

 THE RESEARCH AGENDA

A Tale of Two Private Catholic Philadelphia Universities: Longitudinal Market Position Differentiation

By John Haller

This article is a longitudinal comparative case study exploring the market position of Saint Joseph's University and Villanova University — two private Catholic institutions in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At one time, Saint Joseph's and Villanova shared a number of similar characteristics in student demand, faculty characteristics, student outcomes, and financial resources. However, by 2018–19, the similarities in the characteristics of the institutions had changed. This study works to understand the longitudinal market position changes at each institution. The research methodology involved a quantitative approach. The analysis revealed how the market positions at Saint Joseph's and Villanova changed, over time.

Saint Joseph's University and Villanova University are two private Catholic institutions located approximately seven miles apart in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The institutions share similar mission statements in that each references the importance of the liberal arts, justice, inclusivity, citizenship, and spirituality in the Catholic tradition (Saint Joseph's University 2023; Villanova University 2023). In addition, Saint Joseph's and Villanova share a number of similar characteristics. For example, before 2017, each institution was ranked amongst the best regional universities in the North in *U.S. News* (*U.S. News Academic Insights* 2019). Each institution also had a Carnegie Commission Classification of master's level until 2016 (Indiana University 2021;

Villanova University 2016). In the 1980s, each institution enrolled a similar percent of students from the top 10, 25, and 50 percent of their high school class. Each institution had similar five-year graduation rates, had a similar percent of faculty members with a terminal degree and student-faculty ratio, and had a similar endowment per student (*U.S. News Academic Insights* 2019; NACUBO 2023). However, by 2017, and well before that time, many of the similarities in the characteristics in the institutions' paths had diverged. For instance, today Villanova is ranked as a National University in *U.S. News* and is classified as a doctoral institution by the Carnegie Commission, while Saint Joseph's remains a regional North university in *U.S. News* and a master's level insti-

tution by the Carnegie Commission (*U.S. News Academic Insights* 2019; Indiana University 2021; Villanova University 2016). In addition, the percentage of students who enroll from the top 10, 25, and 50 percent of their high school class, the five-year graduation rate, and the endowment per student at Villanova is meaningfully higher relative to Saint Joseph's (*U.S. News Academic Insights* 2019; NACUBO 2023). Given the changes in the institutional characteristics at Saint Joseph's and Villanova, Villanova now operates in a different and stronger position in the higher education market relative to Saint Joseph's. Thus, the value proposition, or means by which Villanova competes and appeals to internal and external constituents, is stronger than Saint Joseph's. Financially, as a greater number of stronger students are now attracted to Villanova, and as the institution is able to capture greater resources via grants and donations, they are able to generate more institutional revenue (*U.S. News Academic Insights* 2019; NACUBO 2023). Based on the *U.S. News* rankings and Carnegie Classification, Villanova is perceived to be more prestigious than Saint Joseph's. Hence, Villanova's stronger and more differentiated market position allows for a more successful and sustainable operation relative to Saint Joseph's.

Purpose of the Paper

This paper is a comparative case study that assesses each institution's market position longitudinally. From a comparative perspective, this paper examines the different ways Saint Joseph's and Villanova's market position changed and serves as a model or template by which other institutions can work to understand their relative positions. Meaningfully, this study will show the institutional elements of market position that influenced changes in Saint Joseph's and Villanova's differentiation and trajectory.

Research Question

The research question for this paper was: How did market position change longitudinally at Saint Joseph's and Villanova?

Quantitative Analysis

Longitudinal quantitative analysis was conducted to understand each institution's market position differentiation, the variables used in understanding each institution's market position, and how these variables changed over time.

The primary source of data used to calculate institutional market position was found in the *U.S. News Academic Insights* database dating back to 1988 when *U.S. News* rankings data was first captured (*U.S. News Academic Insights* 2019). The institutional endowments at each institution was captured via the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) database. Instructional expenditures at each institution were provided by Brian Zucker, via the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

Quantitative analysis was conducted, which revealed the *U.S. News* variables used in ranking institutions that were meaningful in affecting changes in each institution's market position over time. The analysis provided insight into the comparative variable differences, what the differences were, and the order of magnitude by which the variables changed for each institution over time. The period for the data set analysis ranged from 1988 to 2019. The variables analyzed included those in the *U.S. News* rankings methodology: five-year graduation rate, the percent of first-year students in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class, the 25th and 75th percentile of first-year students' standardized test scores, admissions rate, average class size, percent of faculty with a terminal degree, percent of full-time faculty, student-faculty ratio, peer assessment, and percent of alumni giving.

Within the *U.S. News Academic Insights* database, there were variables of interest that were not part of the *U.S. News* ranking methodology. These variables also provided an insight into the market position for each institution. For this analysis the number of applicants per FTE (full-time enrolled student) was tracked, as this measure provided information on student demand for or relative interest in each institution. Also, the percent of students not receiving financial aid was included in the analysis as this provided a measure of price elastic-

ity of demand or brand strength and the level of financial resources that were allocated by each institution to enroll a student.

An analysis of the *U.S. News* ranking methodology variables provided meaningful insight to each institution's market position and longitudinal changes. Similarly, an analysis of those variables outside the *U.S. News* ranking methodology, but included in the *U.S. News Academic Insights* database, provided additional insight to the market position of each institution longitudinally. The analysis shed light on the variables that influenced changes in market position at Saint Joseph's and Villanova longitudinally.

Longitudinal analysis was conducted to assess four market position elements—student demand, student persistence, faculty characteristics, and financial resources—and the variables included in each of the elements. Next, further longitudinal analysis was conducted to assess the market position at each institution using a market position rubric adapted from one developed by Kalsbeek and Zucker (Hossler and Bontrager 2014).

The market position of each institution was defined based on market demand and financial strength metrics. The methodology employed used a modification of variables and weights from the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). In the modified market demand metric, a 50 percent weight was assigned to the five-year graduation rate and eliminated the six-year graduation rate. In the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) a 25 percent weight was used for the five-year graduation rate and 25 percent for the six-year graduation rate. While using both the five- and six-year graduation rates allows for two enrolling cohorts to be assessed for completion and using only five-year graduation rates can advantage institutions with more timely completions, prior to 2003, this metric was not available in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) (Zucker, personal communication 2020). Hence, using only the five-year graduation rate allowed greater longitudinal analysis. In addition, in the modified market demand metric, a 10 percent weight was assigned to the 75th, 50th, and 25th percentile ranking of the SAT and converted ACT score. The mod-

ified market position rubric eliminated the percentile ranking of the test submission rate that was used in the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) as the incidence of test taking was not indicative of either institutions' market demand, given Villanova only recently adopted test-optional admissions in 2020 (Cox 2020). Note that in the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014), a 6 percent weight was assigned to the 75th, 50th, and 25th percentile ranking of the SAT and converted ACT score. In the market modified demand metric, a 6 percent weight was assigned to the percentile ranking of each institution's reject rate—or the percent ranking of those students not admitted to an institution, similar to the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). In the modified market demand metric, a measure included the percent share of tuition that was not discounted for first-year students and assigned an 8 percent weight. This metric provided a measure of the level of financial resources that did not need to be expended to enroll a first-year class, which is an indicator of student demand. In the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014), an 8 percent weight was given to the percentile ranking of freshman full-pay students, a subtly different calculation. Last, in the modified market demand metric, a 6 percent weight was assigned to the ratio of applicants to matriculated first-year students. In the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014), a 3 percent weight was assigned to yield, and another 3 percent was assigned to applicants to matriculants. As the yield metric included in the Kalsbeek/Zucker (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) methodology was confounded in the applicant-to-matriculated first-year student metric, it was eliminated in the modified market position rubric.

The modified financial strength metric included a sum of two measures similar to the Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). The first was the institutional endowment per FTE as a proxy of total resources available to the institution on a per-student basis. The second was a measure of the level of expenditures for instruction per FTE as a proxy for the level of investment in instruction and academic support on a per-student basis. Brian Zucker provided this calculation.

