Who is a Bennie? Who is a Johnnie?

An Analysis of Campus Inclusivity

Hynes Scholars 2017-2018
2017-2018 Hynes Scholars Cohort

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What is the Hynes Scholars Program?
Research Question

What conceptualizations of the "Bennie" and "Johnnie" identities are held by CSB/SJU students?
Why is this Research Important?

The Impact of Belonging & College Identity

Feeling included
- Increases motivation
- Quality of social life

Feeling excluded
- Feelings of isolation
- Identity negotiation
- Fighting stereotypes or lack of cultural competence
Inclusivity and the Unique Situation of CSB/SJU

CSB/SJU Mission:

▪ “...the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University affirm our mission to teach and foster respect for diversity, to embrace the marginalized and break down the privileges that would exclude those who are different or disadvantaged...”
Inclusivity at CSB/SJU

- There is a “hostile and isolating environment at CSB/SJU for marginalized students”
  (Record Article: The CSB/SJU experience is not the same for all students)

- “The obvious cannot be dismissed: there is a significant cultural and racial disparity within our beloved St. John’s University and College of Saint Benedict”
  (Record Article: Diversity gap still exists as CSB/SJU become more diverse than ever with arrival of class of 2021)
At CSB/SJU “you are locked into an identity complex: “Bennie” or “Johnnie.” And you may spend your 4 consecutive years shifting uncomfortably in the ambiguous but very real set of gendered expectations . . .”
“I am a Bennie, but I did not have the typical CSB experience. I never felt completely accepted nor comfortable. To me, this is not the picture perfect community that everyone likes to brag about. We pick the voices we want to be heard and silence those who object and ask for change.”
2016-17 Senior Survey

I Have Found a Community at CSB/SJU Where I Feel Like I Belong

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

% of Student Responses

Students Here Actively Engage with Other Students Whose Race or Ethnicity are Different than their Own

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

% of Student Responses
Students Here Actively Engage with Other Students Whose Economic Background is Different than their Own

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

% of Student Responses

Students Here Actively Engage with Other Students Whose Sexual Orientation are Different than their Own

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

% of Student Responses

Students Here Actively Engage with Other Students Whose Religious Beliefs are Different than their Own

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

% of Student Responses
Community vs. Inclusivity
- 90% of seniors: community
- 57% of seniors: inclusivity

Identity and Privilege
- 21% of students: identity
- 90% of students of color: harder work

Derogatory remarks and profiling
- 20% of students: targets of derogatory remarks
- 19% of students: targets of racial profiling
Our Goal

Our goal with this project is to increase awareness and foster inclusivity on our campus.
Development of Survey
Survey Questions

- Are you a CSB student, SJU student, or Alumni?
- What is your graduation year?
- Do you identify as a person of color?
- How would you describe your race/ethnicity?
- How would you describe your gender?
- How would you describe your sexual orientation?
- How would you describe your family’s socioeconomic status?
Survey Questions

- Please list the top 3 words you would use to describe...
- Please list the top 3 social identities you would use to describe...
- I feel included in the definition of a typical Bennie or Johnnie
- Optional: How could CSB/SJU be more inclusive for you?
Results
Who Were Our Respondents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSB Students</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJU Students</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumnae/Alumni</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Demographics of Respondents: Race and Ethnicity

44 of 222 respondents identified as a person of color.

#### How would you describe your race/ethnicity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>166 (74.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>11 (5.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>9 (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td>4 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>3 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>24 (10.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>222</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar chart showing race/ethnicity distribution](chart.png)
Demographics of Respondents: Sexual Orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 100%
### Participant Demographics: Gender Identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Gender Description Chart]

- **Female**: 150 respondents
- **Male**: 50 respondents
- **Other**: 5 respondents

**Total respondents**: 205
Participant Demographics: Socioeconomic Identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic Identity</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>16 (7.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>134 (60.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>61 (27.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>11 (5.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>222</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do you think of when you hear “Bennie” or “Johnnie”? 
“Please List the Top 3 Words You Would use to Describe the Average Bennie”

TOP RESULTS:

1. Smart  (14.8%)
2. Strong  (13.1%)
3. Kind  (10.8%)
4. Intelligent  (7.2%)
5. Friendly  (6.8%)
“Please List the Top 3 Words You Would Use to Describe the Average Johnnie”

TOP RESULTS:
1. Smart (14.9%)
2. Friendly (10.8%)
3. Nice (10.4%)
4. Kind (9.46%)
5. Athletic (9%)
Definition of a Social Identity

- Social identity is a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s)
“Please List the Top 3 Social identities You Would Use to Describe the Average Bennie”

Top 5 Results:
1. White (30.2%)
2. Catholic (10.8%)
3. Student (9.5%)
4. Female (6.8%)
5. Women (6.8%)
“Please List the Top 3 Social Identities You Would Use to Describe the Average Johnnie”

