

## 1.4 Enrollment of First-Time Freshmen by Race/Ethnicity

**Increase the number and proportion of Nebraska postsecondary students who have been underrepresented in the state's higher education system.**

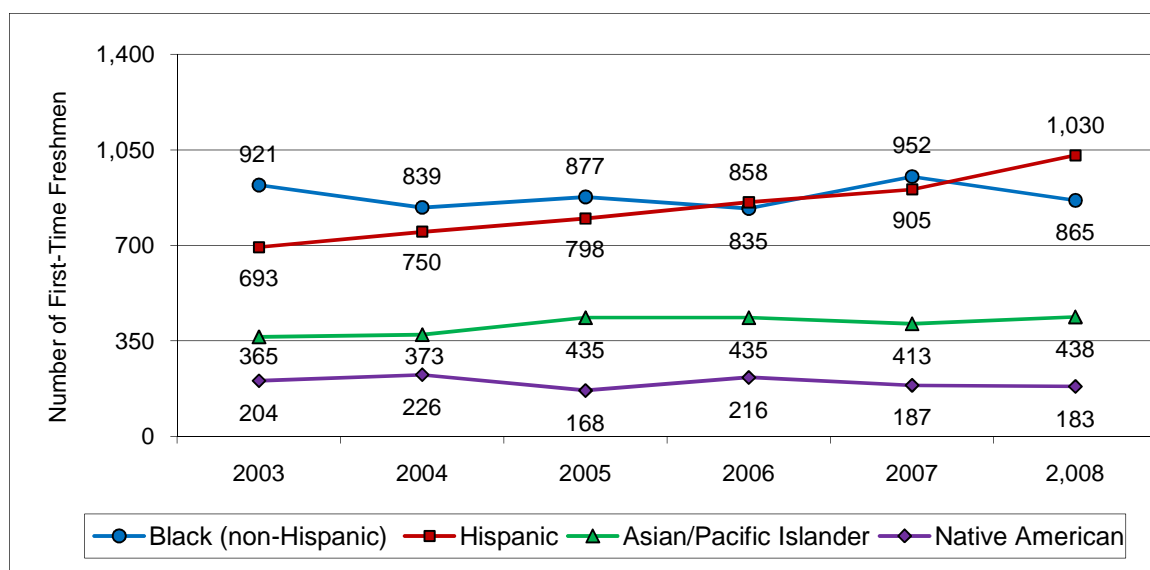
The 2003 LR 174 Higher Education Task Force recommended increasing the number and percentage of underrepresented students as another approach to increasing the enrollment of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. To determine the extent to which this strategic objective is being achieved, the following analysis focuses on (1) the changes that have occurred since 2003 in the numbers of white non-Hispanics and minority students who have been enrolled as first-time freshmen at Nebraska colleges and (2) the extent to which each racial/ethnic group was represented in the state's postsecondary education system in fall 2008, the latest period for which data are available.

### **Changes in the Numbers of First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska Institutions**

- In fall 2008, a total of 17,452 first-time freshmen of known race/ethnicity were enrolled at Nebraska's degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions, a 13.9% decrease from the total of 20,259 first-time freshmen of known race/ethnicity in fall 2003.
- In fall 2003, white non-Hispanics accounted for 89.2% of the first-time freshmen, while minorities accounted for 10.8%. Of the first-time freshmen enrolled in fall 2008, 14.4% were minorities, an increase of 3.6 percentage points.
- As shown in [Figure 1.4.1](#), higher numbers of Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders enrolled in college in fall 2008 than in fall 2003, but there were 56 fewer black non-Hispanics and 21 fewer Native Americans enrolled as first-time freshmen in Nebraska colleges in 2008 than in 2003. (See [Table A7.1](#) and [Table A7.3](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.)

