

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.

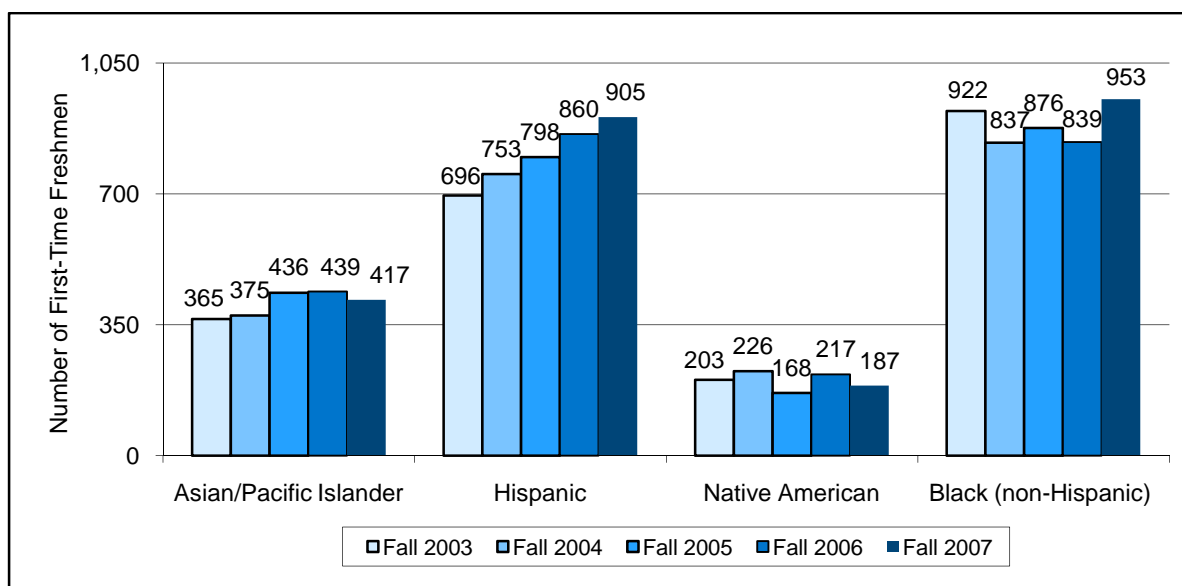
The 2003 LR 174 Higher Education Task Force recommended increasing the number and percentage of underrepresented students as another approach to increasing the enrollment of Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. To determine the extent to which this strategic objective is being achieved, the following 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 2007, the latest period for which data are available.

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

- In fall 2007, a total of 17,703 first-time freshmen of known race/ethnicity were enrolled at Nebraska's degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions, a 12.7% decrease from the total of 20,272 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 2007, 13.9% were minorities, an increase of 3.1 percentage points.
- As shown in [Figure 1.4.1](#), slightly higher numbers of Asians/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics and black non-Hispanics enrolled in college in fall 2007 than in fall 2003, but Hispanics were the only minority group with consistent gains throughout the period. (See [Table A7.1](#) and [Table A7.3](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.)

