

Trends

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Family and Personal Characteristics of Fall 2007 New CSB/SJU Students

Each fall the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University survey new entering first year students. The *New Entering Student Survey* provides the colleges with an opportunity to identify student characteristics, experiences, and expectations. This fall 947 CSB/SJU students, representing 90% of all new entering students, completed the survey during new student orientation. This issue of *Trends* examines the family and personal characteristics of our new students.

Family Characteristics

- *Geographic Profile.* Students from Minnesota make up nearly 82% of all new, first-year students this fall. Over half of all Minnesota students came from the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and approximately 15% came from Central Minnesota (Stearns, Sherburne and Benton counties.)

CSB/SJU enrolled new students from 25 states and 13 foreign countries. American students of color made up 5% of all new entering students at Saint John's and 6.9% of all new entering students at Saint Benedict. Since 2002, CSB and SJU have increased the percentage of new entering students of color by 47%. The number of new entering international students at CSB/SJU decreased slightly this fall (from 46 students in fall 2006 to 40 students in fall 2007). However, the total number of new entering international students at CSB and SJU has risen by more than 50 percent since fall 2002.
- *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 in the home. This fall, 87% of all first-year students came from two-parent families; only 11% 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 2006, only 76% of all 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, 47% of all new CSB/SJU students reported that both of their parents had earned at least a baccalaureate degree. Alternately, nearly 7% said neither parent had any education beyond high school (compared to 20% in fall 1990). In total, 73% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students report that at least one of their parents has earned at least a baccalaureate degree. 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 (84%) come from families where both parents are in the labor force. Business occupations are the most commonly reported for parents of new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students. In fall 2007, 41% of all new entering students indicated that their mother or father was employed in a business-related occupation. An additional 23% reported that one or both of their parents was a medical doctor or some other health care professional. 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. Four in ten new CSB/SJU students in fall 2007 reported a family connection to one or the other college, most often a parent or sibling. Nearly one-third (31%) of all new students indicated that having a relative attend

Most new students continue to come from Minnesota families in which both parents are highly educated and are active in the labor force.

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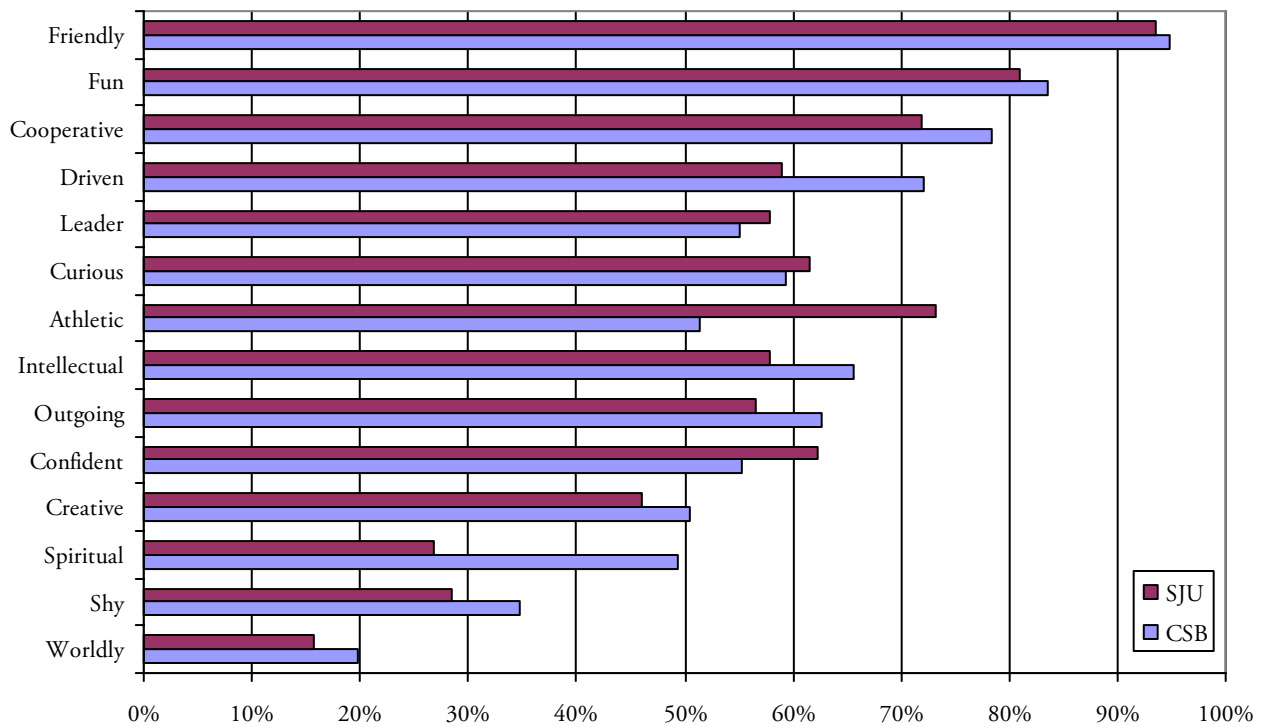
Saint John's
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CSB/SJU was a very or somewhat important reason in their decision to enroll at the colleges.

Personal Characteristics

- *Religious Affiliation.* In fall 2007, two-thirds of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John’s students indicated they were Catholic. The percentage of students here who are Roman Catholic is slightly higher than the average at Catholic colleges nationally (62%). After Roman Catholic, the next most frequently cited religious preference was Lutheran (13%). Only 8% of new entering CSB/SJU students indicated no religious preference.
- *Public or Private High School.* Seven in ten new students come to CSB/SJU from public high schools. One-quarter come from private Catholic high schools, and the remaining 5% come from other private high schools or home schools.
- *Friendly, Fun and Cooperative.* Students were asked to select from a list of adjectives all of the words that they thought characterized themselves. At least three-quarters of new entering students described themselves as friendly, fun and cooperative. Least often selected were the adjectives worldly, shy and spiritual. A majority of new entering students also used friendly and fun to describe CSB/SJU (89% and 78% respectively).

Percentage of first-year students selecting the following adjectives as personal descriptors



- *Well-traveled.* Though few new students described themselves as worldly, the new entering class of 2007 is well-traveled. Nearly half (44%) of the class traveled or studied outside of the United States during high school.
- *Political Interests.* Thirty-three percent of all new students said that being politically active was a very important or essential life goal, and half reported that being politically or socially aware was a very important college outcome.

Their desire to be politically active notwithstanding, most new students do not identify a particular political viewpoint. The largest number of students continue to describe their political views as middle of the road (48% in fall 2007), though this number has shrunk in the past five years, particularly at CSB. This fall, 31% of new SJU students characterized their political views as right of center, while 26% identified themselves as left of center. CSB students were more evenly split on the political spectrum, with 25% characterizing their political views as liberal or far left and 24% 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.