

Trends

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

Family and Personal Characteristics of Fall 2006 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 991 CSB/SJU students, representing 95% of all new entering students, completed the survey during new student orientation. This issue of *Trends* examines the family characteristics and personal experiences of our new students.

Family Characteristics

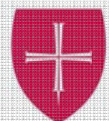
- *Geographic Profile.* Students from Minnesota make up 80% of all new first-year students this fall, their lowest share of total enrollment ever. Almost half of all Minnesota students came from the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and 16% came from Central Minnesota (Stearns, Sherburne and Benton counties.)

CSB/SJU enrolled new students from 32 states and 17 foreign countries. Both schools exceeded their geographic diversity goals. The College of Saint Benedict enrolled more international students this fall than in past years (100 students in fall 2006 vs. 85 students in fall 2005), while Saint John's University enrolled more American students from outside Minnesota (372 students in fall 2006 vs. 333 students in fall 2005).
- *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, 85% of all first-year students came from two-parent families; only 12% 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 2005, only 74% 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, 46% of all new CSB/SJU students reported that both of their parents had earned at least a baccalaureate degree. Only 6% said neither parent had any education beyond high school (compared to 20% in fall 1990). In total, over 70% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students report that at least one of their parents has earned 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 occupations among parents of new Saint Benedict and Saint John's students. In fall 2006, 41% of all new entering students indicated that their mother or father was employed in a business-related occupation. An additional 20% reported that one or both of their parents was an elementary, secondary, or college teacher or administrator. 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 2006 reported a family connection to one or the other college, most often a parent or sibling. Nearly one-third (32%) of all new students indicated that having a relative attend CSB/SJU was a very or somewhat important reason in their decision to enroll at the colleges.

Most new students continue to come from highly educated two parent families in Minnesota.

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Research

COLLEGE OF
Saint Benedict

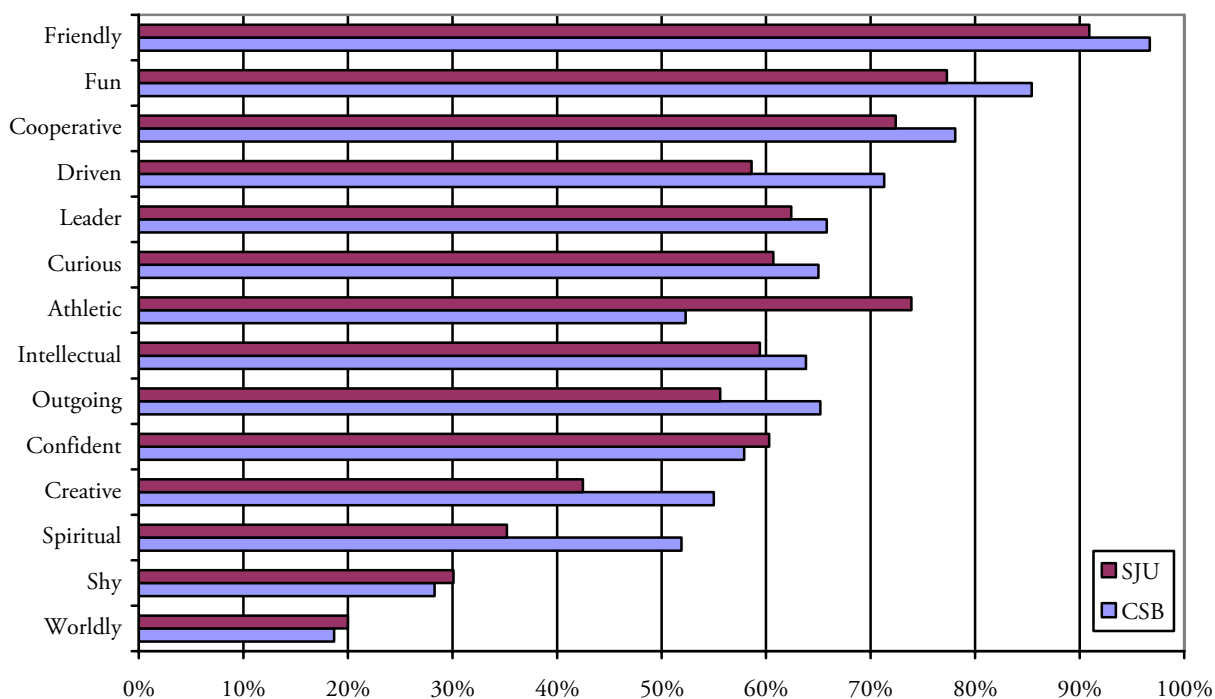


Saint John's
UNIVERSITY

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 2006, 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 somewhat higher than the average at Catholic colleges nationally (59%). After Roman Catholic, the next most frequently cited religious preference was Lutheran (16%). Only 7% of new entering CSB/SJU students indicated no religious preference.
- Public or Private High School.* Fully seven in ten (71%) new students come to CSB/SJU from public high schools. Nearly one-quarter (23%) come from private Catholic high schools, and the remaining 6% come from other private high schools or home schooling.
- Friendly, Fun and Cooperative.* New this year, students were asked to select from a list of adjectives all of the words that they thought characterized them. 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 (90% and 80% 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 2006 is well-traveled. Nearly half (46%) of the class traveled or studied outside of the United States during high school.
- Political Awareness.* Fifty-seven percent of all new CSB/SJU students said that being politically active was a very important or essential life goal. The largest number of students continue to describe their political views as middle of the road (46% in fall 2006), but this number has shrunk in the past five years. This fall, only 48% of new entering Saint Benedict students described their political views as middle of the road, compared to 62% of Saint Benedict students entering in fall 2002. A similar trend can be seen among Saint John's students, though to a lesser degree. (Historically, Saint John's students have been more likely to indicate more polarized political views.) Similar to last year, 34% of SJU students characterized their political views as right of center and 23% identified themselves as left of center. CSB students were more evenly divided, with 24% characterizing their political views as liberal or far left and 29% 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.