Figure 1.4.1

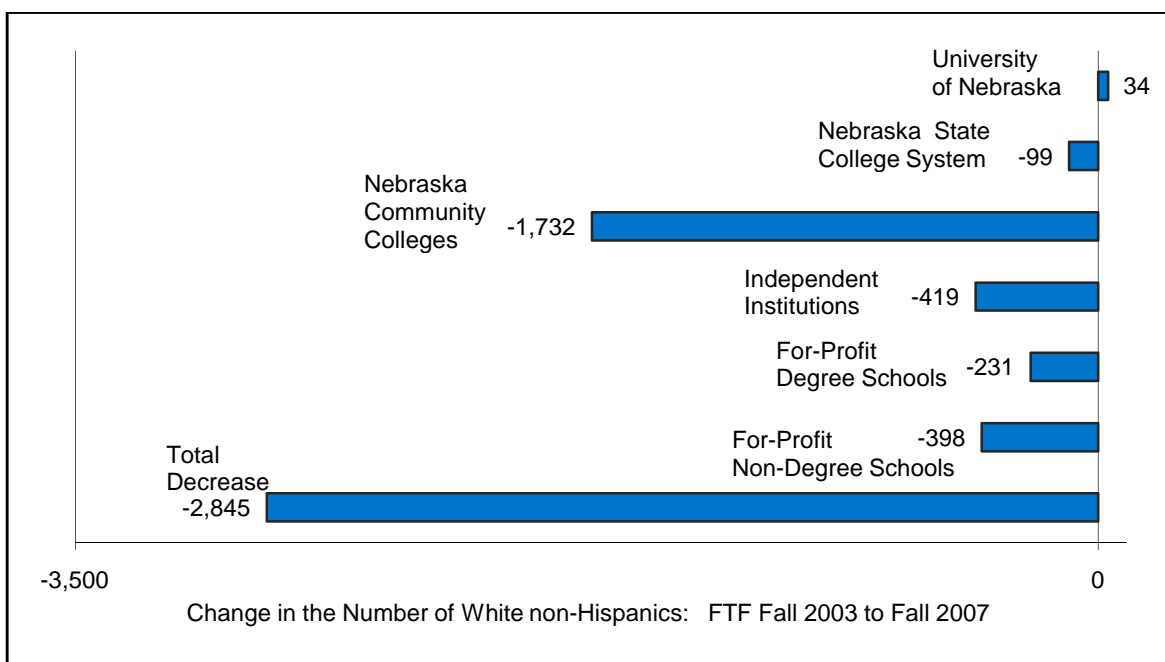
Changes in the Numbers of Minority Students Enrolled as First-Time Freshmen at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions Fall 2003 to Fall 2007¹



¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 through 2007 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 276 more minority students attending Nebraska colleges as first-time freshmen in fall 2007 than in fall 2003, an increase of 12.6%. In contrast, there were 2,845 fewer white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen in Nebraska's postsecondary education system in fall 2007 than in fall 2003, a decrease of 15.7%. (See [Table A7.1](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.)
- Between fall 2003 and fall 2004, 1,501 fewer white non-Hispanics enrolled at Nebraska institutions, accounting for more than half of the total decrease of 2,845 students from 2003 to 2007. Over the next three years, enrollment of white non-Hispanics enrolled as first-time freshmen continued to decline: 248 fewer in fall 2005, 734 fewer in fall 2006 and 362 fewer in fall 2007.
- Lower enrollments at Nebraska's community colleges—at Southeast Community College, in particular—accounted for more than 60% of the decrease in the number of white non-Hispanic, first-time freshmen between fall 2003 and fall 2007.¹ 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 2007, except for the University of Nebraska.

Figure 1.4.2
Changes in the Numbers of White Non-Hispanics
Enrolled as First-Time Freshmen (FTF) at Nebraska Postsecondary Institutions
Fall 2007 Compared to Fall 2003 Baseline¹



¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2003 and fall 2007 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.

¹Decreases 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 and 316 in fall 2007 for a total four-year decrease of 1,897. Metropolitan Community College reported 27 fewer white non-Hispanic first-time freshmen in 2007 than 2003, and Mid-Plains reported a net decrease of 200 students over the same four-year period. These decreases were offset slightly by the following four-year net increases in the number of non-Hispanic first-time freshmen: 298 at Central Community College, 20 at Northeast Community College, and 74 Western Nebraska Community College.

- 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 and 166 white students in fall 2005 and fall 2006, respectively. As a result, there was a net gain of 34 white non-Hispanics between fall 2003 and fall 2007.
- The total 2,845 decrease, shown in [Figure 1.4.2](#) on the previous page is much greater than would be expected, given the number of white non-Hispanics who graduated from Nebraska high schools between 2002-2003 and 2006-2007 and the percentage of these students who continued on to college within a year of graduating from high school.
- The number of white non-Hispanics who graduated from Nebraska's high schools decreased 1,305 between 2002-2003 and 2006-2007, from 19,704 to 18,399 in 2006-2007. Given an average estimated college continuation rate of 53.3% over the four-year period, 696 fewer white non-Hispanic, first-time freshmen would be expected to be enrolled at Nebraska colleges and universities in fall 2007, compared to the actual decrease of 2,845.¹ Like the migration data summarized in section 1.2, this comparison 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.
- 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 enrollments.

Racial/Ethnic Representation in Nebraska's Postsecondary Education System Fall 2006

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.

