

1.2 Nebraska High School Graduates Who Go to College in Nebraska

Increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who pursue their postsecondary education in Nebraska.

The analysis of college continuation rates, summarized in the previous section of this report, revealed that the estimated proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who attended degree-granting institutions in Nebraska within a year of high school graduation increased from 50.0% in fall 2002 to 53.7% in fall 2008. Over the same four-year period, the percentage who attended out-of-state institutions increased from 11.6% to 11.8% for a total college continuation rate of 65.5% in fall 2008.

While monitoring and increasing Nebraska's college continuation rates is important, another approach to increasing college enrollment in Nebraska that was recommended by the 2003 LR 174 Higher Education Task Force is to increase the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who pursue their postsecondary education in their home state, rather than going out of state to college.

The data required to monitor the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who go to colleges and universities in Nebraska or other states are collected every two years through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) maintained by the National Center of Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. This section compares the latest available IPEDS data, which are for fall 2008, to 2002 baseline statistics.

The best available estimate of the proportion of Nebraska high school graduates who pursue their postsecondary education in Nebraska is the number of students with Nebraska residency who enroll at Nebraska degree-granting institutions as first-time freshmen within a year of graduating from high school, compared directly to the number who go out of state to college. Consequently, this section provides a detailed analysis of the numbers and percentages of Nebraska high school graduates who attended Nebraska and out-of-state, degree-granting institutions as first-time freshmen within 12 months of graduating from high school between fall 2002 and fall 2008.¹

Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who start college at Nebraska or out-of-state degree-granting institutions more than 12 months after they graduated from high school are also of interest. However, since there is no way of knowing exactly when they received their diplomas from Nebraska or out-of-state high schools, these students are considered separately in the analysis reported in this section.

Data reported by non-degree-granting schools are excluded from the following analysis because the residency data reported by the non-degree-granting institutions in Nebraska were not as complete or consistent as the data reported by the degree-granting institutions in 2002, which is the baseline for this analysis. See Explanatory Note A6.1 in Appendix 6 for more information on the collection and limitations of the data analyzed in this section.

¹For the purposes of IPEDS reporting, first-time freshmen are defined to be degree-seeking students. Students who are taking courses for credit but who are not seeking degrees are not (or should not) be included in first-time freshmen cohorts.

Changes in the Number of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Degree-Granting Institutions by Length of Time Since High School Graduation

- Between fall 2002 and fall 2008, there was an increase in the number of Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who attended degree-granting institutions within one year of high school graduation. But there was a much larger decrease in the number of first-time freshmen who enrolled in college more than a year after they graduated from high school, as shown in Table 1.2.1. As a result, total enrollment of Nebraska-resident first-time freshmen at degree-granting institutions decreased by 9.6% over the six-year period.
- The 9.6% decrease in the number of Nebraska-resident first-time freshmen who attended degree-granting colleges and universities between fall 2002 and fall 2008 is due entirely to the 48.1% decrease in the number of Nebraskans who started college more than one year after high school graduation. This steep decline is discussed in detail later in this section.

**Table 1.2.1
Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Degree-Granting
Postsecondary Institutions Classified by Length of Time Since High School Graduation
Fall 2004 through Fall 2008 Compared to Fall 2002¹**

