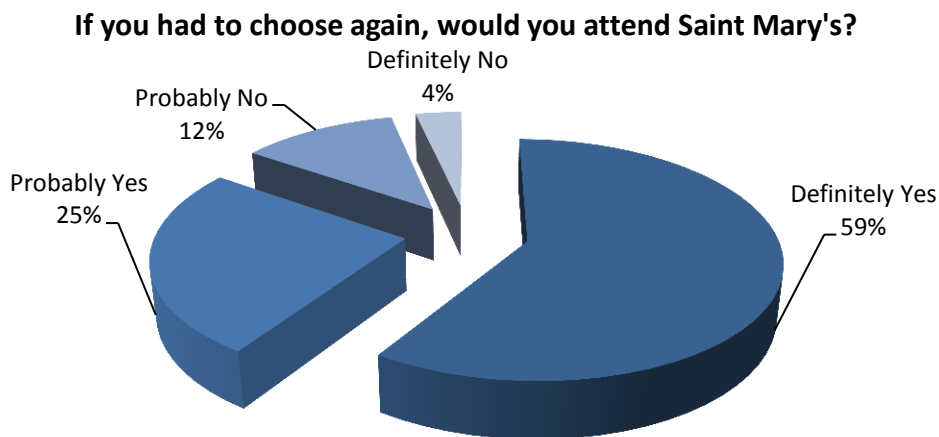


Institutional Research Update (November 2015)

While the vast majority of recent graduating seniors would attend Saint Mary's again if they could choose again, a small percentage (16%) indicates they probably or definitely would not. Using data from the College Senior Survey administered to graduating seniors in 2014 and 2015 just prior to commencement, this note explores potential influencing factors impacting seniors' assessment of whether they would choose Saint Mary's again, particularly those indicating they would not choose the College again. Results indicate seniors less sure of their choice to attend Saint Mary's have greater family and work obligations that likely influence their ability to integrate into campus life. Moreover, nearly half received a Pell grant compared to a fifth of those definitely sure they would attend Saint Mary's again speaking to the greater financial need of this group. These seniors report less frequent interaction with peers and faculty and as a result, are less likely to report that they see themselves as a member of the Saint Mary's community and feel like they are valued at Saint Mary's. (Note: All differences presented between those definitely/probably not choosing Saint Mary's again and all other groups are significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. The average response rate for these two years of College Senior Survey administrations was 41%)

Chart 1: Saint Mary's graduating senior assessment of choice to attend Saint Mary's



Source: 2014 and 2015 HERI College Senior Survey

- The majority of seniors (84%) report they would attend Saint Mary's again if they had it to do over. However, 16% indicate they probably or definitely would not. Significant differences are not observed by student race/ethnicity as 82% of students of color or international students would attend Saint Mary's again compared to 86% of white students.

Key Question: For graduating seniors who probably or definitely would not attend Saint Mary's again (16% of graduates), what can be said that differentiates them and their experience at Saint Mary's?

Finding 1: Graduating seniors who probably or definitely would not attend Saint Mary's again if they had it to do over have more frequent work and family obligations likely due to their increased level of financial need.

Chart 2: Pell Recipient and Distance from Home by Level of Certainty in Choice of Saint Mary's

