

# Foundations of Excellence® Process Assessment Abbreviated Analysis of Results

This is an abbreviated version of a report that Darlena Jones, Director of Research and Development at Educational Benchmarking Inc., prepared for the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education (formerly Policy Center on the First Year of College) in June 2008. This version of the report includes only the top response items from sections of the report that the Gardner Institute staff members believe will be most useful to individuals who are interested in former participants' perceptions of the overall Foundations of Excellence® process. To receive the entire report, contact the Gardner Institute at [info@fyfoundations.org](mailto:info@fyfoundations.org).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Foundations of Excellence® Process Assessment describes perceptions of faculty/staff who were participants in their institutions' use of the Foundations of Excellence® self-study. The John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, formerly the Policy Center on the First Year of College (Policy Center) commissioned this study through Educational Benchmarking (EBI).

**Purposes of Assessment:** The purposes were to identify perceptions of the various aspects of the process, provide information to support process improvement and provide the Policy Center with information to improve overall faculty/staff satisfaction with the process.

**Survey Design:** The survey was designed by members of the Policy Center and the survey development team at EBI.

**Survey Administration:** Each survey participant was sent an email with a direct link to the survey questionnaire asking them to enter and complete the survey. For those participants who did not respond, three reminder emails were sent at various intervals asking them to use the direct link and complete the survey.

**Response Rate:** EBI attempted to survey 5,518 participants and received 2,327 completed surveys for a 42.9% response rate.

## **MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

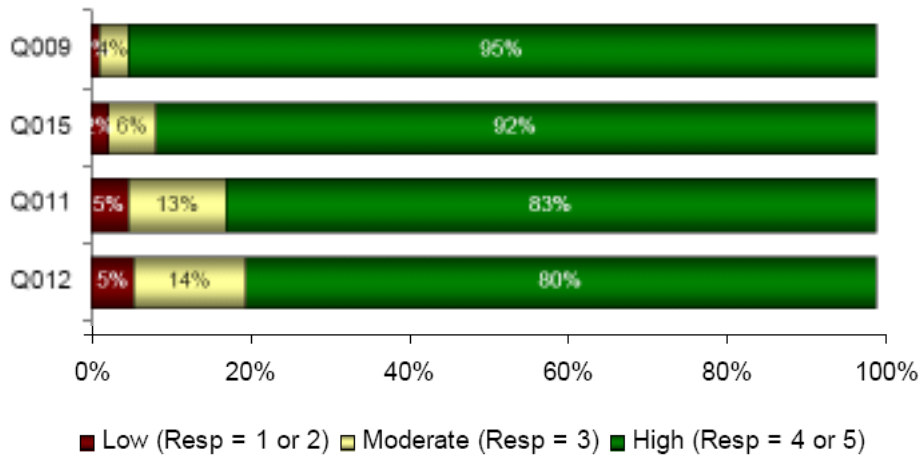
**To what degree were the following reasons why your institution decided to participate in the FoE Process?**

Q009. Improve retention of first-year students / beginning students

Q015. Create a more effective strategy for approaching the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q011. Understand all efforts currently in place directed towards the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q012. Improve integration of current efforts



This chart shows a frequency distribution of the respondents in one of three categories: those who felt the issue was not relevant to their participation (colored red), those who felt that it may have been moderately relevant (colored yellow), and those who felt the issue was extremely relevant to their participation. The highest rated issue was improving retention of first-year students / beginning students (Q009) while the next highest rated question was to create a more effective strategy for approaching the first year of college (Q015).

## **FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE<sup>®</sup> (FoE) PROCESS**

The following questions ask the participant to evaluate the FoE process overall.