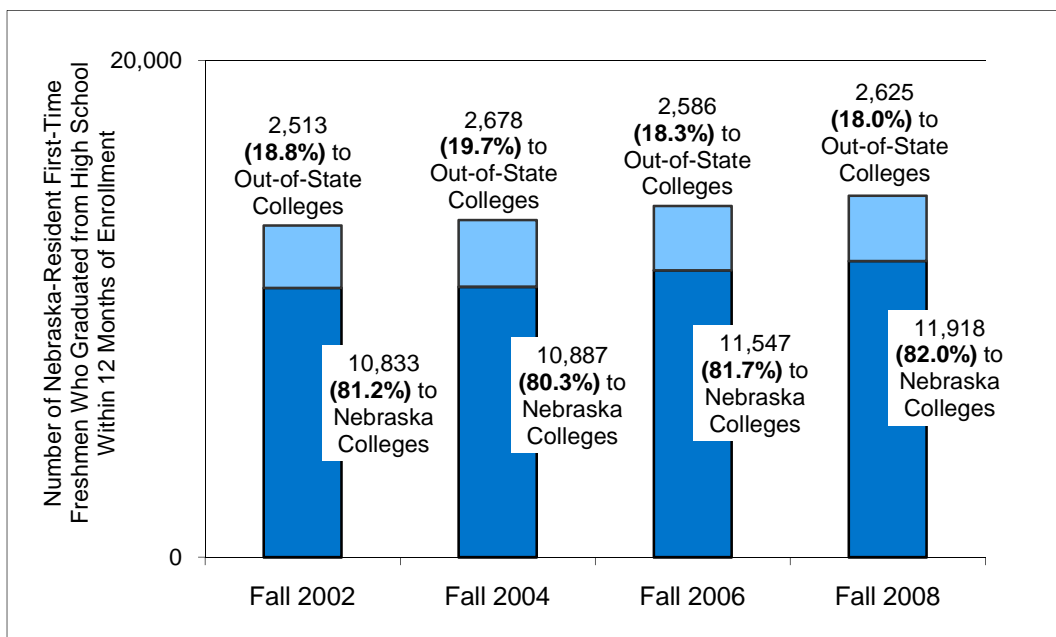
Where Students Enrolled as First-Time Freshmen	Number and Percentage of Nebraska-Resident First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska and Out-of-State Postsecondary Institutions						Change in the Number and Percentage of Students Since Fall 2002	
	Fall 2002		Fall 2004		Fall 2006			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Graduated during the 12 Months Prior to College Enrollment	13,346	67.4%	13,565	72.6%	14,133	77.1%		
Graduated More than 12 Months Prior to College Enrollment	6,461	32.6%	5,128	27.4%	4,189	22.9%		
Total	19,807	100.0%	18,693	100.0%	18,322	100.0%		
	Fall 2008						n	%
	n	%						
Graduated during the 12 Months Prior to College Enrollment	14,543	81.3%					1,197	9.0%
Graduated More than 12 Months Prior to College Enrollment	3,353	18.7%					-3,108	-48.1%
Total	17,896	100.0%					-1,911	-9.6%

¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students.

In-State and Out-of-State Enrollments of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Who Graduated from High School Within 12 Months of College Enrollment

- The net increase of 1,197 students between 2002 and 2008, shown in [Table 1.2.1](#) on the preceding page, is attributable to an increase of 112 Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who enrolled at out-of-state degree-granting schools within 12 months of high school graduation and an increase of 1,085 students who pursued their postsecondary education at degree-granting institutions in Nebraska. (See [Table A6.1](#) in [Appendix 6](#) for supporting data.)
- As illustrated in [Figure 1.2.1](#) below, the enrollment increases between fall 2002 and fall 2008 resulted in a higher percentage of Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen starting college in Nebraska, while a lower percentage pursued their postsecondary education out of state.

Figure 1.2.1
Number and Percentage of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska and Out-of-State Degree-Granting Institutions Within 12 Months of Graduation from High School
Fall 2002–Fall 2006¹



¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See [Table A6.1](#) in [Appendix 6](#) for supporting data.

- As illustrated in [Figure 1.2.2](#), the increase in the percentage of recent Nebraska high school graduates who pursued their postsecondary education in their home state is attributable to the fact that all of the higher education sectors attracted more of these students in fall 2008 than in fall 2002. Specifically, enrollments of Nebraska-resident first-time freshmen increased as follows:

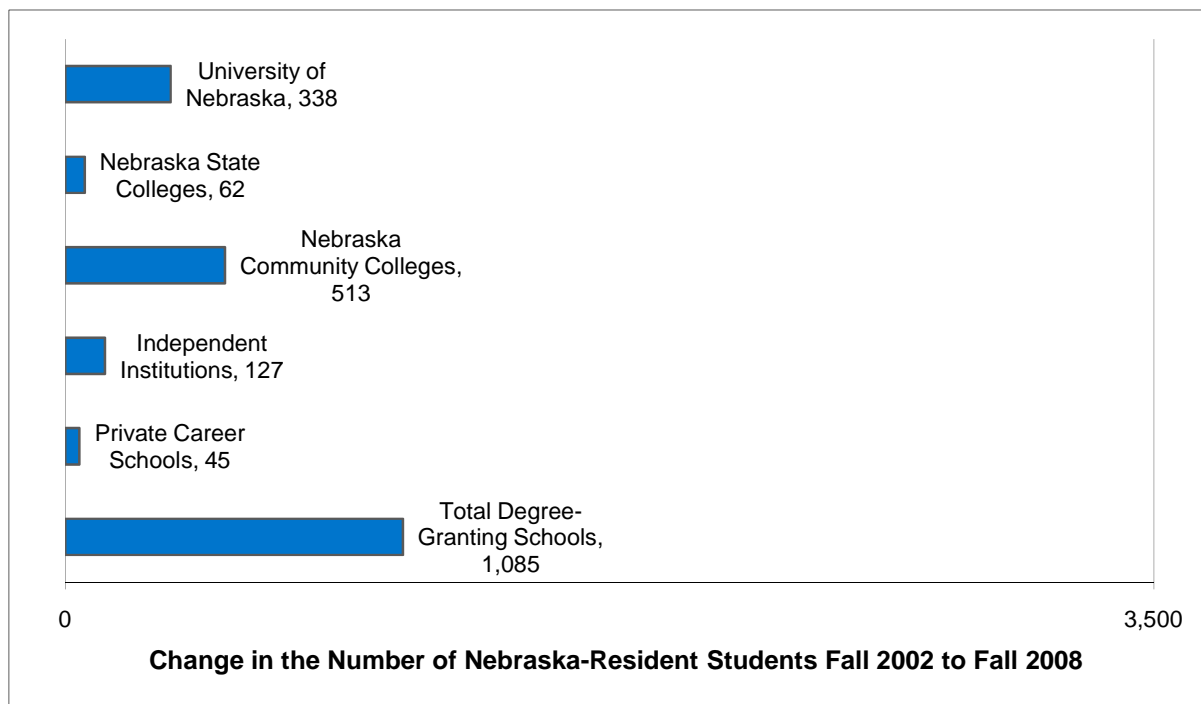
University of Nebraska	up 6.4%	5,313 in 2002 to 5,651 in 2008
Nebraska State College System	up 7.0%	880 in 2002 to 942 in 2008
Nebraska Community Colleges	up 17.6%	2,918 in 2002 to 3,431 in 2008
Nebraska independent institutions	up 7.9%	1,600 in 2002 to 1,727 in 2008
For-profit degree-granting schools	up 36.9%	122 in 2002 to 167 in 2008

See [Table A6.2](#) in [Appendix 2](#) for supporting data, including 2004 and 2006 enrollments.

- As mentioned previously, out-of-state, degree-granting schools attracted only 112 more first-time freshmen from Nebraska in fall 2008 than in fall 2002, resulting in a net decrease in the percentage of recent high school graduates who went out of state to pursue their postsecondary education.
- See the *Fall 2006 Nebraska Report on the Residence and Migration of First-Time Freshmen* for detailed information on the out-of-state colleges and universities attended by Nebraska-resident first-time freshmen. This report is available on the Coordinating Commission Web site, www.ccpe.state.ne.us. An update is scheduled for publication when the data for fall 2010 are available in 2011.