TOP RESULTS:
1. White (27.4%)
2. Catholic (9.8%)
3. Athletes (8.5%)
4. Student (8.1%)
5. Partiers (7.2%)

Other Results:
1. Male (6.7%)
2. Leader (4.5%)
Bennie/Johnnie Comparison

Bennies
- Strong (14%)
- Bold (7%)
- Confident (6%)
- Hardworking (5%)

Both
- **White** (23% Bennies, 22% Johnnies)
- **Smart** (19% Bennies, 13% Johnnies)
- **Kind** (15% Bennies, 9% Johnnies)
- **Friendly** (10% Bennies, 9% Johnnies)

Johnnies
- Athletic (9%)
- Nice (7%)
- Loud (5%)
- Outgoing (5%)

Both
- **White** (23% Bennies, 22% Johnnies)
- **Smart** (19% Bennies, 13% Johnnies)
- **Kind** (15% Bennies, 9% Johnnies)
- **Friendly** (10% Bennies, 9% Johnnies)
“I feel included in the definition of a typical Bennie or Johnnie”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feelings of Inclusivity Among Alumni, Bennies, and Johnnies

Feelings of Inclusivity Between Alumni, Bennies, and Johnnies

- Alumni
- Bennies
- Johnnies

Percentage of Respondents

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

- Alumni: 50% Strongly Agree, 40% Agree, 10% Neutral, 10% Disagree, 0% Strongly Disagree
- Bennies: 40% Strongly Agree, 30% Agree, 20% Neutral, 10% Disagree, 5% Strongly Disagree
- Johnnies: 30% Strongly Agree, 20% Agree, 10% Neutral, 20% Disagree, 10% Strongly Disagree
Reasons People Feel Included in the Bennie Identity

1. White
2. Middle class
3. Pride of academics
4. Involvement on campus
5. They attend the school, therefore they fit in
Reasons Why People Do Not Identify as a Bennie or Johnnie:

Geography

- “I’m not from Minnesota, don’t really like football or sports, and I feel like an outsider with most people on campus”
- “Being from Colorado, I am not like the majority of students that are from the Midwest area, such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa.”
Reasons Why People Do Not Identify as a Bennie or Johnnie:

Religion

- “While I fit many of the characteristics of a Bennie like white and female and heterosexual, I am not religious and I feel very uncomfortable with this. I also feel like I don’t share similar life goals with Bennies. A typical Bennie is looking for an MRS degree (just looking for a johnnie to get married to).”
- “For the most part, I feel that I am included within the parameters of this definition. However, I am not Christian. I feel that this is something that separates me from a majority of the community here, as many people here are Christian and I am not. I feel that I have sometimes been excluded from certain groups or perceived negatively by them because of this.”
Reasons Why People Do Not Identify as a Bennie or Johnnie:

Socioeconomic status
- “Lower socioeconomic class than an average Bennie”.

Race
- “Bennie and Johnnie are usually referring to white people”.

Politics
- “Sometimes feel that I am an outsider in regards to some ideas since I come from a more Conservative home state.”
Summary of the Research

- Most respondents felt included in the definition of a typical Bennie and Johnnie
- Top social identity was white
- Top word was smart
- Some words and identities created a sense of both inclusion and exclusion
  - Geography, religion, socioeconomic status, race, politics
Limitations of the Survey

- Majority of the respondents were white
- Majority of the respondents were current CSB students
- A small sample size compared to the number attending our school (6% of students → 222/3621)
- Only 33 of the respondents answered the question about next steps or ways to be more inclusive
What Can We Do?

“What this means is that at this moment in time we have to focus on ensuring that every student at the College of Saint Benedict feels as if this is her home...

(Excerpt from President Mary Dana Hinton’s Remarks at the All-Campus Community Forum)
What is Already Being Done?

Mellon Grant and Inclusivity Vision

- Different programs that are available for students
- Exposing exclusivity
- Policy change
- Inclusive Visioning Day
Suggestions to Increase Inclusivity: General

- Listen with the intent to act
- Challenge privilege
- Promote discussion
Suggestions to Increase Inclusivity: Specific

- Diversify the Faculty
- Events and Activities
- Education
Suggestions to Increase Inclusivity: Specific

- Diversify Friend Groups
- Diversify the Student Body
Our Suggestions:

- Transportation
- Break accommodations
- Anti-racism training
- Alter labelling system
  - Uniform title
  - Apparel with both labels
Questions?
Special Thanks to:

- Elle Larsen - Coordinator
- Kalila Moua - Student Coordinator
- Corrie Grosse - Faculty Advisor
- Mary Geller - Vice-President for Student Development
- Institute for Women’s Leadership
Works Cited

- Record Article: The CSB/SJU experience is not the same for all students
- 2012 Blog Post by a student in a Literary theory and criticism course entitled “Why Bennies aren’t Feminists”
- 2016-17 CSB/SJU Senior Surveys
- 2017 CSB/SJU Mellon Grant Survey