

## 2.2 College Graduation Rates (Based on IPEDS Data)

### Increase the percentage of students who complete associate degrees within three years and baccalaureate degrees within six years

The college graduation rates reported in this section are based on data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The latest available data are for undergraduates who completed degree programs during the 2007–2008 academic year. Completion data for students who finished their degree programs in 2008–2009 will not be available for analysis until mid-2010. Consequently, the following analysis focuses on how 2007–2008 graduation rates for Nebraska institutions compare to 2002–2003 baseline rates. Throughout this analysis, the terms “completion rate” and “graduation rate” are used interchangeably.

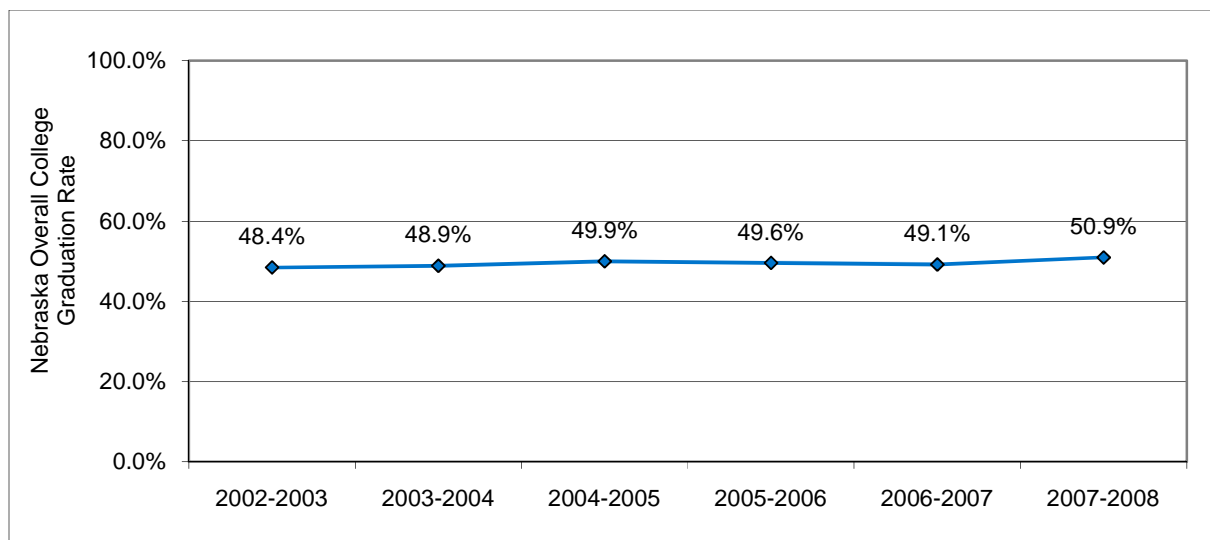
Generally, baccalaureate graduation rates are based on a six-year time frame, while rates for associate degrees are based on three years. Rates are calculated only for students who enrolled in degree programs as full-time, first-time freshmen. See [Explanatory Note A10.1](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for further information on IPEDS-defined time frames and how completion rates are calculated using IPEDS data.

#### The Overall College Graduation Rate for Nebraska

- The statewide graduation rate for Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions increased from 48.4% in 2002-2003 to 50.9% in 2007-2008, resulting in a net gain of 2.5% over the six-year period.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2.2.1

Overall College Graduation Rate for Nebraska  
2002–2003 through 2007–2008<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 through fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. See [Table A10.1](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

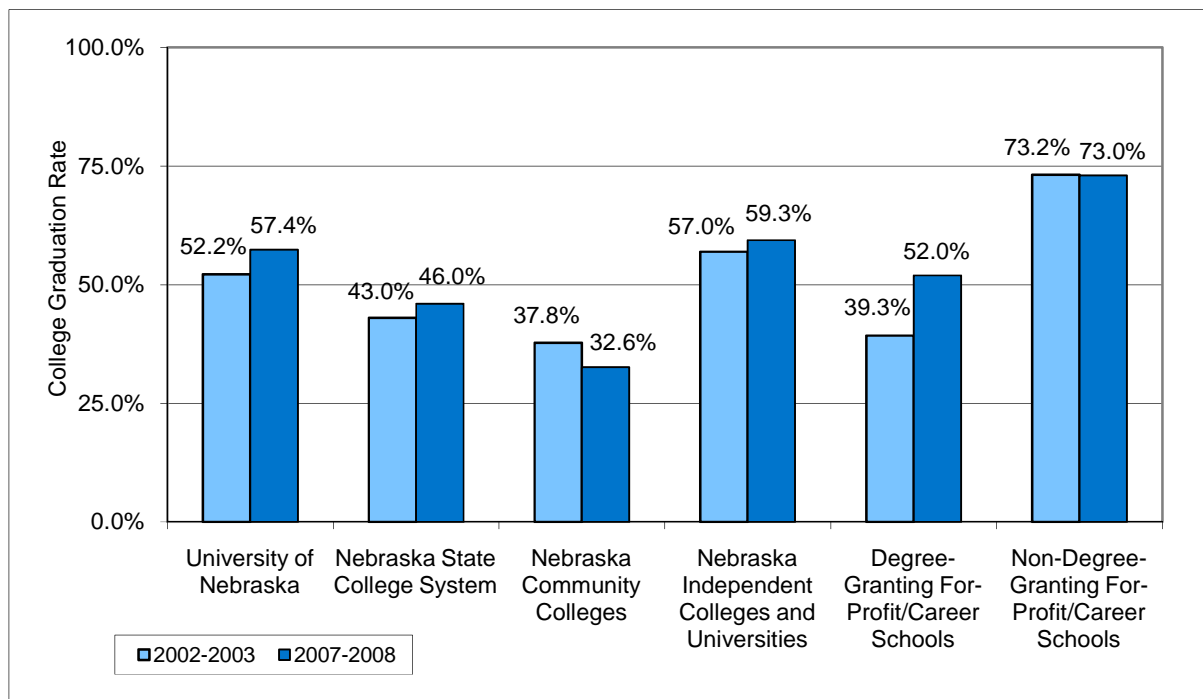
<sup>1</sup>Data for Nebraska institutions in the degree-granting and non-degree-granting for-profit sectors are included in the calculation of the state graduation rates presented in this report. All rates reflect the latest available data reported by Nebraska institutions.

