

## Section A.7

# Fall Enrollment Compared To 12-Month Enrollment

### Notes

- (1) This is the second year the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education has reported fall enrollment compared to 12-month enrollment. Previously, only fall enrollment numbers were reported in the *Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska*.
- (2) Reported enrollments do not include students who were enrolled in the physician assistant military and distance education programs at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). Since 1998-1999, UNMC has conferred 500 to 600 bachelor's and master's degrees each year 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.

## **Three Methods of Measuring Enrollment**

There are three methods to measure student enrollment in Nebraska postsecondary institutions as defined by IPEDS. They are “Fall Enrollment,” “12-Month Unduplicated Headcount” and “FTE” (Full-Time Equivalent). This section of the Factual Look compares fall enrollment and 12-month enrollment for each of Nebraska’s public institutions and by sector.

FTE is not included in this section because the Coordinating Commission is still in the process of verifying the accuracy of the data on which FTE calculations are based. The Commission is also in the process of verifying the 12-month enrollment and FTE data reported by Nebraska’s independent institutions with the intention of including the independent sector in future editions of this section of the Factual Look.

### **Fall Enrollment**

The fall enrollment data collected from each institution provide a “snapshot” of the number of students at the institution at a particular time.<sup>1</sup> The fall enrollment survey in IPEDS asks for enrollment numbers as of the institution’s “official fall reporting date” or October 15<sup>th</sup>. It is the institution’s choice which date will be used. These enrollment data are the most frequently reported for a variety of purposes by the news media, state agencies, and the institutions themselves. In general, they are a good indicator of enrollment trends at most institutions.

“Institutions report annually the number of [full-](#) and [part-time](#) students, by gender, race/ethnicity, and [level](#) (undergraduate, graduate, first-professional); the total number of [undergraduate entering students](#) (including first-time, transfers-in, part-time students, and non-degree students); and [retention rates](#).” (IPEDS Glossary, [Fall Enrollment](#))

### **12-Month Enrollment**

Also referred to as “12-Month Unduplicated Headcount,” 12-month enrollment is the total number of students who were enrolled at an institution at any time during the academic year. Each student is counted only once per academic year. For example, if a student was enrolled in the fall and spring semester at Wayne State College, that student would be counted only once for the entire academic year. This count also captures a student who was enrolled only in the spring semester and not in the fall semester and, therefore, was counted only in the spring semester. In this way, 12-month enrollment is designed to capture the “total” number of students an institution serves throughout the academic year.

“Institutions report an unduplicated head count for the total number of students by gender, race/ethnicity, and level (undergraduate, graduate, first-professional) enrolled throughout the reporting period. Students included are those enrolled in any courses leading to a degree or other formal award, as well as those enrolled in courses that are part of a terminal vocational or occupational program. Institutions also report the total instructional activity for the same 12-month period for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Instructional activity data are reported in units of contact hours (sometimes referred to as clock hours) or credit hours.” (IPEDS Glossary, [12-Month Enrollment](#))

<sup>1</sup>In previous Commission publications, fall enrollment has been referred to as fall headcount or fall headcount enrollment.

## **FTE (Full-Time Equivalent)**

FTE is not a measurement of actual enrollment, but rather a calculation of enrollment, based on the total credit or contact hours reported by the institution. There has been debate over the years about how FTE enrollments should be calculated and how they should be used.

IPEDS collects the data necessary to calculate FTE along with the 12-Month Enrollment data.

"Institutions also report the total instructional activity for the same 12-month period for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Instructional activity data are reported in units of contact hours (sometimes referred to as clock hours) or credit hours." (IPEDS Glossary, [12-Month Enrollment](#))

The IPEDS method of calculating FTE is as follows:

"The number of FTE students is calculated based on the [credit](#) and/or [contact hours](#) reported by the institution on the [IPEDS 12-month enrollment \(E12\)](#) component and the institution's [calendar system](#), as reported on the [Institutional Characteristics \(IC\)](#) component. The following table indicates the level of [instructional activity](#) used to convert the credit and/or contact hours reported to an indicator of full-time equivalents (FTE students):

Quarter calendar system

Enrollment level (One FTE over [12-month period](#))

