

# **2007 Alumni Survey Summary of Results**

**Saint Mary's College of California  
Office of Institutional Research  
January 31, 2007**

During the early part of January 2007, the Saint Mary's College Alumni Office sent an email message requesting participation in an on-line survey of SMC alumni. Approximately 11,000 alumni were sent the message, from which we received approximately 2,100 completed responses. What follows is a summary of the responses to both the scaled survey questions as well as the open-ended questions.

The questions are provided below:

#### SCALED QUESTIONS

Using the scale below, please select the response that best reflects your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

(Scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree nor Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree, Not able to respond)

- My experience as a student at Saint Mary's was very important to me.
- Of the colleges or universities I have attended, Saint Mary's had the greatest impact on me.
- Saint Mary's prepared me well for life.
- The Christian Brothers were an important part of my experience at Saint Mary's.
- I have knowledge of Saint Mary's current state of affairs.
- I have a good sense of Saint Mary's future direction.
- I read Saint Mary's magazine - The Magazine of Saint Mary's College.
- The Magazine of Saint Mary's College is of value to me.
- I read Saint Mary's e-newsletter - The Update.
- The Update is of value to me.
- Alumni input is solicited.
- Overall, alumni input is utilized in the campus decision-making process.
- Saint Mary's adequately prepared me to live in a diverse society.
- Saint Mary's concern for alumni is growing.
- I have attended Saint Mary's sponsored events since graduation.
- I give back to Saint Mary's.
- The College's alumni activities are of interest to me.
- I am able to attend alumni events regularly.
- The alumni office is always responsive to my concerns.
- I would like to become more involved with Saint Mary's in years to come.

#### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

My most vivid memory of Saint Mary's is:

The three words that best capture my experience with Saint Mary's are:

The college's greatest opportunities for the future are:

My three greatest worries about Saint Mary's are:

If I had one piece of advice for the Brother Ronald Gallagher, President of Saint Mary's, it would be:

Please use the space below to provide us with any additional comments or feedback you wish.

What follows are summary tables and graphs for the scaled questions along with two summaries (executive and detailed) for the open-ended questions.

**2006 SMC Alumni Survey Summary of Responses, Undergraduates Only, with Disaggregation by Year of Graduation\***

	Graduates 1943-1969 %	Graduates 1970-1996 %	Graduates 1997-Present %
<b>My experience as a student at Saint Mary's was very important to me.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	0.6	1.1	1.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	0.6	1.7	1.4
Strongly Agree/Agree	98.3	97	96.8
<b>Of the colleges or universities I have attended, Saint Mary's had the greatest impact on me.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	3.9	4.8	3.9
Neither Disagree nor Agree	7.7	8.7	6.9
Strongly Agree/Agree	79.6	74.5	71.2
<b>Saint Mary's prepared me well for life.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	3.4	4.1	3.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	8.8	10.3	9.2
Strongly Agree/Agree	85.6	83.8	86.1
<b>The Christian Brothers were an important part of my experience at Saint Mary's.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	2.8	9.8	17.3
Neither Disagree nor Agree	7.2	22.8	33.3
Strongly Agree/Agree	87.3	65.5	46.4
<b>I have knowledge of Saint Mary's current state of affairs.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	14.9	15.3	14.3
Neither Disagree nor Agree	19.3	21	20
Strongly Agree/Agree	62.4	62.5	64.7
<b>I have a good sense of Saint Mary's future direction.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	20.4	24.1	28.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	32	36.7	36.1
Strongly Agree/Agree	41.4	36.7	33.1

\* Data presented by year of graduation is for undergraduate students only. Non-respondents and "not able to respond" responses are excluded.

## 2006 SMC Alumni Survey Summary of Responses, Undergraduates Only, with Disaggregation by Year of Graduation\*

	Graduates 1943-1969 %	Graduates 1970-1996 %	Graduates 1997-Present %
<b>I read Saint Mary's magazine - The Magazine of Saint Mary's College.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	3.9	6.7	11
Neither Disagree nor Agree	4.4	8	9.4
Strongly Agree/Agree	90.1	83.7	78.3
<b>The Magazine of Saint Mary's College is of value to me.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	5.5	6.5	9.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	17.1	19	22.4
Strongly Agree/Agree	74.6	72.2	66.8
<b>I read Saint Mary's e-newsletter - The Update.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	7.2	9.1	13.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	11.6	14	14.1
Strongly Agree/Agree	77.9	75.2	72.4
<b>The Update is of value to me.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	6.1	8.7	8.1
Neither Disagree nor Agree	21.5	22.8	27.8
Strongly Agree/Agree	68.5	66.5	61.7
<b>Alumni input is solicited.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	10.5	11.5	14.5
Neither Disagree nor Agree	29.8	31.8	33.5
Strongly Agree/Agree	47.5	49	44
<b>Overall, alumni input is utilized in the campus decision-making process.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	9.4	11.2	16.8
Neither Disagree nor Agree	47	47.7	47.1
Strongly Agree/Agree	19.9	20.2	20.2
<b>Saint Mary's adequately prepared me to live in a diverse society.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	6.6	9.9	14.2
Neither Disagree nor Agree	13.3	19.2	16.2
Strongly Agree/Agree	77.3	69.5	68.2