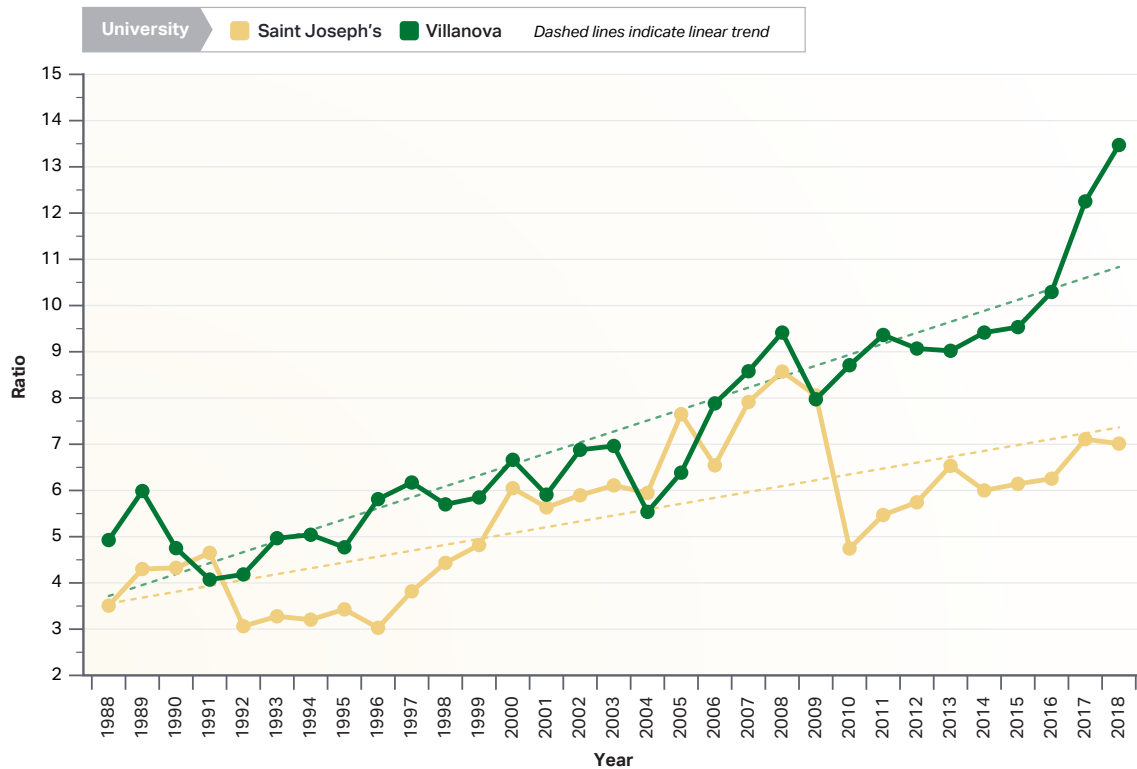


FIGURE 1 ➤ Applicants Per Matriculated First-Year Student

Assessing the market position for each institution longitudinally, using the modified Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) provided insight to the overall market position changes at Saint Joseph's and Villanova. Similarly, assessing individual market position variables that are part of the four elements provided insight to the factors that influenced overall market position changes at each institution.

Conceptual Framework

The modified Kalsbeek/Zucker rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) includes the market position elements of student demand and financial resources. This rubric provided insight to and a representation of Saint Joseph's and Villanova's market position over time. This assessment provided greater understanding of the specific market position elements that impacted longitudinal market position changes at each institution.

Findings

Market Position Elements Findings

While the purpose of this paper involved the changes in longitudinal market position differentiation between Saint Joseph's and Villanova, within some specific years or points in time, each institution experienced events that influenced specific market position variables. For example, the great recession of 2008 had impacts on specific market position variables at each institution.

The variable associated with student demand included applicants and matriculated students (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). Figure 1 shows the ratio of applicants relative to first-year matriculated students at each institution. The trend line shows a growing gap in this ratio indicating that, while there is growing demand per matriculated student at each institution, there is a greater increase in the number of applicants per matriculated student at Villanova. Between 1988 and 1991, the mean difference in the ratio between Saint Joseph's and