**Figure 1.4.1**

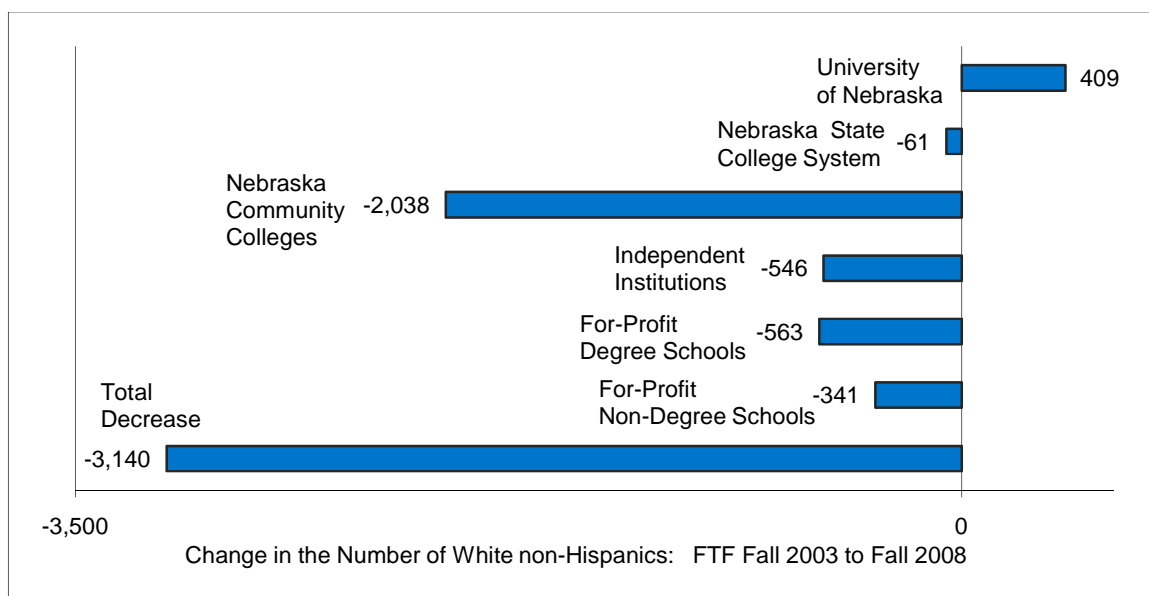
**Changes in the Numbers of Minority Students Enrolled as First-Time Freshmen at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions Fall 2003 to Fall 2008<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 through 2008 IPEDS enrollment surveys. Includes part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity. Includes degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions.

- The net effect of these changes is that there were 333 more minority students attending Nebraska colleges as first-time freshmen in fall 2008 than in fall 2003, an increase of 15.3%. In contrast, there were 3,140 fewer white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen in Nebraska's postsecondary education system in fall 2008 than in fall 2003, a decrease of 17.4%. (See [Table A7.1](#) and [Table A7.2](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.)
- Lower enrollments at Nebraska's community colleges—at Southeast Community College, in particular—accounted for almost 64% of the decrease in the total number of white non-Hispanic, first-time freshmen between fall 2003 and fall 2008.<sup>1</sup> However, as shown in [Figure 1.4.2](#), all of the other sectors of higher education in Nebraska experienced declines in the number of white non-Hispanics enrolled as first-time freshmen between 2003 and 2008, except for the University of Nebraska.
- In the case of the University of Nebraska, a decrease of 294 white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen in fall 2004 and a small decrease of 23 students in fall 2007 were offset by increases of 185, 166, and 375 white students in fall 2005, 2006 and 2008, respectively. As a result, there was a net gain of 409 white non-Hispanics between 2003 and 2008.

**Figure 1.4.2**  
**Changes in the Numbers of White Non-Hispanics**  
**Enrolled as First-Time Freshmen (FTF) at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions**  
**Fall 2008 Compared to Fall 2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity. See [Table A7.2](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

<sup>1</sup>Decreases from the preceding year in the enrollment of white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen at Southeast Community College were 696 in fall 2004, 400 in fall 2005, 485 in fall 2006, 316 in fall 2007, and 96 in fall 2008 for a total four-year decrease of 1,993. Other net decreases in the numbers of white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen over the five-year period were as follows: 80 fewer at Metropolitan Community College, 248 fewer at Mid-Plains Community College, and 17 fewer at Northeast Community College. These decreases were offset slightly by net five-year increases in the numbers of white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen: 266 at Central Community College and 34 at Western Nebraska Community College.

- A year-by-year analysis of the numbers of white non-Hispanic, first-time freshmen reveals that, between fall 2003 and fall 2004, 1,533 fewer white non-Hispanics enrolled at Nebraska institutions, accounting for almost half of the total decrease of 3,140 students from 2003 to 2008. Over the next four years, the number of white non-Hispanics enrolled as first-time freshmen continued to decline: 268 fewer in fall 2005, 793 fewer in fall 2006, 257 fewer in fall 2007, and 289 fewer in fall 2008.
- As shown in Table 1.4.1 below, each annual decline in the enrollment of white non-Hispanic, first-time freshman between fall 2003 and fall 2008 was greater than would be expected, given the year-to-year changes that occurred in the number of white non-Hispanics who graduated from Nebraska high schools each year between 2002-2003 and 2007-2008 and the estimated percentage of these students who continued on to college in Nebraska within a year of graduating from high school, which are presented in Table A5.3 in Appendix 5.
- For example, due to a decrease in the number of white non-Hispanics who graduated from Nebraska high schools between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, it would be expected that 326 fewer white non-Hispanics would enroll as first-time freshmen at Nebraska colleges between fall 2005 and fall 2006, but the actual decrease in enrollment was 793 students. Over the five-year period between fall 2003 and fall 2008, the total expected decrease in white non-Hispanic, first-time freshmen enrollment is estimated to be about 400 students, compared to an actual decrease of 3,140 white non-Hispanics. Like the analysis of migration data summarized in section 1.2, this analysis of actual and expected change indicates that the unexpected decrease in enrollment was among the white non-Hispanics who would not have started college for more than a year after they graduated from high school.