### **To what degree did the FoE Process:**

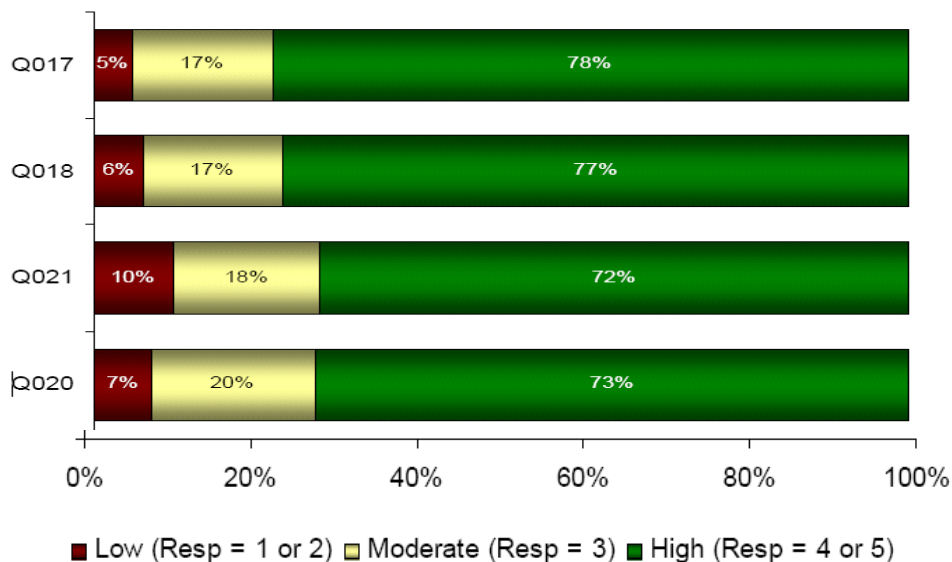
Q017. Facilitate the participation of a broad range of stakeholders

Q018. Focus discussion on a campus-wide perspective of the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q021. Facilitate the creation of a coordinated institution-wide plan for improving the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q020. Provide an effective structure for gathering evidence for analyzing your first year of college

The highest rated item was the process's ability to facilitate the participation of a broad range of stakeholders (Q017 – 78% of respondents rated it high or very high).



## FOUNDATIONAL DIMENSIONS®

You worked with Foundational Dimensions® based on an aspirational model. To what degree did they:

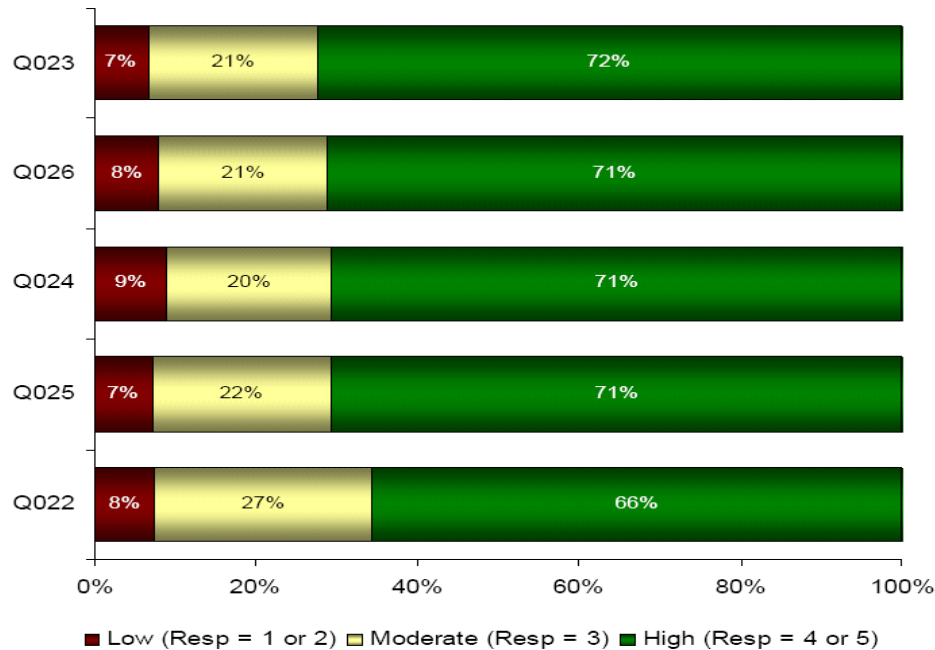
Q023. Form a basis for substantive conversation

