

# **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?

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## 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

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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)

## 2012 Student Blog Post

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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 . . . .”



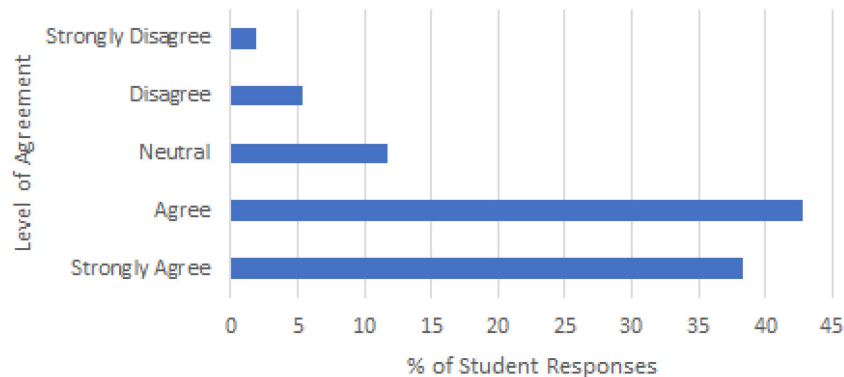
## Record Article: The CSB/SJU Experience is Not the Same for All Students

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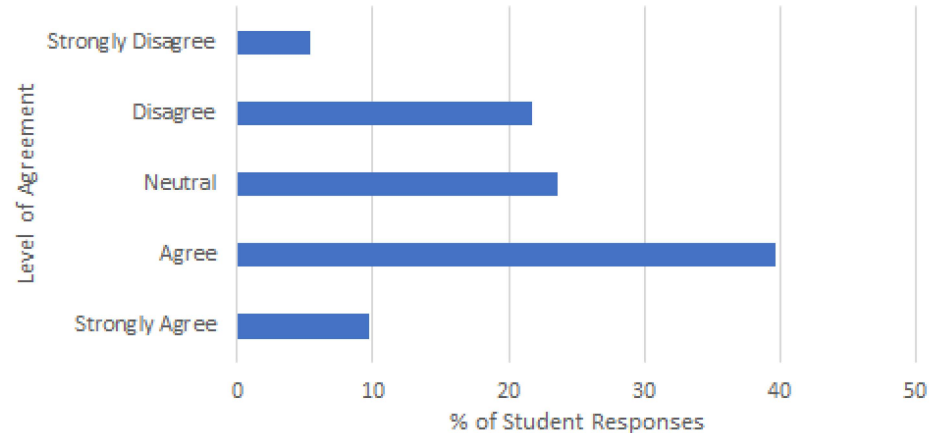
“I am a Bennie, but I did not have the typical CSB experience. I never felt completely accepted nor comfortable. To me, this is not the picture perfect community that everyone likes to brag about. We pick the voices we want to be heard and silence those who object and ask for change.”

# 2016-17 Senior Survey

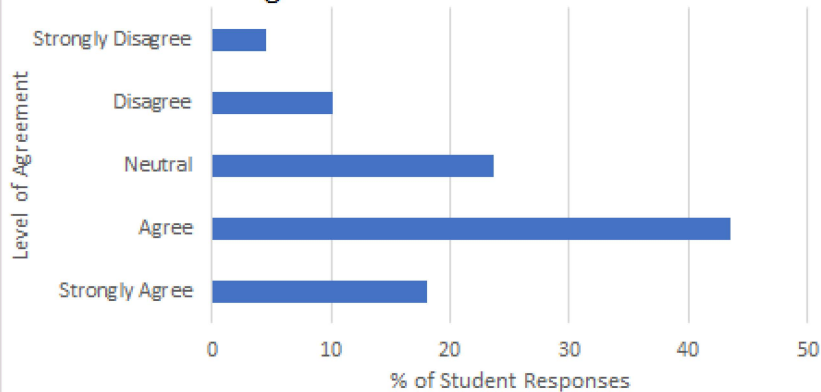
I Have Found a Community at CSB/SJU Where I Feel Like I Belong