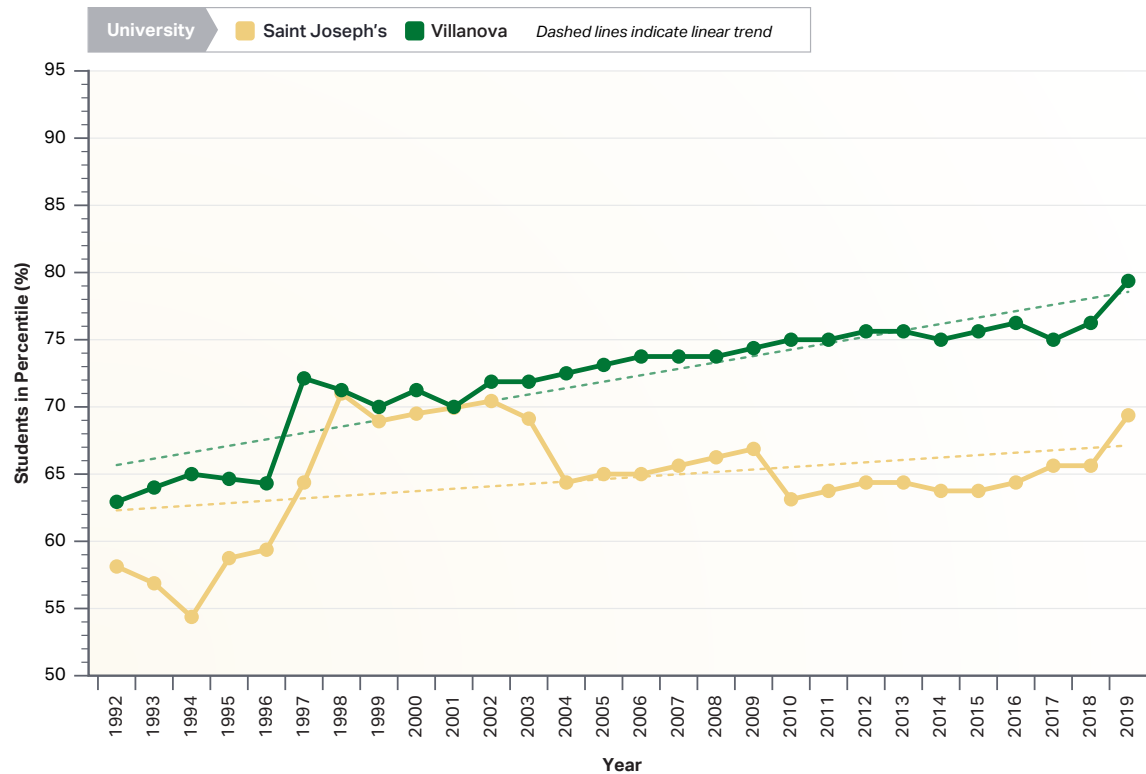


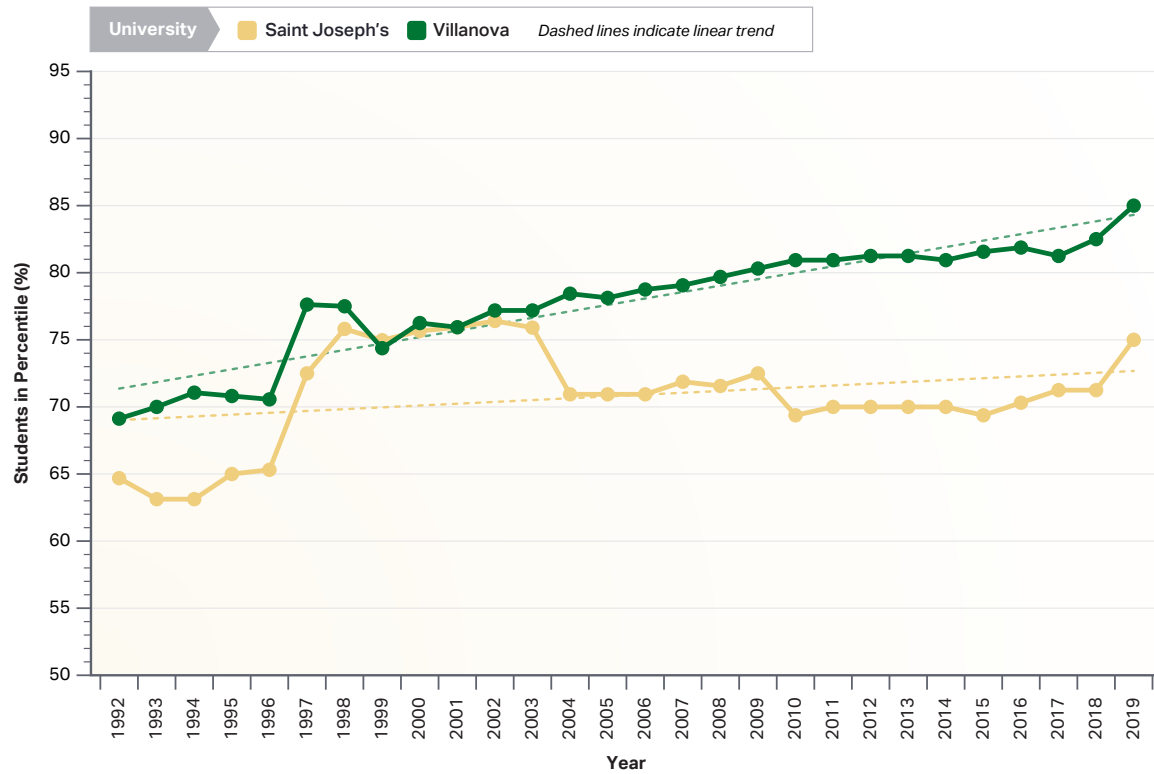
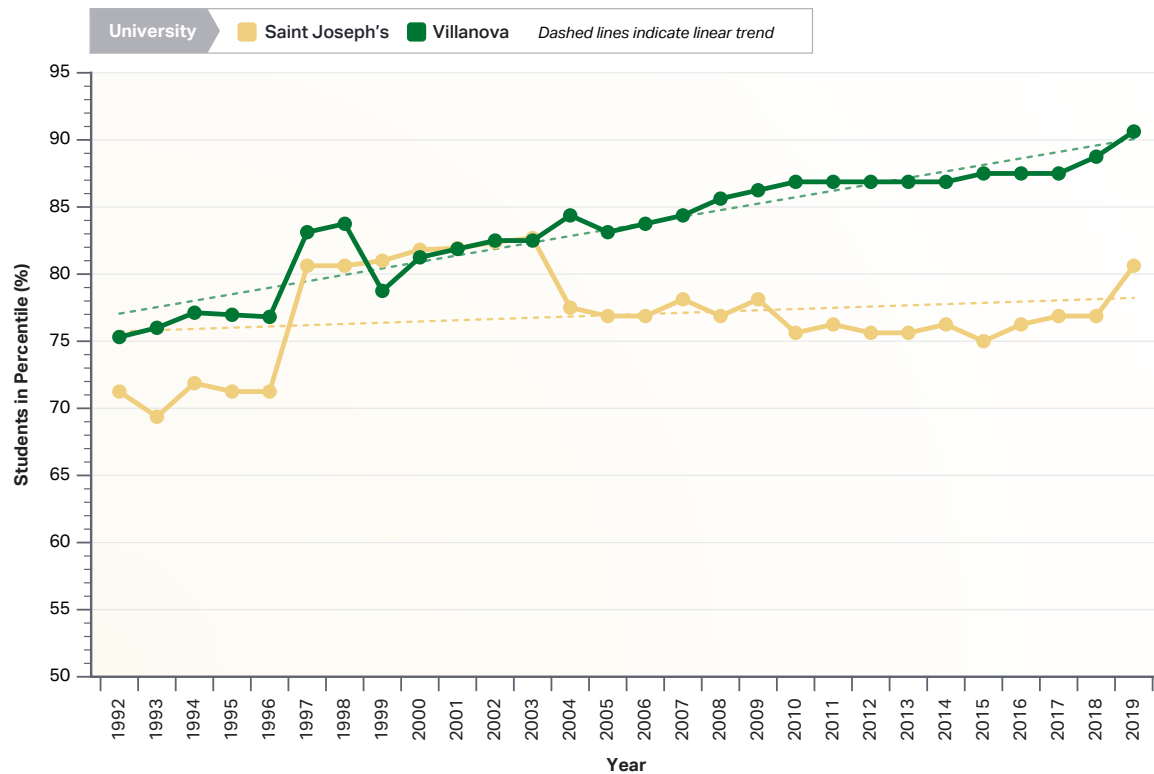
FIGURE 2 ▶ 25th Percentile SAT as Percent of Enrolled Students

Villanova is 0.74. However, between 2015 and 2018, the mean difference in the ratio between Saint Joseph's and Villanova is 4.21; a greater than five-fold increase. In 2009, post great recession, both Saint Joseph's and Villanova experienced a decline in applicants per matriculated student. However, the decline at Saint Joseph's was more meaningful as the institution purposefully worked to grow the size of the entering first-year student class given the great recession financial effect.

Figures 2, 3, and 4 show the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentile, as a percent, respectively, on the SAT for Saint Joseph's and Villanova longitudinally. In each case, there is a growing gap from 1992 to 2019 in the SAT percentiles, as a percent of enrolled students, between Saint Joseph's and Villanova. For example, Figure 2 shows that in 1992, the 25th percentile, as a percent of enrolled students, on the SAT at Saint Joseph's was 58 versus 63 percent for Villanova, a 5 percentage point difference. However, in 2019, the 25th percentile, as a percent of enrolled students, on the SAT at Saint Joseph's was 69 versus 79 percent for

Villanova, a 10 percentage point difference—double the difference from 1992. Similarly, Figure 3 (on page 36) shows that in 1992, the 50th percentile, as a percent of enrolled students, on the SAT at Saint Joseph's was 65 versus 69 percent for Villanova, a 4 percentage point difference. However, in 2019, the 50th percentile, as a percent of enrolled students, on the SAT at Saint Joseph's was 75 versus 85 percent for Villanova, a 10 percentage point difference—more than double the difference from 1992. Likewise, Figure 4 (on page 36) shows that in 1992, the 75th percentile, as a percent of enrolled students, on the SAT at Saint Joseph's was 71 versus 75 percent for Villanova, a 4 percentage point difference. However, in 2019, the 75th percentile, as a percent of enrolled students, on the SAT at Saint Joseph's was 81 versus 91 percent for Villanova, a 10 percentage point difference—more than double the difference from 1992.

Figure 5 shows how the rejection rate percentile for Saint Joseph's and Villanova were similar in the early 1990s and became meaningfully different after 2008.

**FIGURE 3** ➤ 50th Percentile SAT as Percent of Enrolled Students**FIGURE 4** ➤ 75th Percentile SAT as Percent of Enrolled Students

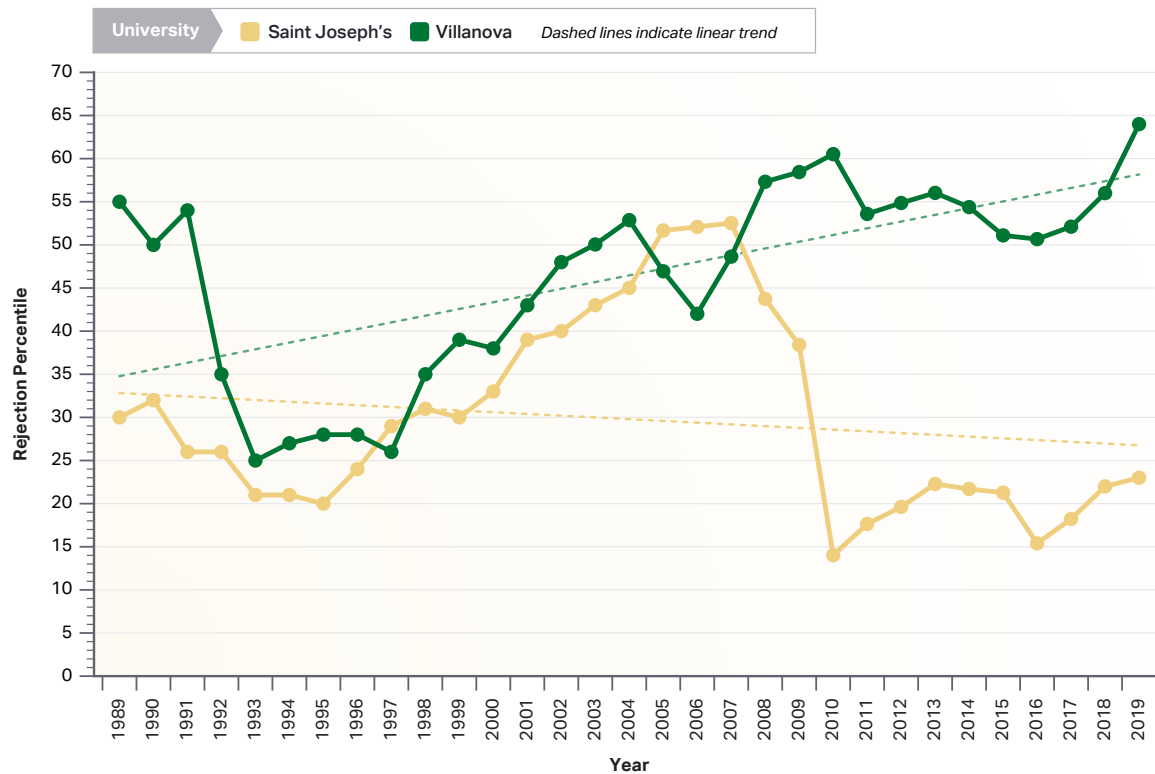


FIGURE 5 ▶ Rejection Rate Percentile

The trend line, which captures the slope for each institution, shows a widening gap longitudinally. Between 1993 and 1995, the average rejection rate percentile at Saint Joseph's was 21, versus 27 at Villanova; a 6 percentage point difference. However, between 2017 and 2019, the average rate at Saint Joseph's remained 21, versus 57 percent at Villanova; a 36 percentage point difference. In other words, over time, the percentage of students not admitted at Villanova became meaningfully higher compared to Saint Joseph's, as Villanova became more selective in admissions.