Q026. Form a valuable framework for the self-study

Q024. Expand your awareness or understanding of the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q025. Provide an effective organizational structure for the self-study

Q022. Define excellence in the first year of college / beginning college experience



There was very little variability in the responses for these items. The item with the highest percentage of high/very high respondents was Q023 which asked if the Foundational Dimensions formed a basis for substantive conversation. The item with the lowest percentage of high/very high respondents was Q022 which asked if the Foundational Dimensions defined excellence in the first year of college / beginning college experience.

## OVERALL OUTCOME OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE PROJECT

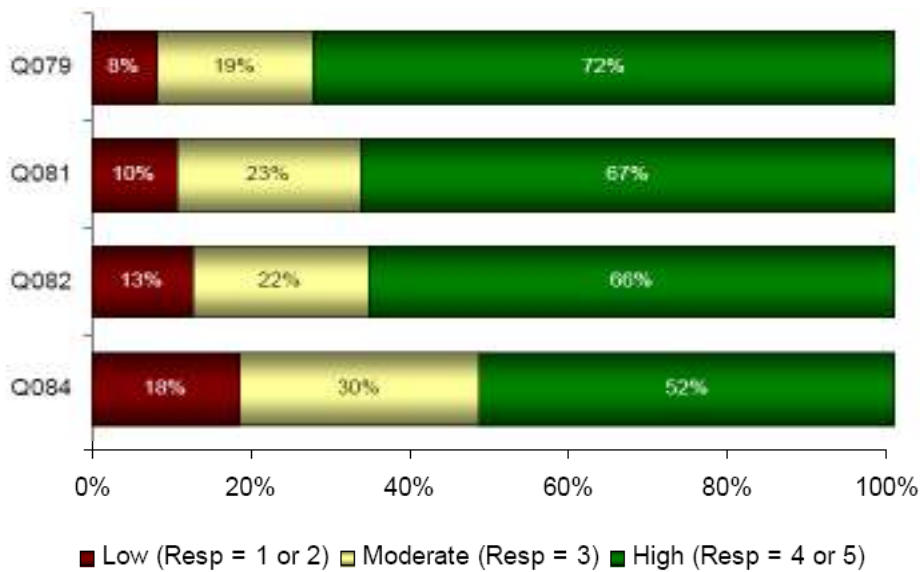
To what degree did the Foundations of Excellence project result in the following:

Q079. Increase in the perceived importance of first-year issues at your institution

Q081. An inclusive process that involved people who are responsible for improving the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q082. A strategic plan for improving the first year of college / beginning college experience

Q084. Improved academic affairs/faculty/student affairs collaboration

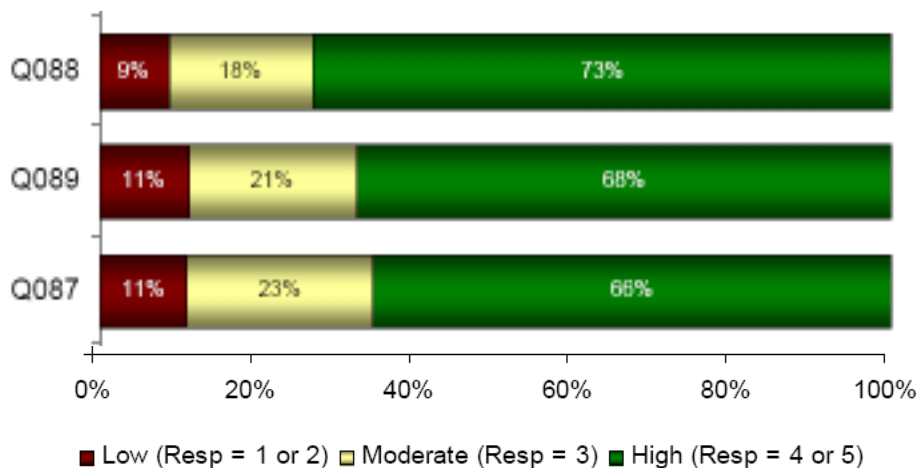


Over 92% of survey respondents felt that FoE process increased the perceived importance of first-year issues at their institution to at least a moderate degree while 90% of respondents felt that this was an inclusive process that involved people who are responsible for improving that first college year.