## **College Graduation Rates by Sector and by Institution**

- The state's overall college graduation rate increased by 2.5% between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008, but completion rates by sector varied noticeably, as shown in Figure 2.2.2 below. (See Table A10.2 in Appendix 10 for supporting data.)
- The non-degree-granting, for-profit schools have had the highest overall completion rate among the state's six sectors of postsecondary education since 2002–2003, followed by Nebraska's independent (not-for-profit) colleges and universities.
- As shown in Figure 2.2.2, the graduation rate for the non-degree-granting, for-profit schools decreased slightly from 73.2% in 2002–2003 to 73.0% in 2007–2008, while the sector rate for Nebraska's independent institutions increased from 57.0% to 59.3% over the six years.
- Compared to the other sectors, the sector completion rate for the degree-granting, for-profit schools has shown the greatest improvement, increasing from 39.3% in 2002–2003 to 52.0% in 2007–2008. However, most of this 12.7% increase is due to The Creative Center having an unusually low graduation rate in 2002–2003, which is the baseline for this analysis, and the graduation rates for the Lincoln and Omaha campuses of Kaplan University (previously Hamilton College) increasing by about 10 percentage points between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008. (See Table A10.4a through Table A10.4e in Appendix 10 for supporting data.)

**Figure 2.2.2**

**Graduation Rates for Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions by Sector  
2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. The rates for 2002–2003 are different from those published prior to March 2008 due to minor data processing errors in the past. See Table A10.2 in Appendix 10 for supporting data.

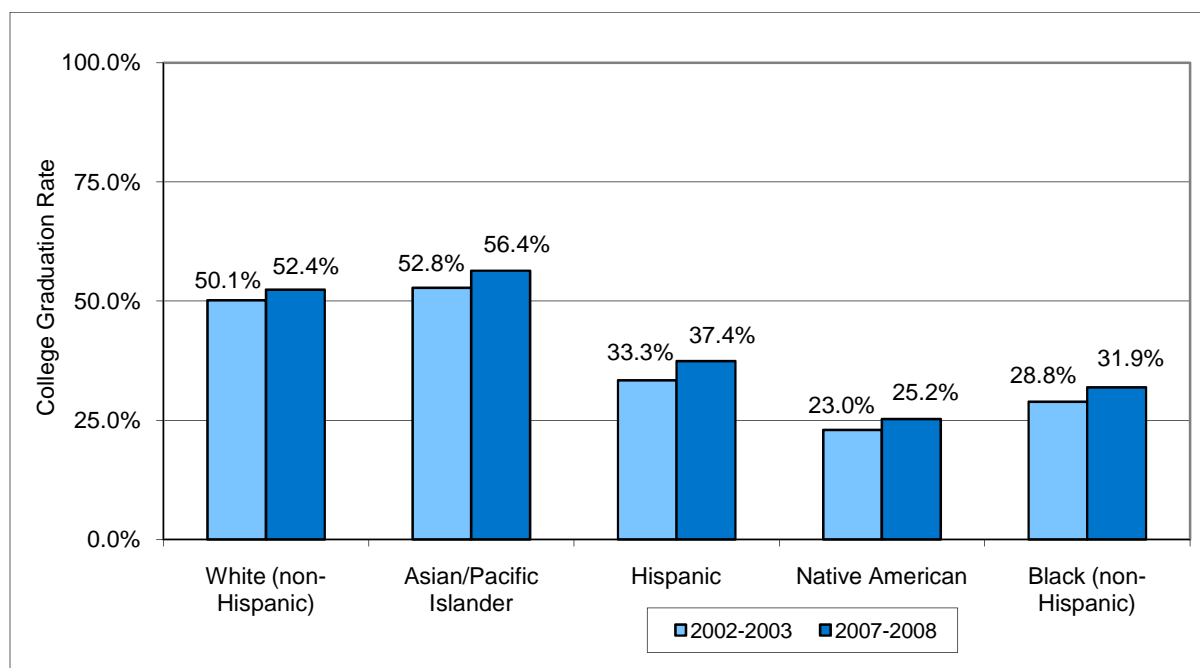
- The overall graduation rate for the University of Nebraska system increased from 52.2% in 2002–2003 to 57.4% in 2007–2008. This gain of 5.2% is attributable to increasing the completion rates at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to 63.7%, the University of Nebraska at Kearney to 58.7% and the University of Nebraska at Omaha to 42.6%. These increases more than offset the decrease in the graduation rate at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA), which was 53.7% in 2007–2008, compared to 62.6% in 2002–2003.
- Graduation rates at Nebraska’s state colleges have tended to fluctuate since 2002–2003. However, there were net increases in the graduation rates at all three colleges between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008. The graduation rate at Wayne State College increased from 45.4% to 47.5%. The rate at Chadron State College increased from 46.9% to 49.3%, and the completion rate at Peru State College increased from 31.4% to 32.7%. As a result, the overall graduation rate for the Nebraska State College System increased from 43.0% to 46.0% between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.
- Increases in graduation rates to 49.4% at Mid-Plains Community College, 49.1% at Northeast Community College, and 23.2% at Western Nebraska Community College were offset by completion rates that decreased to 33.8% at Southeast Community College, 32.3% at Central Community College, and 13.7% at Metropolitan Community College. The net effect of these increases and decreases was that the overall graduation rate at the community colleges decreased 5.1%, from 37.8% in 2002–2003 to 32.6% in 2007–2008.
- Within the independent sector, Nebraska Indian Community College and Little Priest Tribal College had completion rates of only 3.3% and 0.0%, respectively, in 2007–2008, but the overall graduation rate for the sector was 59.3%, up 2.3% from 57.0% in 2002–2003.
- The highest graduation rates in the independent sector in 2007–2008 were reported by Creighton University (76.3%), Nebraska Methodist College of Nursing and Allied Health (71.9%), Nebraska Wesleyan University (65.8%) and Doane College (66.7%).
- In 2007–2008, the graduation rates of the seven reporting, degree-granting, for-profit schools ranged from 33.5% at the Lincoln campus of Kaplan University (previously Hamilton College) to 100% at the Myotherapy Institute. As mentioned previously, The Creative Center and the Lincoln and Omaha campuses of Kaplan University had significantly higher graduation rates in 2007–2008 than in 2002–2003, with the net effect of increasing the overall graduation rate for the sector from 39.3% in 2002–2003 to 52.0% in 2007–2008.
- Within the category of non-degree-granting, for-profit schools, decreases in graduation rates between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 more than offset increases so that the sector’s overall graduation rate decreased slightly from 73.2% in 2002–2003 to 73.0% in 2007–2008.
- Statewide, 36% of the postsecondary institutions with undergraduate programs had completion rates that were lower in 2007–2008 than in 2002–2003, while the graduation rates for the remaining 64% were higher.
- See [Table A10.3](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for a comparison of the 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 completion rates for each postsecondary institution in Nebraska.
- See [Table A10.4a](#) through [Table A10.4f](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for the data used to calculate the completion rates for each of the state’s postsecondary institutions from 2002–2003 through 2007–2008.