Figure 6 (on page 38) shows the percent share of tuition that was not discounted for the first-year students calculation that was assigned an 8 percent weight to the market demand calculation. This metric is important in the assessment of market demand as it calculates the level of financial resources that did not need to be expended in order to enroll a first-year student class. In other words, it serves as a measure of price elasticity of demand. While the overall trend for each institution is declining, the percent share of tuition not discounted

at Villanova became meaningfully less over time. For example, in 1989, 90 percent of tuition was not discounted at Villanova versus 86 percent at Saint Joseph's; a 4 percentage point difference. However, by 2019, the percent of tuition not discounted at Villanova was 68, compared to 46 percent at Saint Joseph's; a 22 percentage point difference indicating further price elasticity of demand at Villanova as a meaningfully higher percent of tuition was not discounted in order to enroll a first-year student class.

The variables associated with student persistence include metrics tied to first-year student retention and graduation rates. These variables measure institutional outcomes associated with student success tied to both inside and outside of classroom experiences (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). These measures are used by students when comparing, considering, and choosing different institutions (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). The results show a growing gap in the primary measure of student persistence between Saint Joseph's and Villanova longitudinally.

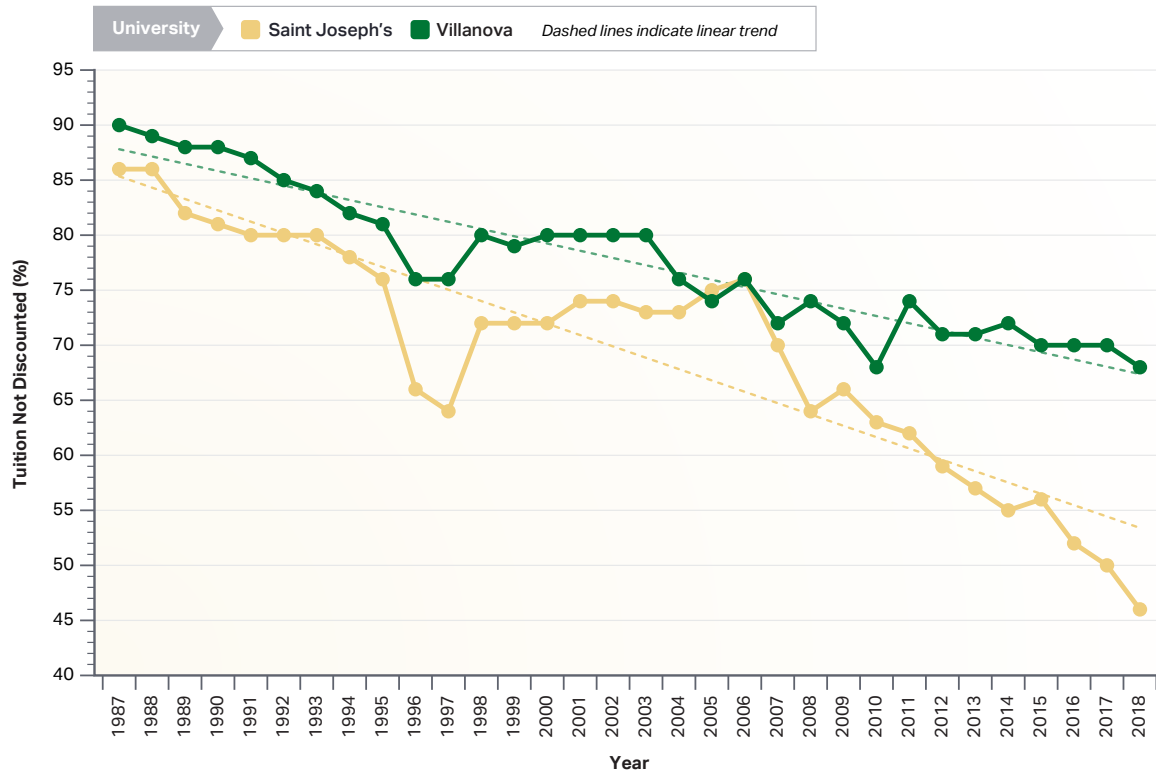


FIGURE 6 ▶ Percent Share of Tuition Not Discounted

Figure 7 (on page 39) shows a growing gap in the five-year graduation rate between Saint Joseph's and Villanova longitudinally. For instance, from 1990 to 1993, the five-year graduation rate difference between Saint Joseph's and Villanova ranges from a 6 to 9 percentage point difference. However, between 2016 and 2019, the five-year graduation rate difference between Saint Joseph's and Villanova ranges from a 9 to 16 percentage point difference. This growing difference is represented graphically based on the changes in four-year average five-year graduation rates.

The next variables are associated with financial resources include metrics tied to institutional endowment and educational expenditures. These metrics provide a snapshot of an institution's overall financial strength and its ability to fund educational investments relative to instruction and student support (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). When assessing an institution's endowment and educational expenditures, to normalize the data, relative to the enrollment of the institutions, for comparative purposes, calculations are made relative to

FTE to capture differences in enrolled student numbers. The results show a meaningfully growing gap in overall financial resources longitudinally when comparing Saint Joseph's and Villanova.

Figure 8 (on page 39) shows the increasingly widening gap in endowment per FTE longitudinally between Saint Joseph's and Villanova. In 1983, Saint Joseph's had a greater endowment per FTE than Villanova until 1996. However, beginning in 1996, the trend line shows a growing gap in endowment per FTE at Villanova relative to Saint Joseph's. While the great recession each had one-year impacts on this metric in 2008, after this year, endowment per FTE at Villanova increased meaningfully relative to Saint Joseph's. By 2018, endowment per FTE at Villanova was 83 percent higher than that of Saint Joseph's (\$110,324 at Villanova versus \$60,163 at Saint Joseph's).

Figure 9 (on page 40) shows the level of instructional expenditures per FTE longitudinally for each institution, a measure provided by Brian Zucker. The trend line shows a growing gap between the two insti-

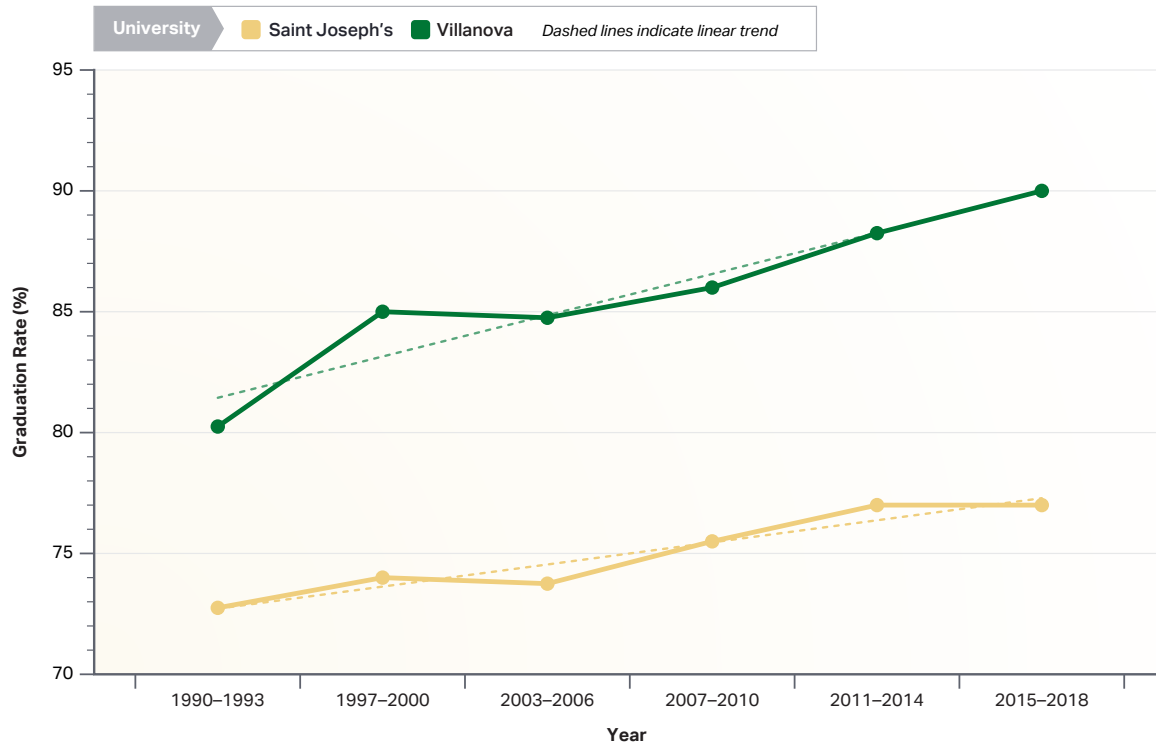


FIGURE 7 ➤ Five-Year Graduation Rate (Four-Year Average)