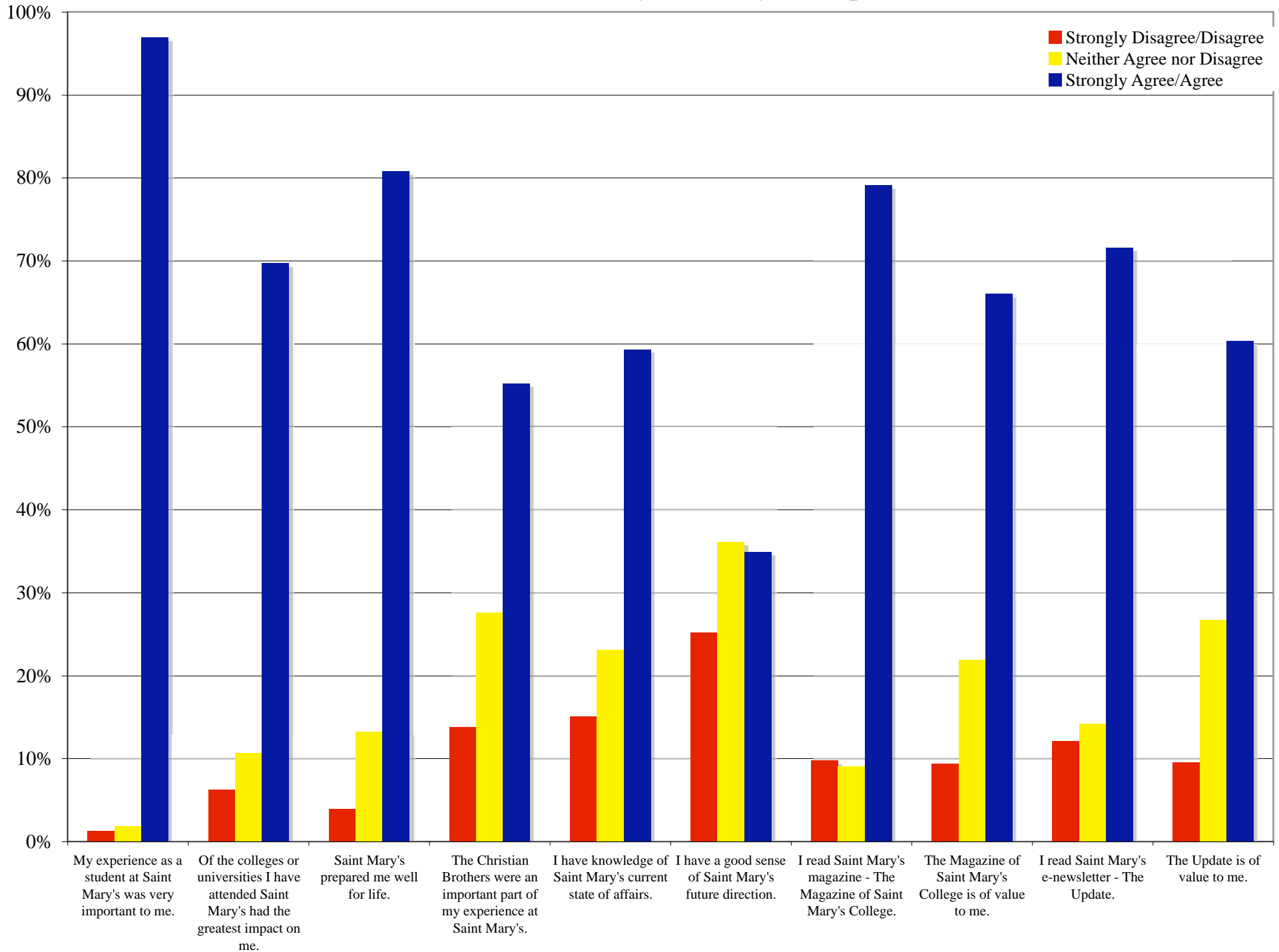
\* Data presented by year of graduation is for undergraduate students only. Non-respondents and "not able to respond" responses are excluded.