## **College Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity**

- An analysis of IPEDS completion data reveals that graduation rates at Nebraska’s postsecondary institutions varied and changed by race/ethnicity between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.<sup>1</sup>
- As shown in [Figure 2.2.3](#), the graduation rates for white non-Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders in 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 were significantly higher than the completion rates for Hispanics, Native Americans and black non-Hispanics.
- [Figure 2.2.3](#) shows that the reported graduation rates for the five racial/ethnic groups—white non-Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics Native Americans, and black non-Hispanics—improved between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.
- Two years earlier, in 2005–2006, the graduation rate for Native Americans was lower than the 2002–2003 baseline rate, and in 2006–2007, the completion rate for Hispanics was lower than the group’s baseline rate. Such fluctuations in completion rates of minorities may be due, in part, to the relatively low number of graduates in these racial/ethnic categories.
- As of fall 2008, the greatest increases in graduation rates were for Hispanics (up 4.1%) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (up 3.6%). Smaller increases were reported for white non-Hispanics (up 2.2%), Native Americans (up 2.3%), and black non-Hispanics (up 3.1%). (See [Table A10.5a](#) and [Table A10.5b](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.)

**Figure 2.2.3**

**Graduation Rates for Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions  
by Race/Ethnicity  
2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



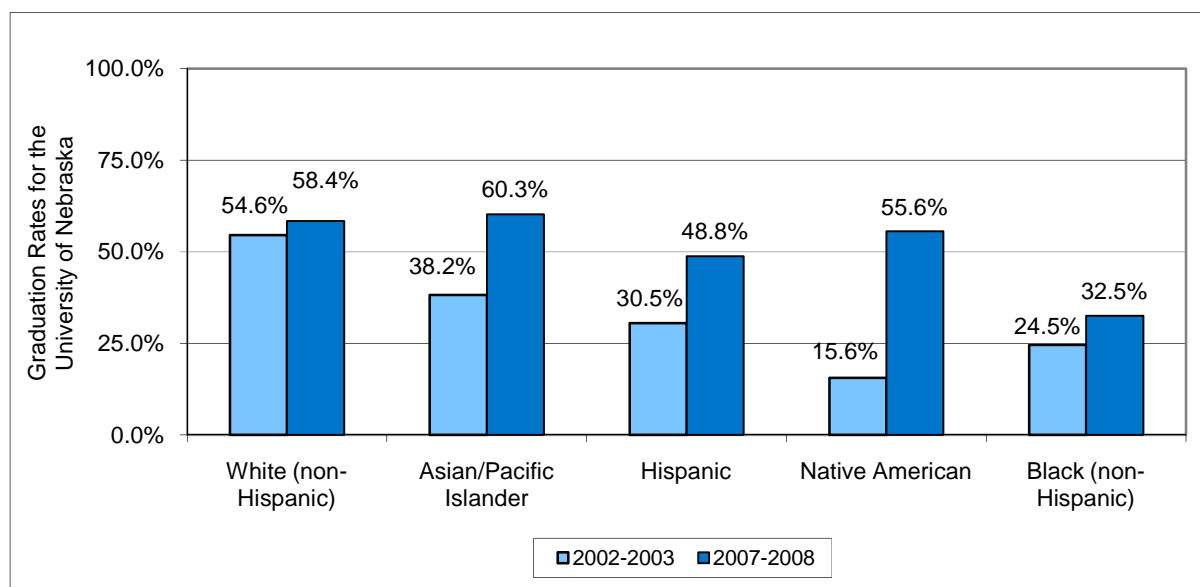
<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. See [Table A10.5a](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

<sup>1</sup>Throughout the remainder of this section, some of the graduation rates reported are different from those published prior to March 2009 due to minor data processing errors in the past.