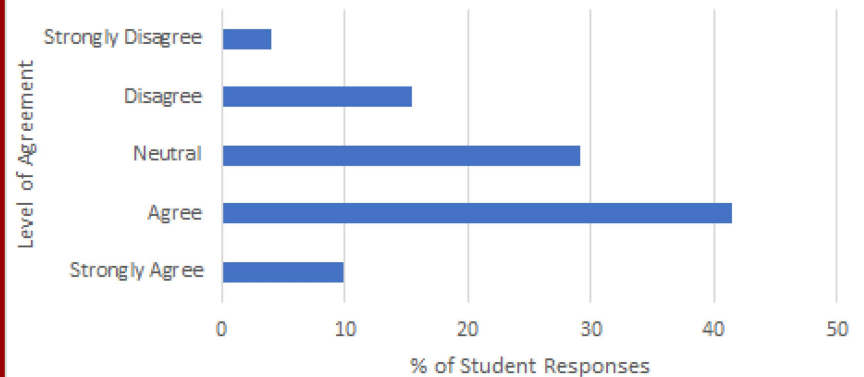
Students Here Actively Engage with Other Students Whose Race or Ethnicity are Different than their Own



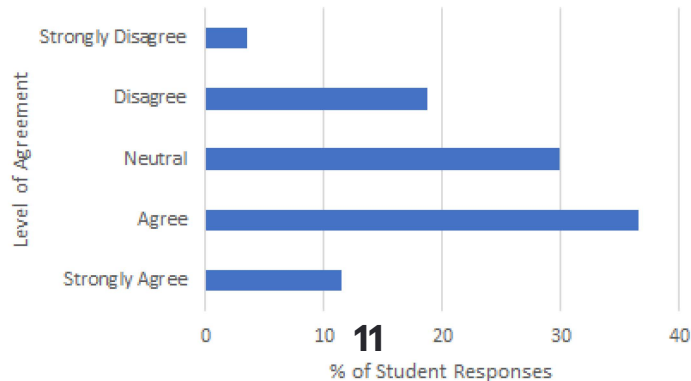
### Students Here Actively Engage with Other Students Whose Economic Background is Different than their Own



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



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



## 2016-17 Senior Survey and Mellon Grant Survey

- 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

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Our goal with this project is to increase awareness and foster inclusivity on our campus

# Development of Survey



## Survey Questions

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- 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

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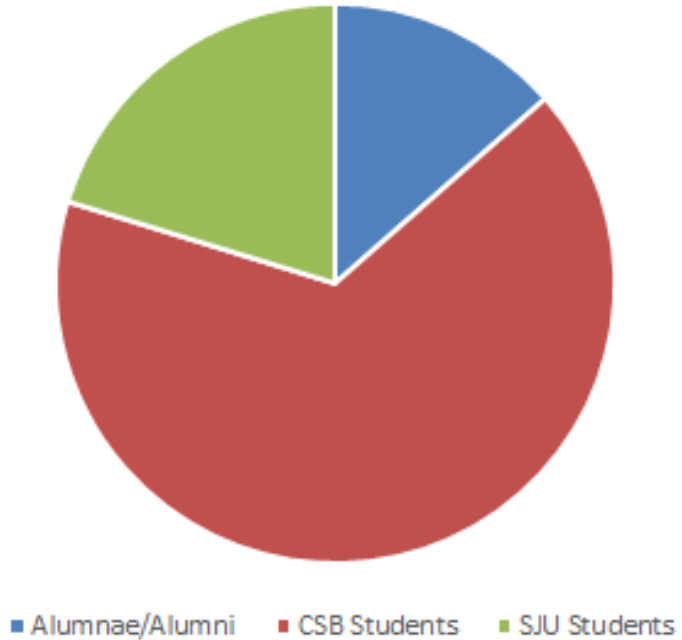
- Please list the top 3 words you would use to describe. . .
- Please list the top 3 social identities you would use to describe. . .
- I feel included in the definition of a typical Bennie or Johnnie
- Optional: How could CSB/SJU be more inclusive for you?