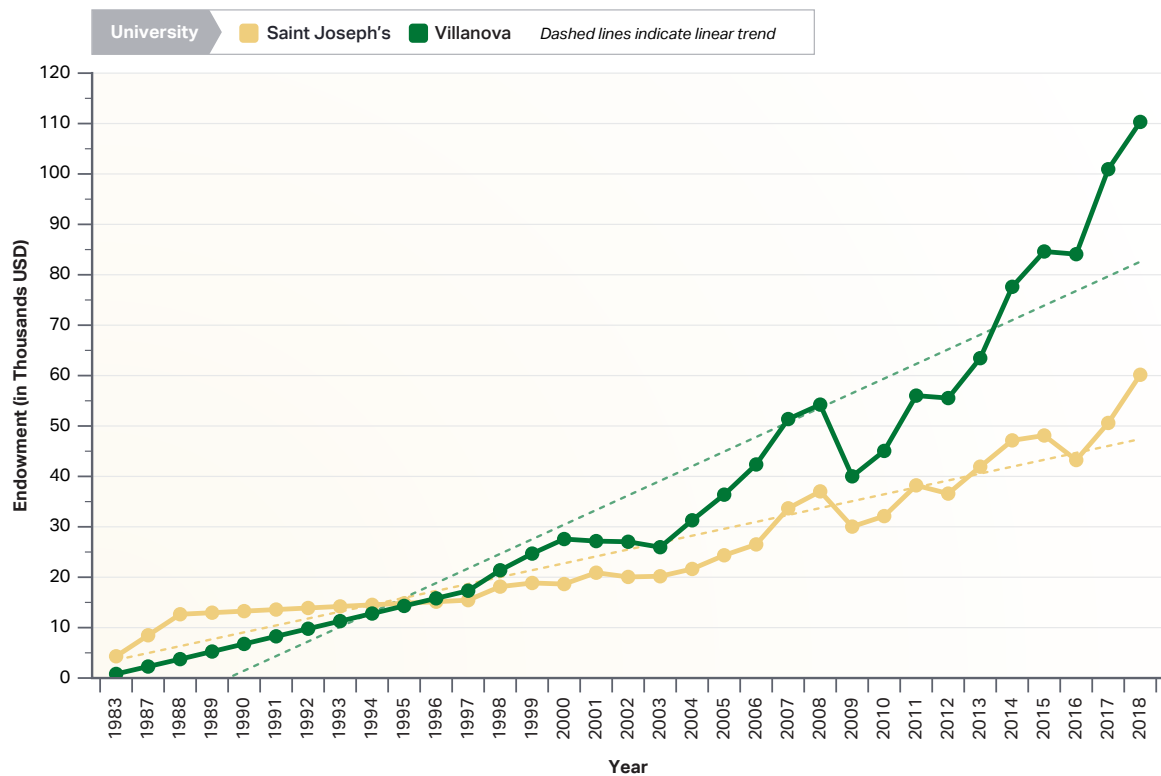


FIGURE 8 ➤ Endowment per FTE

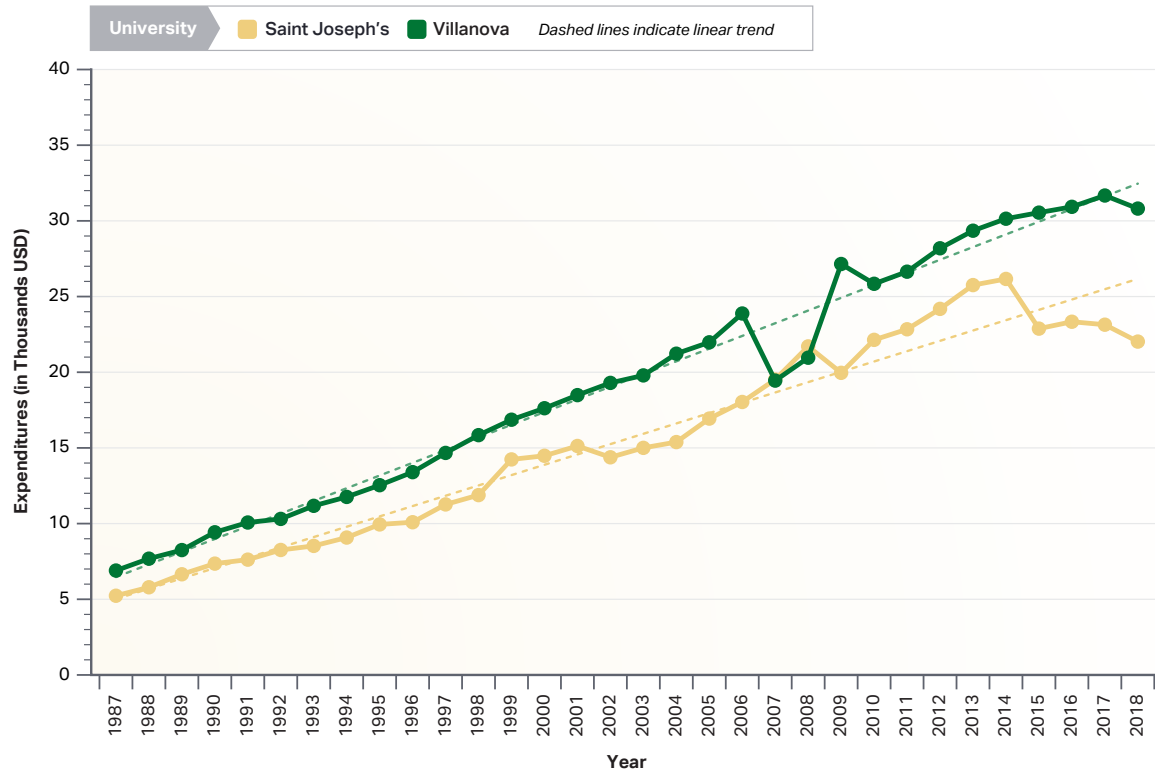


FIGURE 9 ► Instructional Expenditures per FTE

tutions. In 1987, this metric was \$6,898 for Villanova and \$5,233 for Saint Joseph's—a \$1,665 difference. In 1996, this metric at Villanova surpassed that of Saint Joseph's. With the exception of the downturn between 2007 and 2010, due to the great recession, the trend line shows an increasing longitudinal gap indicating Villanova's increasing investment in or commitment to instruction per FTE, as part of strategic planning efforts, relative to that of Saint Joseph's. In 2018, this metric was \$30,812 for Villanova and \$22,025 for Saint Joseph's—a difference of \$8,788. In other words, the amount spent for instruction per FTE increased between 1987 and 2018 by nearly six times more at Villanova than at Saint Joseph's.

Market Position Rubric Findings

Using the modification of the Kalsbeek/Zucker market position rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014), there is a growing gap in the market demand variables between Saint Joseph's and Villanova longitudinally. Recall from Figure 7 (on page 39) that from 1990 to 1993, the five-year graduation rate difference between Saint Jo-

seph's and Villanova ranged from a 6 to 9 percentage point difference. However, between 2016 and 2019, the five-year graduation rate difference between Saint Joseph's and Villanova ranged from a 9 to 16 percentage point difference.