<p align="center"><b>Table 1.4.1</b>  <b>Actual and Estimated Expected Changes in the</b>  <b>Number of White (Non-Hispanic), First-Time Freshmen at Nebraska</b>  <b>Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions</b>  <b>Fall 2003 through Fall 2008<sup>1</sup></b></p>				
Change from:	To:	Actual Change	Estimated Expected Change <sup>2</sup>	Difference between Actual and Expected
Fall 2003	Fall 2004	- 1,533	-212	-1,321
Fall 2004	Fall 2005	- 268	-129	-139
Fall 2005	Fall 2006	- 793	- 326	-467
Fall 2006	Fall 2007	- 257	- 27	-230
Fall 2007	Fall 2008	- 289	+ 283	-572
	<b>Total Change</b>	<b>- 3,140</b>	<b>- 411</b>	<b>- 2,729</b>

<sup>1</sup>Based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys.

<sup>2</sup>The one-year increase or decrease in the number of white non-Hispanics who graduated from Nebraska high schools multiplied by the estimated college continuation rate for the second of the two high school classes being compared. See Table A7.3 for the numbers of white non-Hispanic high school graduates and Table A5.3 for estimated in-state college continuation rates for fall 2004, fall 2006, and fall 2008.

- The reasons for the unexpected decrease are not known but, as mentioned in section 1.2, economic conditions, higher tuitions, and federal and state grant aid not keeping pace with increases in tuition and fees are three factors that may have adversely affected first-time freshmen enrollments.

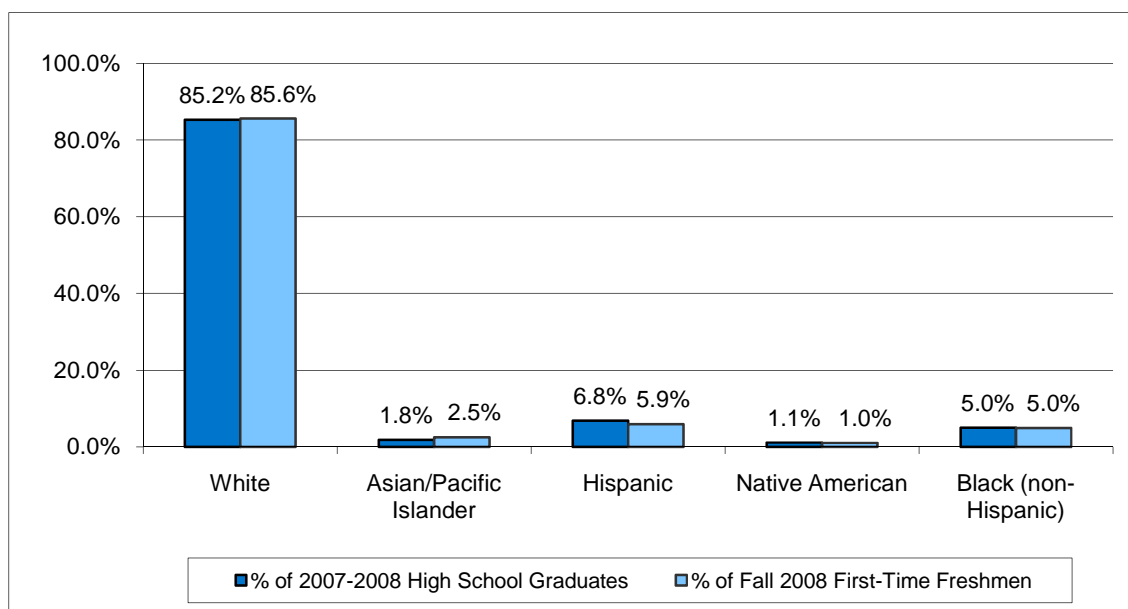
## **Racial/Ethnic Representation in Nebraska’s Postsecondary Education System Fall 2008**

The following analysis examines the extent to which students in each racial/ethnic group have been represented in Nebraska’s postsecondary education system. In this analysis students in a racial/ethnic category are considered to be “underrepresented” if they accounted for a smaller percentage of the first-time college freshmen at Nebraska institutions than they did of the students who graduated from Nebraska high schools the preceding year. Conversely, students are considered to be “overrepresented” if they accounted for a larger percentage of first-time college freshmen than they did of the students who graduated from high school the year before.

