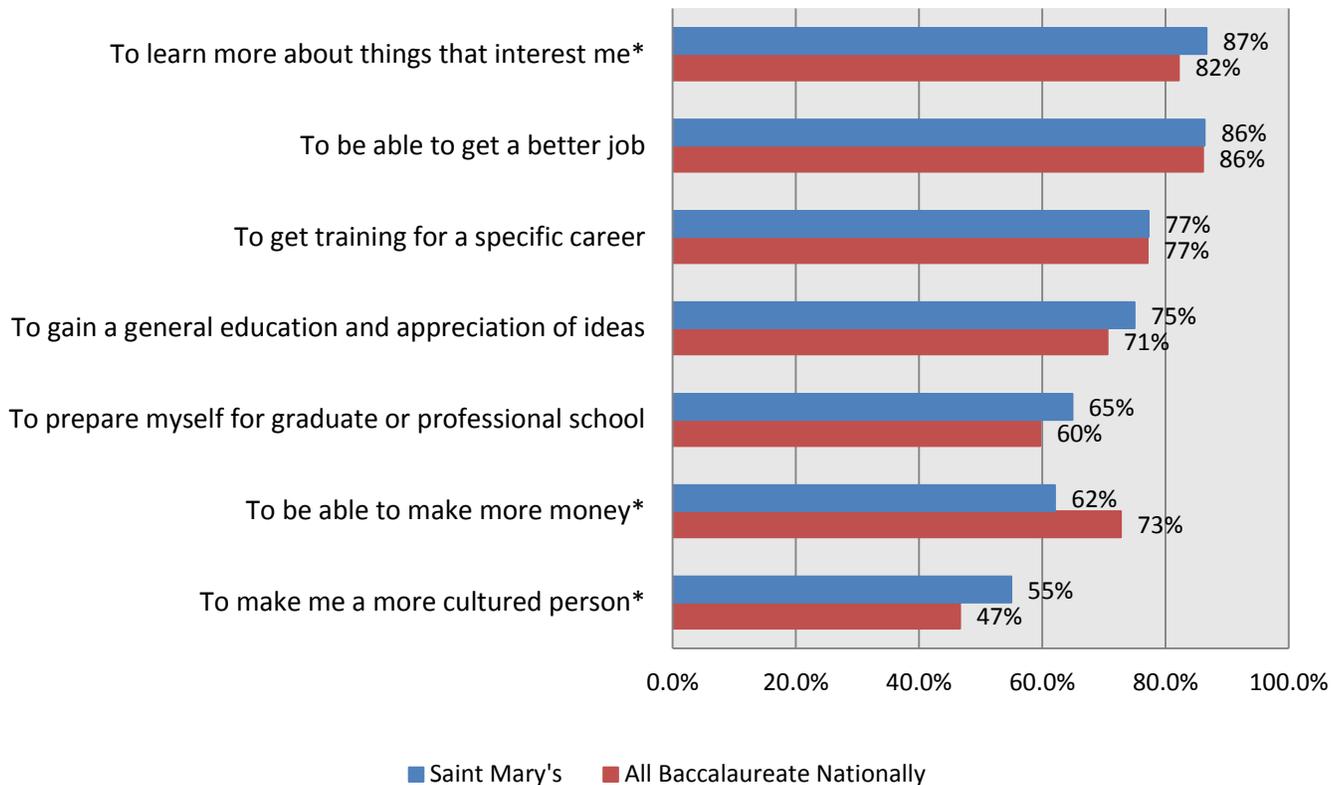


Institutional Research Update (February 2015)

This month's update explores what factors influence first-year students to (1) attend college more generally and (2) attend the institution in which they ultimately enrolled. Data will then be shared on whether the institution students chose was their preferred choice. Data from the 2014 CIRP First-Year Survey of first-year students beginning in Fall 2014 was analyzed. This survey was administered this past August at orientation and achieved an 82% response rate.

What influences first-year students to attend college in general?

