

Section B

Degrees and Awards

Executive Summary of Data

Section B of the *Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska* summarizes the numbers of degrees and other awards reported through Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) surveys of Nebraska's public and independent (not for profit) colleges and universities and for-profit/career schools. Institutions report the number of degrees and other awards conferred during a one-year period beginning on July 1. For example, degrees and awards reported for 2006-2007 were awarded between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007. Ten-year trends are based on the 1997-2007 IPEDS surveys of Nebraska public and independent colleges and universities. Six-year trends include Nebraska's for-profit/career schools. In this section, the number of degrees and awards conferred are analyzed by (1) sector and institution, (2) degree level, (3) gender, (4) race/ethnicity and (5) discipline.

Executive Summary of Data 1997-2007

Total Number of Degrees Conferred

- In 2006-07, Nebraska's public and independent colleges and universities¹ conferred 24,261 degrees, certificates and diplomas.²
- Between 1996-97 and 2006-07, the total number of degrees conferred by public and independent institutions increased 32.5%. Almost 70% of this growth occurred within the second half of the 10-year period.
- Including the for-profit/career schools, the total number of awarded degrees increased to 26,132 in 2006-07, an increase of 21.3% from 2000-01 when 21,540 degrees were conferred by all of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions.

Increases in the Number of Degrees by Sector

The number of degrees increased across all sectors, but the highest rate of increase was in the independent sector.

Sector	Six-Year Increase in the Number of Degrees 2000-01 through 2006-07
Independent colleges and universities	Up 35.1%
Nebraska community colleges	Up 23.0%
For-profit/career schools	Up 19.3%
Nebraska State College System	Up 14.0%
University of Nebraska	Up 8.3%

Shifts in the Degrees Awarded by Sector

- As a result of the significant increase in the number of degrees awarded within the independent and community college sectors, there has been a shift in the percentage of degrees awarded by each sector.

¹Throughout the remainder of this summary, "degrees" include certificates and diplomas.

²The numbers of degrees reported since 1998-1999 include 500 to 600 bachelor's and master's degrees conferred each year by the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) to graduates of the physician assistant military and distance education programs. These programs serve all branches of the military and most graduates are not residents of Nebraska. For technical reasons, these students are not included in UNMC enrollment counts.

- The University of Nebraska continues to award the highest number and percentage of degrees conferred in the state. However, in 2006-07, the University of Nebraska accounted for a lower percentage of the degrees conferred in the state than in 2000-01. At the end of the same six-year period, the state's independent institutions, community colleges, state colleges and for-profit/career schools accounted for the about the same or increased percentages of the awards conferred.

**% of Total Degrees Awarded by
Public and Independent Institutions**

Sector	2000-01	2006-07
University of Nebraska	40.9%	36.6%
Independent colleges and universities	25.5%	28.4%
Nebraska community colleges	21.5%	21.8%
Nebraska State College System	6.4%	6.1%
For-profit/career schools	5.6%	7.2%

Institutions Conferring the Highest Number of Degrees

- The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) conferred the highest number of degrees in the state throughout the 10-year period from 1996-97 to 2006-07.
- The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) awarded the second-highest number of degrees until 2006-07, when Bellevue University in the independent sector conferred a slightly higher number of academic awards.

Number of Degrees

Rank	Sector	1996-97	2006-07	% Increase
1	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	4,012	4,436	10.6%
3	Bellevue University	743	2,439	228.3%
2	University of Nebraska at Omaha	2,239	2,426	8.4%
4	Creighton University	1,377	1,697	23.2%
5	Southeast Community College	1,335	1,648	23.4%

Institutions with the Highest Growth Rates

- Between 1996-97 and 2006-07, the largest increase in the number of degrees awarded was at Bellevue University, where the number of degrees more than tripled.
- Bellevue University alone accounted for almost 57% of the growth in the independent sector and for 28.5% of the growth in the total number of degrees awarded by public and independent institutions (excluding for-profit/career schools).

- The highest growth rate within the public sector was at Peru State College, where the number of degrees increased 81.5%, from 233 in 1996-97 to 423 in 2006-07.

Degrees by Level

Undergraduate degrees accounted for 79.1% of the 26,132 degrees granted in 2006-07, but the highest rate of growth between 2001-02 and 2006-07 was at the master’s level.