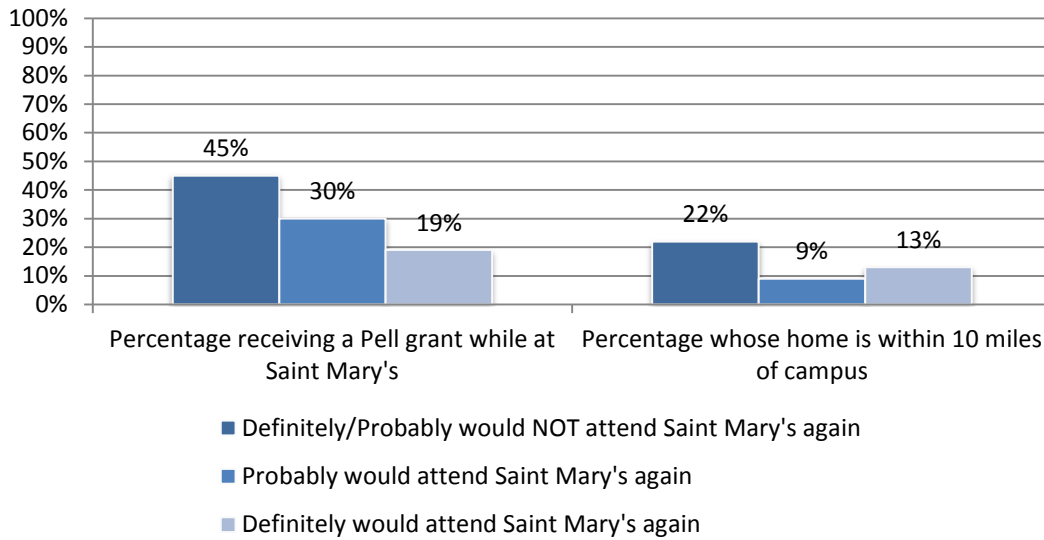
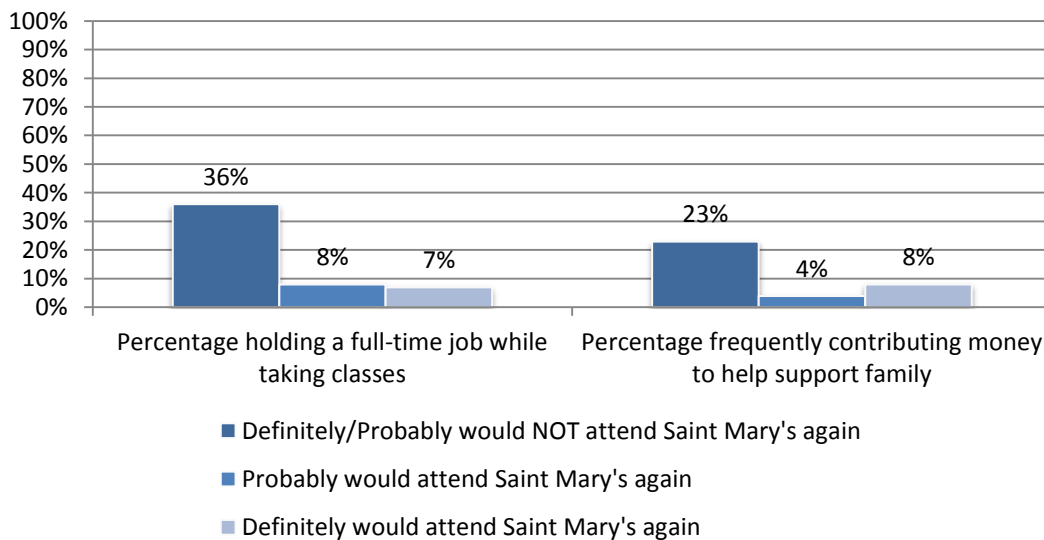


Chart 3: Outside obligations for Saint Mary's Seniors by Level of Certainty in Choice of Saint Mary's

