

MEDIA RELEASE

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Girls' School Graduates Have a Clear Edge Over Coeducated Peers, New Research Reveals

[ATLANTA, GA] — (April 26, 2019) Graduates of all-girls schools have a definitive edge over their coeducated peers. This week, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) released the results of a study that shows statistically significant advantages for girls' school graduates as they enter university. Commissioned by the National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS), *Fostering Academic and Social Engagement: An Investigation into the Effects of All-Girls Education in the Transition to University* was prepared by principal investigator Dr. Tiffani Riggers-Piehl, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), in collaboration with HERI. This new data analysis is an update of a 2009 report, also published by HERI, that was originally conducted by Dr. Linda Sax of UCLA in association with Dr. Riggers-Piehl.

These two major peer-reviewed studies spanning Generations Y and Z compare the self-confidence, academic achievement, political engagement, and aspirations of girls' school graduates to their coeducated peers. Drawing data from the well-known Freshman Survey conducted by HERI, both studies used the same sophisticated multilevel modeling to separate the effect of an all-girls education from other influences including socioeconomic differences, race/ethnicity, parent education, and the characteristics of the high schools attended. Dr. Riggers-Piehl and her colleagues note the data reveals "a consistent portrait of girls' school graduates who are more engaged academically and socially than their coeducated peers, findings which align with the profile outlined in the aforementioned report in 2009."

The study identified several key areas in which all-girls schools are better preparing their students for success in university and beyond. Based on the reported data, the researchers concluded that when compared to their female peers at coed schools, girls' school graduates:

- Have stronger academic skills
- Are more academically engaged
- Demonstrate higher science self-confidence
- Display higher levels of cultural competency
- Express stronger community involvement
- Exhibit increased political engagement

Specifically, the research report identifies over 80 statistically significant differences that favor graduates of all-girls schools when compared to female graduates of coed schools, such as the following:

- Girls' school alumnae are 5% more likely than their coeducated peers to say they frequently **seek alternative solutions to a problem** and more frequently **explore topics on their own**, even when not required. More than 2/3 of girls' school graduates report frequently **supporting their arguments with logic**, whereas coed school female graduates are 7% less likely to report this academic skill.
- Graduates of girls' school are 7% more likely to frequently **tutor other students** and 6% more likely to frequently **study with others**.
- Girls' school graduates, compared to students from coed schools, are 4% more likely to report they are "very confident" or "absolutely confident" in their **understanding of scientific concepts** and ability to **explain the results of a study** and use **technical science skills** such as tools, instruments, and techniques.
- When asked about their ability to work and live in a diverse society, alumnae from all-girls schools are nearly 10% more likely to have the goal of helping **promote racial understanding**, and 75% value **improving their understanding** of other countries and cultures, compared to 70% of their coeducated peers. Half (50%) of girls' school graduates, compared to 45% of female students from coed schools, count their **tolerance of others** with different beliefs as a strength. Girls' school alumnae are 6% more likely to note their ability to **work cooperatively** with diverse people as a strength.
- Girls' school graduates are 8% more likely to have a goal of participating in **community action** programs and are 5% more likely to think it is "very important" or "essential" to become involved in **environmentally minded** programs. Alumnae of all-girls schools more frequently participate in **volunteer work** compared to their coeducated peers—52% versus 47%.
- Women who attended all-girls schools are 5% more likely than coeducated graduates to **plan to vote** in elections and to publicly **communicate their opinion** about a cause. Considering their political engagement, graduates from all-girls schools are 7% more likely to think it is "very important" to have the goal of keeping **up-to-date with political affairs**.

As the data shows, girls' school graduates rate themselves as more successful and engaged in areas where men have historically seen greater representation: science and politics. Reflecting on the totality of the findings, the researchers noted, "these statistically significant results demonstrate differences in areas of critical importance in the twenty-first century for women as they enter university and beyond, thus emphasizing the contribution of all-girls schooling for women's success."

ABOUT Atlanta Girls' School (AGS)

AGS's mission, *Inspiring Girls to Lead Lives of Purpose*, is more important than ever before and is at the heart of all the programs we offer. In a world becoming exponentially more complex, girls will face challenges in college and beyond that will require curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and confidence to be solved. At Atlanta Girls' School, we teach girls to be world-class problem solvers. Our curriculum and culture emerge from a distinct vision of what girls must learn individually and collectively to become thoughtful and capable leaders.

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ABOUT NCGS

The **National Coalition of Girls' Schools (NCGS)** is the leading advocate for girls' schools, connecting and collaborating globally with individuals, schools, and organizations dedicated to educating and empowering girls. NCGS acts at the forefront of educational thought providing its member schools research on girls' education and performance outcomes; professional development for educators to share best practices for teaching girls; networking opportunities to unite and build a community of thought leaders; and advocacy about the unique benefits of all-girls education.

Founded in 1991, NCGS serves over 250 national and international PK-12 grade girls' schools (independent, public, charter, and religiously-affiliated), 15,000 educators, 100,000 students, and nearly one-million alumnae.

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ABOUT HERI

The **Higher Education Research Institute (HERI)** serves as an interdisciplinary center for research, evaluation, data, policy studies, and research training in post-secondary education. HERI is housed in the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS). HERI is home to six national surveys of college students, faculty, and staff, including the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), also known as The Freshman Survey, which is the largest and longest-running study of higher education in the U.S. The Institute's research program covers a variety of topics including the college student outcomes, leadership development, institutional transformation, faculty performance, educational equity, and issues surrounding campus climate.

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