[Undergraduate](#) 45 credit hours, 900 contact hours

[Graduate](#) 36 credit hours

[Semester/trimester/4-1-4](#) plan/other calendar system

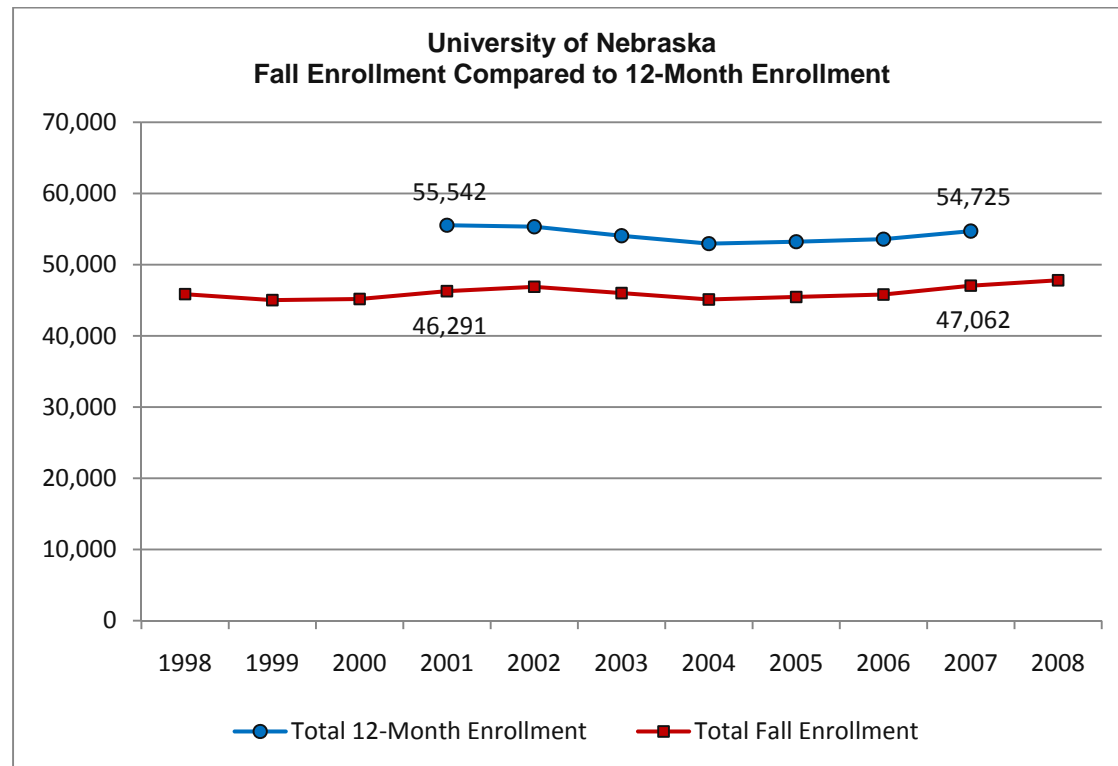
Enrollment level (one FTE over 3-month period)

Undergraduate 30 credit hours 900 contact hours

Graduate 24 credit hours"

(IPEDS Glossary, ([Calculation of FTE Students \(using instructional activity\)](#)))

## University of Nebraska

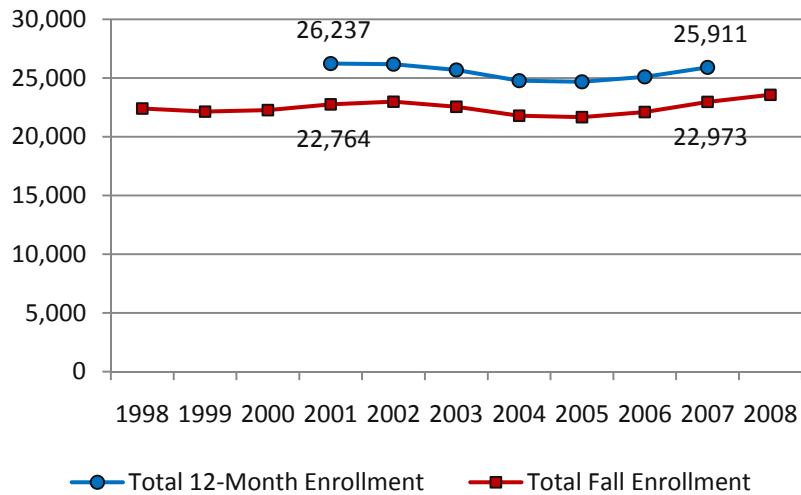


From 2001 to 2007, fall enrollment at the University of Nebraska increased 1.7%, while 12-month enrollment decreased 1.5%.

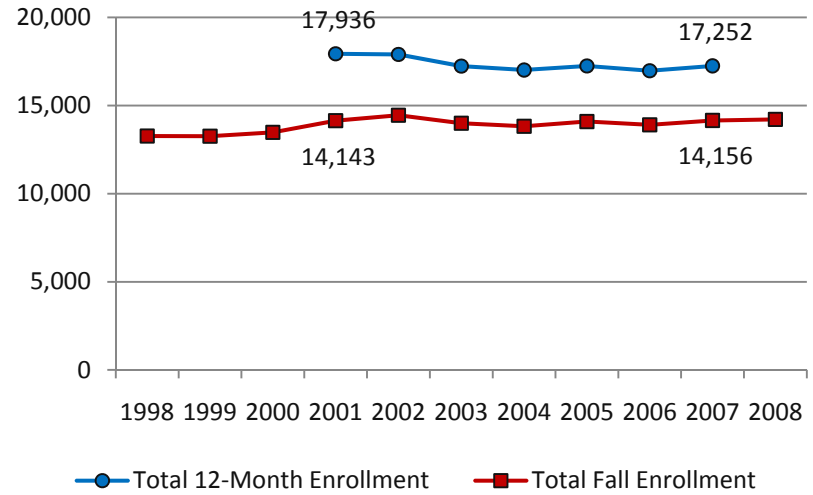
For 2007-08, 12-month enrollment was 7,663 or 16.3% higher than fall 2007 enrollment.

