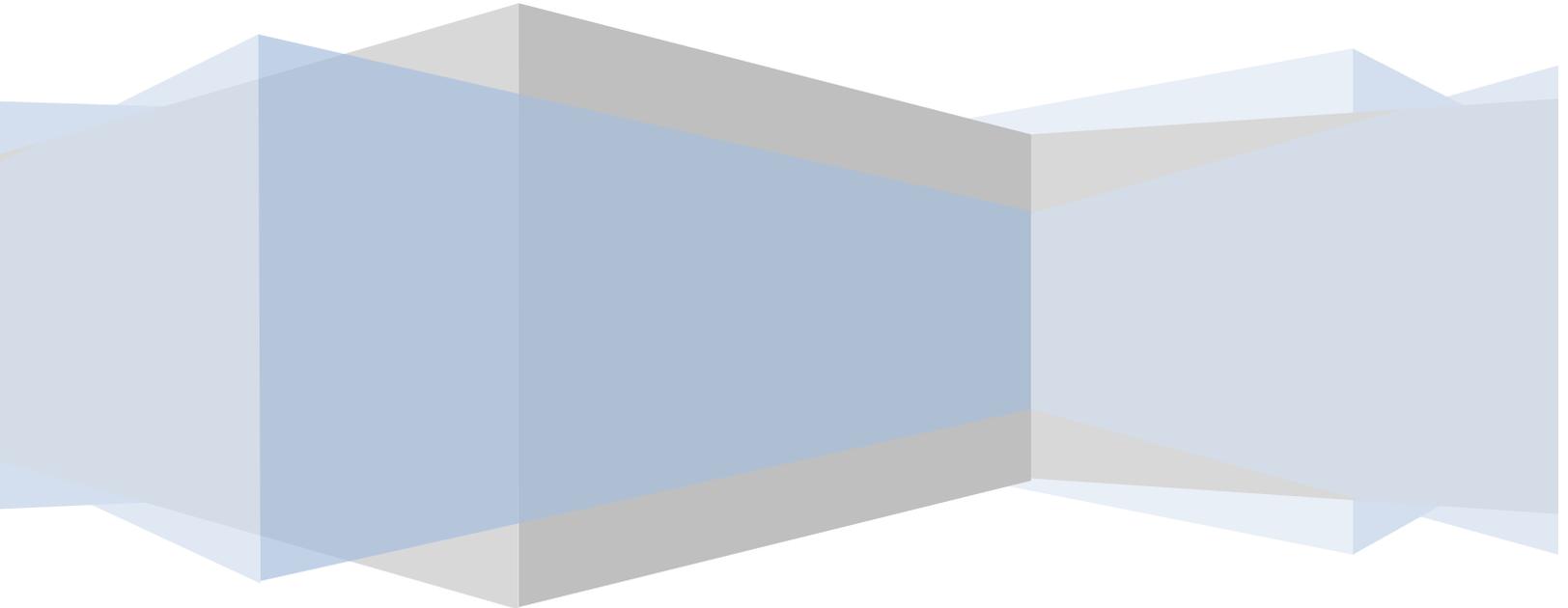


Foundations of Excellence

2011 Two-Year Institutions Retention Analysis

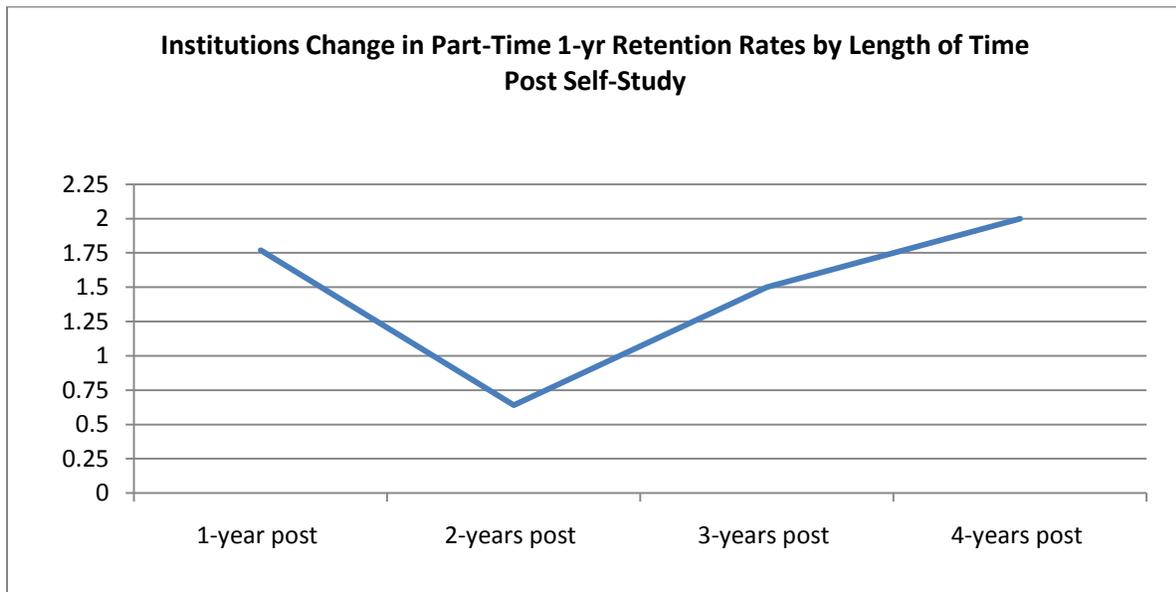
Prepared by: Brent M. Drake, Ph.D.

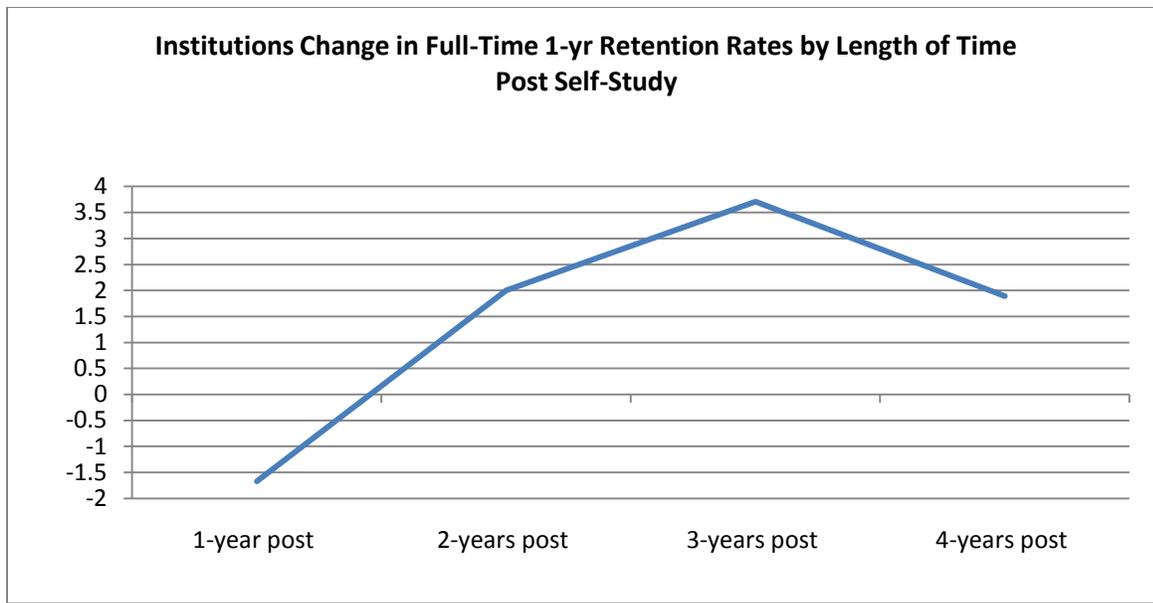


Executive Summary

This study is an analysis of first-year part-time and full-time retention rates for two-year institutions that participated in the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) self-study program split 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 31 of the 34 two-year institutions in the population responded to the survey (91% response rate).

The results indicate that participation in the FoE self-study process is positively related to increases in both part-time and full-time retention rates.