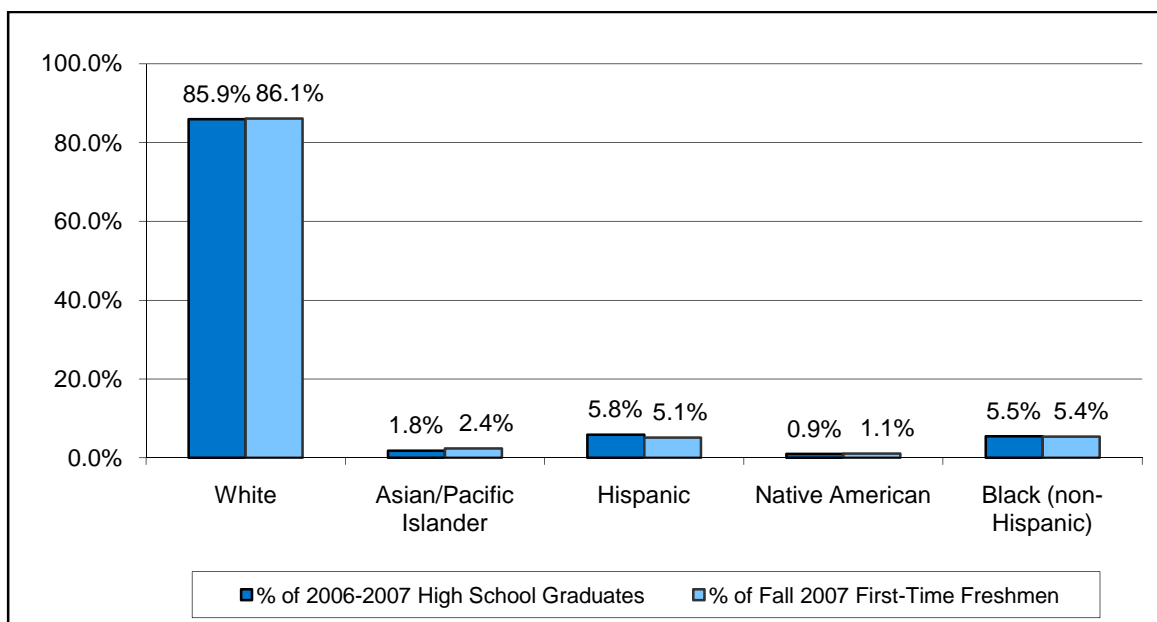
- As evidenced in section 1.1.a of this report, disproportionately lower percentages of black non-Hispanics, Hispanics and Native Americans graduate from Nebraska high schools as a result of the fact that their graduation rates are significantly lower than the high school graduation rates for white non-Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- However, as illustrated in [Figure 1.4.3](#) on the following page, 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.

Note: Students from low-income households are underrepresented in Nebraska's higher education system. The Coordinating Commission is currently conducting research on this topic for future publication.

¹The estimated college continuation rate for Nebraska was 51.1% in fall 2004 and 55.4% in fall 2006. Multiplying 1,353 by the average of 53.3% results in an expected decrease of 721 students.

Figure 1.4.3

Percentages of 2006–2007 Nebraska High School Graduates and First-Time Freshmen Enrolled at Nebraska Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions in Fall 2007 by Race/Ethnicity



¹Data Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, December 2007, and the National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2006 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 2007 section of [Table A7.3](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

- 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 in fall 2007, relative to the extent that they were represented among the state's high school graduates in 2006–2007.
- Hispanics, on the other hand, were underrepresented in 2007, accounting for 5.8% of Nebraska's high school graduates in 2006–2007, but representing 5.1% of the first-time freshmen who were enrolled at Nebraska colleges in fall 2007.

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 2007

Determining if there was any change between fall 2003 and fall 2007 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 2006–2007 than in 2002–2003. However, comparing the percentage distributions of high school graduates in 2002–2003 and 2006–2007 to the percentage

distributions of first-time freshmen in fall 2003 and 2007 reveals that, compared to the first-time freshmen who started college in 2003:

- (1) Hispanics were more underrepresented in the fall 2007 freshmen class.
- (2) Asians/Pacific Islanders were slightly more overrepresented among the first-time freshmen in fall 2007.
- (3) Native Americans were overrepresented among first-time freshmen to the same slight degree in fall 2007 as they were in fall 2003, relative to the extent that they were represented among the state's high school graduates in 2002–2003 and 2005–2006.
- (4) Black non-Hispanics were slightly overrepresented in fall 2003, but equally or slightly underrepresented in fall 2007.
- (5) White non-Hispanics were slightly underrepresented in fall 2003 and equally or slightly overrepresented in fall 2007.

