

# Trends

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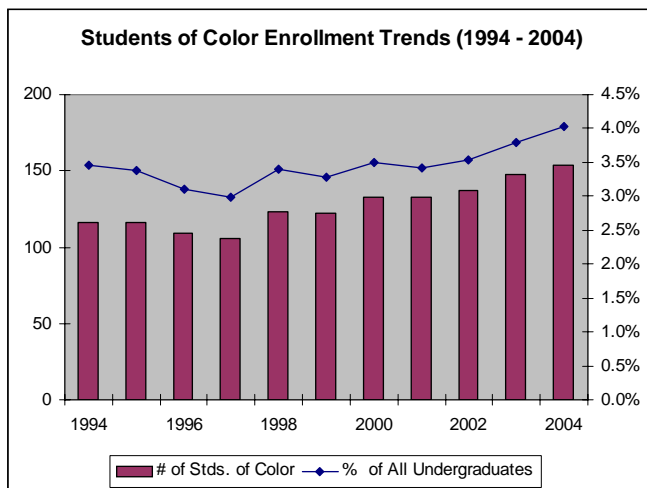
*A Research Newsletter Prepared by the Office of Institutional Planning, Research, and Communication*

## Racial and Ethnic Diversity at CSB/SJU

As liberal arts institutions, we prepare our students to live and succeed in a diverse and rapidly changing world. Demographic data has long indicated that the state and national population is becoming increasingly diverse. *Strategic Directions 2010*, approved by the Board of Trustees and Board of Regents last fall, places increased racial and ethnic diversity among the colleges' top priorities. The data that follow summarizes enrollment trends, characteristics, and collegiate expectations of the students of color at CSB/SJU.

### Enrollment and Characteristics

- American students of color have accounted for 3% to 5% of total first-year-to-senior enrollment at both Saint Benedict and Saint John's for more than a decade. Between fall 1997 (when student of color enrollment was at its lowest in recent history) and fall 2004, the number of students of color enrolled at CSB/SJU increased by more than 20%. The rising number of racially and ethnically diverse students has been masked by the growth in total enrollment. In fall 1992, students of color made up 4.6% of all CSB/SJU students, the highest percentage in two decades. In fall 2004, the colleges enrolled only four fewer students of color than they did in 1992, though those students accounted for only 4.0% of total undergraduate enrollment.



- Historically, a larger percentage of students of color than majority students have come to the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University from outside of Minnesota. That trend, however, appears to have reversed itself in recent years. In fall 1999, one-third of all new non-white students at CSB/SJU came from outside of Minnesota. By fall 2003, only 13% came from other states.
- While students of color at CSB/SJU have essentially strong academic profiles, they are not as strong, on average, as their white peers. The mean high school grade point average for students of color was 3.50 (compared to an average of 3.63 for white students). Differences in ACT scores were more pronounced. The average composite ACT score among white student was 25.1, compared to 22.9 among non-white students.

While new entering students of color are as confident of obtaining their bachelor's degree as their white peers, they are more skeptical about the experience they will have at CSB/SJU.

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COLLEGE OF  
Saint Benedict



Saint John's  
UNIVERSITY

## Why enroll?

- While American students of color cite many of the same reasons for attending CSB or SJU as their white peers, there are a number of key differences. In general, students of color are more likely than majority students to point to graduate school attendance as a key college outcome. Fully two-thirds of all non-white students said preparation for graduate/professional school was a “very important” reason for going to college, compared to less than half (49%) of all white students. More than 1 in 4 non-white students said they planned to get a doctorate, compared to just 18% of all white students. Students of color also were more interested in earning a law degree than their white peers (8% vs. 5%). [Note: this aspiration is not unrealistic, while students of color have historically only accounted for 3% to 4% of the student body, over 10% of all CSB/SJU graduates who earned doctorates between 1999 and 2003 were non-white students.]
- Students of color also made different choices when preparing for college. Non-white CSB/SJU students applied to more schools than majority students. Between 1999 and 2003, 57% of all students of color applied to three or more colleges compared to just 41% of white students. Also, fewer students of color than white students described CSB or SJU as their first choice institution (73% vs. 90%).

## Expectations

- Both students of color and majority students cited the academic reputation of CSB/SJU as the most important reason for enrolling here—though non-white students were less likely than their white peers to cite the schools’ academic reputation (61% vs. 72%) as a “very important” factor in choosing CSB/SJU.
- While both white and non-white students were equally confident they would earn a bachelor’s degree, American students of color were more skeptical about the experience they would have at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University. Fewer than 6 in 10 non-white students said there was a “very good” chance they would make at least a “B” average in college, compared to two-thirds of all white students. One in three students of color also said there was at least some chance they would transfer to another college, compared to only 1 in 5 white students. New students of color also were significantly less likely than their white colleagues to indicate there was a “very good” chance they would be satisfied with CSB/SJU, (47% vs. 62%).
- New students of color also have somewhat lower expectations than white students of the community experience at CSB/SJU. While more than 80% of new white students indicated there was a very good chance they would develop close friendships with other students, only 71% of all non-white students responded similarly.

## Key Conclusions

- American student of color have higher long-term degree aspirations than their white peers, even though their average academic profile upon enrolling at CSB/SJU is not as strong as the average for majority students.
- Students of color are somewhat skeptical about the experience they will have at CSB and SJU. They traditionally have applied to more colleges than majority students, are less sure about their academic performance while in college, and are less certain about finishing their degree here.
- Non-white students also are comparatively skeptical about their social expectations at CSB/SJU. A smaller percentage of students of color than majority students said they selected CSB/SJU for its social reputation (38% vs. 48%). And fewer students of color than white students expect to develop close friendships with other students. (71% vs. 81%).

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