**2006 SMC Alumni Survey Summary of Responses, Undergraduates Only, with Disaggregation by Year of Graduation\***

	<b>Graduates 1943-1969 %</b>	<b>Graduates 1970-1996 %</b>	<b>Graduates 1997-Present %</b>
<b>Saint Mary's concern for alumni is growing.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	4.4	5	8.3
Neither Disagree nor Agree	37	40.2	33.5
Strongly Agree/Agree	47.5	44.7	47.5
<b>I have attended Saint Mary's sponsored events since graduation.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	17.6	24.9	42.4
Neither Disagree nor Agree	6.1	9.7	7.3
Strongly Agree/Agree	71.8	61.2	46.9
<b>I give back to Saint Mary's.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	12.7	19.5	33.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	11	20.2	24.5
Strongly Agree/Agree	72.9	56.5	37.4
<b>The College's alumni activities are of interest to me.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	11	12.6	11.5
Neither Disagree nor Agree	19.9	23.8	21.2
Strongly Agree/Agree	64.1	61.8	65.9
<b>I am able to attend alumni events regularly.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	48	54	56.3
Neither Disagree nor Agree	24.3	27.7	22.5
Strongly Agree/Agree	22.1	15	18.8
<b>The alumni office is always responsive to my concerns.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	6.7	5.8	7.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	35.9	48	43.9
Strongly Agree/Agree	34.2	21	19.6
<b>I would like to become more involved with Saint Mary's in years to come.</b>			
Strongly Disagree/Disagree	17.2	10.2	4.7
Neither Disagree nor Agree	35.4	31.2	20
Strongly Agree/Agree	38.7	54.9	73.5

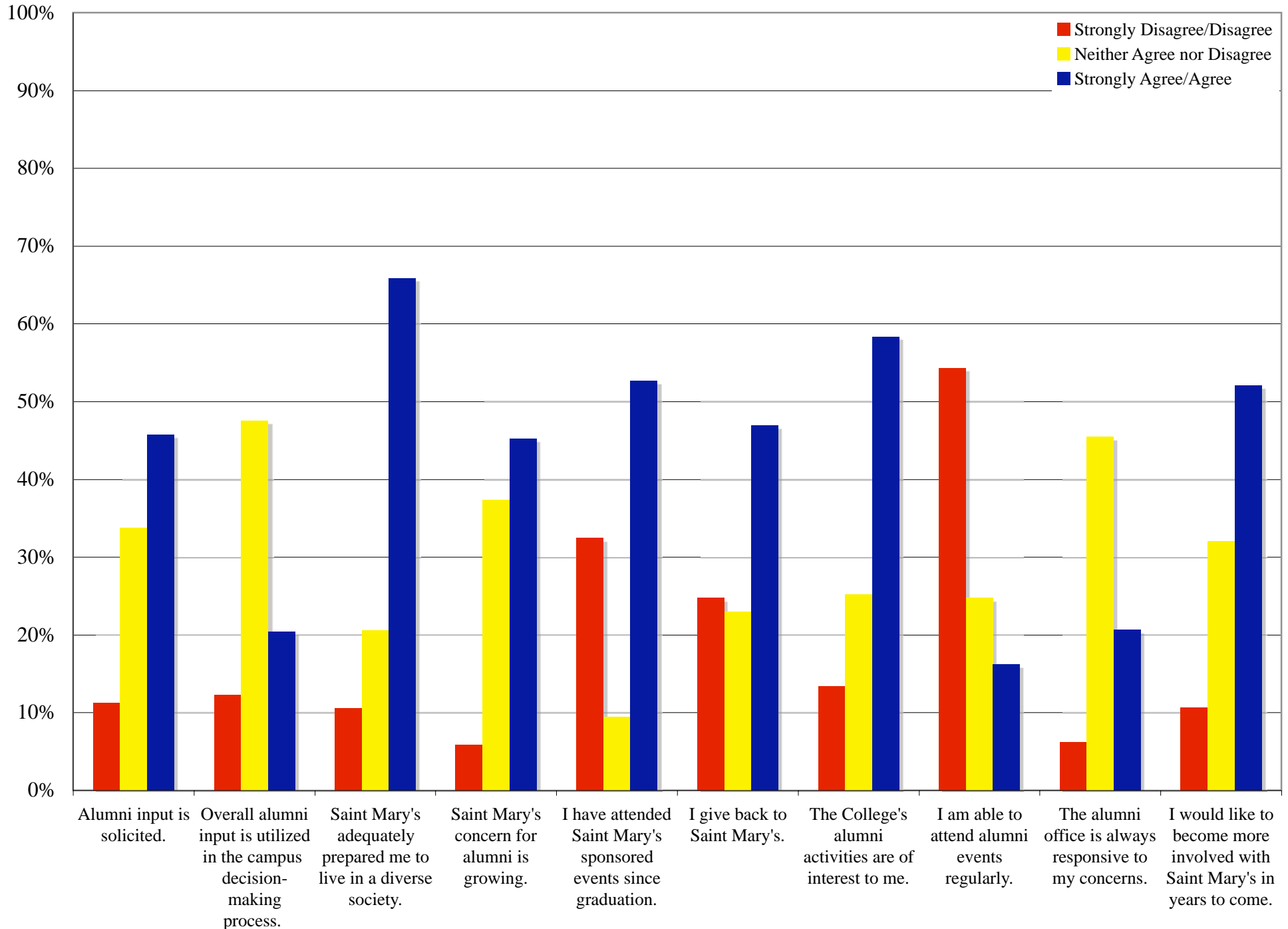
\* Data presented by year of graduation is for undergraduate students only. Non-respondents and "not able to respond" responses are excluded.