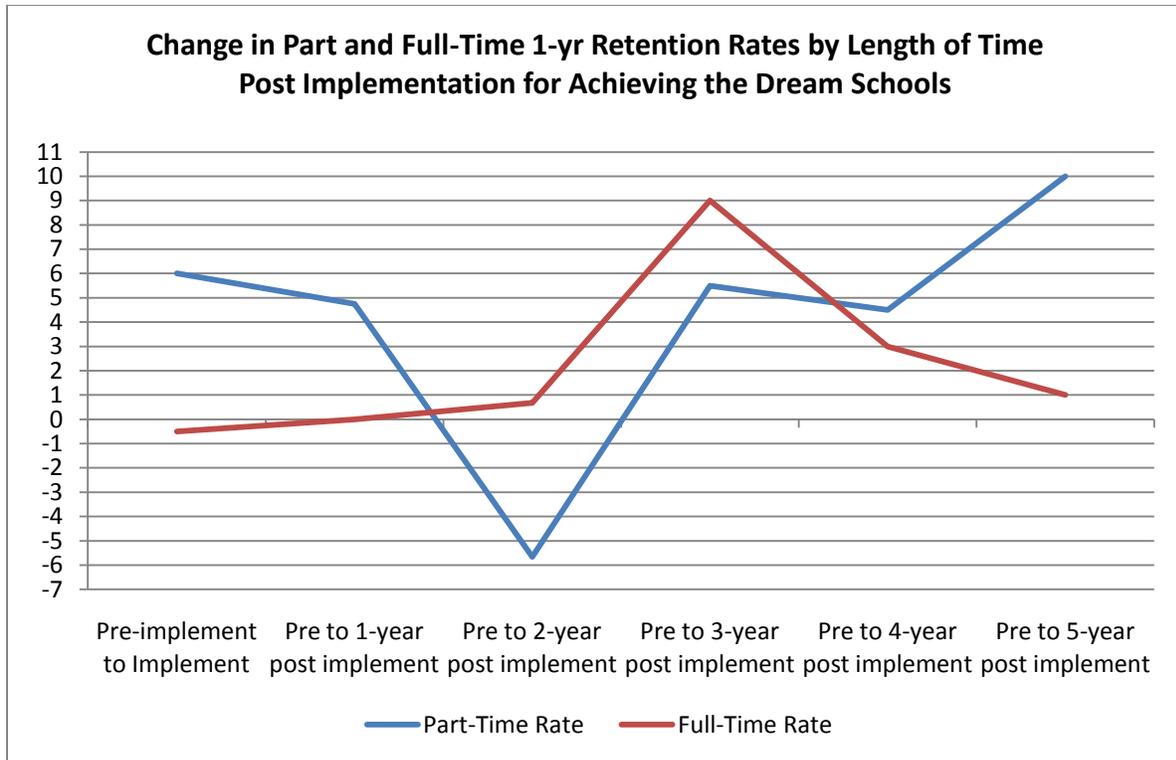


However, the results were mixed when examining the results post-implementation of an action plan following the FoE process. With a small overall sample size, when analysis is further subdivided into levels of implementation, many of the cell sizes fall below five observations. Given this, any conclusions drawn about patterns of change in retention within the subdivided groups must be taken with a great deal of caution.

Although limited to a small sample (4 institutions), schools that participated in the Achieving the Dream¹ process combined with implementation of the FoE action plan showed encouraging results post implementation. All of the Achieving the Dream participants had implemented an action plan following their FoE self-study to a medium or high degree. Additionally, the Achieving the Dream participants exhibited gains in both part-time and full-time retention rates post implementation. This result is encouraging in light of the recent finding that in aggregate the Achieving the Dream schools saw little improvement in academic outcomes

¹ Achieving the Dream seeks to help more students earn postsecondary credentials at community colleges, including occupational certificates and degrees, by working with institutions to improve student progression via better use of student outcome data. For more on Achieving the Dream see: <http://www.achievingthedream.org/Portal/Modules/936b3989-b5a5-4cf9-ac87-93495e5eea3b.asset?>

post-implementation (Rutschow, Richburg-Hayes, Brock, Orr, Cerna, Cullinan, Kerrigan, Jenkins, Gooden, & Martin, 2011). The positive relationship between joint FoE and Achieving the Dream participation and retention rates warrants further investigation to examine if there is some unique experience in coupling both the Achieving the Dream and FoE action plan processes that is associated with gains in schools' retention rates.



References

Rutschow, E. Z., Richburg-Hayes, L., Brock, T., Orr, G., Cerna, O., Cullinan, D., Kerrigan, M. R., Jenkins, D., Gooden, S. & Martin, K. (January 2011). *Turning the tide: Five years of Achieving the dream in community colleges*. Retrieved May 26, 2011 from <http://www.achievingthedream.org/Portal/Modules/133a5359-8084-4c0e-af92-f01d5662f044.asset>