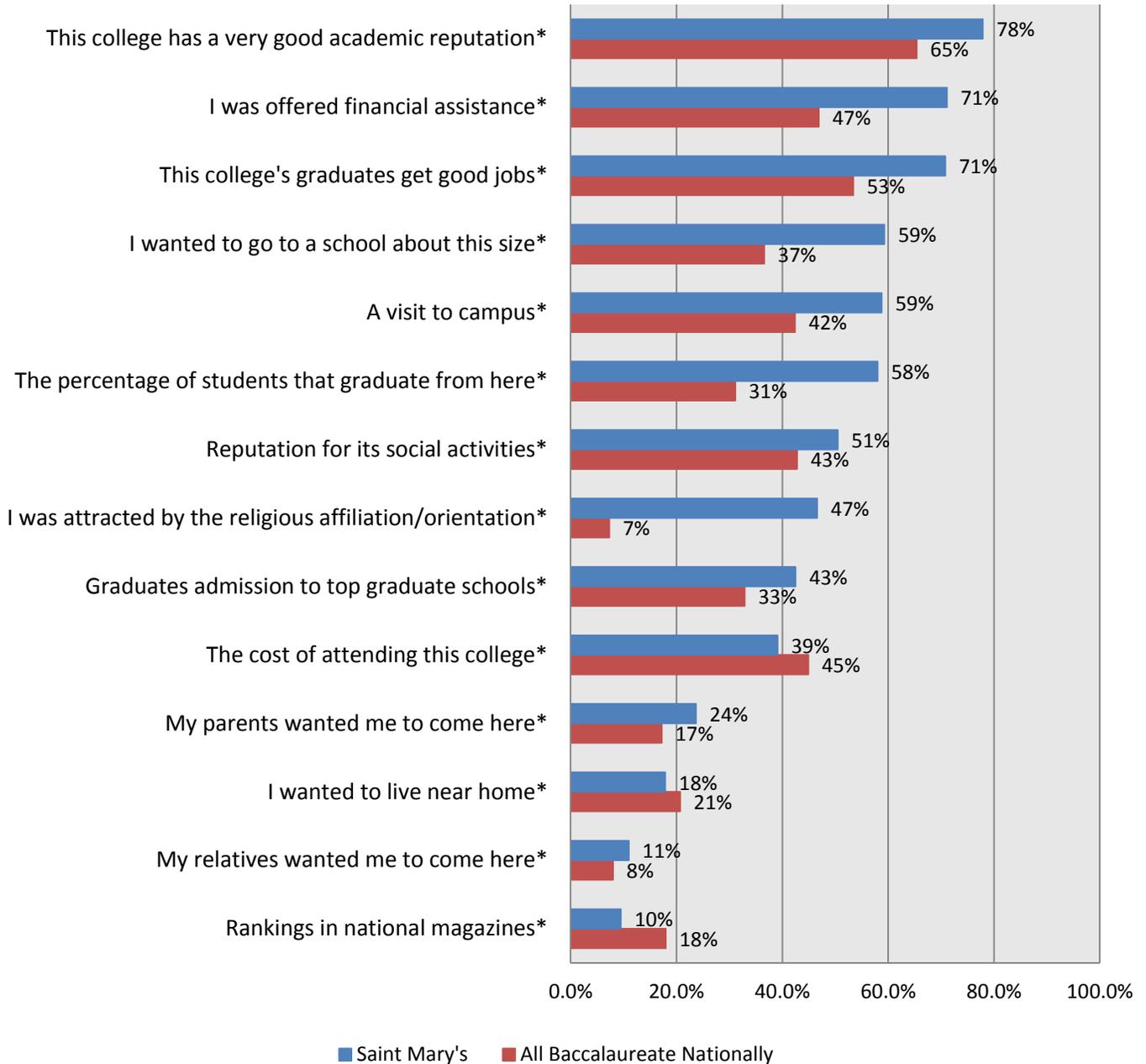
How important were the following in deciding to go to college?
(% Very Important)



*Significantly different at p<.05 level.

What influences first-year students to attend the institution in which they ultimately enrolled?

How important were the following in deciding to go to **this College?**
 (% Very Important)



*Significantly different at p<.05 level.

What choice was Saint Mary's among the colleges in which the student applied?

| | Saint Mary's Fall 14 First-Years | All Baccalaureate (Fall 14) |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| First Choice | 59.5% | 55.0% |
| Second Choice | 27.5% | 27.2% |
| Third or lower | 12.9% | 17.7% |

Take-Aways:

- First-year students both at Saint Mary's and nationally decide to attend college for a variety of reasons but primary among them are the desire to learn more about things that interest them and to be able to get a better job.
- The desire to make more money is less important to Saint Mary's first-years than it is for first-years nationally. Becoming a more cultured person, however, is cited by more Saint Mary's first-years as a very important reason for attending college.
- First-years decide to enroll at Saint Mary's for many reasons as well, but the most important influence appears to be the academic reputation of the College.
- Importantly, more than 70% of Saint Mary's first-year students told us that their decision to enroll here was highly influenced by receiving financial assistance. Receiving financial assistance is cited by more Saint Mary's first-years as a very important reason for attending Saint Mary's than first-years nationally.
- The small size of the College is important to many of our students and is an important factor in their decision to enroll here. Likewise, visiting campus appears to positively influence the decision to enroll.
- Compared to first-years nationally, wanting to live near home and rankings in national magazines are less important influences on the enrollment decision of Saint Mary's first-years.
- Finally, parents and relatives appear to play a greater role in the College choice decision for Saint Mary's first-years than first-years nationally.
- For the majority of first-years who enrolled at Saint Mary's in Fall 2014, Saint Mary's was their first choice and for 28%, it was their second choice. For 13% of our students, Saint Mary's was their third choice or lower.