## 2006 SMC Alumni Survey Summary of Responses\*



\* Both graduate and undergraduate respondents are included. Non-respondents and "not able to respond" responses are excluded.

## 2006 SMC Alumni Survey Summary of Responses\*



\* Both undergraduate and graduate respondents are included. Non-respondents and "not able to respond" responses are excluded.

## **Detailed Summary of Open-Ended Questions**

The following is a detailed summary of the responses to the open-ended questions. They are organized in the order in which they were asked on the survey.

### ***My most vivid memory of Saint Mary's:***

In response to the first question which asked alumni to report their most vivid memories of St. Mary's several themes arose: lasting first impressions of the campus, lasting impressions of the people, their academic and social experiences on campus.

### **Lasting first impressions**

Over one hundred alumni reported that their most vivid memory was the beauty of the campus. These comments were often coupled with how welcomed they felt on campus.

- 88 referred to the beauty of the campus.
- 27 mentioned that their first day.
- 21 specifically mentioned being awestruck the first time they drove on campus.
- 14 mentioned orientation.
- 4 mentioned freshman initiation.

### **Lasting impressions of the people**

An even greater number of alumni referred to meeting people and the relationships they cultivated as their most vivid memories.

- 183 alumni reported making great friends, lifelong friends.
- 122 alumni mention having fond memories of the Christian Brothers generally or by naming specific Brothers by name.
- 110 met faculty who cared about students and gave them personal attention.
- 70 alumni mentioned specific faculty they remembered.
- 49 students suggested that they remember St. Mary's having a great sense of community.
- 28 reported meeting their spouse on campus.

### **Their academic social experiences on campus**

In addition to faculty, a significant number of alumni reported having vivid memories about their academic and social experiences on campus.

- 137 alumni reported graduation as their most vivid memory.
- 109 students referred to specific majors, programs and/or classes.
- 93 alumni reported having fond memories of living in the dorms.
- 84 alumni suggested that their most vivid memories were of attending football, basketball, rugby games, and specific games when SMC beat good teams or our rivals.
- 79 students reported having life long memories of their seminar courses and/or readings.
- 68 alumni had vivid memories of playing sports for SMC.
- 45 alumni fondly remembered having small engaging classes.
- 40 alumni fondly remembered Jan term, often referring to the opportunity to travel abroad as the highlight of the course.



- 34 alumni reported having vivid memories of the places that students frequently hung out (dorms, dining commons, pub, library).
- 23 had vivid memories of the discussions they had in class.
- 20 had memories of the Chapel.
- 16 alumni had memories of participating in specific activities (cheerleader, student council, radio station, etc.)
- 12 alumni mention the great books.
- 11 had memories of attending mass.
- 10 reported Jamaican-Me-Crazy
- 10 mentioned historical events (Vietnam war, Kennedy assassination, 1989 earthquake).
- 10 reported painting SMC.
- 5 reported dances.
- 5 had memories of getting married on campus.
- 3 reported Gael stock.

***The three words that best capture my experience with Saint Mary's are:***

In describing their experiences at SMC in three words, the following responses emerged.

- 412 described their experience as educational, thought provoking, or eye opening.
- 275 described their experiences as enjoyable, fun and/or exciting.
- 246 alumni described their experience at SMC as meaningful, fulfilling, memorable, rewarding or valuable.
- 206 described their experience as life change and/or referred to their own growth or maturation.
- 193 described it as challenging.
- 133 used the words community or camaraderie to describe their experience.
- 98 described their experience as spiritual, Christ centered, and/or Lasallian.
- 91 alumni described SMC as caring, supportive, and/or welcoming.