In summary, the pattern of representation for all of the racial/ethnic groups was generally about the same in fall 2007 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.

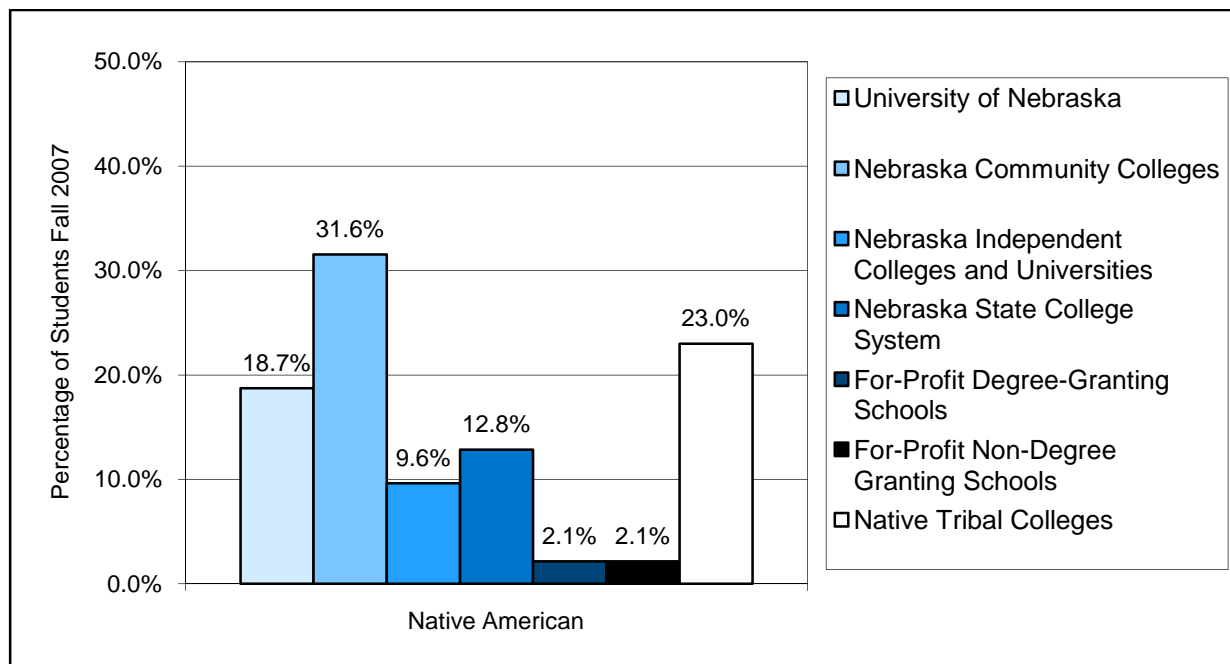
As shown in Figure 1.4.4 on the next page, 23% of the 187 Native Americans who were first-time freshmen in fall 2007 attended Little Priest Tribal College or Nebraska Indian Community College, while almost 10% chose to enroll at other independent colleges and universities.

- As also shown in Figure 1.4.4, 32% of the Native American, first-time freshmen attended the state's community colleges 19% enrolled at the University of Nebraska and almost 13% went to Nebraska's state colleges in fall 2007. In comparison, only 2% attended schools in the for-profit sector.

See 2007 section 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 2007¹ (Bars are in order of Legend from Left to Right)