- As evidenced in section 1.1.a of this report, disproportionately lower percentages of black non-Hispanics, Hispanics and Native Americans graduate from Nebraska high schools as a result of the fact that their graduation rates are significantly lower than the high school graduation rates for white non-Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- However, as illustrated in Figure 1.4.3 below, minority students who graduate from high school generally tend to be represented among first-time college freshmen in Nebraska to about the same degree as white non-Hispanics.
- If the relationship revealed in the following figure continues in the future, increasing the numbers and high school graduation rates of minority students should result in proportional increases in their college continuation rates and their representation in classes of first-time freshmen.

**Figure 1.4.3**

**Percentages of 2007–2008 Nebraska High School Graduates and First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions in Fall 2008 by Race/Ethnicity**



<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, January 2009, and the National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2008 IPEDS survey. Percentages of high school graduates include graduates of public and nonpublic schools, educational service units, and state-operated schools. Percentages of first-time freshmen include part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity. See the last subsection of Table A7.3 in Appendix 7 for supporting data.

- In fall 2008, Asians/Pacific Islanders were slightly overrepresented, while Native Americans and black non-Hispanics were about equally represented among the first-time freshmen at Nebraska's postsecondary institutions, relative to the extent that they were represented among the state's high school graduates in 2007–2008.
- Hispanics, on the other hand, were underrepresented in fall 2008, accounting for 6.8% of Nebraska's high school graduates in 2007–2008, but representing 5.9% of the first-time freshmen who were enrolled at Nebraska colleges in fall 2008.

See the last section of [Table A7.3](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

### **A Comparison of the Representation of Racial/Ethnic Groups in Fall 2003 and Fall 2008**

Determining if there was any change between fall 2003 and fall 2008 in the pattern of racial/ethnic representation in Nebraska's postsecondary education system is complicated by the fact that fewer white non-Hispanics and more minority students graduated from Nebraska high schools in 2007–2008 than in 2002–2003. However, comparing the percentage distributions of high school graduates in 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 to the percentage distributions of first-time freshmen in fall 2003 and 2008 reveals that, compared to the first-time freshmen who started college in 2003:

- (1) Hispanics were more underrepresented in the fall 2008 freshmen class.
- (2) Asians/Pacific Islanders were slightly more overrepresented among the first-time freshmen in fall 2008.
- (3) Native Americans were slightly overrepresented among first-time freshmen in fall 2003 and slightly underrepresented in fall 2008, relative to the extent that they were represented among the state's high school graduates in 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.
- (4) Black non-Hispanics were slightly overrepresented in fall 2003, but equally represented among Nebraska high school grades in 2007–2008 and the state's first-time college freshmen in fall 2008.
- (5) White non-Hispanics were slightly underrepresented in fall 2003 and slightly overrepresented in fall 2008.

In summary, the overall pattern of representation for all of the racial/ethnic groups was about the same in fall 2008 as it was in fall 2003.

See [Table A7.3](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

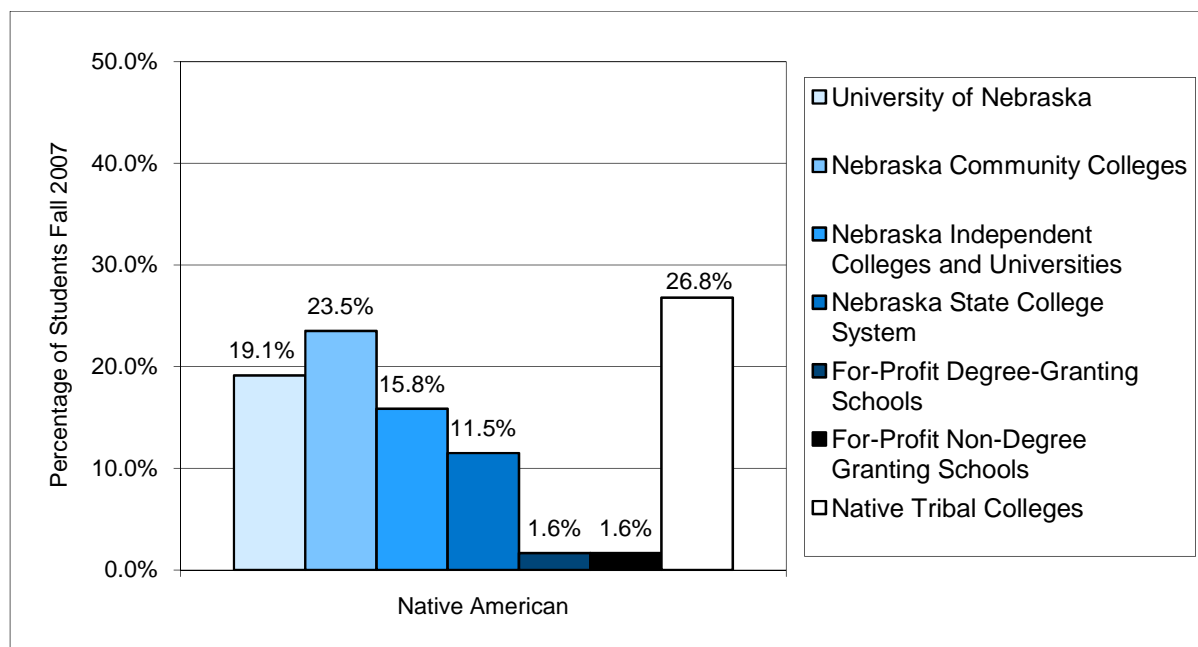
### **The Types of Institutions Most Frequently Attended by Each Racial/Ethnic Group**