Recall the modification of the Kalsbeek/Zucker market position rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). Table 1 shows the resultant sum of the different individual market demand variables, which include the student

TABLE 1 ► Sum of Market Demand Variables

Metric	Weight (%)
Five-Year Graduation Rate	50
75th Percentile SAT	10
50th Percentile SAT	10
25th Percentile SAT	10
Reject Rate Percentile	6
Percent Share of Tuition Not Discounted	8
Applicants to Matriculated Student Ratio	6
Total	100

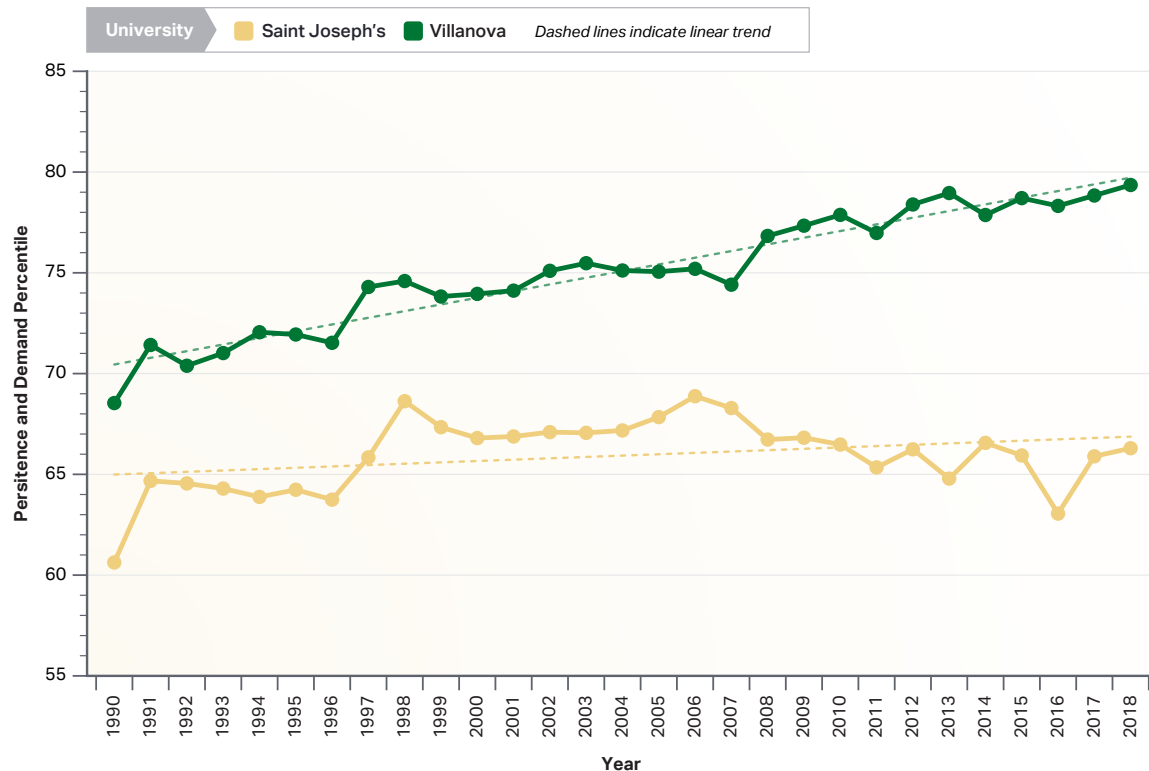


FIGURE 10 ▶ Student Persistence and Demand

demand and student persistence elements of market position, when weighted.

Taken together, the sum of the different individual market demand variables, which include the student demand and student persistence elements of market position, when weighted, resulted in a growing gap, by percentile, between Saint Joseph's and Villanova as shown in Figure 10. In 1990, the market demand gap between Saint Joseph's and Villanova was 7.9 percent, and in 2018 the gap had grown to 13.1 percent. This represents a nearly two-fold change. The trend line indicates the growing difference in market demand for Villanova versus Saint Joseph's. Note that this metric peaked at Saint Joseph's in 2006 while the highest level at Villanova was in 2018, further illustrating the growing gap in student persistence and demand between the two institutions.

Relative to financial strength, the modified financial metric included the sum of two measures. The first was the endowment per FTE for each institution as an indicator of total resources on a per-student basis. The

second calculated the level of instructional expenditures per FTE as a measure of institutional investment in instruction and academic support on a per-student basis. As shown in Figure 8 (on page 39), in 1983, Saint Joseph's had a greater endowment per FTE than Villanova until 1996 after which this figure at Villanova outgrew that of Saint Joseph's meaningfully. By 2018, endowment per FTE at Villanova was 83 percent higher than Saint Joseph's: \$110,324 at Villanova versus \$60,163 at Saint Joseph's. Similarly, as shown in Figure 8, there is a growing gap in the level of instructional expenditures per FTE longitudinally between Saint Joseph's and Villanova. In 1987, this metric was \$6,898 for Villanova and \$5,233 for Saint Joseph's—a \$1,665 difference. In 2018, this metric had grown to an \$8,788 difference of \$30,812 for Villanova and \$22,025 for Saint Joseph's. In other words, the amount spent for instruction per FTE increased between 1987 and 2018, nearly six times more at Villanova.

Taken together, as shown in Figure 11 (on page 42), the different financial resources variables, as an element of market position, when summed, resulted in a growing

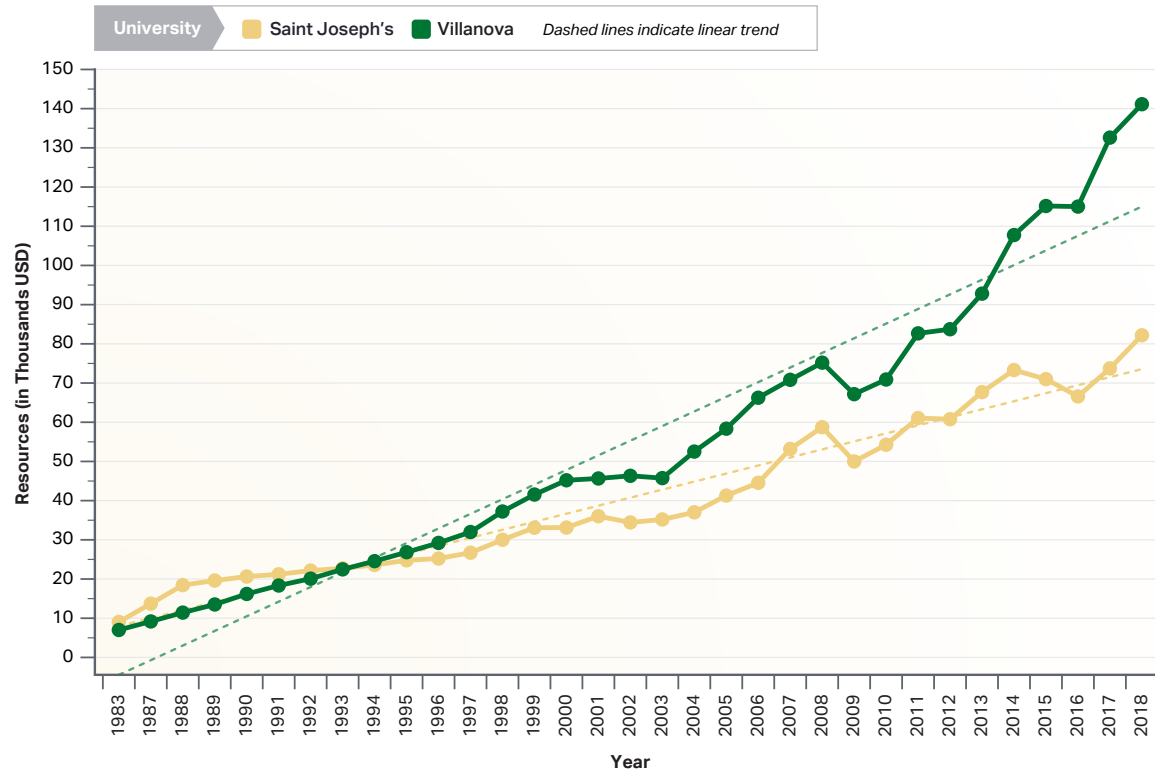


FIGURE 11 ► Financial Resources per FTE

gap between Saint Joseph's and Villanova. In 1987, the level of financial resources at Saint Joseph's was \$9,043 per FTE versus \$7,005 per FTE at Villanova; over \$2,000 greater at Saint Joseph's. In 1994, financial resources per FTE at Villanova surpassed Saint Joseph's. By 2018, financial resources per FTE at Villanova had grown to \$141,136 versus \$82,188 at Saint Joseph's, or over 70 percent higher at Villanova. Note again, the great recession downturn in this metric between 2008 and 2009 for each institution.

Combining student persistence and market demand elements with financial resource per FTE in a single graph provided a visual of the longitudinal market position changes at each institution. For example, Figure 12 (on page 43) displays the modified Kalsbeek/Zucker market position rubric (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) for Saint Joseph's longitudinally. The vertical axis represents financial resources per FTE in dollars. The horizontal axis shows the cumulative market demand metric as a percentile, which includes the student demand and student persistence elements of market position calculation from Figure 10 (on page 41). The

graph shows how the market demand metric at Saint Joseph's vacillates back and forth between 1990 and 2018 but increases by 8.5 percent overall. Between 1990 and 1998, the market demand metric increased from 60.6 to 68.6; an 8 percentage point increase. Between 2000 and 2006, the market demand metric increased again from 66.9 to 68.9—a 2 percentage point increase. However, after 2006, until 2018, Saint Joseph's market demand metric decreased by 2.6 percentage points. On the whole, Saint Joseph's market demand shows a more vacillating stagnating versus increasing trend.

Relative to financial resources, on the whole, between 1990 and 2018, Saint Joseph's financial resources per FTE metric increased by almost four times from \$20,629 to \$82,188. Between 2008 and 2009, during the great recession, financial resources per FTE declined by 17.5 percent and again by 0.5 percent between 2011 and 2012. Financial resources per FTE also declined by 10.1 percent between 2014 and 2016.