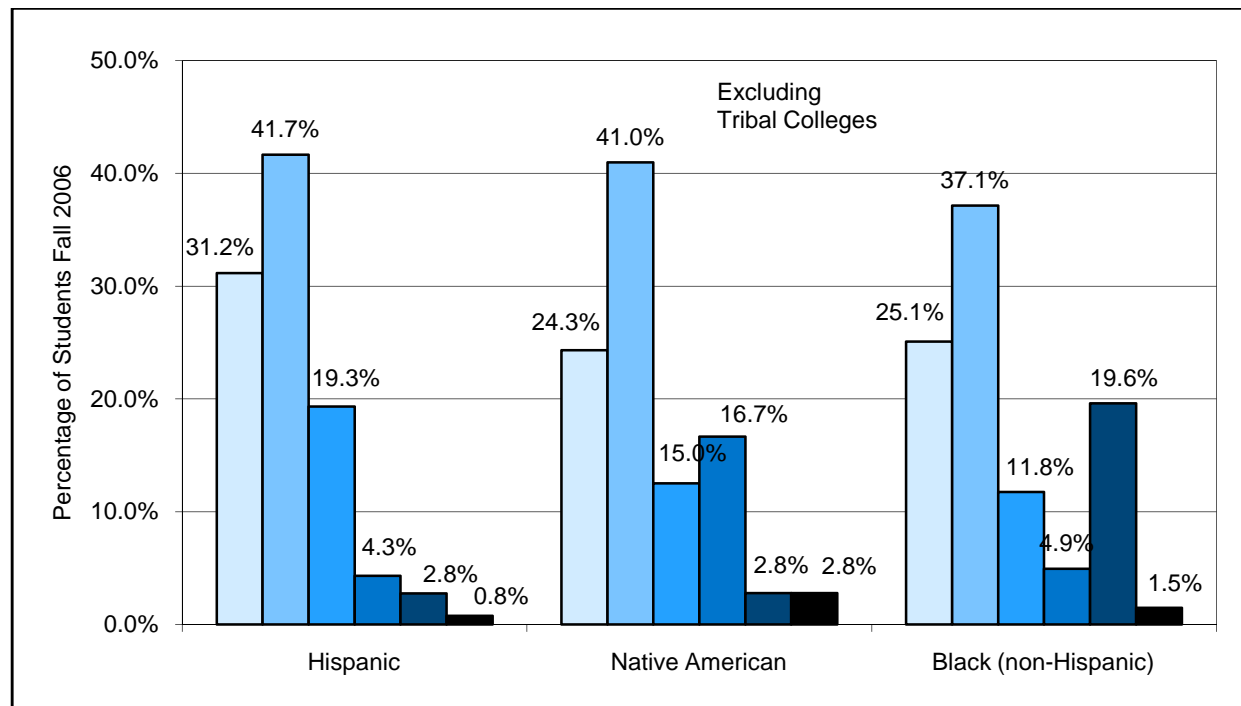
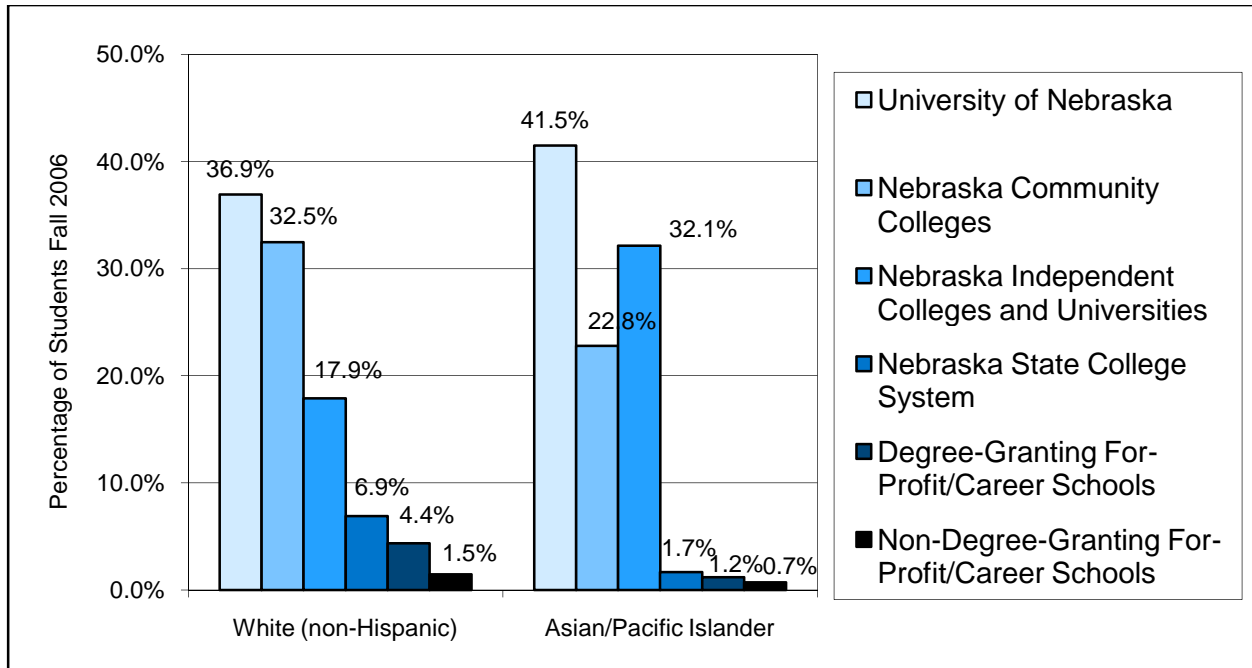
¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2007 IPEDS survey. Includes part-time students, but not foreign students or students of unknown race/ethnicity. See the fourth page of [Table A7.4](#) in [Appendix 7](#) for supporting data.