Another approach to analyzing the representation of white non-Hispanics and minorities is to examine the percentage of students in each racial/ethnic group who attend each of the major types of institutions within Nebraska's postsecondary education system. For the purposes of statewide analysis, two Native American tribal colleges—Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College—are included among the independent colleges and universities since they are not state or locally supported. However, in the following analysis, the tribal colleges are considered separately from other independent institutions when the enrollments of Native Americans are examined so that student enrollment patterns can be interpreted more clearly.

- As shown in [Figure 1.4.4](#), 27% of the 183 Native Americans who were first-time freshmen in fall 2008 attended Little Priest Tribal College or Nebraska Indian Community College, while 16% chose to enroll at other independent colleges and universities.
- As also shown in [Figure 1.4.4](#), 24% of the Native American, first-time freshmen attended the state's community colleges, 19% enrolled at the University of Nebraska, and about 12% went to Nebraska's state colleges in fall 2008. In comparison, fewer than 2% attended schools in the degree-granting or non-degree-granting for-profit sectors.

See the last subsection of [Table A7.4](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

**Figure 1.4.4**  
**Nebraska Enrollment of Native American, First-Time Freshmen**  
**at Nebraska Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions**  
**Fall 2008<sup>1</sup> (Bars are in order of Legend from Left to Right)**



