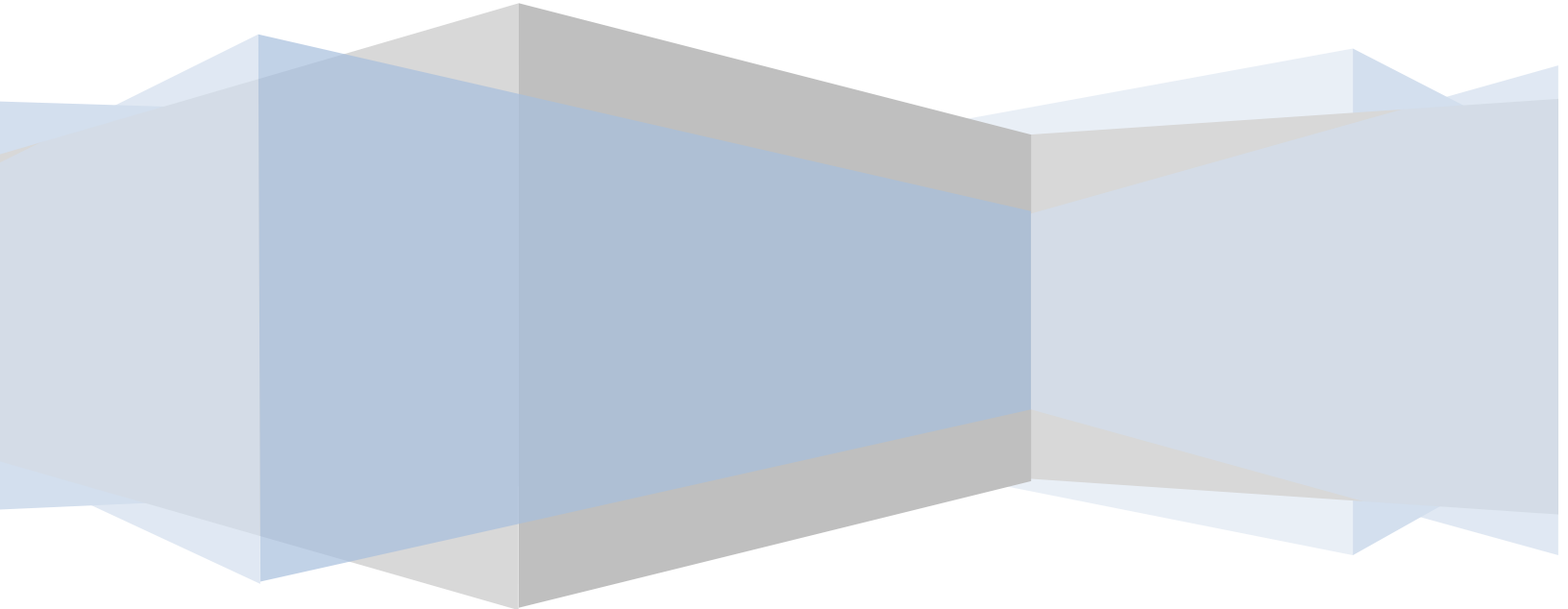


# Foundations of Excellence

## 2011 Private 4-Year Institutions' Retention Analysis Executive Summary

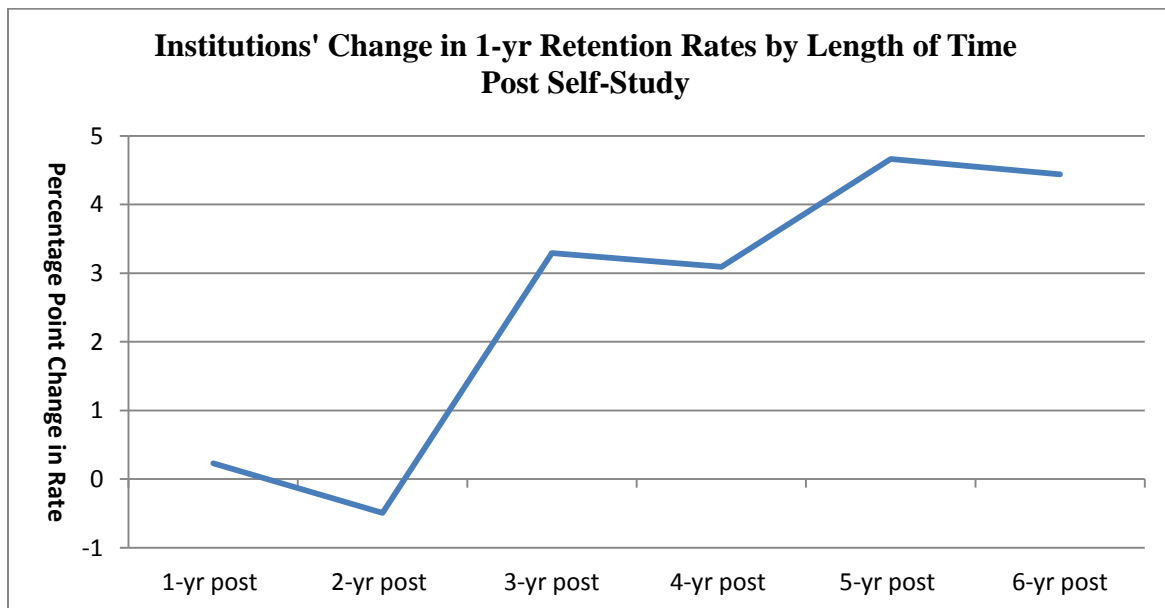
Prepared by: Brent M. Drake, Ph. D.