## **College Graduation Rates by Sector and by Race/Ethnicity**

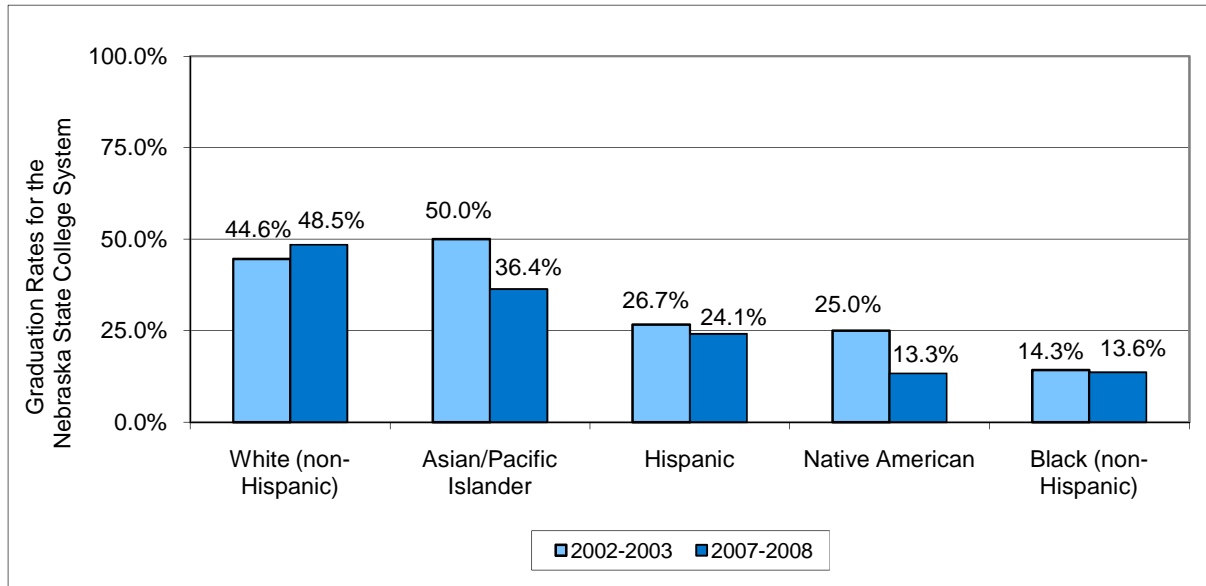
- The charts on this and the following three pages show how graduation rates for the five major racial/ethnic groups varied and changed between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 within each of the six sectors of higher education in Nebraska.
- As shown in [Figure 2.2.4](#), graduation rates for all five racial/ethnic groups increased at the University of Nebraska between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008.
- Sector-level graduation rates for the degree-granting, for-profit/career schools also increased for all of the racial/ethnic groups, except for the completion rate for Native Americans, which was based on only two graduates in 2002–2003 and none in 2007–2008.
- Conversely, graduation rates at the independent colleges and universities decreased for all of the racial/ethnic groups, except for the graduation rate for white non-Hispanics, which increased by 4.5 percentage points.
- There was no consistent pattern of changes between 2002–2003 and 2006–2007 within the other three sectors, where changes in the graduation rates of minority students are frequently attributable to the relatively small numbers of graduates. (See [Table 10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.)

**Figure 2.2.4**  
**Graduation Rates for the University of Nebraska**  
**by Race/Ethnicity**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



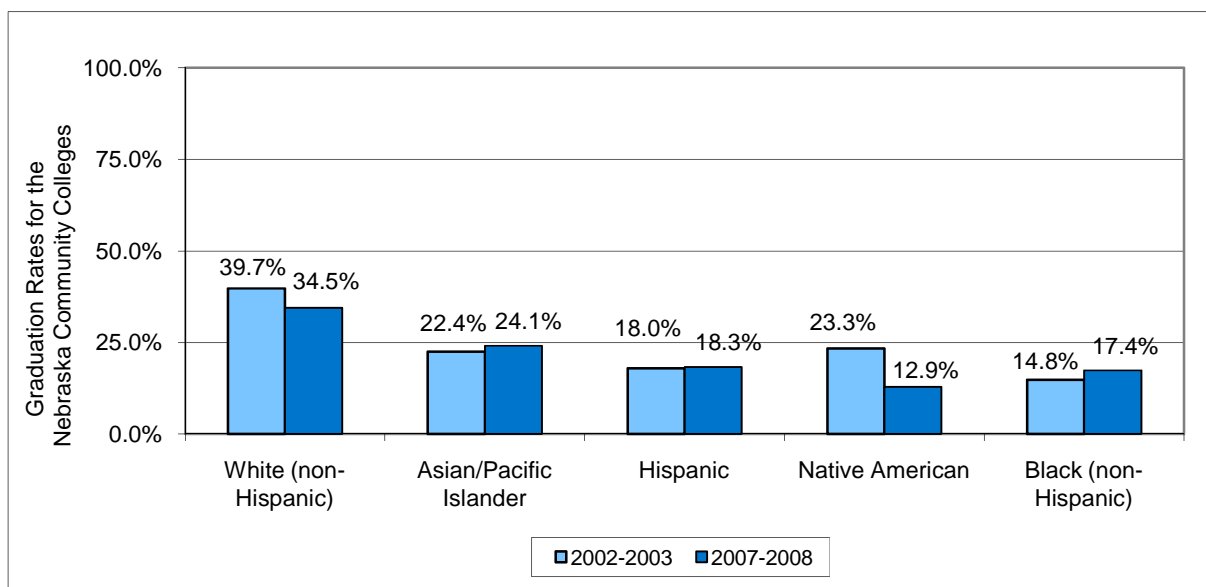
<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Five Native Americans graduated in 2002–2003 and 10 graduated in 2007–2008. Otherwise, there were more than 30 graduates in each minority group. See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