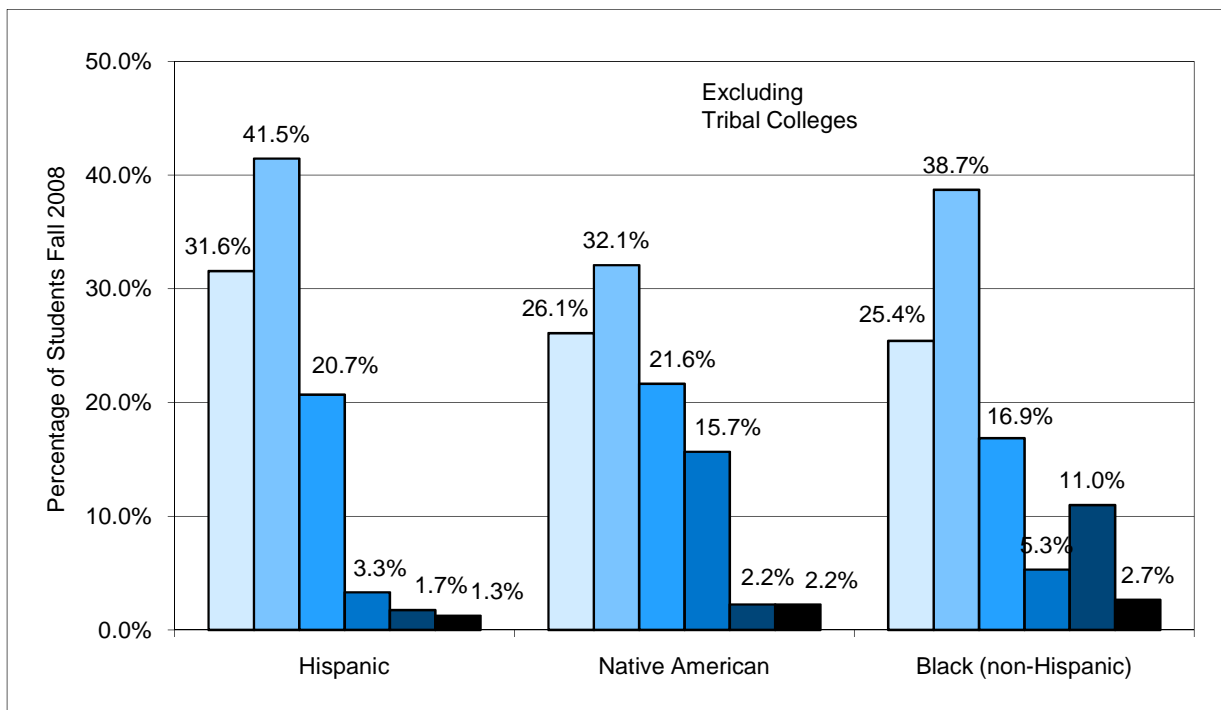
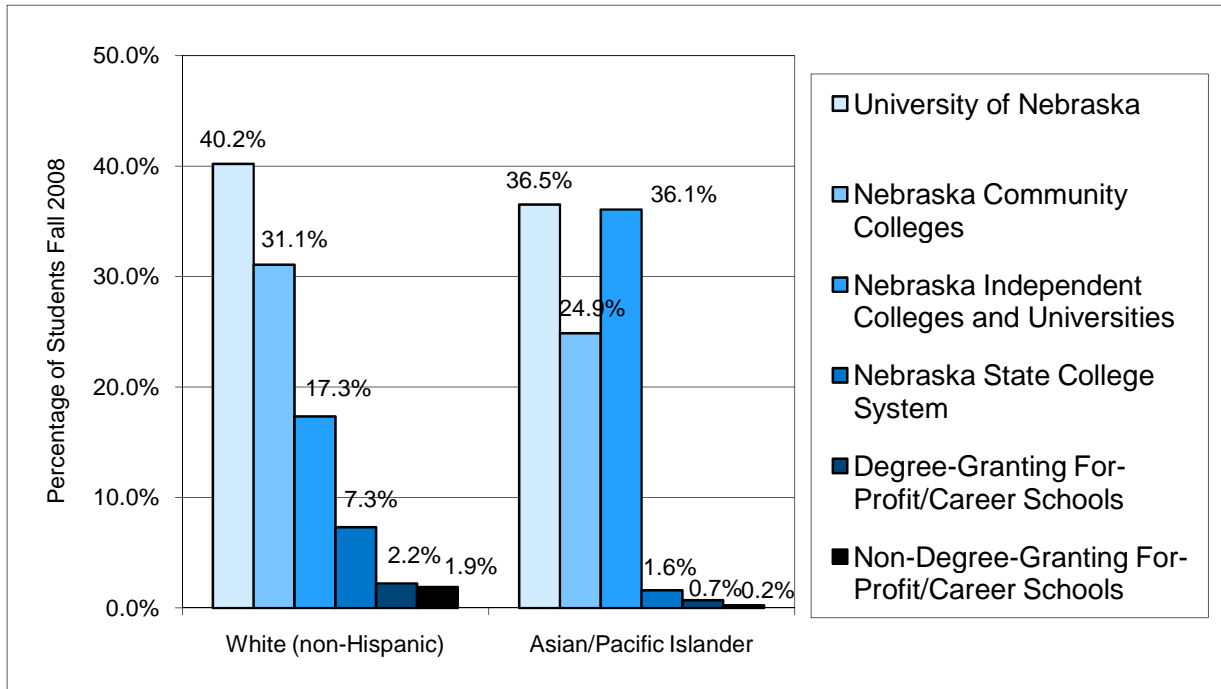
<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2008 IPEDS survey. Includes part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity. See the fourth page of [Table A7.4](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

- [Figure 1.4.5](#) on the next page shows the percentages of the first-time freshmen in each of the five major racial/ethnic groups who attended the major types of institutions within Nebraska's postsecondary education system in fall 2008, excluding the two native tribal colleges in the analysis of Native American enrollments.
- The attendance patterns shown in [Figure 1.4.5](#) are generally the same as those in fall 2005, fall 2006 and fall 2007.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See page 62 of the *2007 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for the attendance pattern in fall 2005 by race/ethnicity, page 66 of the *2008 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for comparable information for fall 2006, and page 73 of the *2009 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for the analysis of comparable data for fall 2007.

Figure 1.4.5

**Nebraska First-Time Freshmen Sector Enrollments by Race Ethnicity  
Fall 2008<sup>1</sup> (Bars are in order of Legend from Left to Right)**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2008 IPEDS survey. Includes part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity.

The two native tribal colleges, Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College, are excluded from the analysis of Native American enrollments.

See Table A7.4 in Appendix 7 for supporting and comparable data for fall 2003 through 2008.

