

# W Y M A N LEADERS P R O G R A M

Highlights from *The Impact of Wyman's Teen Leadership Program on College Achievement and Retention* authored by R. Reed, N. Thomson, & G. Bramman

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**Study Purpose:** To examine the impact of Wyman's postsecondary access programming, Teen Leadership Program (TLP), on college retention (continuing in the same institution) and academic achievement (GPA), to understand the overall programmatic experience of participants, and to understand staff perspectives on the traits students gain from program participation and which are essential to college success.

**Quantitative Results:** Quantitative data from the freshman year of 39 TLP participants who attended Missouri State University over the past 3 years were compared to 82 students with similar characteristics who did not participate in TLP (i.e., graduated from a TLP partner high school; first generation and low-income).

- Of the 39 TLP students in the study, 37 (95%) returned to the institution for their second semester of college. The comparison group of 85 students had 65 return for their second semester (79%), a statistically significant difference,  $p < .05$ .
- The mean GPA for the 39 TLP students was 2.88 on a 4.0 scale. The mean GPA for the comparison group was 2.40, a significant difference,  $p < .05$ .

**Qualitative Results:** Fifteen students participated in focus groups. Over half of the participants were female and the majority identified as African-American. Ten were current freshmen or sophomores; 5 were juniors/seniors. Staff members who had worked longitudinally with students were also interviewed. Three overarching themes emerged from the qualitative portion of the study as key factors in postsecondary success for low-income, first generation students: ***positive adult-student relationships, intentional programmatic experiences, and improved self-efficacy.***