

***A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska***  
**Section B: Degrees and Awards**  
**Key Findings**

The principal function of the *Factual Look* is to provide specified higher education data to the Legislature and other interested parties. There are few “surprises” in the degrees and awards data in this latest section of the 2007 report, but the following points are particularly notable.

**Total Number of Degrees and Awards Conferred**

In 2005-2006, Nebraska’s public and independent colleges and universities<sup>1</sup> conferred 23,982 degrees, certificates, and diplomas.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1995-1996 and 2005-2006, the total number of earned degrees increased by 33.4%; most of that growth occurred within the last four years of the ten-year period.

**Relative to enrollments, more students are completing degrees**

<b>Sector of Nebraska Higher Education</b>	<b>Change in Enrollment, 1996-2006</b>	<b>Change in Degrees Awarded, 1996-2006</b>
Independent colleges and universities <sup>2</sup>	Up 21.3%	Up 61.4%
Nebraska community colleges	Up 6.6%	Up 40.3%
Nebraska State College System	Down 9.0%	Up 23.3%
University of Nebraska	Down 5.6%	Up 15.9%

**Notable Successes**

- Except for less-than-four-year degree attainment by Native Americans, minority students’ degree attainment at all levels increased in absolute numbers and in percentages of all degrees earned.
- Between 1996 and 2006, the number of baccalaureate degrees earned by Native American students increased 60.6% (from 33 to 53).
- Between 1996 and 2006, the number of degrees awarded by Bellevue University increased 243.9%.
- From 1996-2006, the number of degrees awarded by Peru State College increased 81.8%.

## Notable Successes, continued

- Between 2004 and 2005, Central Community College increased its degrees awarded from 1,201 to 1,651. That increase was primarily the result of a campaign that encouraged students to finish “nearly complete” programs and/or apply for awards for which they were already qualified.

### **Degrees by Discipline**

- When totaled, degrees in business, education, and the health professions accounted for 51.2% of all degrees awarded in 2005-2006. High production in these areas generally parallels national data and matches Nebraska’s projected employment needs.

### **Points of Concern**

- Degree attainment by minority students shows substantial overall improvement between 1996 and 2006, but minority students’ degree completion still lags the white population and is low relative to the number of minorities in the Nebraska population. As our earlier data has shown, this is principally due to lower high school graduation rates for minority students.
- Between 1996 and 2006, the number of Native Americans earning less-than-baccalaureate degrees declined by 10% (from 59 to 53).

<sup>1</sup> Not including for-profit/career schools.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the remainder of this summary, “degrees” include certificates and diplomas.

Principal data source: United States Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)  
Analysis and presentation by Nebraska’s Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

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