In comparison, Figure 13 (on page 44) shows the modified Kalsbeek/Zucker market position rubric

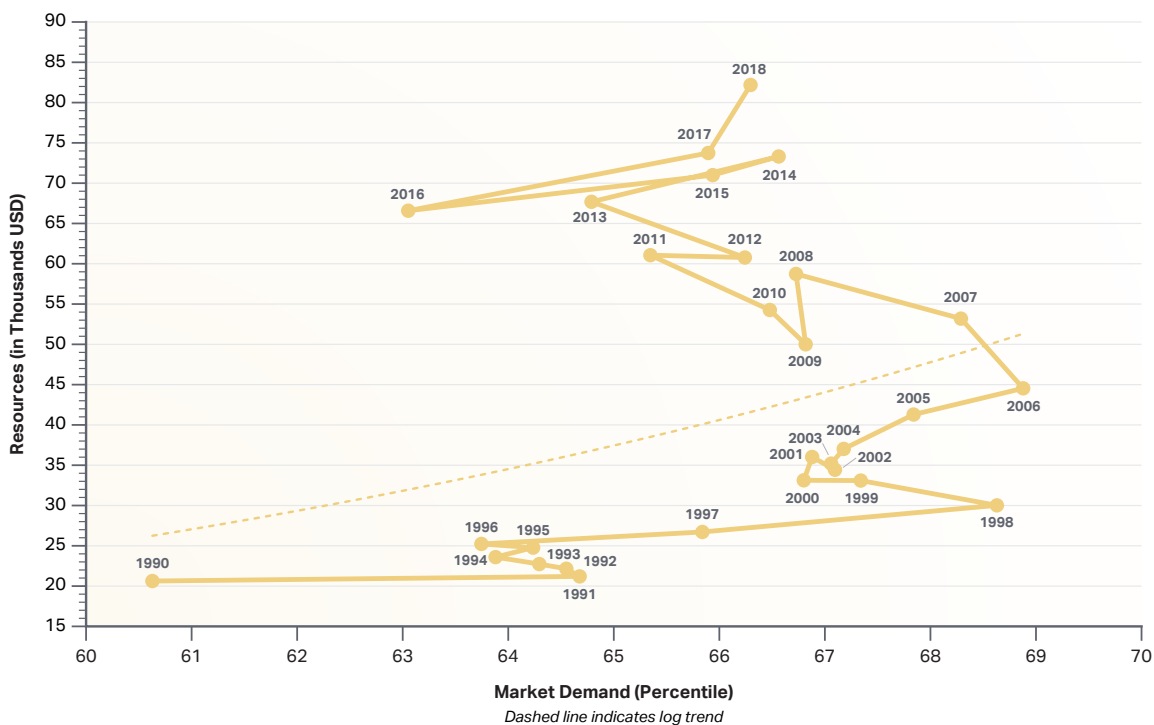


FIGURE 12 ► Financial Resources at Saint Joseph's, by Market Demand

(Hossler and Bontrager 2014) for Villanova longitudinally. Again, by combining the student persistence and market demand elements with financial resources per FTE in a single graph provides a visual of the longitudinal market position changes at the institution. Like Figure 12, the vertical axis represents financial resources per FTE in dollars. The horizontal axis shows the cumulative market demand metric as a percentile, which includes the student demand and persistence elements of market position calculation from Figure 10 (on page 41). The graph shows how the market demand metric at Villanova increased in a near linear fashion between 1990 and 2018. From 1990 to 2018, Villanova's market demand increased by 13.6 percent. On ten occasions, Villanova's market demand declined relative to the prior year only to increase more meaningfully in the subsequent years. The trend line shows meaningful annual increases in market demand between 1990–1991, 1996–1997, and 2007–2008 by 4 percent, 3.7 percent, and 3.1 percent, respectively.

Relative to financial resources, between 1990 and 2018, Villanova's financial resources per FTE metric increased by nearly nine times from \$16,191 to \$141,136. The exponential increase is illustrated in the trend line. Outside of the great recession, Villanova's financial resources per FTE increased each year with nominal decreases between 2002–2003 and 2015–2016. Most meaningfully, between 2010–2011, 2013–2014, and 2016–2017 financial resources per FTE increased \$11,771, \$14,948, and \$17,600 respectively.

Figure 14 (on page 44) shows the comparative longitudinal market position changes at Saint Joseph's and Villanova by financial resources and market demand based on the modified Kalsebeek/Zucker rubric. While Saint Joseph's and Villanova both held similar financial resources per FTE metrics through the mid 1990s, in 1995 financial resources per FTE was \$24,774 at Saint Joseph's and \$26,841 at Villanova, the exponential upward shift in the trend line at Villanova represents a meaningful increase in financial resources per FTE through 2018. Conversely, at Saint Joseph's, while the trend line