Enrollment trend data by Fall Enrollment, 12-Month Headcount, and by FTE are available in the spreadsheet titled **Fall, 12-month & FTE Enrollment** in the **downloadable Excel workbook for Section A: Enrollment**.

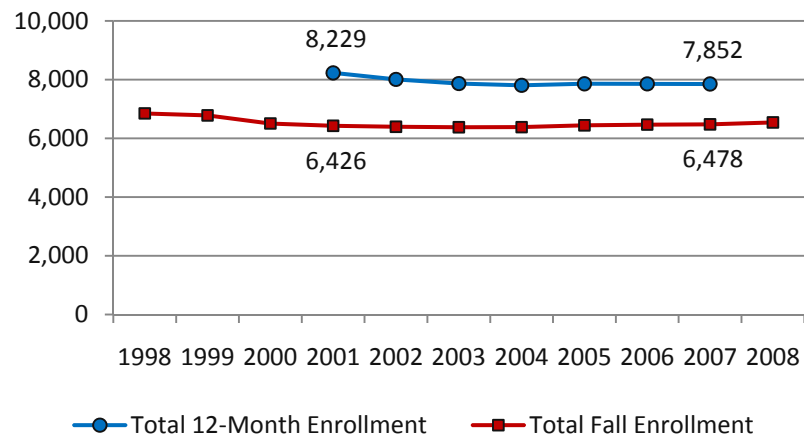
**University of Nebraska at Lincoln  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



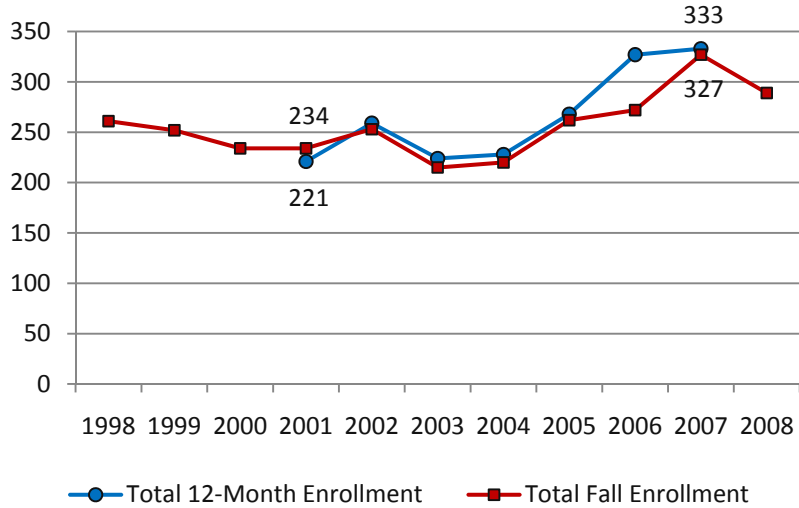
**University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



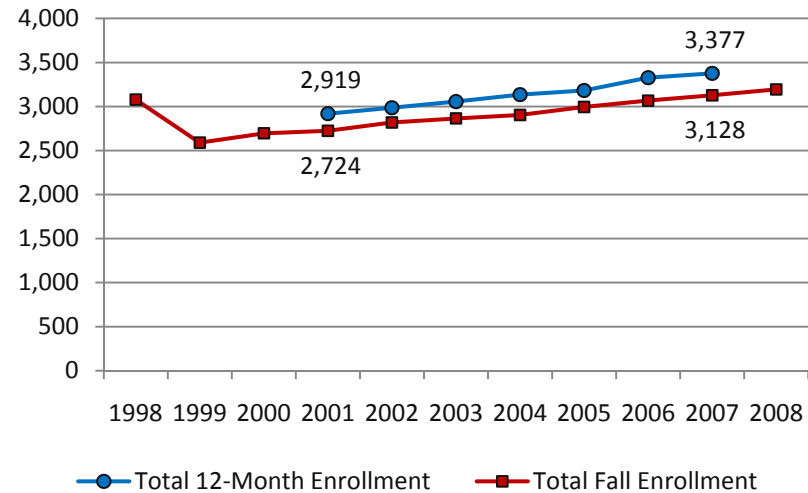
**University of Nebraska at Kearney  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



**Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



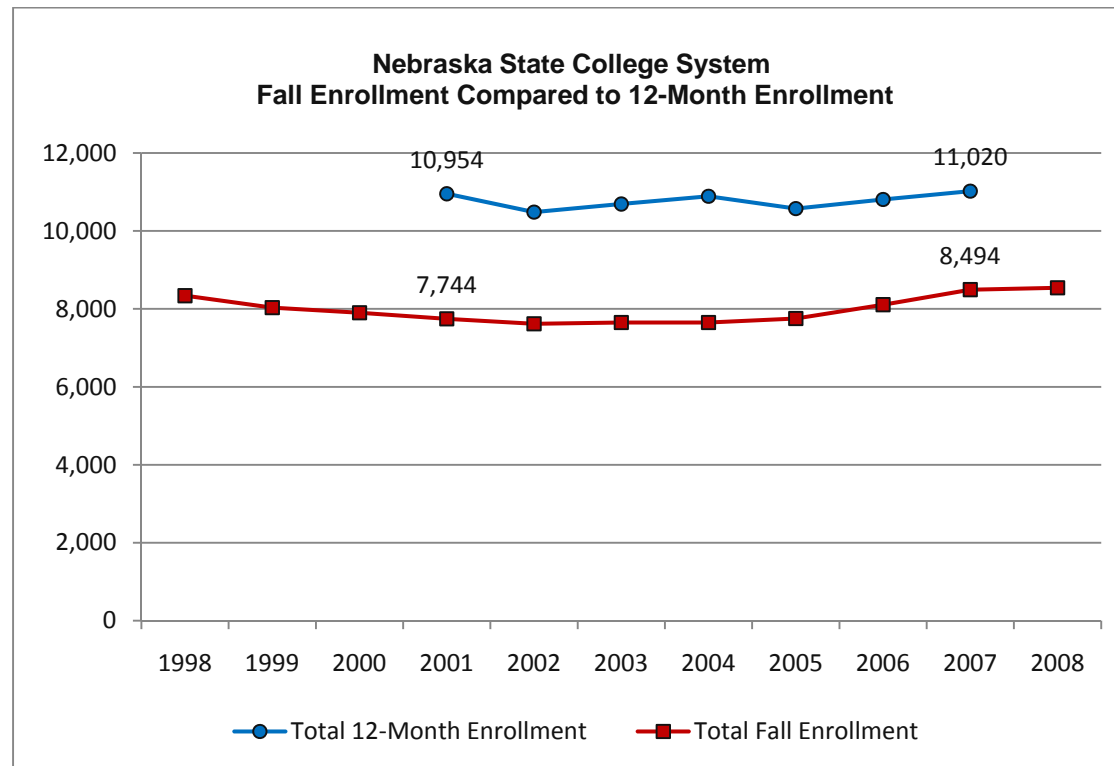
**University of Nebraska Medical Center  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



**University of Nebraska System  
Percent Change in Fall Enrollment and 12-Month Enrollment**

Institution	Fall Enrollment 2001-07 % Change	12-Month Enrollment 2001-07 % Change
Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture	1.7%	-1.1%
University of Nebraska at Kearney	39.7%	28.6%
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	0.8%	-1.9%
University of Nebraska Medical Center	0.9%	-1.0%
University of Nebraska at Omaha	14.8%	13.1%

## Nebraska State College System



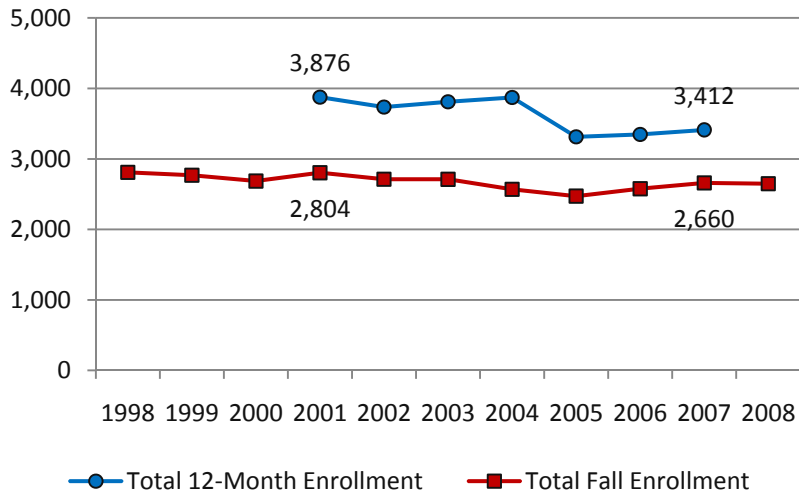
From 2001 to 2007, fall enrollment at state colleges increased 9.7% and 12-month enrollment increased 0.6%. This may indicate that more students who enrolled in the fall semester continued on to the spring semester and/or that fewer students were enrolled only for the spring or summer.

As shown on the charts on the next page, the drop in 12-month enrollment in 2005-06 was due to a decrease in the 12-month enrollment reported by Chadron State College.

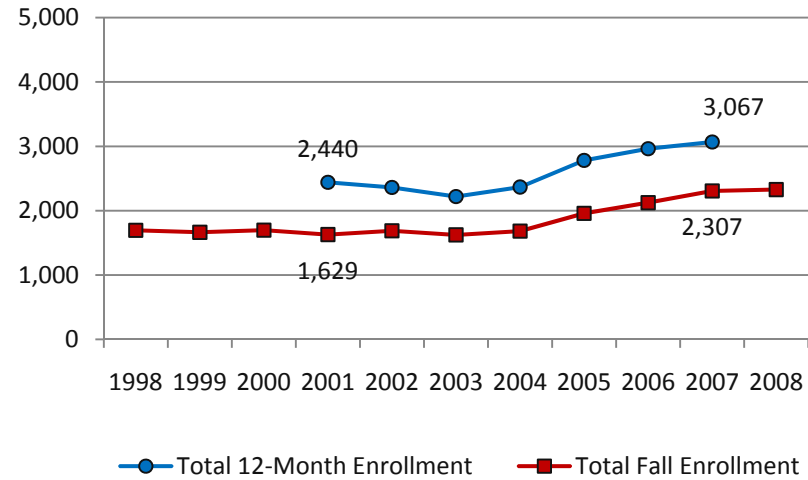
For the Nebraska State College System, 12-month enrollment in 2007-08 was 2,526 or 29.7% higher than fall 2007 enrollment.