**Figure 2.2.5**  
**Graduation Rates for the Nebraska State College System**  
**by Race/Ethnicity**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



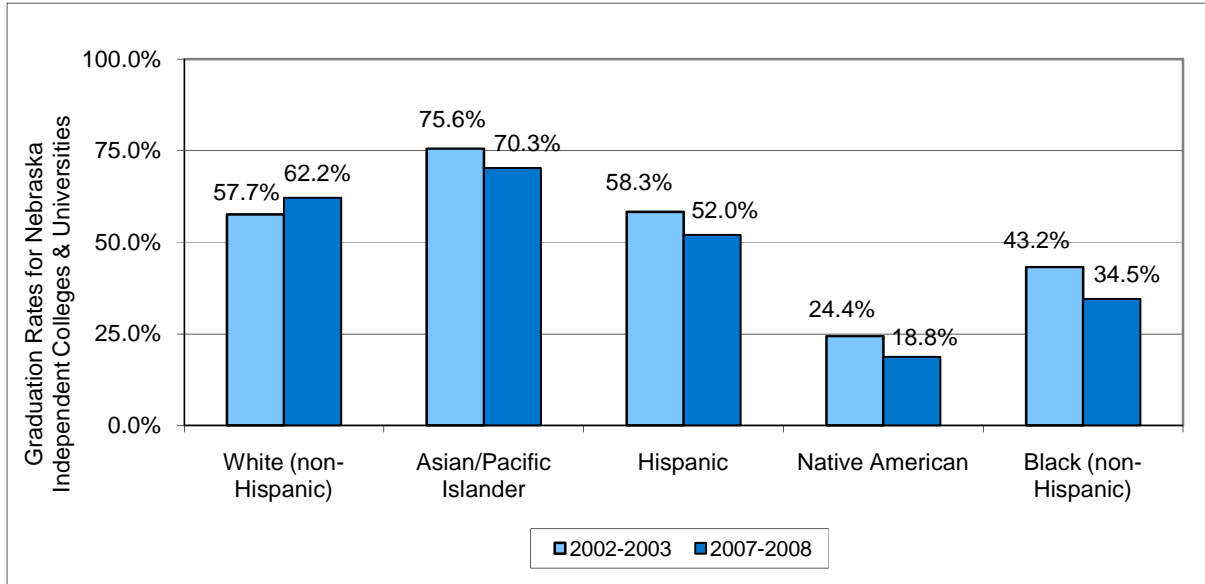
Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys.  
 Number of graduates in 2002–2003: 5 Asian/PI, 4 Hispanic, 5 Native American, 4 black non-Hispanic.  
 Number of graduates in 2007–2008: 4 Asian/PI, 7 Hispanic, 2 Native American, 6 black non-Hispanic.  
 See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

**Figure 2.2.6**  
**Graduation Rates for the Nebraska Community Colleges**  
**by Race/Ethnicity**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



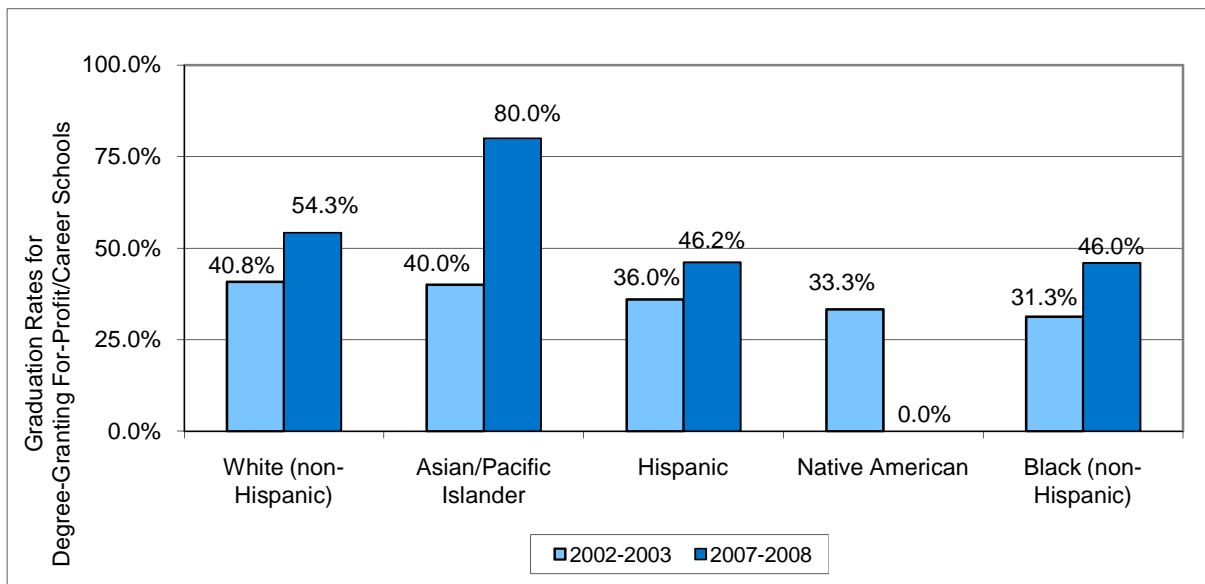
<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys.  
 Number of graduates in 2002–2003: 11 Asian/PI, 23 Hispanic, 7 Native American, 21 black non-Hispanic.  
 Number of graduates in 2007–2008: 14 Asian/PI, 39 Hispanic, 4 Native American, 28 black non-Hispanic.  
 See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

