

Trends

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Family and Personal Characteristics of Fall 2008 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 949 CSB/SJU students, representing 97% 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 81% 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 18% came from Central Minnesota (Stearns, Sherburne and Benton counties.)

CSB/SJU enrolled new students from 27 states and 15 foreign countries. American students of color made up 7.2 % of all new entering students at Saint John's and 6.2% of all new entering students at Saint Benedict. Since 2003, combined enrollment of new entering students of color has increased by 35%. The number of new entering international students at CSB/SJU rose from 40 in fall 2007 to 56 in fall 2008. International student enrollment at CSB and SJU has risen by 80% since fall 2003.

- *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, 86% 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 2007, only 72% 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 8% said neither parent had any education beyond high school (compared nearly 1 in 5 in fall 1990). In total, 72% 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 (87%) 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 2008 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 Minnesota families in which both parents are highly educated and are active in the labor force.

Prepared by
Karen Knutson,
Institutional Planning and
Research

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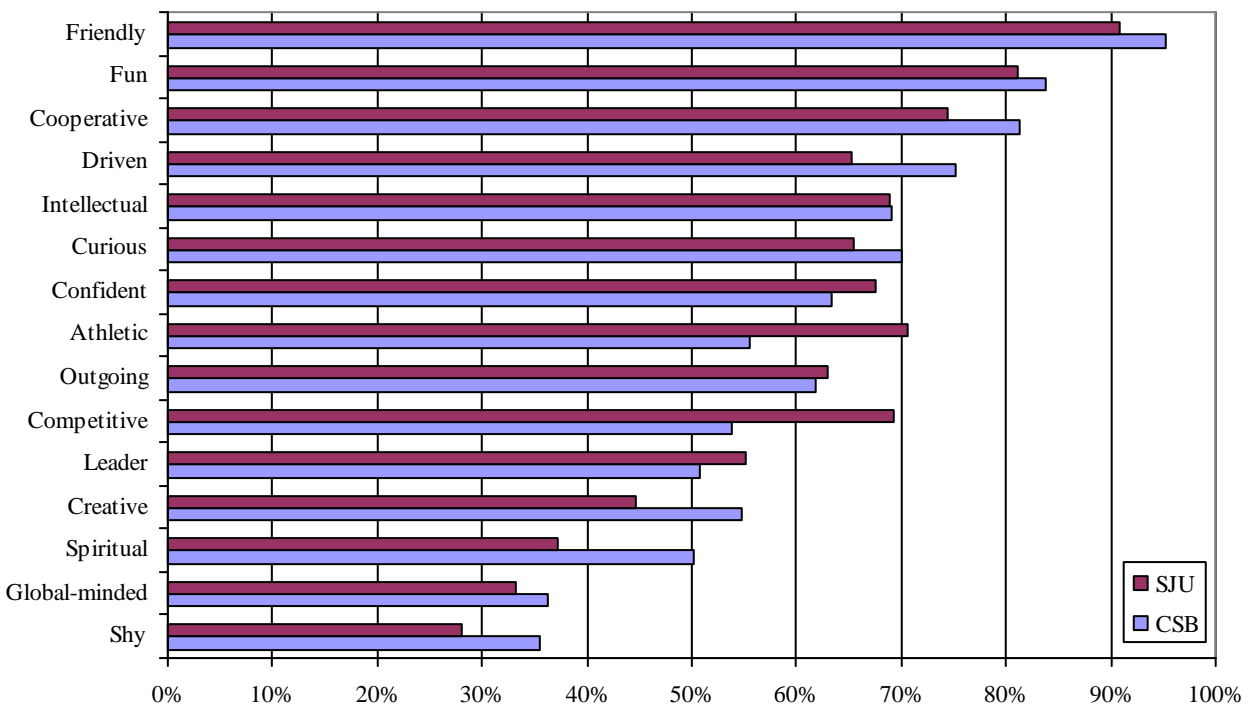


Saint John's
UNIVERSITY

Personal Characteristics

- *Religious Affiliation.* This fall, 59% of all new Saint Benedict and Saint John’s students indicated they were Catholic – the lowest percentage ever recorded on the first-year student survey, and identical to the denominational profile at Catholic colleges nationally. After Roman Catholic, the next most frequently cited religious preference was Lutheran (14%). Only 9% 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-fifth come from private Catholic high schools, and the remaining 10% 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 (92% and 87% 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 2008 is well-traveled. Forty-one percent of the class traveled or studied outside of the United States during high school.
- *Life goals.* Nearly nine in ten of the class of 2008 cited raising a family and helping others in need as important life goals. These two goals, in addition to an interest in developing a meaningful philosophy of life (cited by 72% of new students as an important or essential life objective), surpassed the goal of being very well-off financially (described by 67% as important or essential).

For additional information, please contact Karen Knutson at 320-363-5922 (kknutson@csbsju.edu). If you would like to read past issues of *Trends*, please visit our website at <http://www.csbsju.edu/institutionalresearch/trends/>.