Enrollment trend data by Fall Enrollment, 12-Month Headcount, and by FTE are available in the spreadsheet titled **Fall, 12-month & FTE Enrollment** in the **downloadable Excel workbook for Section A: Enrollment**.

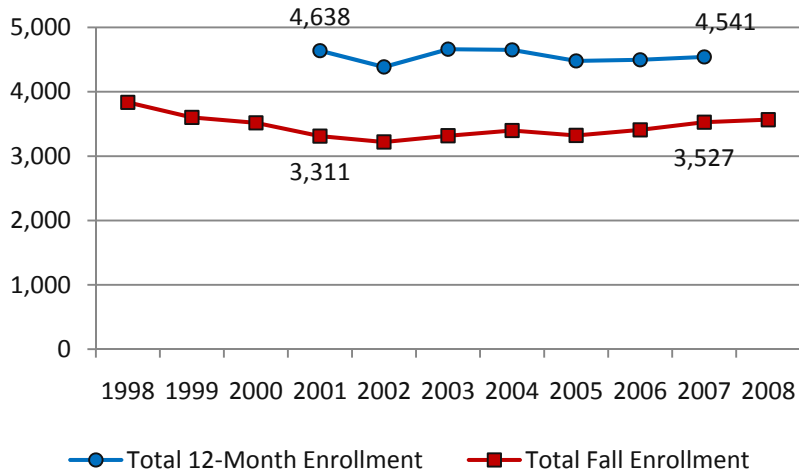
**Chadron State College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



**Peru State College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



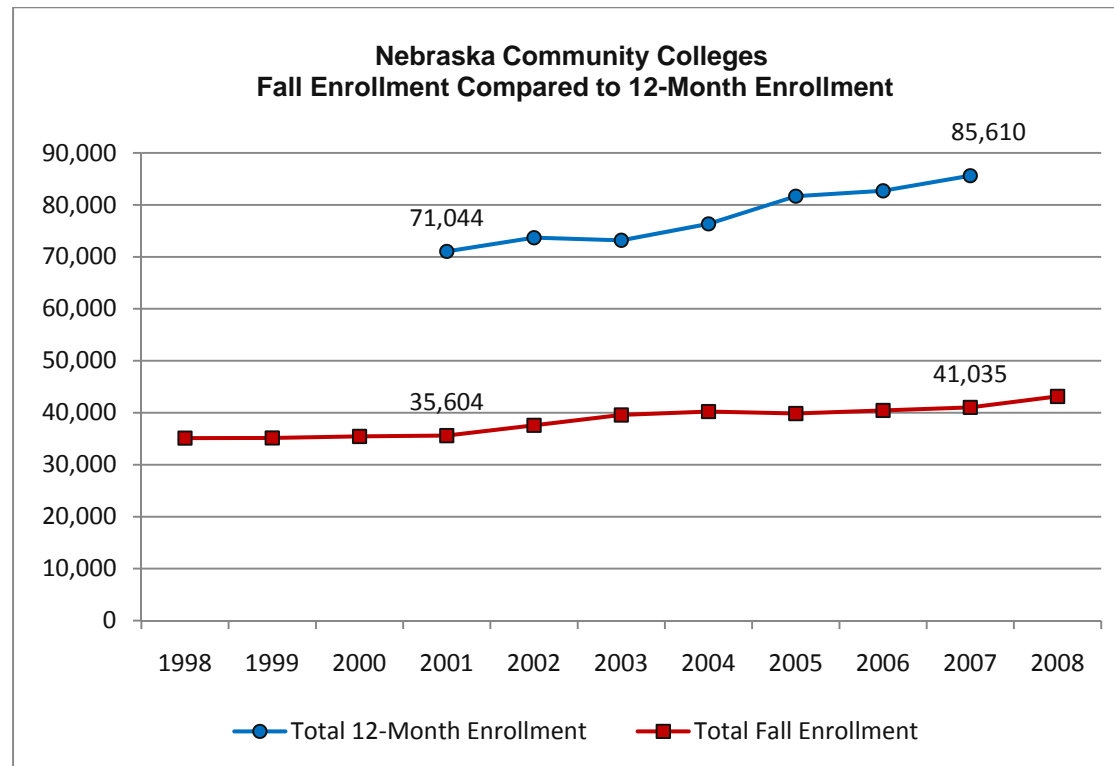
**Wayne State College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



**Nebraska State College System  
Percent Change in Fall Enrollment and  
12-Month Enrollment**

Institution	Fall Enrollment 01-7% Change	12-Month Enrollment 01-07 % Change
Chadron State College	-5.1%	-12.0%
Peru State College	41.6%	25.7%
Wayne State College	6.5%	-2.1%