Figure 1.2.2

Changes in the Numbers of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska Degree-Granting Institutions Within 12 Months of Graduation from High School Fall 2008 Compared to Fall 2002¹



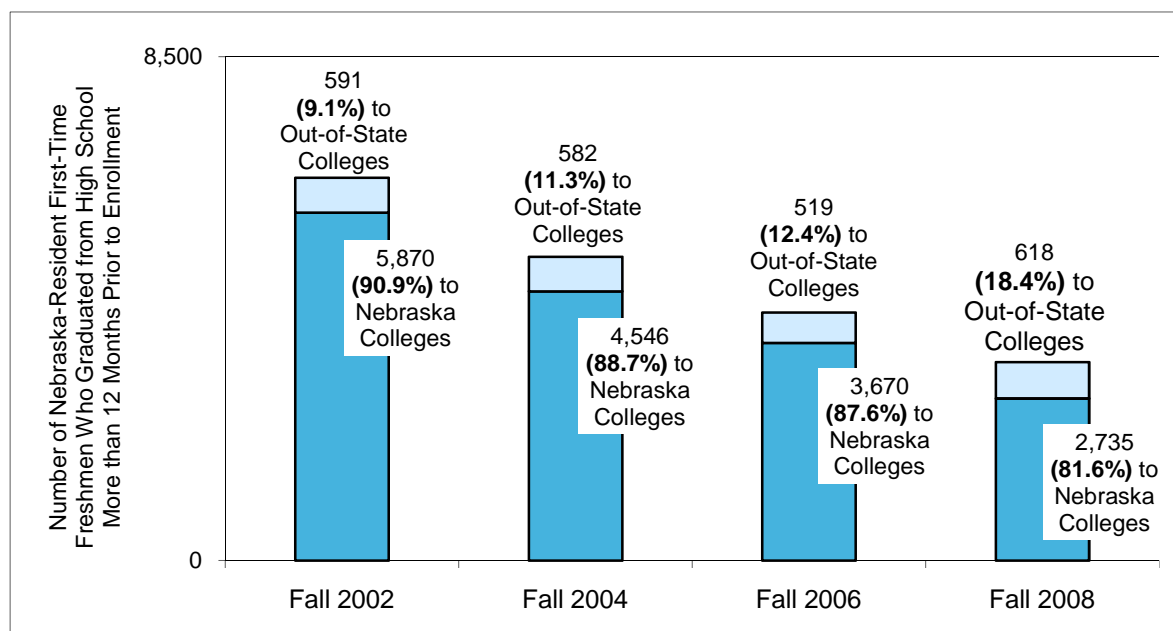
¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002 and fall 2006 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See [Table A6.2](#) in [Appendix 6](#) for supporting data.

In-State and Out-of-State Enrollments of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Who Graduated from High School More than 12 Months Prior to College Enrollment

- Between fall 2002 and fall 2008, there was a significant decrease in the number of first-time freshmen with Nebraska residency who started their postsecondary studies at degree-granting institutions in Nebraska more than a year after they graduated from high school. As illustrated in Figure 1.2.3, 3,135 fewer of these freshmen attended Nebraska colleges in fall 2008 than in fall 2002, a decrease of 48.5%.
- In contrast, between 2002 and 2008, 27 more first-time freshmen from Nebraska went to out-of-state colleges more than a year after graduating from high school. (See Table A6.3 in Appendix 6 for supporting data.)
- As shown in Figure 1.2.3, the net effect of these changes in enrollment was that a lower percentage of the students who graduated from high school more than a year before college enrollment attended Nebraska postsecondary institutions in fall 2008 than in fall 2002, while a higher percentage chose to go out of state. Specifically, 81.6% attended Nebraska colleges in 2008, compared to 90.9% in 2002. In 2008, 18.4% went to out-of-state schools, compared to 9.1% in 2002.

Figure 1.2.3

Number and Percentage of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska and Out-of-State Degree-Granting Institutions More than 12 Months After Graduation from High School Fall 2002–Fall 2008¹