# Results



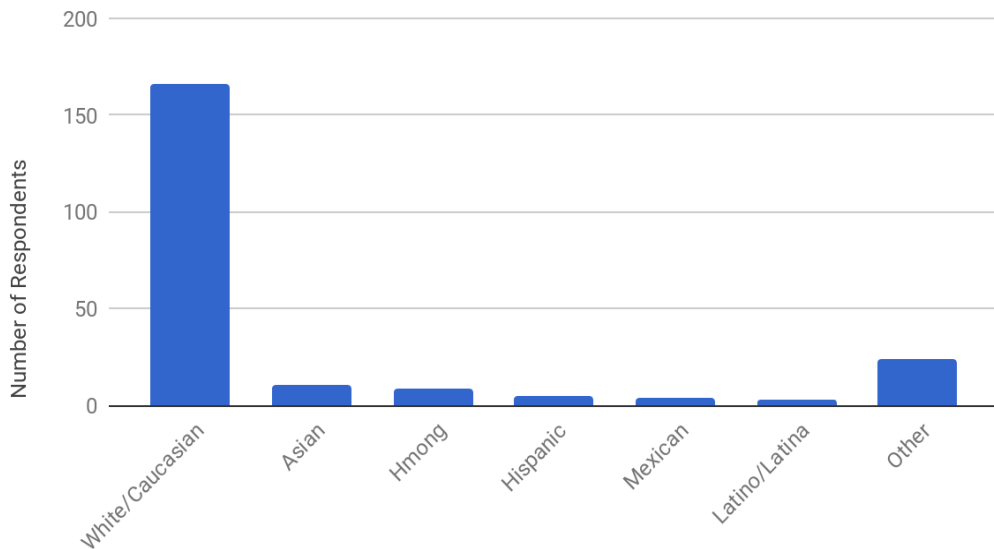
# Who Were Our Respondents?



CSB Students	66.2%
SJU Students	20.2%
Alumnae/Alumni	13.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Demographics of Respondents: Race and Ethnicity

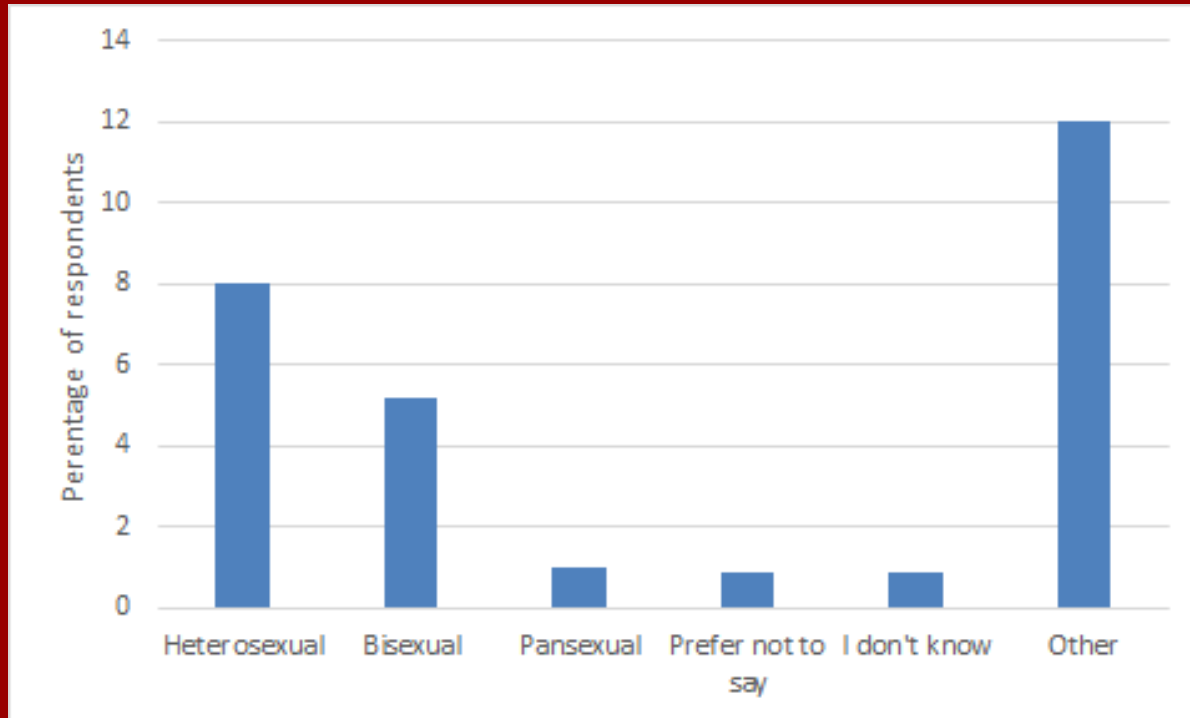
How would you describe your race/ethnicity?