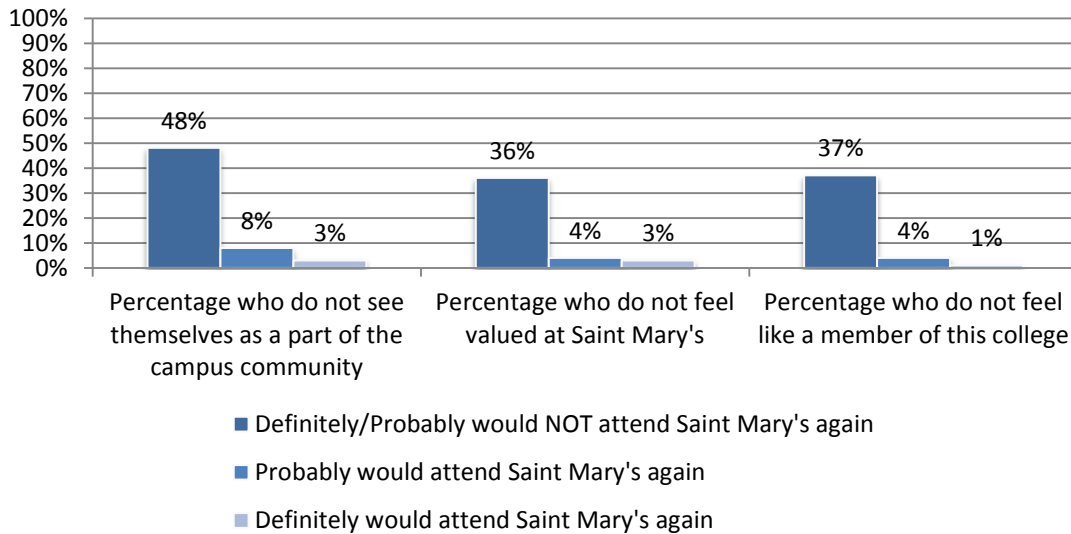


Source: 2014 and 2015 HERI College Senior Survey

- Graduating seniors who are less sure about their choice to attend Saint Mary's are significantly more likely to have received a Pell grant and are five times more likely to have held a full-time job while taking classes compared to those absolutely sure of their choice to attend Saint Mary's. They are also significantly more likely to frequently contribute money to help support family.

Finding 2: Graduating seniors who are not sure they would attend Saint Mary's again are less likely to feel like they are a part of the Saint Mary's community.

Chart 4: Sense of Belonging at Saint Mary's by Level of Certainty in Choice of Saint Mary's

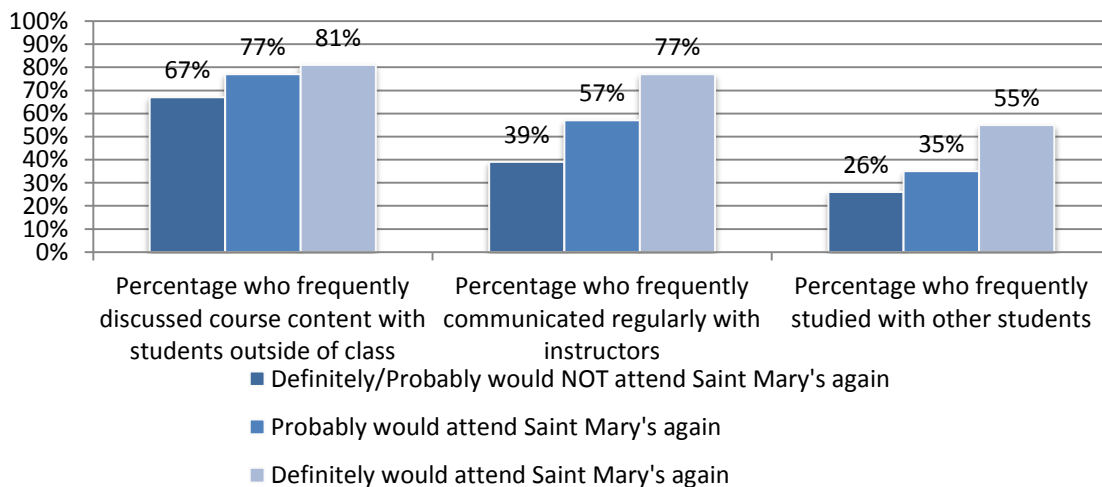


Source: 2014 and 2015 HERI College Senior Survey

- Those seniors less certain of their choice to attend Saint Mary's feel less connected to the College. Nearly half report not seeing themselves as a part of the campus community compared to just 3% of those who definitely would choose Saint Mary's again. More than a third do not feel valued at Saint Mary's and do not feel like a member of the College.

Finding 3: Seniors less sure they would attend Saint Mary's again report less active engagement with peers and faculty.