**Figure 2.2.7**  
**Graduation Rates for Independent Colleges and Universities**  
**in Nebraska by Race/Ethnicity**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Ten Native Americans graduated in 2002–2003 and 6 graduated in 2007–2008. Otherwise, there were more than 30 graduates in each minority group. See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

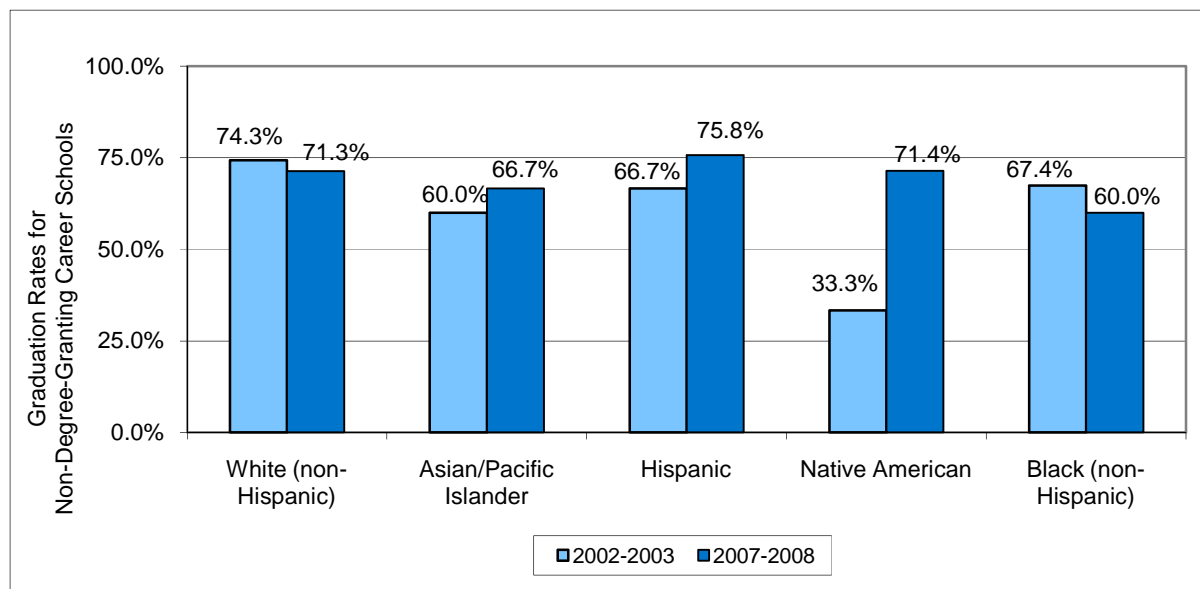
**Figure 2.2.8**  
**Graduation Rates for the Degree-Granting, For-Profit/Career Schools**  
**in Nebraska by Race/Ethnicity**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Number of graduates in 2002–2003: 4 Asian/PI, 9 Hispanic, 2 Native American, 41 black non-Hispanic. Number of graduates in 2007–2008: 8 Asian/PI, 12 Hispanic, 0 Native American, 40 black non-Hispanic. See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

Figure 2.2.9

**Graduation Rates for the Non-Degree-Granting, For-Profit/Career Schools in Nebraska by Race/Ethnicity 2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**