White/Caucasian	166 (74.8%)
Asian	11 (5.0%)
Hmong	9 (4.1%)
Hispanic	5 (2.3%)
Mexican American	4 (1.8%)
Latino/Latina	3 (1.4%)
Other	24 (10.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>

44 of 222 respondents identified as a person of color

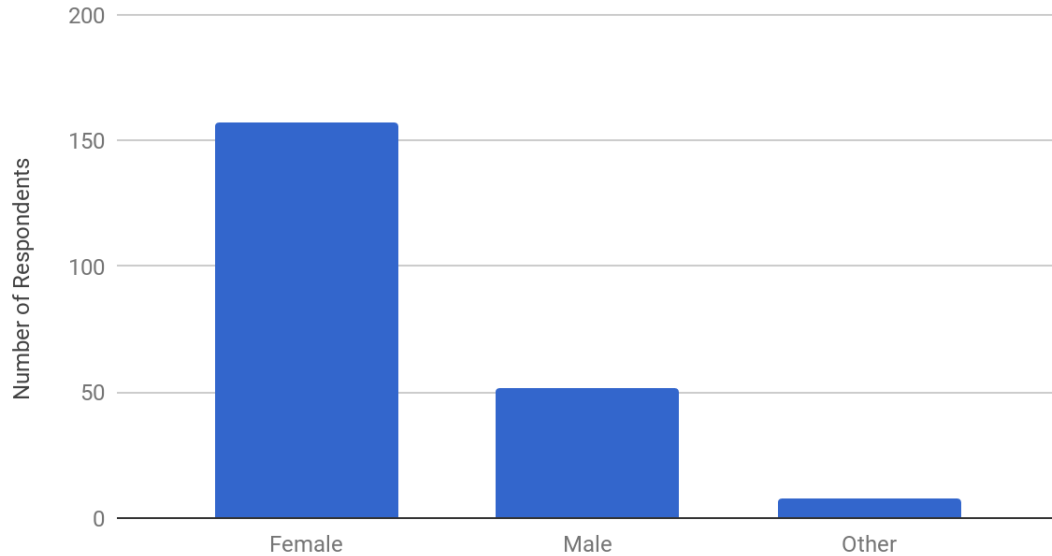
## Demographics of Respondents: Sexual Orientation



Heterosexual	80%
Bisexual	5.2%
Pansexual	1%
Prefer not to say	0.9%
I don't know	0.9%
Other	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