## Nebraska Community Colleges



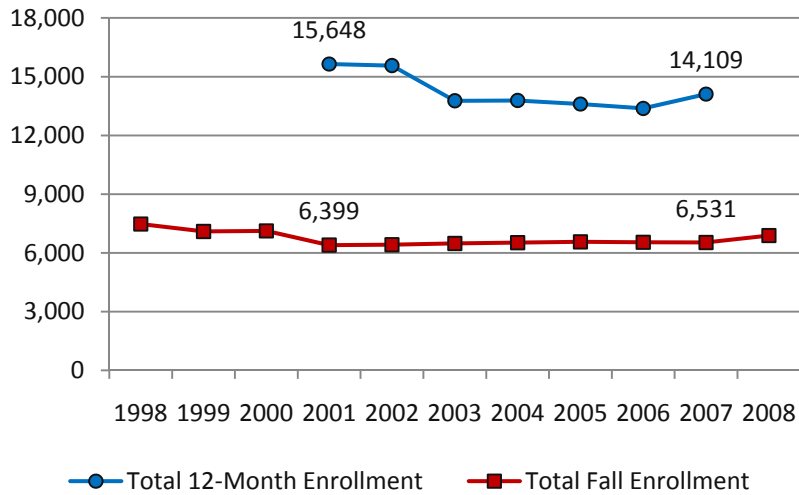
The community colleges have enjoyed growth as measured by fall enrollment and 12-month enrollment. From 2001 through 2007, fall enrollment at community colleges increased 15.3% (5,431) and 12-month enrollment increased 20.5% (14,566).

The higher increase in 12-month enrollment, compared to the increase in fall enrollment (14,566 vs. 5,431), indicates that an increasing number of students were enrolled sometime during the academic year but not in the fall. At least part of this increase may be due to more students dropping in and out of a college or transferring back and forth from one institution to another, a pattern known as swirling.

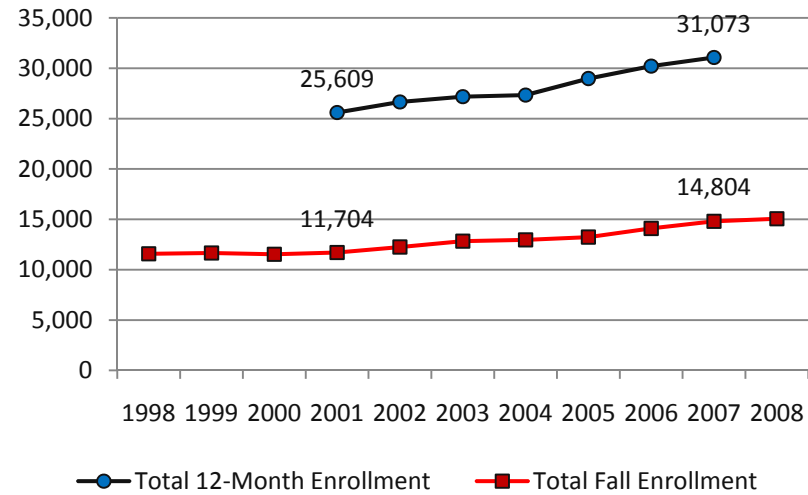
Based on the data for 2001 through 2007, fall enrollment accounts for only about half of the total number of students measured by 12-month enrollment.

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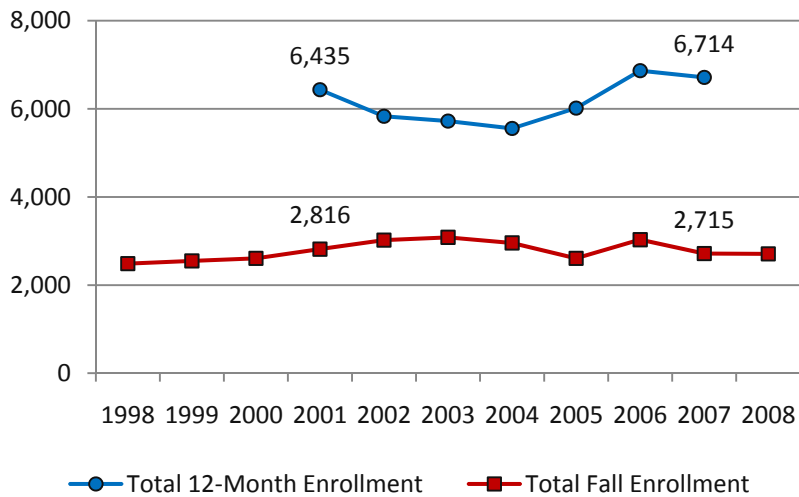
**Central Community College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



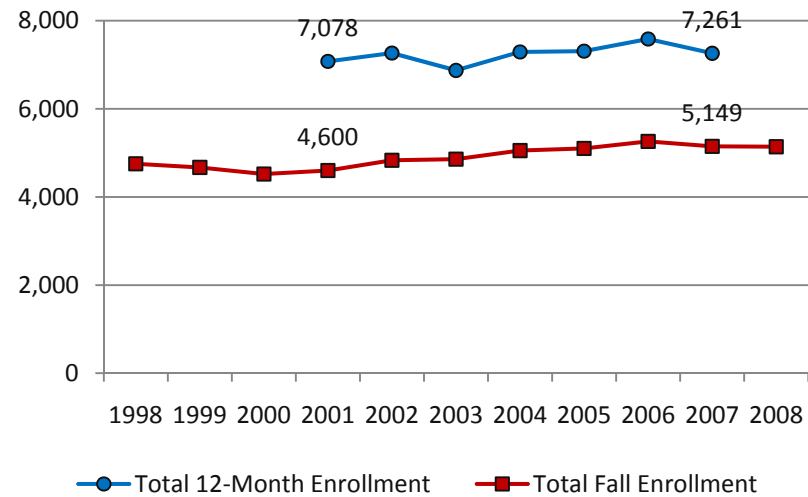
**Metropolitan Community College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**