- As evidenced in [Figure 1.4.5](#) on the previous page, white non-Hispanics most frequently enrolled as first-time freshmen at the schools constituting the University of Nebraska and the state's community colleges in fall 2008. In comparison, about half as many white non-Hispanics chose to enroll at independent institutions, and noticeably fewer attended state colleges or for-profit/career schools.
- Compared to the other minority racial/ethnic groups, higher percentages of Asians/Pacific Islanders enrolled at the University of Nebraska and independent institutions, while a lower percentage attended the state's community colleges and only small percentages chose to enroll at the state colleges or for-profit/career schools.
- Referring to [Figure 1.4.5](#), a higher percentage of Hispanics enrolled at Nebraska's community colleges, compared to the first-time freshmen in the other racial/ethnic groups, while about equal or lower percentages chose to attend the other types of institutions within the state.
- If the tribal colleges are excluded from the independent sector, as shown in [Figure 1.4.5](#) on the previous page, the first-time freshmen enrollment pattern for Native Americans is similar to the pattern for Hispanics, except that Native American students were more likely to attend the state colleges and less likely to attend the state's community colleges.
- The first-time freshmen enrollment pattern of black non-Hispanics was also similar to the pattern for Hispanics in fall 2008, except for the important difference that a significantly higher percentage of the black non-Hispanics were enrolled in for-profit degree-granting schools. Compared to other racial/ethnic groups, black non-Hispanics were also more likely to be enrolled in non-degree-granting for-profit schools and, aside from white non-Hispanics, black first-time freshmen were more likely to be enrolled at the state colleges. Like their Native American classmates, black non-Hispanics were less likely than white non-Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics to enroll as first-time freshmen at the institutions constituting the University of Nebraska. Compared to the other racial/ethnic groups, black students were the least likely to attend independent colleges and universities.

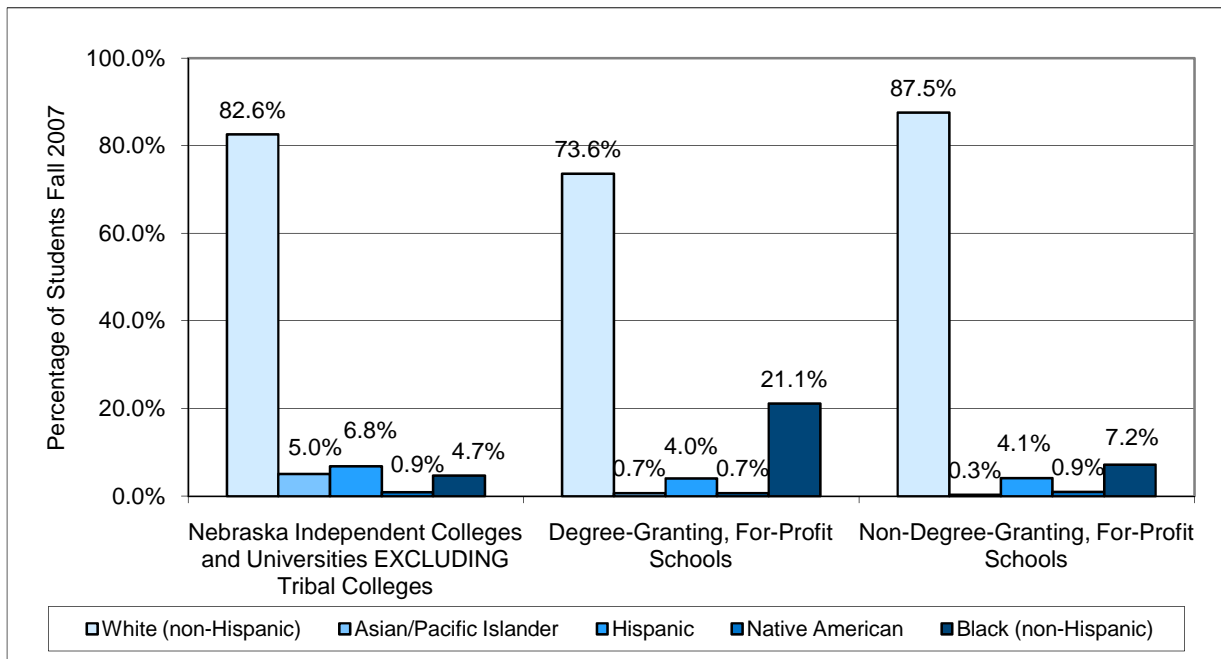
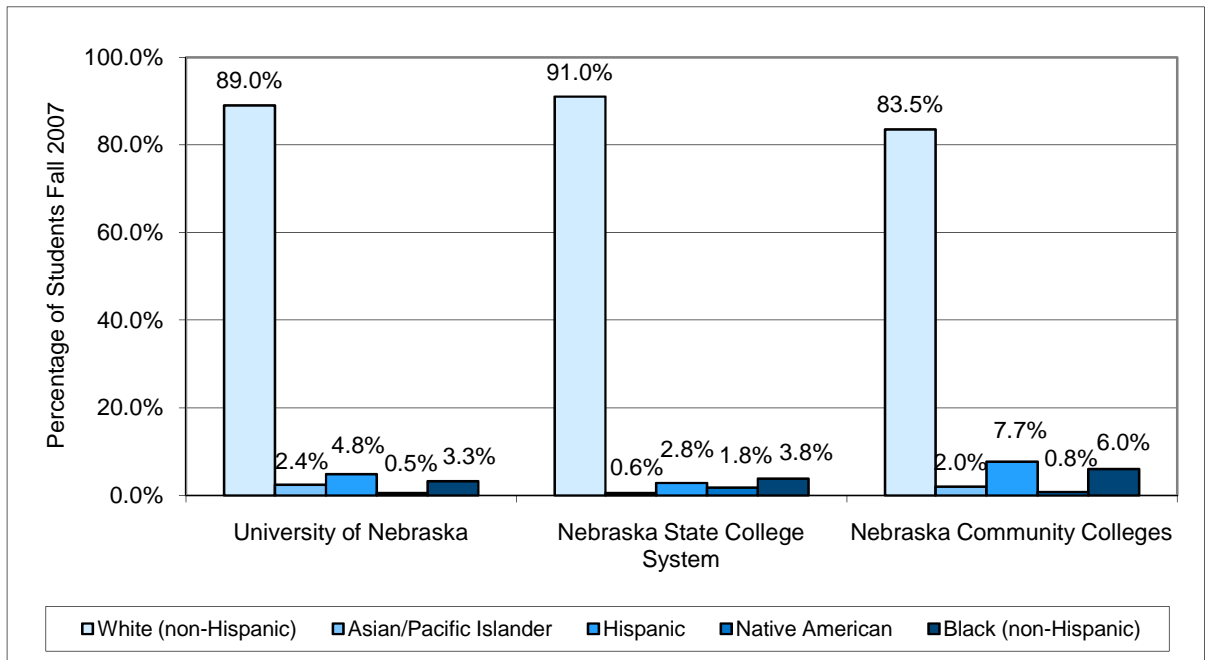
### **Representation of Racial/Ethnic Groups by Sector**