Chart 5: Engagement with Peers and Faculty by Level of Certainty in Choice of Saint Mary's

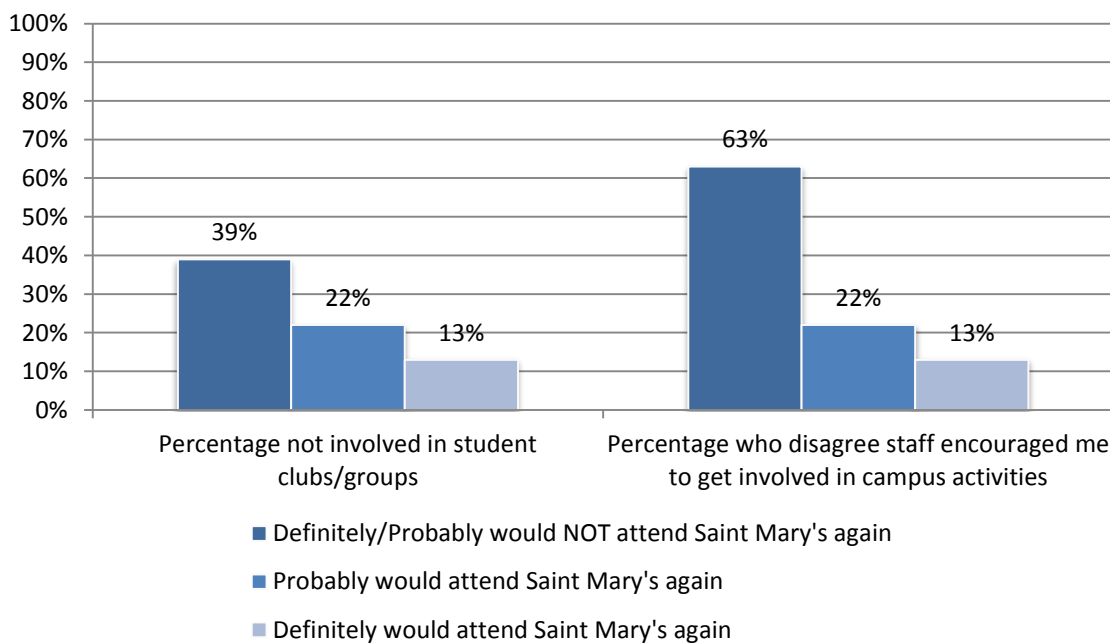


Source: 2014 and 2015 HERI College Senior Survey

- Perhaps not surprisingly, since seniors less sure of their choice to attend Saint Mary’s report less connection to the College, they also report less frequently engaging with faculty and other students.
- More than 75% of seniors who are certain of their choice to attend Saint Mary’s report frequently communicating regularly with instructors while only 39% of those less certain in their choice report the same.
- Similarly, only 26% of those who indicated they probably or definitely would not attend Saint Mary’s again reported frequently studying with other students compared to 55% of those who would definitely attend Saint Mary’s again.

Finding 4: Graduating seniors who are not sure they would attend Saint Mary’s again report less frequently engaging in student clubs/groups and reported receiving less encouragement from staff to participate.

Chart 6: Engagement in Campus Activities by Level of Certainty in Choice of Saint Mary’s



Source: 2014 and 2015 HERI College Senior Survey

- Seniors who are less certain in their choice to attend Saint Mary’s were less likely to participate in student clubs/groups.
- Likewise, these students were more likely to report they did not receive encouragement from staff to get involved in campus activities.

Conclusion

While the vast majority of our graduating seniors are satisfied with their experience at Saint Mary’s, it is important to understand the small percentage of students who say they probably would *not* have chosen Saint Mary’s if they had it to do over again. Particularly, this note explored the reasons or experiences that might have contributed to this assessment. Results from graduating seniors in 2014 and 2015 on the *College Senior Survey* indicate that seniors who probably or definitely would not choose Saint Mary’s again had greater outside obligations from work and family. Nearly half were Pell recipients compared to a fifth who indicated they would definitely choose Saint Mary’s again. It

appears that this group had fewer economic resources that made them more likely to work full-time and contribute money to support their family while taking classes. Given this added responsibility, it seems quite possible that this may impact their ability to integrate as effectively into campus life. They less frequently interact with peers and faculty and are less likely to get involved with student clubs/groups. This likely contributes to feeling less connected to the College as a greater percentage report feeling like they are not a member of the College and do not feel valued at Saint Mary's. These findings point to the importance of engaging students who must work full-time and have greater financial constraints which might leave less time to participate in student activities, interact with peers and engage with instructors.