

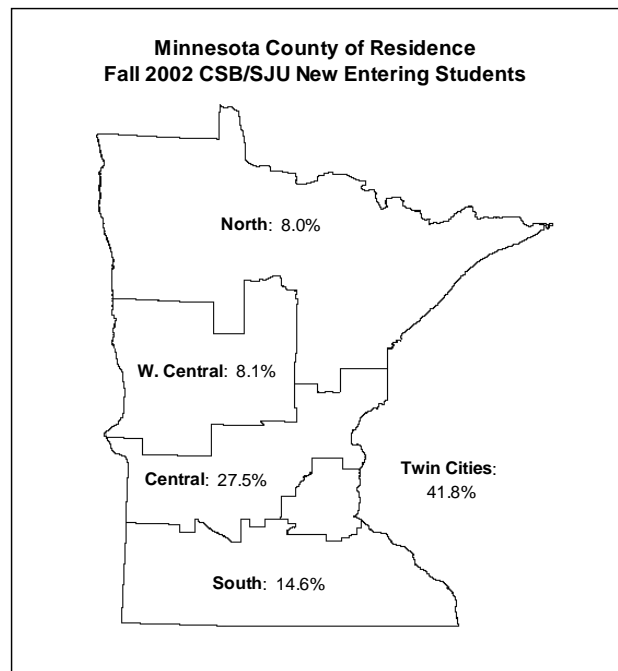
CSB and SJU together enrolled 12% of all first-time new entering private college students in Minnesota this fall.

New Student Enrollment Strong at CSB/SJU

This fall, the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University enrolled 3,876 first-year to senior students, only 13 fewer than the prior year and the second highest combined total in the colleges' history. The small decline in enrollment this year marked the first time since 1994 that enrollment had not risen. Our experience was not unusual. Though total enrollment figures for Minnesota's private colleges have not yet been reported, it appears that first-time new student enrollment declined at more than half of the 17 members of the Minnesota Private College Council.

Enrollment Highlights

Together, CSB and SJU enrolled new entering students from 21 states and 13 foreign countries this fall. Students from Minnesota made up 85% of all first-year students. Among Minnesota resident students, 42% came from the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area, a smaller percentage than the prior three years. Stearns, Sherburne, and Benton counties provided about 16% of all new entering Minnesota students, a percentage that has been declining since 1996.



Fully half of all new CSB students, and 46% of all new SJU students, reported a family connection to one or the other college, typically a parent or sibling. The number of students indicating a family connection to the colleges has increased significantly at both the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University in the last decade.

College of Saint Benedict

- The College of Saint Benedict enrolled 516 new entering students this fall. Since fall 1997, CSB new student enrollment has been nearly constant between 514 and 519 (with the exception of fall 2001, when first-year student enrollment totaled 556).
- First-year to senior enrollment at CSB this fall totaled 2,014, the second highest total in the college's history (surpassed only by fall 2001). High and rising retention rates have fueled

enrollment growth in recent years. This fall, 89.6% of last years' new students returned for their second year – the highest 1st to 2nd year retention rate in at least the last 14 years. Retention rates have increased significantly among all CSB students since 1990.

- This fall, CSB enrolled 10.7% of all first-time new entering female students at private colleges in the state. The colleges' enrollment market share has been stable for at least the last decade. Among Minnesota's private colleges, only the University of St. Thomas enrolled more new entering women than the College of Saint Benedict.
- Only a handful of private colleges in the state receive more applications for admission each year than the College of Saint Benedict. However, because CSB enrolls a significantly larger number of new students than nearly all other private colleges in the state, its applicant-to-enrolled student ratio of 2.5:1 is comparatively low. On average, Minnesota's private colleges received 3.6 applications for every female student they enrolled this fall.
- Overall academic quality of the new entering class at Saint Benedict's remained high this fall. The average composite ACT score for new students was 24.8, similar to the last two years and significantly higher than the average in 1990 (22.1). The average new entering student at CSB this fall finished high school in the top 18% of her class (37% finished in the top 10%) and had a cumulative high school grade point average of 3.74, the highest mark in the colleges' history.

Saint John's University

- Saint John's University enrolled 468 new entering students this fall, a total typical for the last five years. New student enrollment at SJU averaged 435 between 1992 and 1997. Since 1997, average fall enrollment of new students has averaged 479.
- First-year to senior enrollment at Saint John's totaled 1,857 in fall 2002, nearly identical to undergraduate enrollment in fall 2001. Since 1994 (the low mark of the last 30 years), undergraduate enrollment at SJU has grown by 15%. Similar to the experience at CSB, enrollment growth at SJU has been assisted by high retention rates. This fall, 89.4% of last years' new students returned for their second year. Since 1996, first-to-second year retention rates at SJU have averaged nearly 91%. Retention rates at CSB/SJU are significantly above national averages for private and public colleges and are competitive with the most highly regarded colleges in the country.
- Saint John's enrolled 14% of all first-time new entering male students at private colleges this fall, an enrollment market share that has changed little in the last ten years. Among Minnesota's private colleges, only the University of St. Thomas enrolled more new entering men than Saint John's University this fall.
- Only four other private colleges in the state receive more admission applications from men than Saint John's. However, the University's applicant-to-enrolled ratio of 2.3:1 is significantly below the average for all of Minnesota's private colleges. On average, private colleges in the state receive 3.6 applications for every male student they enroll. Comparatively low application-to-enrolled student rates at CSB and SJU historically have been offset by the colleges' very high yield rates (which measure the percentage of students accepted for admission who actually enroll). Over the course of the last five years, yield rates at SJU have averaged 52.6%, compared to an average of 45.6% for men at all private colleges in Minnesota. Similarly, yield rate at CSB have averaged 50%, compared to a five-year private college average for women of just 43%.
- Academic characteristics of the fall 2002 new entering class at Saint John's were similar to last year. The average composite ACT score for new students this fall was 25.3, identical to the average for the new entering class in 2001. Average ACT scores among new Saint John's students have risen significantly since 1990. The typical new student at SJU this fall completed high school in the top 25% of his class (22% finished in the top 10%) and had a cumulative high school grade point average of 3.56. Average high school rank and grade point average among new SJU students has been stable over the last five years.

For additional information, please contact Jon McGee at 5287 or at jmcgee@csbsju.edu. If you would to read past issues of Trends, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/Trends/trends.htm>.