

Trends

November 2005
Vol. 6, Issue 4

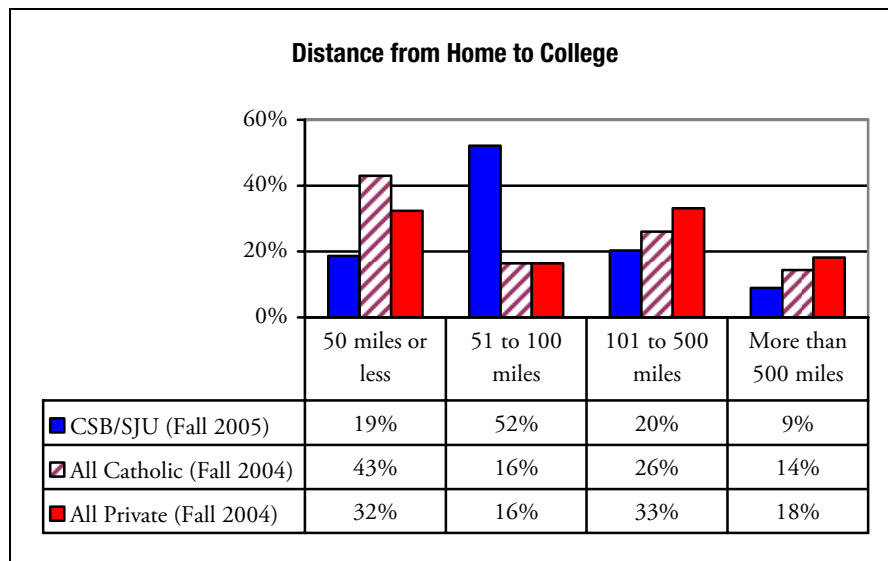
A Research Newsletter Prepared by the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Communication

Family and Personal Characteristics of Fall 2005 New CSB/SJU Students

More than 970 new entering CSB/SJU students, representing 95% of the class, completed the *New Entering Student Survey* this fall. The survey provides the colleges with an opportunity to identify and evaluate student characteristics, expectations, and high school experiences. This issue of *Trends* examines the family and personal experiences of our new students.

Family Characteristics

- Geographic Profile.** Students from Minnesota made up 82% of all new first-year students this fall, their lowest share of total enrollment ever. The five-state Upper Midwest region provided 89% of all new students. The majority of new CSB/SJU students (71%) traveled less than 100 miles from home to college – not surprising given the proximity of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the largest single source of enrollment for both colleges. Only 9% said they traveled more than 500 miles from home to enroll at Saint Benedict or Saint John's, compared to 18% of all private college students nationally. In general, Catholic college students have been less likely than all other private college students to travel long distances to college. In Fall 2004, only 14% of all Catholic college students nationally traveled more than 500 miles from home to college, in part, reflecting the large number of Catholic colleges available.

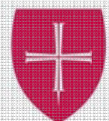


- Status of Parents.** The vast majority of new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students continue to come from families where both parents are present. This fall, 84% of all first-year students came from two-parent families; only 13% reported that their parents were divorced or separated. Our students are much more likely than their colleagues at private or Catholic colleges nationally to come from two-parent families. In fall 2004, only 71% of all private college and Catholic college students nationally came from families where both parents lived together.
- Parent Educational Attainment.** New students today typically come from highly educated families. This fall, nearly 43% of all new CSB/SJU students reported that both of their parents had earned at

Most new students come from highly educated two-parent families in the Upper Midwest.

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least a baccalaureate degree. Less than 7% said neither parent had any education beyond high school (compared to 20% in fall 1990). In total, over 68% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students report that at least one of their parents has earned a baccalaureate degree. In general, CSB/SJU students come from more highly educated families than their private college peers across the country.

- *Parent Occupation Profile.* The overwhelming majority of new CSB/SJU students – 83% – come from families where both parents are in the labor force. Business occupations are the most commonly reported occupations among parents of new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students. In fall 2005, 38% of all new entering students indicated that their mother or father was employed in a business-related occupation. An additional 22% reported that one or both of their parents was a teacher or college professor. The parent occupational profile reported by our students is similar to what is reported by private college students nationally.
- *Alumni and Alumnae Connections.* A significant percentage of new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students continue to report alumni or alumnae connections to the colleges. Nearly half (45%) of all new CSB/SJU students in fall 2005 reported a family connection to one or the other college, most often a parent or sibling.

Personal Characteristics

- *Religious Affiliation.* Though it has stabilized in recent years, the percentage of new CSB/SJU students who identify themselves as Roman Catholic has declined dramatically since 1980. In fall 2004, less than two-thirds (65%) all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students indicated they were Catholic. The percentage of students here who are Roman Catholic is a bit higher than averages at highly selective Catholic colleges nationally (62%). After Roman Catholic, the next most frequently cited religious preference was Lutheran (17%). Only 6% of new entering CSB/SJU students indicated no religious preference.
- *Political Awareness.* Forty-three percent of all new CSB/SJU students said that keeping up to date with political affairs was a very important or essential life goal, higher than the national average for new private college students. The largest numbers of students continue to describe their political views as middle of the road (47% in fall 2005). More SJU students describe themselves as liberal or far left rather than conservative or far right (35% vs. 25%). CSB students seem more evenly divided, with 24% characterizing their political views as liberal or far left and 28% indicating conservative or far right. New students today are decidedly more conservative than their baby boom predecessors. For most of the 1970s, between one-third and one-half of all CSB and SJU students routinely described their political views as liberal.
- *Alcohol Use.* This fall, almost half of all new CSB/SJU students reported occasional drinking during their senior year in high school; 6% said they drank frequently. While rates of alcohol use among new CSB/SJU students remain high (and have been higher than national averages) they have declined significantly since 1990. The decline in reported drinking parallels a similar change in the number of students who say they partied while in high school. In fall 1990, nearly 80% of all new CSB/SJU students reported partying every week – and 35% said they partied more than 6 hours each week. Only 1 in 10 new students that year said they did not party at all in high school. By fall 2005, the percentage who reported partying more than six hours per week fell to 14% and the number who said they did not party at all had risen to 27%.