Since different percentages of white non-Hispanics and minority students enrolled as first-time freshmen at each of the major types of postsecondary institutions in fall 2008, their representation varied across the six sectors of higher education, as shown in [Figure 1.4.6](#) on the next page. Native Americans accounted for 84% of the combined first-time freshmen enrollment of Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College in fall 2006, 77% of their enrollment in fall 2007, and 94% in fall 2008. Consequently, these two schools are excluded from the sector of independent colleges and universities in the following analysis so that this sector can be more clearly compared to the other sectors in [Figure 1.4.6](#).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See [Table A7.5](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for the distribution of first-time freshmen at the two native tribal colleges and the distributions of first-time freshmen at independent institutions in 2008, including and excluding Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College. See [Table A7.5](#) on page 186 of the *2009 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for comparable data for fall 2007.

**Figure 1.4.6  
Nebraska First-Time Freshmen Racial/Ethnic Enrollments by Sector  
Fall 2008<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2008 IPEDS survey. Includes part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity. See [Table A7.5](#) and [Table A7.6](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data and comparable data for fall 2003 through fall 2008.

- The analysis summarized in [Figure 1.4.6](#) on the preceding page reveals that the racial/ethnic distributions of first-time freshmen enrolled at (1) the University of Nebraska, (2) the Nebraska state colleges, (3) the Nebraska community colleges, and (4) Nebraska's independent colleges and universities were very similar in fall 2008, with two exceptions:
  - Hispanics and black non-Hispanics accounted for higher percentages of the first-time freshmen at the community colleges and independent schools.
  - Hispanics accounted for a slightly lower percentage of the first-time freshmen enrolled within the Nebraska State College System, compared to the other three sectors.
- At the degree-granting and non-degree-granting, for-profit schools:
  - Hispanics accounted for slightly lower percentages of the first-time freshmen than they did within the University of Nebraska, community college and independent (not-for profit) sectors.
  - Asian/Pacific Islanders and Native Americans were represented at the for-profit schools in about the same or lower percentages as they were within the other four sectors.
  - Black non-Hispanics, on the other hand, accounted for a significantly higher percentage of the first-time freshmen at the degree-granting and non-degree-granting, for-profit schools than they did within any of the other sectors.

**Note:** The distributions for 2008 in [Figure 1.4.6](#) on the preceding page are essentially the same as those for fall 2005, fall 2006 and fall 2007, with the exception that black non-Hispanics accounted for a lower percentage of the first-time freshmen at non-degree-granting, for-profit/career schools in 2007 and 2008 than in 2005 or 2006.

### **Further Research**

In the near future, the Coordinating Commission plans to conduct research to determine the extent to which students from low-income households are represented in Nebraska's higher education system.