- [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 2007, 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 and fall 2006.¹
- As evidenced in [Figure 1.4.5](#), [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 2007. 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 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 noticeably 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.

¹See page 62 of the *2007 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for the attendance pattern in fall 2005 by race/ethnicity and page 66 of the *2008 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for comparable information for fall 2006.

Figure 1.4.5

**Nebraska First-Time Freshmen Sector Enrollments by Race Ethnicity
Fall 2007¹ (Bars are in order of Legend from Left to Right)**



¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2007 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 2007.

- 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.
- The first-time freshmen enrollment pattern of black non-Hispanics, on the other hand, was quite different from the patterns evidenced for the other racial/ethnic groups in fall 2007. Specifically, a significantly higher percentage of black non-Hispanics were enrolled in the for-profit degree-granting schools, while a lower percentage attended 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

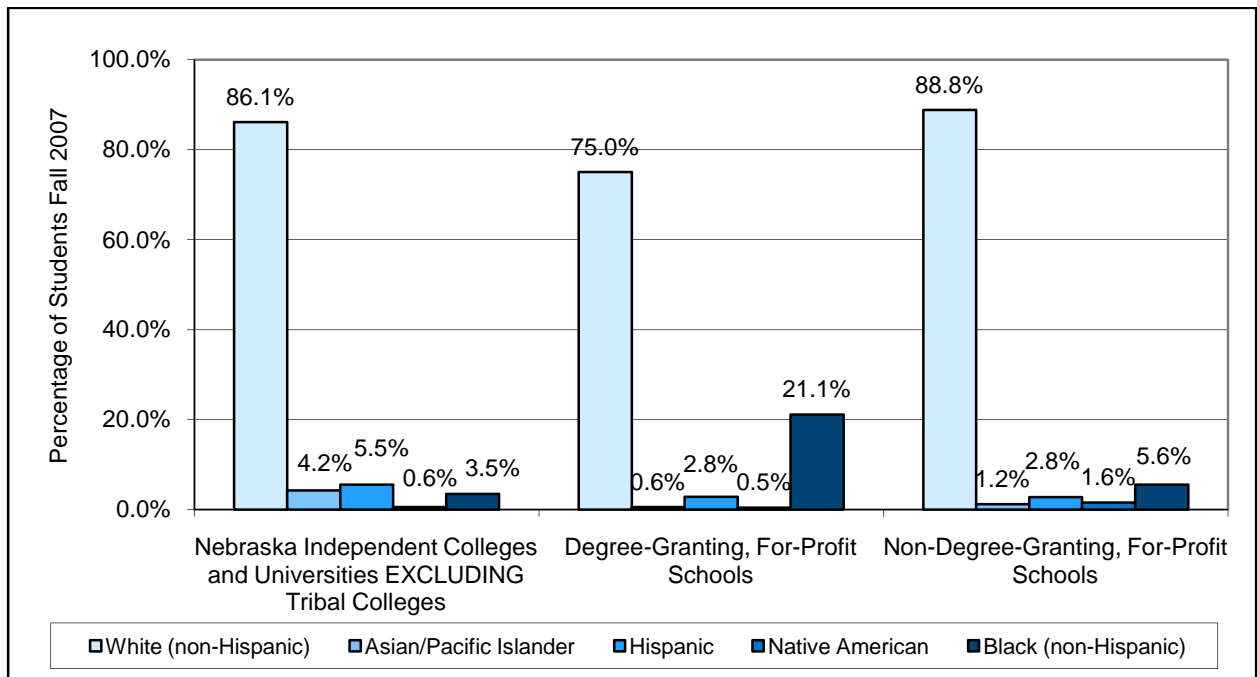
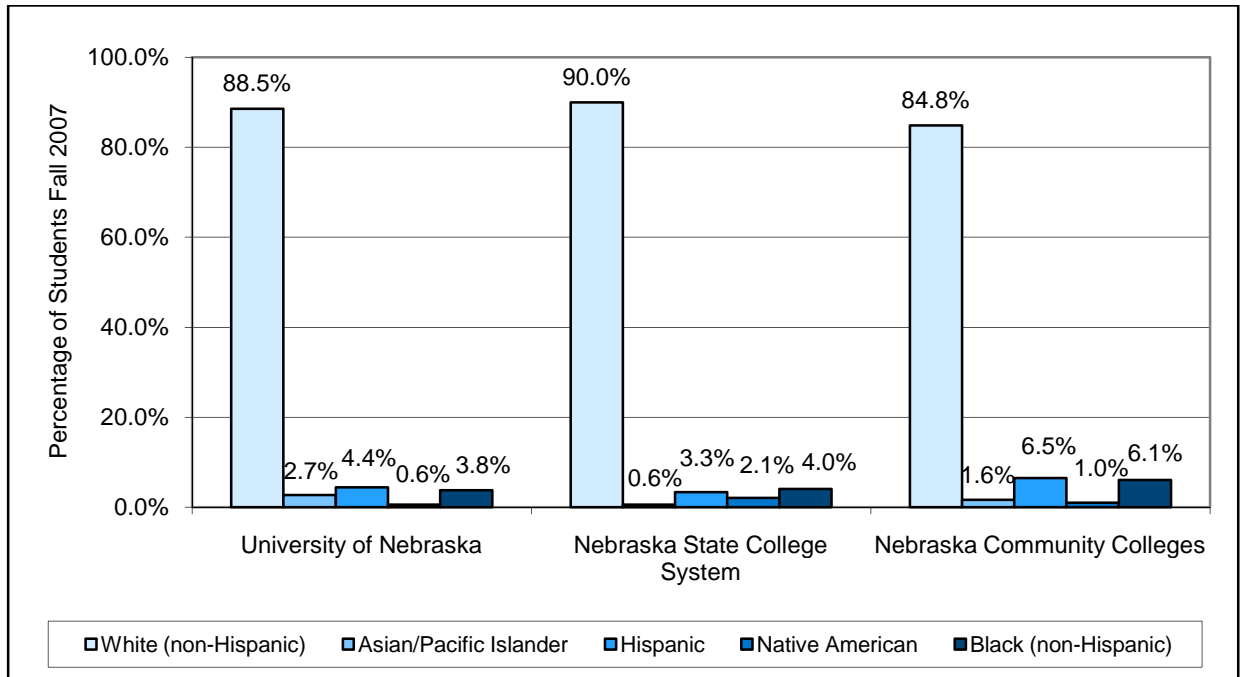
Since different percentages of white non-Hispanics and minority students enrolled as first-time freshmen at each of the major types of postsecondary institutions in fall 2007, their representation varied across the six sectors of higher education, as shown in [Figure 1.4.6](#) on the next page. Native Americans accounted for 84% of the combined first-time freshmen enrollment of Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College in fall 2006 and 77% of their enrollment in fall 2007. 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](#).¹

- The analysis summarized in [Figure 1.4.6](#) 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 2007, with two exceptions:
 - Hispanics and black non-Hispanics accounted for higher percentages of the first-time freshmen at the community colleges.
 - 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 public 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 for-profit schools than they did within any of the other sectors.

Important Note: The distributions for 2007 in [Figure 1.4.6](#) are essentially the same as those for fall 2005 and fall 2006, 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 than in 2005 or 2006.

¹See [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 2007, including and excluding Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College. See [Table A7.5](#) on page 169 of the *2008 Nebraska Higher Education Progress Report* for comparable data for fall 2006.

Figure 1.4.6
Nebraska First-Time Freshmen Racial/Ethnic Enrollments by Sector
Fall 2007¹



¹Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2007 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 2007.