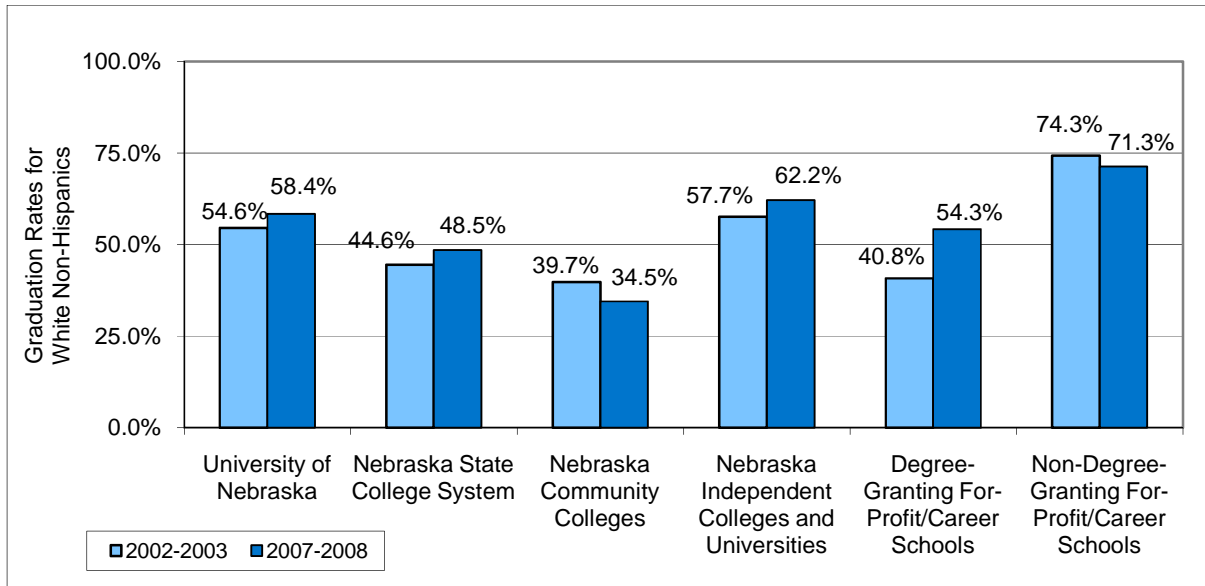


<sup>1</sup>Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2007 IPEDS surveys. Number of graduates in 2002–2003: 3 Asian/PI, 10 Hispanic, 2 Native American, 29 black non-Hispanic. Number of graduates in 2007–2008: 2 Asian/PI, 25 Hispanic, 5 Native American, 33 black non-Hispanic. See Table A10.6 in Appendix 10 for supporting data.

**College Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and by Sector**

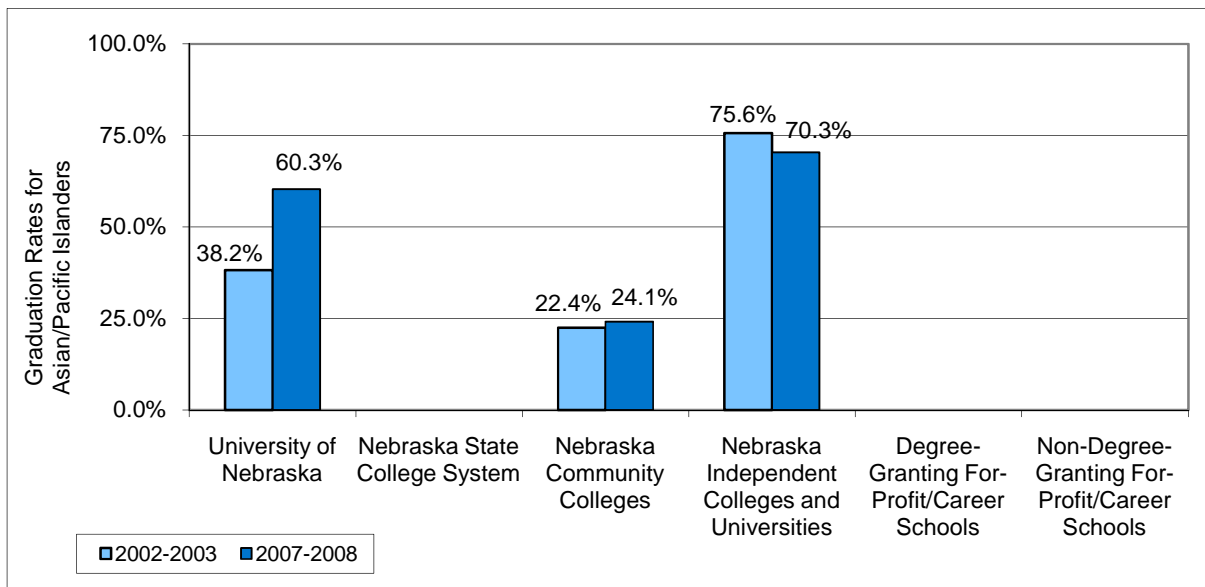
- The charts on the following two pages directly show how sector graduation rates varied and changed between 2002–2003 and 2007–2008 for each racial/ethnic group.
- Native Americans are excluded from this portion of the analysis because the University of Nebraska and the independent sector were the only groups of institutions to graduate more than a few Native Americans in 2002–2003 or 2007–2008. Graduation rates for the other racial/ethnic groups are shown only for sectors with 10 or more graduates in both years.
- As shown in [Figure 2.2.10](#), the graduation rate for white non-Hispanics increased or stayed about the same across four sectors—the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska State College System, the independent institutions and the degree-granting, for-profit/career schools—but decreased at Nebraska’s community colleges and non-degree-granting, for-profit/career schools.
- As illustrated in [Figure 2.2.11](#), the graduation rate for Asian/Pacific Islanders was higher in 2007–2008 than 2002–2003 at the University of Nebraska and the community colleges, but decreased within the independent sector.
- The graduation rate for Hispanics increased at the University of Nebraska, the community colleges, and the non-degree-granting, for-profit schools, but decreased within the independent sector, as evidenced in [Figure 2.2.12](#).
- For black non-Hispanics, graduation rates increased at the University of Nebraska the state’s community colleges, and at the degree-granting for-profit schools, but decreased at independent institutions and non-degree-granting schools, as shown in [Figure 2.2.13](#).