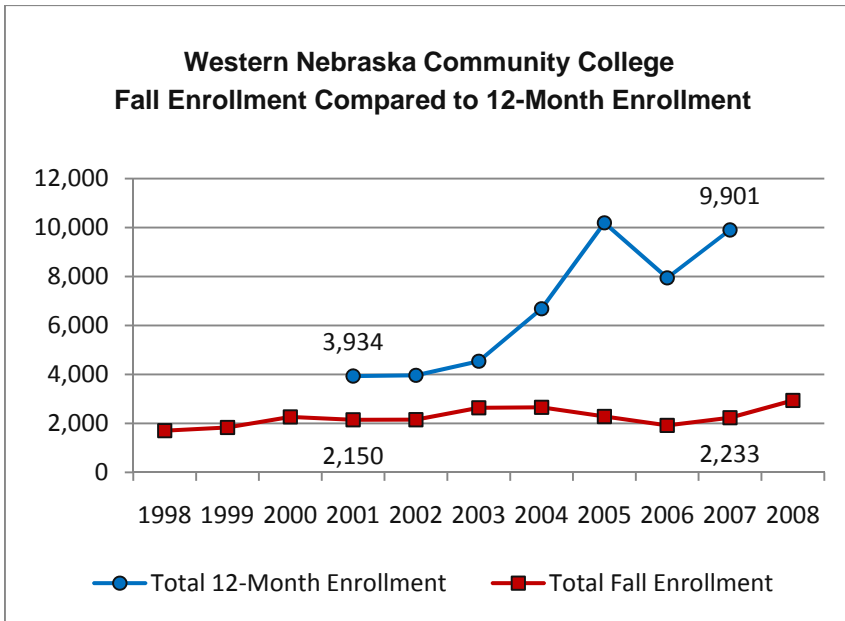
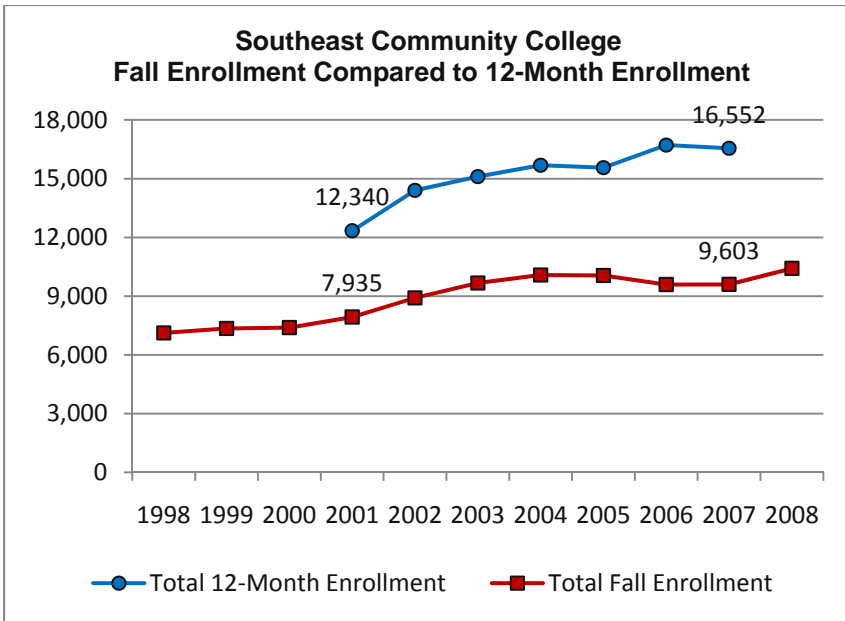


**Mid-Plains Community College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**



**Northeast Community College  
Fall Enrollment Compared to 12-Month Enrollment**





<b>Nebraska Community Colleges Percent Change in Fall Enrollment and 12-Month Enrollment</b>		
Institution	Fall Enrollment 01-07 % Change	12-Month Enrollment 01-07 % Change
Central Community College	2.1%	-9.8%
Metropolitan Community College	26.5%	21.3%
Mid Plains Community College	-3.6%	4.3%
Northeast Community College	11.9%	2.6%
Southeast Community College	21.0%	34.1%
Western Nebraska Community College	3.9%	151.7%

## **Fall Enrollment and 12-Month Enrollment Compared**

In general, the previous charts show that fall enrollment and 12-month enrollment follow a similar trend for most of the public institutions, indicating that either fall enrollment or 12-month enrollment is a valid measure of enrollments for trend analyses. While the levels of enrollment vary by institution and by sector, trends in fall and 12-month enrollment generally have been parallel, with the exception of Chadron State College and Western Nebraska Community College.