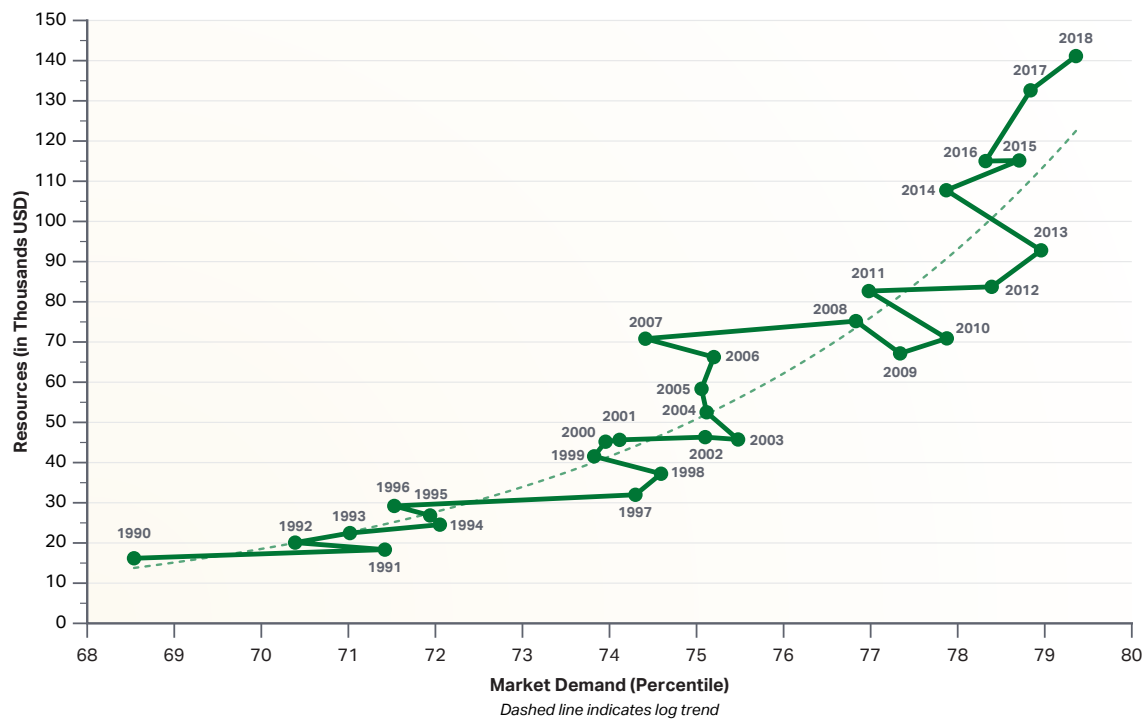


FIGURE 13 ► Financial Resources at Villanova, by Market Demand

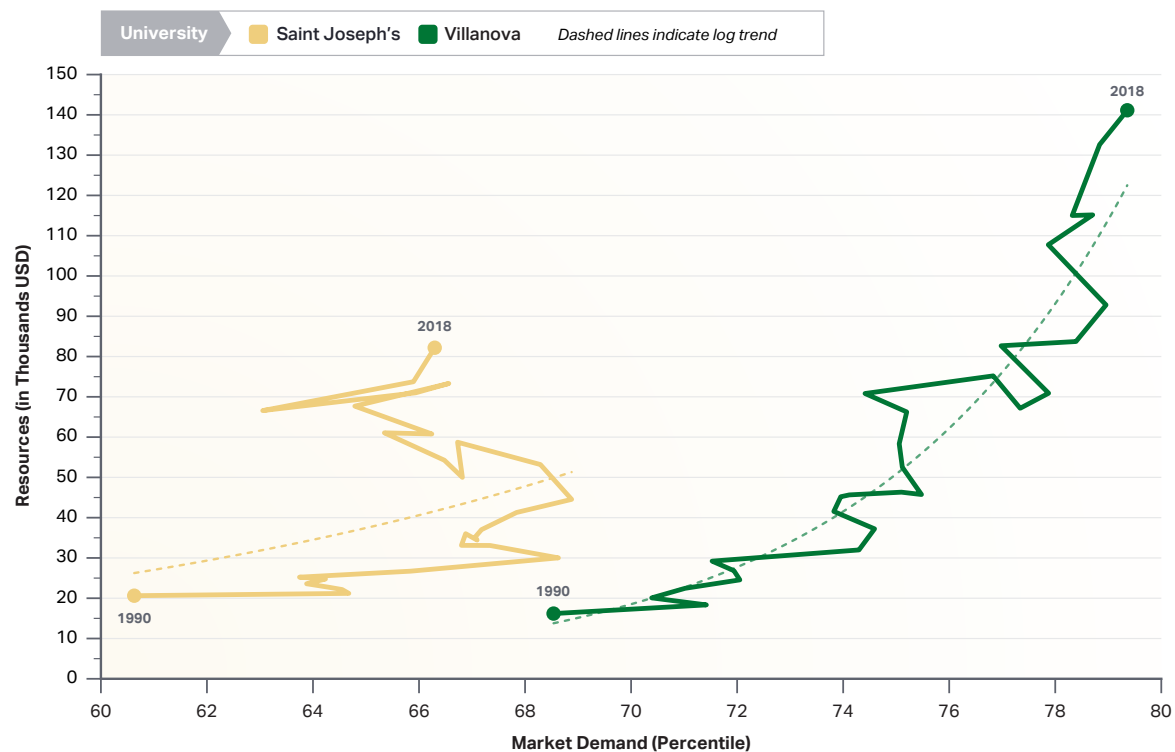


FIGURE 14 ► Financial Resources by Market Demand

shows a modest increase, it is much flatter than at Villanova. Overall, between 1990 and 2018, while financial resources per FTE increased by nearly four times from \$20,629 to \$82,188 at Saint Joseph's, they increased nearly nine times from \$16,191 to \$141,136 at Villanova.

Similarly, while Villanova held a slightly higher market demand percentile relative to Saint Joseph's in 1990, 60.6 at Saint Joseph's and 68.5 at Villanova, by 2018, this metric had increased more meaningfully at Villanova such that the gap had increased nearly two-fold from 7.9 percent to 13.1 percent. The longer more increasing length of the trend line shows the more significant longitudinal increase in market demand at Villanova versus Saint Joseph's. While Saint Joseph's market demand vacillates back and forth between 1990 and 2018, and increases only 8.5 percent overall, Villanova's market demand metric increased 13.6 percent between 1990 and 2018.

Summary

This paper presents a comparative case study between two institutions—Saint Joseph's University and Villanova University—two private, Catholic, Philadelphia institutions that at one time shared similar characteristics but over time experienced market position changes in vastly different ways. This paper assessed the factors affecting market position differentiation at each institution.

The paper showed that the student demand, student persistence, and financial resources elements of market position were at one time similar at each institution but took markedly different trajectories. Similarly, the market position rubric illustrated how Villanova's market trajectory ascended meaningfully over time while Saint Joseph's market trajectory was less pronounced.

Implications

This paper served as an opportunity to explore changes in market position longitudinally. More narrowly, this study was a case study comparison of two institutions, which at one time had similar characteristics but experienced different market position trajectories.

There are opportunities to build out the market position metric modified from Kalsbeek/Zucker (Hossler

and Bontrager 2014) more comprehensively. Should more longitudinal data exist on first-year retention; this could be included as a variable in the student persistence element of market position. To more fully measure faculty characteristics, faculty compensation, research productivity, or library capacity could be explored in addition to student-faculty ratio and percent of faculty with a terminal degree.

To broaden the definition of market position, another element could be created relative to student outcomes. To measure this, the percent of students employed, in graduate school, or pursuing volunteer opportunities six-months after graduation could be used, as this is the benchmark metric used by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the First-Destination Survey (NACE 2021). Another metric for this element could include the percent of graduates pursuing graduate education. Metrics on student outcomes could include the institutional mean for graduate standardized test scores.

While assessing market position has been largely assessed using undergraduate enrollment metrics, and this was appropriate for Saint Joseph's and Villanova given their more predominant undergraduate enrollment, at doctoral granting institutions with larger graduate student enrollment, market position could be assessed using graduate student enrollment metrics.

Institutional leaders interested in understanding their respective market positions can refer to the model for market position modified from Kalsbeek/Zucker (Hossler and Bontrager 2014). Institutional leaders can calculate and graph their own respective market position and trajectory longitudinally. In addition, institutional leaders may replicate the model for market position modified from Kalsbeek/Zucker (Hossler and Bontrager 2014) for core competitors to assess differences in overall position, and the longitudinal changes to their own institution. This would help institutional leaders understand their specific market position and where they hold competitive advantages or deficiencies.

Limitations

From a perspective of personal positionality, the author was an employee at Saint Joseph's from 2006 to

2014. The experience may have biased the way the analysis was conducted. Note some information was not collected as early as 1988 or was not collected in subsequent years resulting in missing data for each institution. In some cases, missing data was collected via each institution's Institutional Research office. In other cases, the data was found through IPEDS. In other cases, where the data was not available, it was imputed using the average from the year prior to and following the missing data element. In cases, where multiples years of data were missing, a moving average was calculated. In cases where data was missing, institutional historical documents proved useful. In other cases, where the data was not available, it was imputed using the average from the year prior to and following the missing data element. In cases where multiples years of data were

missing, a moving average was calculated. The level of complexity involved in calculating expenditures per FTE via FASB resulted in seeking outside assistance.

Recommendations

While this article worked to show how market position changed longitudinally at each institution, why this phenomenon occurred is a topic for further research. As referenced, a subsequent article will work to answer the question—what organizational changes occurred at each institution that subsequently influenced shifts in longitudinal market position? This work will involve qualitative analysis relative to organizational change and alterations to the external and internal environments that impacted each institution.

References

- Alder, J. 2023. *Should I Go to a Liberal Arts College or a Research University?* Best College Values (website). Retrieved from: <bestcollegevalues.com/should-i-go-to-a-liberal-arts-college-or-a-research-university/>.
- Hossler, D., and B. Bontrager. 2014. *Handbook of Strategic Enrollment Management*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. 2021. *The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*. Bloomington, IN: Author. Retrieved from: <carnegieclassifications.iu.edu>.
- NACE. See National Association of Colleges and Employers.
- NACUBO. See National Association of College and University Business Officers.
- National Association of Colleges and Employers. 2023. *The NACE First-Destination Survey*. Bethlehem, PA: Author. Retrieved from: <naceweb.org/job-market/graduate-outcomes/first-destination/>.
- National Association of College and University Business Officers. 2023. *Historic Endowment Study Data*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from: <nacubo.org/Research/2022/Historic-Endowment-Study-Data>.
- Saint Joseph's University. 2023. *History and Mission*. Philadelphia: Author. Retrieved from: <sju.edu/history-mission>.
- Cox, E. 2020. University announces test-optional admission cycle for 2020–2021. *The Villanovan*. May 21. Retrieved from: <villanovan.com/3365/news/university-announces-test-optional-admission-cycle-for-2020-2021/>.
- U. S. News Academic Insights. 2019. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from: <ai.usnews.com>.
- Villanova University. 2016. A Message From Peter M. Donahue, OSA, Ph.D., President of Villanova University. Villanova, PA: Author. Retrieved from: <www1.villanova.edu/villanova/email/president/carnegie_classification_feb2016.html>.
- . 2020. *Villanova University Ranked as a Top 50 National University by U.S. News & World Report*. Villanova, PA: Author. March 16. Retrieved from: <villanovau.com/resources/general/villanova-ranked-top-fifty-national-university>.
- . 2023. *Mission Statement*. Villanova, PA: Author. Retrieved from: <www1.villanova.edu/villanova/president/about_university/mission.html>.

About the Author

**John Haller**

John Haller, Ed.D., is the Vice President of Enrollment Management and New Student Strategies at the University of Miami. During his time at Miami, he led the movement from a largely merit-based to a hybrid merit- and need-based financial aid strategy where 100 percent of financial need is met. Also, the institution realized a 60 percent plus

increase in applications and a 50 percent plus increase in yield. The institution realized a decrease in student indebtedness and the highest freshman retention and six-year graduation rates in university history. Prior to Miami, John served as the associate provost for enrollment management at Saint Joseph's University and had experiences in student success at Drexel University, M.B.A. admissions

at Vanderbilt University, and undergraduate admissions at Denison University. He is an honors graduate in economics and statistics from the University of Michigan, received master's degrees in business and higher education, and received his Ed.D. in higher education from the University of Pennsylvania.