- Significant increases in the number of master’s degrees were evidenced at the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska State College System, as well as within the independent sector, where the number of master’s degrees tripled, from 474 in 1996-97 to 1,445 in 2006-07.
- By 2006-07, master’s degrees accounted for 15.8% of the degrees awarded, up from 15.0% in 2001-02.
- First-professional³ and doctoral degrees accounted for the remaining 5.1% in 2006-07.

Degrees by Discipline (Not Including Degrees Conferred by For-Profit/Career Schools)

- Nebraska’s public and independent institutions confer the highest numbers of degrees in business, education and health professions. Together, these disciplines accounted for 53% of the degrees awarded in 2006-07 and for almost 68% of the growth in the number of degrees between 1996-97 and 2006-07.
- Over the 10-year period, business accounted for the highest total number of degrees, but the highest rate of growth was in the health professions.

Discipline	<u>Number of Degrees</u>		% Increase
	1996-97	2006-07	
Business	3,683	5,292	43.7%
Health professions	2,866	4,596	60.4%
Education	2,256	2,951	30.8%

- Degrees in the health professions accounted for 32% of the increased number of degrees at the master’s level and for virtually all of the increased number of first-professional and doctoral degrees between 1996-97 and 2006-07.
- 1,680 more master’s degrees were conferred in 2006-07 than in 1996-97. Of these additional degrees, 31.9% were in the health professions, 26.8% were in education and 23.0% were in business.

³In Nebraska, first-professional degrees are conferred in dentistry, medicine, pharmacy and law.

- At the first-professional level, the highest growth was in pharmacy, followed by dentistry. However, by far, the highest number of additional degrees was at the doctoral level, where the introduction of doctorates in occupational therapy and physical therapy produced a dramatic increase. Increases in these two fields are largely attributable to the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) and the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) replacing master's degrees in these disciplines as the degrees generally accepted for entry into professional practice.

Discipline ³	<u>Number of Degrees</u>		10-Year Increase in the Number of Degrees
	1996-97	2006-07	
Pharmacy (FP)	139	226	87
Dentistry (FP)	125	141	16
Medicine, M.D. (FP)	232	242	10
Other Health			
Professions (Doctoral)	<u>21</u>	<u>135</u>	<u>114</u>
Health professions total	517	744	227
Law (FP)	293	275	-18
All other disciplines	<u>294</u>	<u>311</u>	<u>17</u>
Total	1,104	1,330	226

³FP = First-professional program

Degrees by Gender

- In 2006-07, women earned 58.0% of the degrees awarded by Nebraska's public, independent and for-profit institutions, up from 55.3% in 2000-01.
- The widest gender gap was at the master's level, where women earned almost 60.3% of the degrees in 2006-07.
- The most significant changes in gender gaps occurred at the first-professional and doctoral levels.
 - In 2006-07, women earned 49.1% of the first-professional degrees, up from 41.3% in 1996-97.
 - In 1996-97, men earned 56.5% of the doctoral degrees, compared to the 43.5% earned by women. By 2006-07, the pattern was reversed with women earning 55.1% of the doctorates awarded by the University of Nebraska and Creighton University.
- In 2006-07, the smallest gender gaps at the undergraduate level were evidenced at the Nebraska community colleges, where women earned 53.6% of the less-than-four-year degrees, and at the University of Nebraska, where women earned 53.7% of the bachelor's degrees. In comparison, women earned 59.2% of the bachelor's degrees conferred by the state colleges and 58.2% of the bachelor's degrees awarded by independent institutions.

Minorities and Foreign Students

- Minorities students – consisting of black non-Hispanics, Hispanics, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans – earned 9.8% of the degrees conferred by public, independent and for-profit/career schools in 2006-07, up from 7.5% in 2000-01.
- In 2006-07, foreign students earned 2.6% of the degrees, down from 2.9% six years earlier.
- As shown below, minorities and foreign students earned higher percentages of the degrees at the master's, first-professional and doctoral levels than at the undergraduate level in 2006-07.

% of Degrees Earned in 2006-07

	Less-Than-Four-Year Degrees	Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	First-Professional and Doctoral Degrees
White non-Hispanics	89.1%	89.4%	83.5%	77.9%
Minorities	10.7%	8.3%	12.1%	12.6%
Foreign students	0.2%	2.3%	4.4%	9.6%

- Within the minorities, the highest increase in the percentage of degrees awarded was for black non-Hispanics who received less-than-four-year awards from for-profit/career schools. In 2006-07, black non-Hispanics accounted for 10.9% of the less-than four-year awards conferred by for-profit/career schools in Nebraska, up from 5.8% in 2000-01.