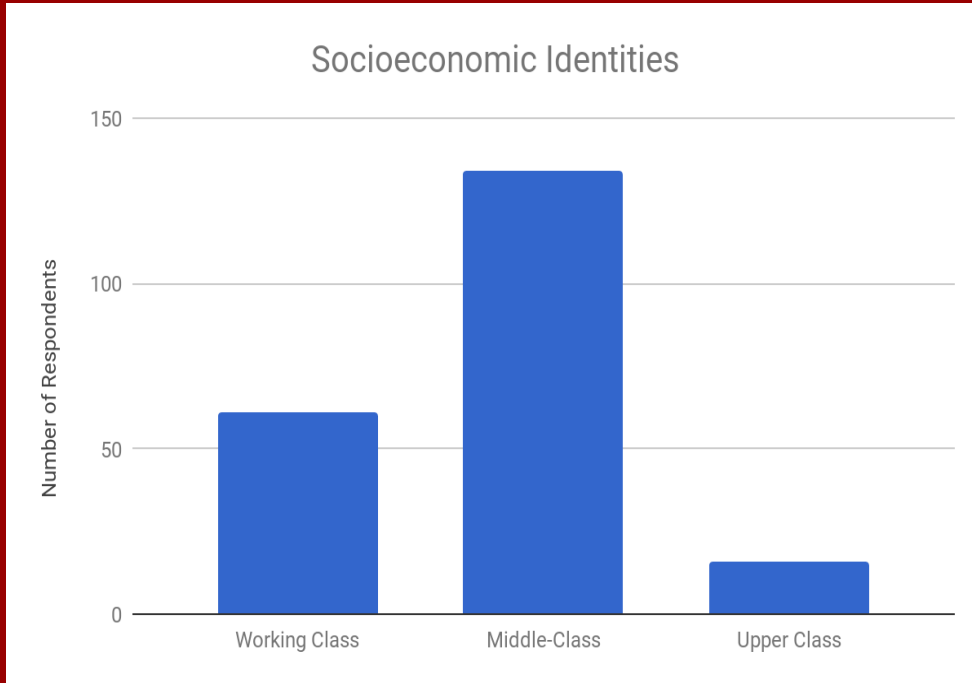
# Participant Demographics: Gender Identities

Gender Description



Female	72.5%
Male	23.8%
Other	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Participant Demographics: Socioeconomic Identities



Upper Class	16 (7.2%)
Middle Class	134 (60.4%)
Working Class	61 (27.5%)
No response	11 (5.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>

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%)





## Definition of a Social Identity

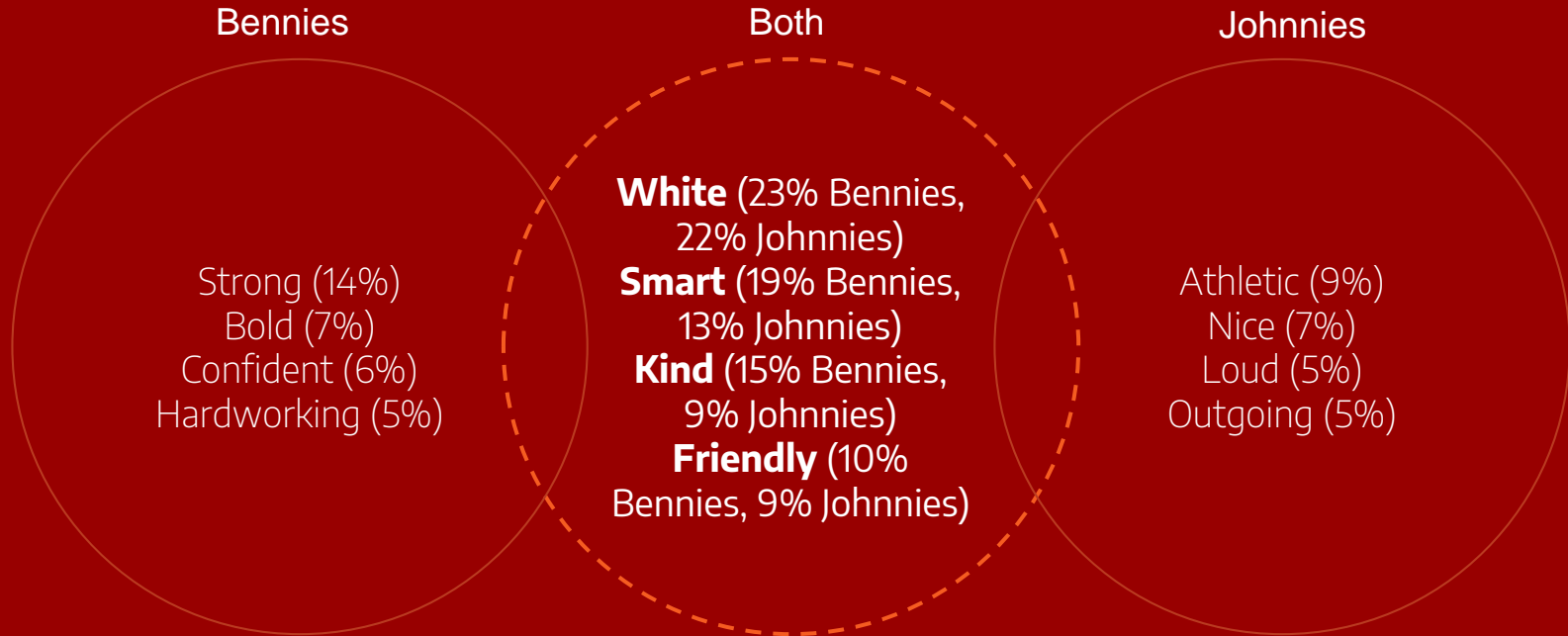
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- Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership(s)