**Figure 2.2.10**  
**Graduation Rates for White Non-Hispanics by Sector**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



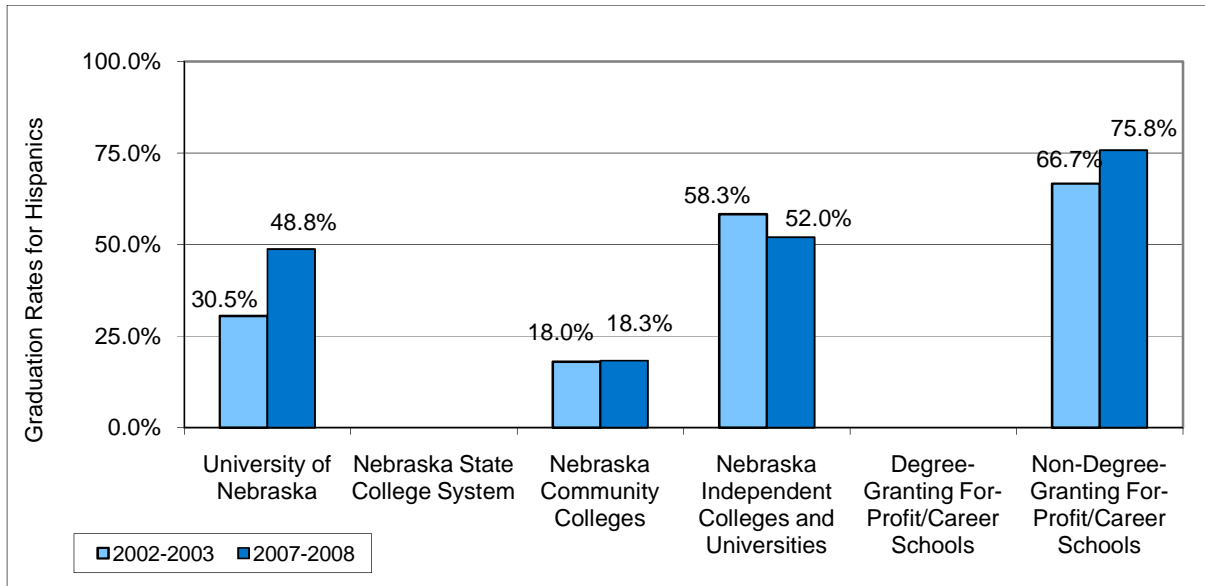
<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. See Table A10.6 in Appendix 10 for supporting data.

**Figure 2.2.11**  
**Graduation Rates for Asians/Pacific Islanders by Sector**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



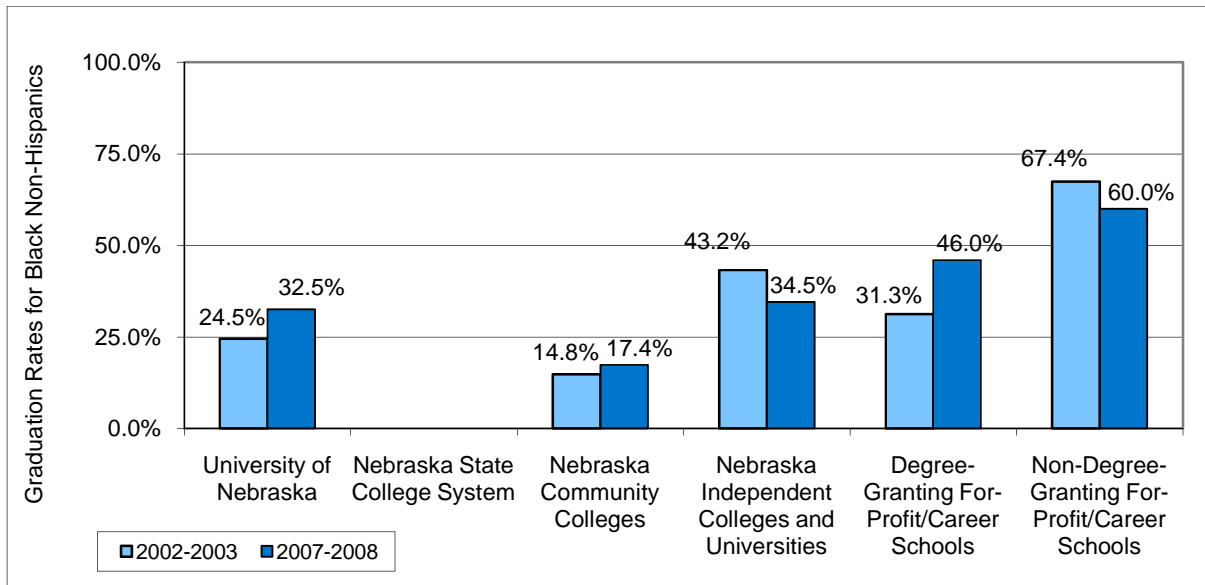
<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes only postsecondary education sectors with 10 or more graduates in 2002–2003 and 2007–2008. See Table A10.6 in Appendix 10 for supporting data.

**Figure 2.2.12**  
**Graduation Rates for Hispanics by Sector**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes only postsecondary education sectors with 10 or more graduates in 2002–2003 and 2007–2008. See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.

**Figure 2.2.13**  
**Graduation Rates for Black Non-Hispanics by Sector**  
**2007–2008 Compared to 2002–2003 Baseline<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Data Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2008 IPEDS surveys. Includes only postsecondary education sectors with 10 or more graduates in 2002–2003 or 2007–2008. See [Table A10.6](#) in [Appendix 10](#) for supporting data.