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**WILDER RESEARCH STUDY CREDITS POWER OF YOU PROGRAM  
FOR DOUBLING COLLEGE ENROLLMENT  
OF MINNEAPOLIS AND SAINT PAUL HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**

***Students of color enrollment up 150 percent; low-income student enrollment up 115 percent***

MINNEAPOLIS, October 30, 2008 – A recently released independent evaluation by Wilder Research reported that enrollment of new Minneapolis and Saint Paul high school graduates “more than doubled” at the three higher education institutions offering the Power of YOU program, from 594 in 2004 and 2005 to more than 1,300 in 2006 and 2007. The Wilder evaluation stated that “this result suggests a strong impact of the Power of YOU on enrollment at program schools.”

Over the two-year period of 2006 and 2007, enrollment of students of color increased by nearly 500 students, a 150% increase at Power of YOU program schools. Enrollment of low-income students increased 115%.

“By 2010, two-thirds of all jobs will require education and skills beyond high school, so I am pleased that we have made headway on erasing the real or perceived barriers to enrolling in higher education,” states Phil Davis, President of Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

The Power of YOU, a program that guarantees two years of tuition-free college plus an array of intensive student support services, was launched in 2006 as a result of strong evidence from the Citizens League, the Itasca Project and others that closing Minnesota’s educational achievement gap among students of color is our region’s most significant future workforce issue.

Beyond access to college, the Wilder Research data suggested that, “Power of YOU students were more likely to remain enrolled in college during their first year to year and a half compared to their peers.” Data showed retention rates of Power of YOU students were substantially higher – 85% retention from fall semester to spring semester, compared to 72% and 66% rates of comparison groups.

“The fact that Power of YOU students have such a high rate of retention demonstrates that the program is keeping high school graduates in college after successfully recruiting them,” declares Donovan Schwichtenberg, President of Saint Paul College.

Of the 792 students in the Power of YOU in 2006 and 2007, 72% were low-income and more than 65% were students of color.

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Other Wilder Research findings:

- Eight in 10 Power of YOU students reported that the Power of YOU influenced their decision to attend college.
- The Power of YOU program “did not simply draw students away from other colleges but increased the overall number of students attending college.”
- The number of new Minneapolis and Saint Paul public high school graduates enrolling in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system increased by 48% from 2005 to 2007 – from 761 students enrolled in 2005, to 1,126 students enrolled in 2007.

The Wilder evaluation also noted opportunities for the Power of YOU program, including helping to improve student preparation for college. In response, MCTC is offering placement testing to all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in the Minneapolis public schools to assess their readiness for college-level work and to ensure time for appropriate curricular intervention.

Looking to the future, Metropolitan State University will support Power of YOU students who want to obtain their Bachelor’s degree. “The next step,” states President Sue K. Hammersmith “is to create more bridge scholarships, based on merit, so that this group of students has the opportunity to continue their education.”

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