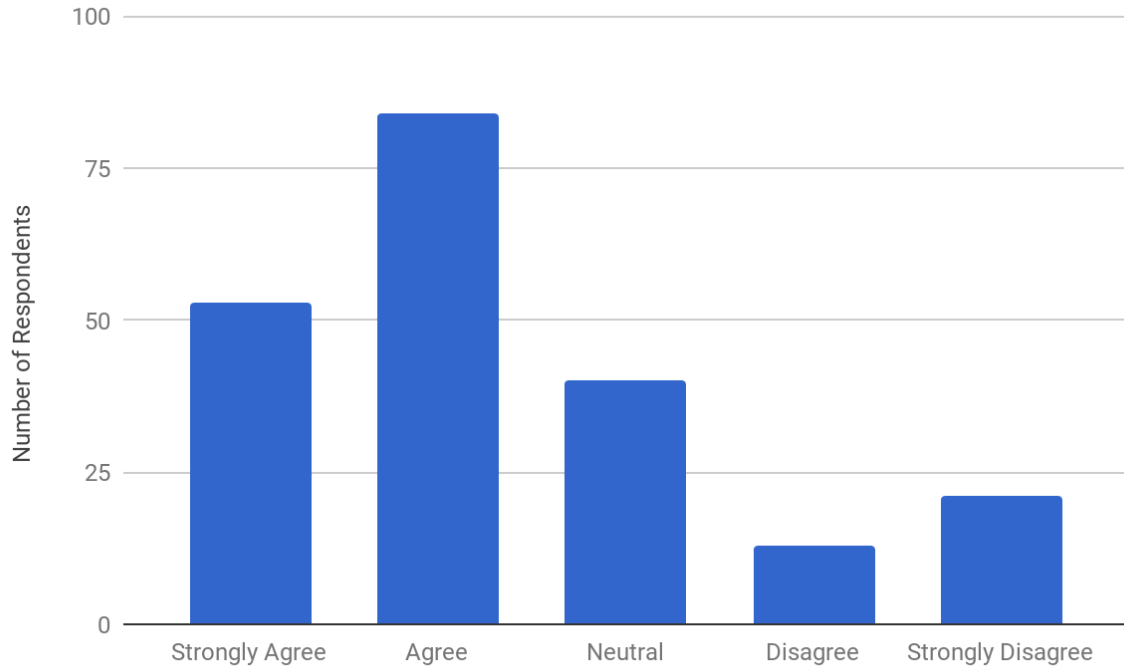




# Bennie/Johnnie Comparison

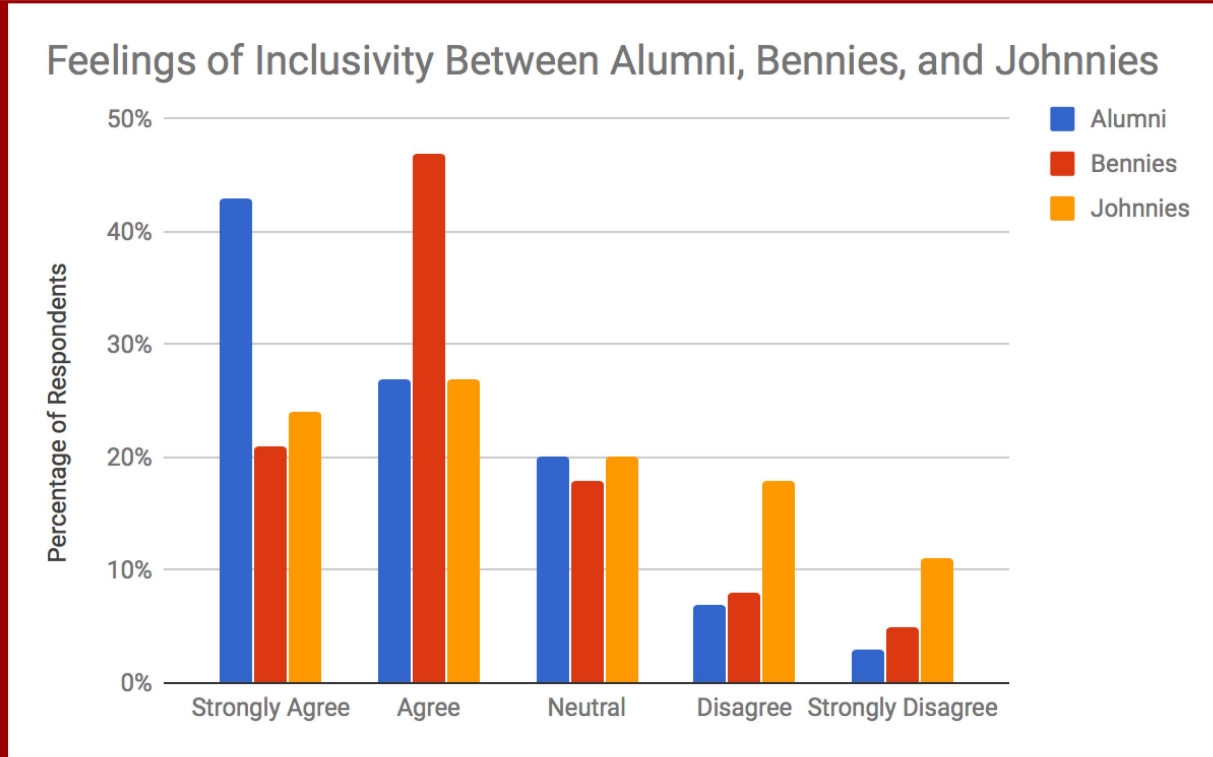


## “I feel included in the definition of a typical Bennie or Johnnie”



	Percent of Respondents
Strongly Agree	25%
Agree	39.8%
Neutral	19%
Disagree	10%
Strongly Disagree	6.2%

# Feelings of Inclusivity Among Alumni, Bennies, and Johnnies



## Reasons People Feel Included in the Bennie Identity

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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:

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### 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

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- 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

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- 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?

...Turning Research Into Change

“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?

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### Mellon Grant and Inclusivity Vision

- Different programs that are available for students
- Exposing exclusivity
- Policy change
- Inclusive Visioning Day

## Suggestions to Increase Inclusivity: General

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- Listen with the intent to act
- Challenge privilege
- Promote discussion



## Suggestions to Increase Inclusivity: Specific

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- Diversify the Faculty
- Events and Activities
- Education

## Suggestions to Increase Inclusivity: Specific

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- Diversify Friend Groups
- Diversify the Student Body

# Our Suggestions:

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- Transportation
- Break accommodations
- Anti-racism training
- Alter labelling system
  - Uniform title
  - Apparel with both labels

# Questions?



## Special Thanks to..

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- 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

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- Cheng, D. X. (2004). Students' sense of campus community: What it means, and what to do about it. *NAPSA journal*, 41(2), 216-234.
- Osterman, Karen F. "Students' Need for Belonging in the School Community" *Review of Educational Research* 70.3 (2000) 323-367. Web. 28 March. 2018.
- 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