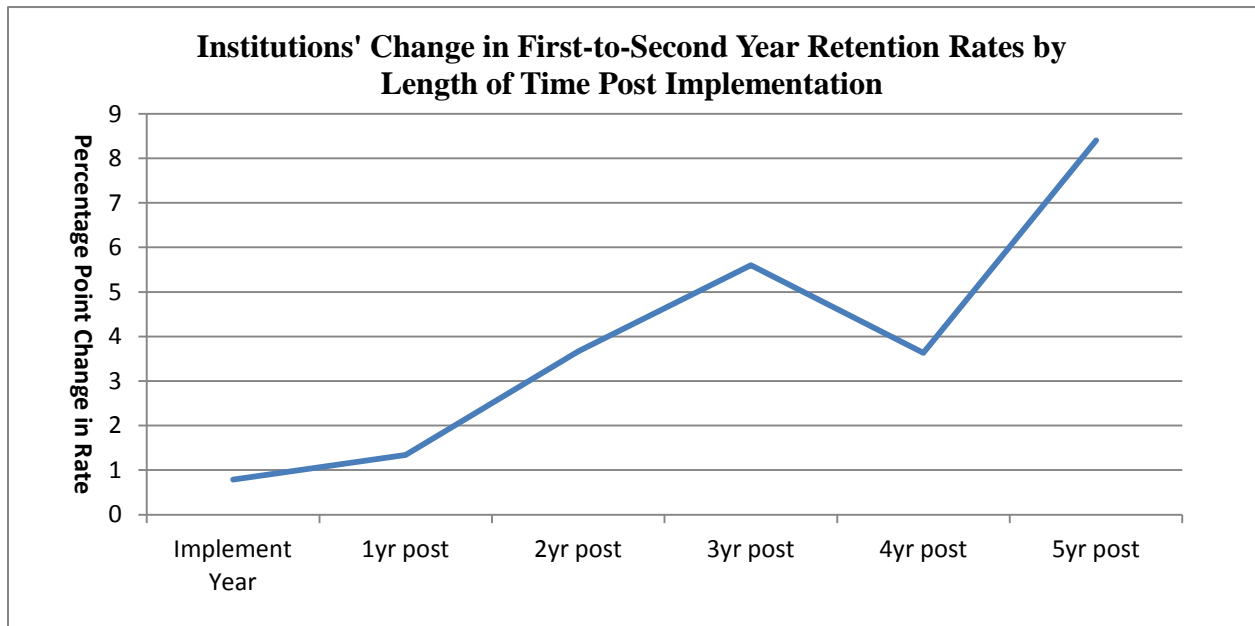
## Executive Summary

This study examines the federal Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) first-to-second year, full-time student retention rates for private institutions that participated in the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) self-study program. The analysis splits the data by demographic variables provided from a brief “Survey of Foundations of Excellence Impact” conducted in March 2010. Surveys were sent electronically to the individual on each campus who served as leader (liaison) for the FoE process. Ultimately 22 of the 23 private institutions in the population responded to the survey (96% response rate).

With a small overall sample size, when the analysis is further subdivided into levels of implementation many of the cell sizes fall below five observations. Given this, any conclusions drawn about patterns of change within the retention rates must be taken with a great deal of caution. Nevertheless, the results indicated that participation in the FoE self-study process was positively related to gains in first-to-second year rates over time as institutions saw a 4.44 percentage point gain in first-to-second year retention rates six years post self-study.



The gains in first-to-second year retention rates were even more dramatic for institutions that implemented an action plan following the self-study process. Ultimately those institutions saw an 8.40 percentage point gain in first-to-second year retention rates five years after they had implemented their action plan.



Finally, the level at which institutions implemented their action plan mitigated the relationship between implementation and retention gains. Specifically, institutions that implemented their action plan to a high degree saw higher gains in their first-to-second year retention rates every subsequent year following implementation compared to limited and medium implementers. The high implementers saw immediate large gains in their first-to-second year retention rates that culminated in a 12.0 percentage point (17.5%) gain in the first-to-second year retention rates five years after action plan execution.

**Change in First-to-Second Year Retention Rates Post-Implementation of FoE Action Plan by Level of Plan Implementation**

