in their ability to work effectively with others (81%) and their ability to learn effectively on their own (80%).
- Three-quarters of all seniors said their CSB/SJU experience contributed significantly to their ability to write clearly and effectively (78%) and to their understanding of themselves and their values (75%).

### Key Life Objectives After Graduation

Similar to what they were asked as new entering students, 2003-2004 seniors were asked to evaluate the importance of a number of post-college experiences, aspirations, or objectives.



- 84% of all 2003-2004 CSB/SJU seniors said that raising a family was a “very important” or “essential” life objective. More than half (55%) identified a family as an “essential” life objective, compared to just 39% of all new entering students in fall 2000.
- More than 8 in 10 seniors also said that helping others who were experiencing difficulty was a key life objective. As new entering students, less than two-thirds of the class of 2004 indicated that helping others in difficulty was a “very important” or “essential” life objective.
- Though not cited as a particularly important objective when they were new students, fully three-quarters of all 2003-2004 seniors indicated that developing a meaningful life philosophy was a “very important” or “essential” life objective.
- Students’ expectations about wealth change significantly between their first-year and their senior year. As new entering students, two-thirds of the class of 2004 indicated that being very well-off financially was a key life objective. By the time they were seniors, however, fewer than half (44%) responded similarly. The decline in the importance of financial well-being was particularly sharp among CSB students. The number of Saint Benedict seniors describing financial well-being as very important fell from 61% to just 38% between the first year and fourth year.
- Though most seniors did not indicate that their experiences at CSB/SJU had contributed significantly to their understanding of people of other races or ethnic backgrounds, most said that promoting racial and ethnic understanding was a “very important” or “essential” life objective. As new students in fall 2000, only about one-quarter identified racial and ethnic understanding as a critical life objective.

For additional information about the *2003-2004 CSB/SJU Senior Survey*, or a complete summary of survey results, please contact Jon McGee at 5287 or at [jmcgee@csbsju.edu](mailto:jmcgee@csbsju.edu). If you would like to read past issues of the *Trends* monthly research newsletter, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/Trends/trends.htm>