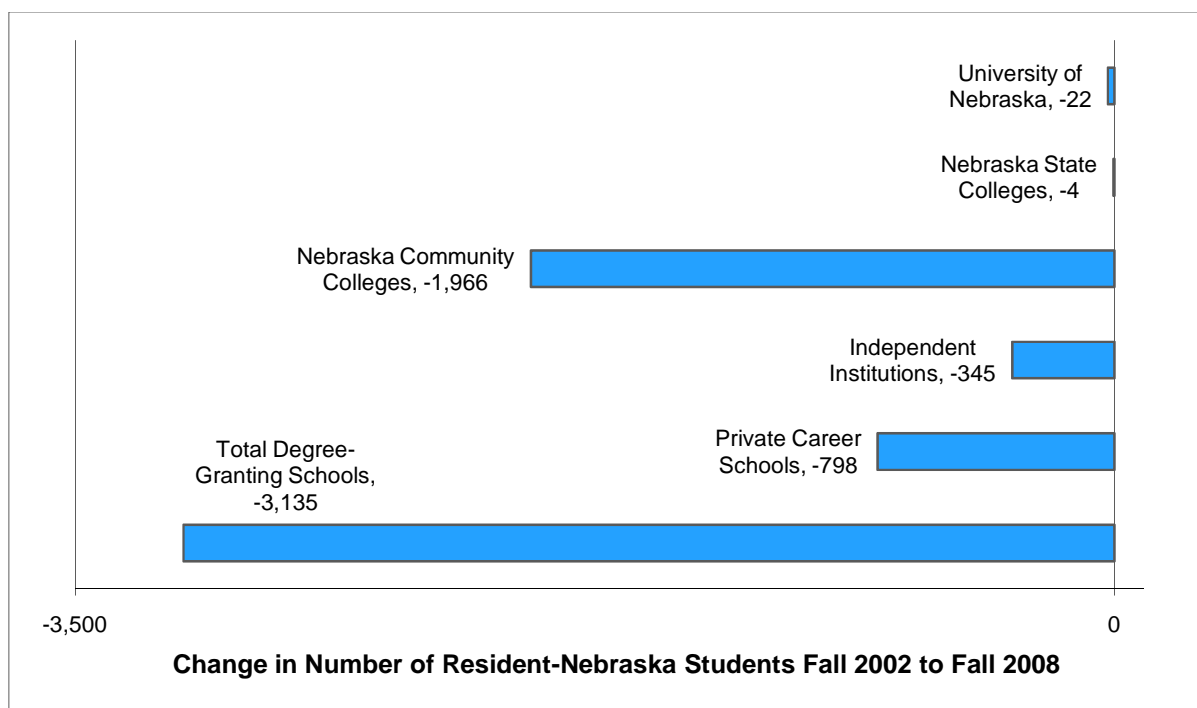


¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See Table A6.3 in Appendix 6 for supporting data.

- In 2002, a total of 6,461 Nebraskans started college at in-state or out-of-state colleges more than a year after they graduated from high school graduation. By 2008, the total had declined 48.1% to 3,353 first-time freshmen, a difference of 3,108 students.
- Total enrollment decreased steadily over the six-year period: 20.6% between fall 2002 and fall 2004, 18.3% between fall 2004 and fall 2006, and 20.0% between fall 2006 and fall 2008. (See Table A6.3 in Appendix 6 for supporting data.)

- As illustrated in [Figure 1.2.4](#) below, all of the sectors of higher education in Nebraska experienced decreases in the number of first-time freshmen who enrolled in college more than a year after high school graduation, but the degree of decline varied dramatically by sector.
- The greatest decreases in the enrollment of first-time freshmen who started college more than a year after high school graduation were reported by the Nebraska community colleges and the for-profit schools. Together, the state’s six community colleges accounted for 63% of the total decrease of 3,135 students. Degree-granting schools in the for-profit sector accounted for another 25% of the total decrease. (See [Table A6.4](#) in [Appendix 6](#) for supporting data.)
- Nebraska’s community colleges have historically attracted, by far, the greatest share of the first-time freshmen who go to college more than 12 months after they graduate from high school. As a result, it is only logical that the colleges in this sector would be expected to experience the greatest changes if there is a general downward or upward trend in the enrollment of students in this cohort.

Figure 1.2.4
Changes in the Numbers of Nebraska-Resident, First-Time Freshmen
Enrolled at Nebraska Degree-Granting Institutions
More than 12 Months After Graduation from High School
Fall 2008 Compared to Fall 2002¹



¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes full-time and part-time students. See [Table A6.4](#) in [Appendix 6](#) for supporting data.