### **SELECTED PROJECT OUTCOMES**

**To what degree did the Foundations of Excellence project result in the following:**

- Q088. Better assessment information to improve the first year of college / beginning college experience
- Q089. Improvement of your institution's capacity to conduct future institution-wide assessment for educational change
- Q087. Positively impact retention

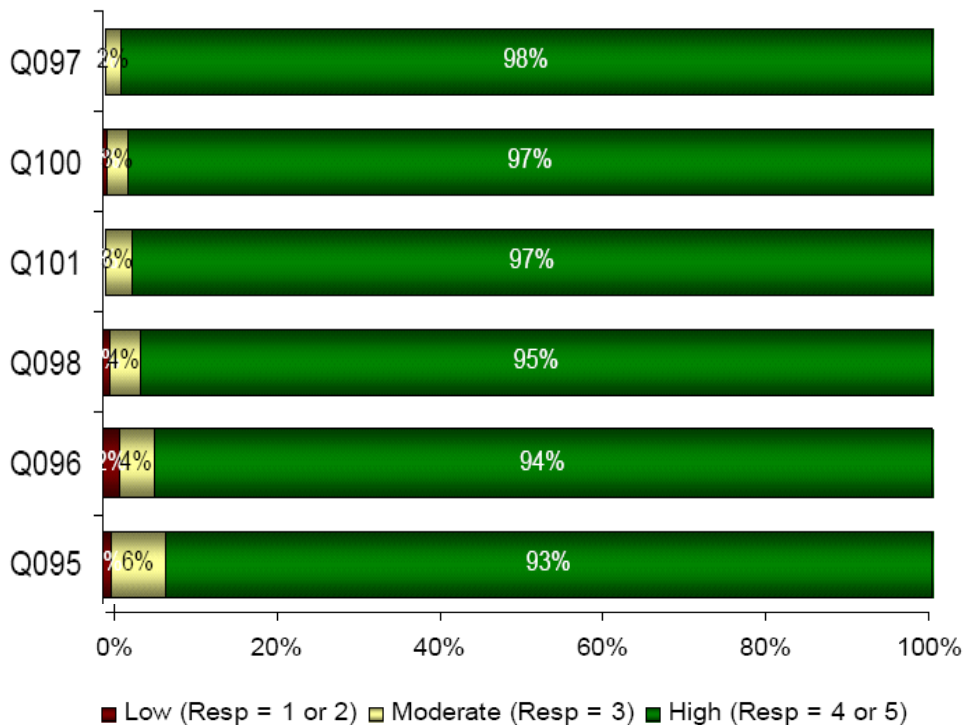


## **POLICY CENTER STAFF**

By far the highest rated series of questions were the nine questions regarding the Policy Center staff and their support of the institutions. Please note that only participants who were the liaison, co-liaison, or dimension committee chair were presented these questions since most campus faculty/staff would have little contact with the Policy Center liaison.

### **To what degree was the Policy Center staff:**

- Q097. Professional
- Q100. Knowledgeable on the Foundations of Excellence process
- Q101. Knowledgeable on first-year issues
- Q098. Respectful about delivering feedback
- Q096. Encouraging or supporting
- Q095. Timely in responding to your questions/concerns/feedback



Nearly 100% of respondents felt that the Policy Center staff was professional, knowledge about the FoE process, and knowledgeable on first-year issues.