***If I had one piece of advice for Brother Ronald Gallagher it would be:***

Many of the themes to the questions **“The College’s greatest opportunities are”** and **“My three greatest fears about Saint ”** overlapped with the question about advice to Brother Ronald Gallagher.

- 97 alumni stressed the importance of spending time with students, listening to them and/or keeping the college student centered.
- 87 alumni suggested that he return to or continue to promote the Christian/Catholic identity or the school and/or return to the institutions core values as laid out by the Brothers.
- 63 alumni suggested that Brother Ronald, reach out to, listen to, and strengthen networks for the alumni.
- 36 alumni stressed the importance of keeping SMC small.
- 36 alumni suggested that Brother Ronald bring football back.
- 29 alumni suggested that he support athletics more generally.
- 28 stated the importance of Jan term, seminar and/or the liberal arts tradition.
- 27 suggested that the institution do more to promote and market SMC.
- 24 expressed great importance of keeping or making SMC affordable for middle-class and poor students.

- 22 alumni felt it is important for Brother Ronald to embrace and promote diversity among students, faculty and/or within the curriculum.
- 20 alumni stressed the importance of the continued presence of the Christian Brothers.
- 11 alumni felt it is important to provide students with more opportunities to socialize on campus.
- 10 alumni also showed concern for the continuation of extended education.
- 7 alumni feel that dorm space should be increased to return to the four-years of on-campus living that they enjoyed.
- 6 advised him to work toward increasing our endowment.

However, a significant number of alumni either felt unqualified to give or uncomfortable offering advice Brother Ronald or suggested that Brother Ronald emulate Brother Mel. Lastly a number of alumni were concerned about SMC's reputation due to recent scandals and suggested that Brother Ronald try to address them or work to promote a more positive image of the institution.

Overall the alumni's responses to these questions suggest that most of them had very positive experiences on campus academically and socially and with people (faculty and students) in the community. Their biggest concerns seem to be ways the campus has changed that may take away from the experiences (i.e. being able to live on campus for four years, football games, staying small, having social activities, the pub, being affordable, etc.). The alumni would also like to see other things stay the same, the beauty of the campus, the presence of the brothers, the values of the university and the courses (seminar) and structure (Jan term) that they feel make St. Mary's unique.

## Executive Summary of Open-Ended Questions

The following is a summary of responses to each of the open-ended questions that were included in the Alumni Survey conducted in December 2006. A set of common themes was identified for each question (bold print). The responses are provided in the order in which they appeared on the survey.

### **My most vivid memory of Saint**

#### **Mary's:**

Making great friends (lifelong)  
Graduation  
Faculty who care, personal attention  
Beautiful campus  
Attending football, basketball, rugby games  
Seminar  
Great sense of community  
Small engaging classes  
Jan Term (particularly study abroad)  
Participating in student activities

### **The three words that best capture my experience with Saint Mary's are:**

Community  
Personal attention  
Empowering  
Encouraging  
Beautiful  
Peaceful  
Spiritual/Christ centered  
Inspirational  
Rewarding  
Commitment

### **The college's greatest opportunities for the future are:**

Increase graduate program offerings  
Increase diversity (cultural, race, economic)  
Improved outreach to and inclusion of alumni  
Expand international relations  
Expand service opportunities  
Expand networking opportunities  
Enhance reputation through academics, athletics  
Bring back football  
Increase SMC exposure

Attract students beyond the bay area

### **My three greatest worries about Saint**

#### **Mary's are:**

Cost/ too expensive  
Lack of diversity  
Getting too big  
Keeping up with technology  
Ability to attract great teachers  
Loss of Christian Brothers  
Losing its sense of purpose/mission/retain core values  
No football  
Decline in male students  
Staying competitive

### **If I had one piece of advice for Brother Ronald Gallagher it would be:**

Improve interaction between students, faculty, and alumni  
Continue liberal arts tradition, seminars, Jan term  
Stay student centered  
Keep SMC affordable  
Strengthen alumni networks  
Continue to embrace diversity  
Bring football back  
Keep the tradition of Christian brothers  
Expand endowment  
Reinvigorate Christian/Catholic identity

### **Additional comments or feedback**

Concerned about increasing cost  
Provide opportunities for internships, better preparation for the real world  
Improve connections with all alumni  
Don't constantly ask for donations  
Bring football back  
Stay small  
Stay true to SMC traditions