- Further analysis of the available data indicates that Southeast Community College alone accounted for 85% of the total decrease of 1,996 students shown for the community colleges in [Figure 1.2.4](#). Between fall 2002 and fall 2008, Southeast enrolled 1,666 fewer first-time freshmen who started college more than 12 months after they graduated from high school.

- Even with a substantial decrease in the number of older first-time freshmen enrolled at Southeast Community College, this institution has continued to attract a high number of older, first-time freshmen. In fall 2002, Southeast enrolled 2,396 students in this category, accounting for 41% of all of the Nebraska-resident first-time freshmen who started college at degree-granting institutions more than a year after high school graduation. In fall 2008, Southeast attracted 27% (730) of the state's first-time freshmen in this cohort.
- Compared to Southeast, Metropolitan Community College (Metro) experienced a much lower decrease in the enrollment of older, first-time freshmen between 2002 and 2008. At the beginning of this period, Metro enrolled 783 (13%) of the state's first-time freshmen who started college at degree-granting schools more than 12 months after high school graduation. In fall 2008, Metro enrolled 67 fewer students in this cohort than it did in fall 2002. With 714 older, first-time freshmen in fall 2008, Metro enrolled 26% of the state's first-time freshmen who graduated more than a year before they went to college, almost equaling Southeast's percentage.
- Between 2002 and 2008, Mid-Plains Community College enrolled 253 fewer first-time freshmen who started college more than a year after high school graduation, and Western Nebraska Community College and Northeast Community College reported a decrease of 118 students in this cohort. By fall 2008, Mid-Plains enrolled only 65 first-time freshmen from Nebraska who started college more than a year after high school, and Western enrolled 95 students in this category, accounting for 2% and 3% of the state's enrollment, respectively.
- Over the same six-year period, Central Community College experienced an increase of 67 Nebraska-resident, first-time freshmen who enrolled more than a year after high school graduation and Northeast also reported a comparable increase of 73 freshmen in this cohort. As a result, Central enrolled 227 students in fall 2008, and Northeast enrolled 179, accounting for 8% and 7%, respectively, of the state's enrollment of older, first-time freshmen.
- In spite of the significant decline in the number of older first-time freshmen who attended Southeast and Mid-Plains, the community colleges as a whole attracted an increased share of the "more than 12 months" first-time freshmen cohort between fall 2002 and fall 2008. In fall 2002, the state's six community colleges accounted for 68% of the Nebraska-resident first-time freshmen who enrolled in degree-granting colleges more than 12 months after graduating from high school. In fall 2008, this percentage increased to 73%.
- In fall 2008, for-profit/career schools accounted for 10% of the first-time freshmen who enrolled at degree-granting colleges more than a year after high school graduation, but the for-profit schools accounted for 25% of the total decrease of 3,135 students shown in [Figure 1.2.4](#) on the previous page.
- Degree-granting for-profit schools enrolled 798 fewer older first-time freshmen in fall 2008 than they did in fall 2002. About 80% of this decline is attributable to reduced enrollments at the Omaha and Lincoln campuses of Kaplan University.¹
- Collectively, Nebraska's independent colleges and universities enrolled 345 fewer students in the "more than 12 months" first-time freshmen cohort in fall 2008 than in fall 2002. However, 90% of this decrease is attributable to reduced enrollments at Bellevue University and Concordia University.

¹Kaplan University was previously known as Hamilton College.

- In comparison to the other four sectors, the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska State College System experienced very small reductions in the numbers of older, first-time freshmen that were enrolled between fall 2002 and fall 2008. However, together with the independent institutions, these sectors accounted for only 16% of all of the first-time freshmen from Nebraska who enrolled in the state's degree-granting schools more than 12 months after high school graduation.
- See [Table A6.4](#) in [Appendix 6](#) for a summary of enrollment changes by sector.
- Why there was a significant decrease in the number of first-time freshmen who enrolled in college more than 12 months after high school graduation, especially at Southeast Community College, is not known. However, economic conditions, higher tuitions, and federal and state grant aid not keeping pace with increases in tuition and fees are three of the factors that may have adversely affected the enrollments of Nebraska residents who did not go to college immediately or soon after they graduated from high school.