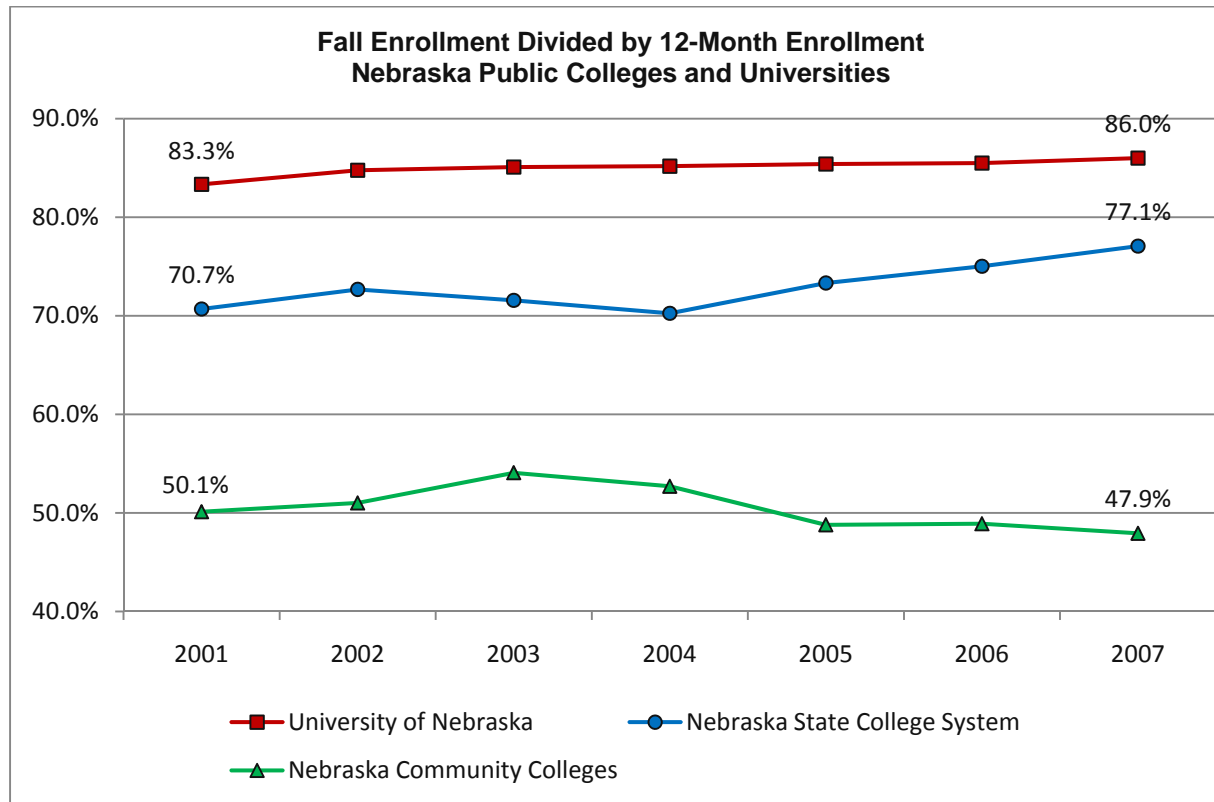
The Commission staff believes that fall enrollment data are generally more accurate and reliable than 12-month enrollment data due to the fact that they are more widely used. However, when fall enrollment is the reported measure, it should be noted that the amount of 12-month enrollment that is captured by fall enrollment varies by sector and institution. A technique for measuring the portion of enrollment captured by fall enrollment is discussed below.

## **Fall Enrollment Divided by 12-Month Enrollment**

Dividing an institution's or sector's fall enrollment by its 12-month enrollment provides a direct comparison of the two measures that can be useful in several ways. First, when expressed as a percentage, this ratio gives an idea of the "accuracy" of fall enrollment as an indicant of the total instructional activity of a particular institution. It answers the question "What percentage of the total activity at the school is captured in the fall enrollment figures?" Second, directly comparing the general trends of several institutions or sectors can be useful in identifying possible errors in the data. Third, changes in the ratio may reflect a general student enrollment trend. If a trend is going down, for example, it may indicate that students in that sector or institution are doing a good bit of "swirling" (dropping in and out and transferring between institutions). If the trend is increasing, it may indicate that more students are staying continuously enrolled at the same institution.

The chart on the following page depicts fall enrollment divided by 12-month enrollment for each sector of Nebraska's public postsecondary institutions.

- Fall enrollment as a percentage of 12-month enrollment at the University of Nebraska slightly increased from 83% in 2001-02 to 86% in 2007-08.
- Over the Nebraska State College System, fall enrollment increased from 71% in 2001-02 to 77% in 2007-08.
- Fall enrollment at Nebraska's community colleges as a percentage of 12-month enrollment has fluctuated around 50% since 2001. This could be a reflection that more students "swirl" in and out of the community college since the community colleges often serve an older, non-traditional student population. In addition, the community colleges also provide a considerable amount of industry training to students who are not captured by fall enrollment figures.



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