A grayscale photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding scenery. The middle ground is filled with a dense forest of evergreen trees. In the background, a large, rugged mountain peak with patches of snow or light-colored rock rises against a clear sky. The overall scene is serene and natural.

Chapter VIII: Progress Toward Washington's Higher Education Goals

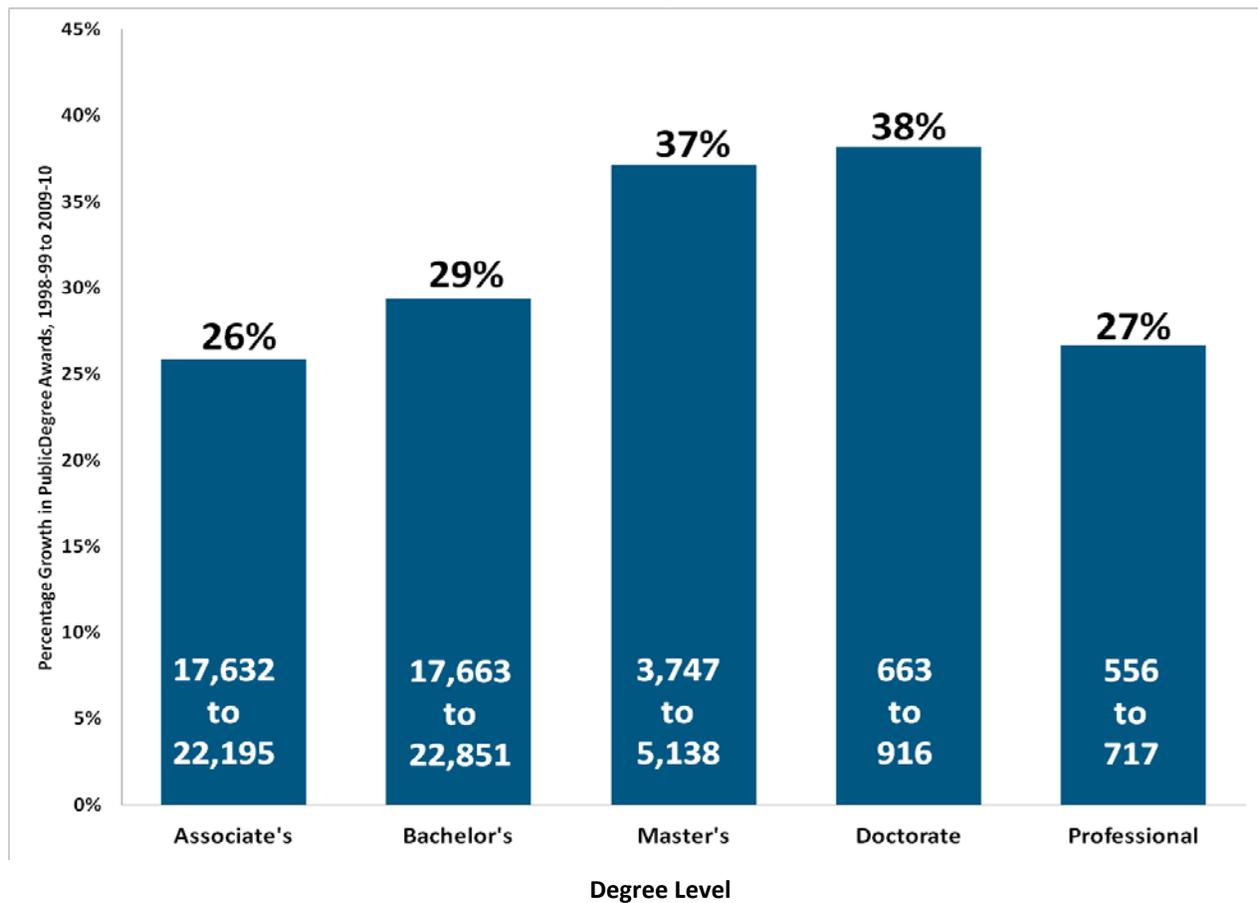
Degree production has grown over the past decade

The number of degrees awarded by Washington's public and private four-year colleges and universities has steadily risen in recent years. This was true for bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional degrees.

In the public sector, the largest percentage increases were in master's and doctoral degrees, although the actual number of doctoral degrees was much smaller than other degree categories (except first-professional degrees such as law and medicine).

Growth in degree production reflects increased higher education funding provided to meet increased demand earlier in the decade. However, recent reductions in higher education funding as a result of the state's current fiscal challenges could reduce degree-award growth in future years.

**Washington Public Institution Degree Award Growth, by Award Level
1998-99 to 2009-10**



Source: HECB staff analysis of data from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2010.

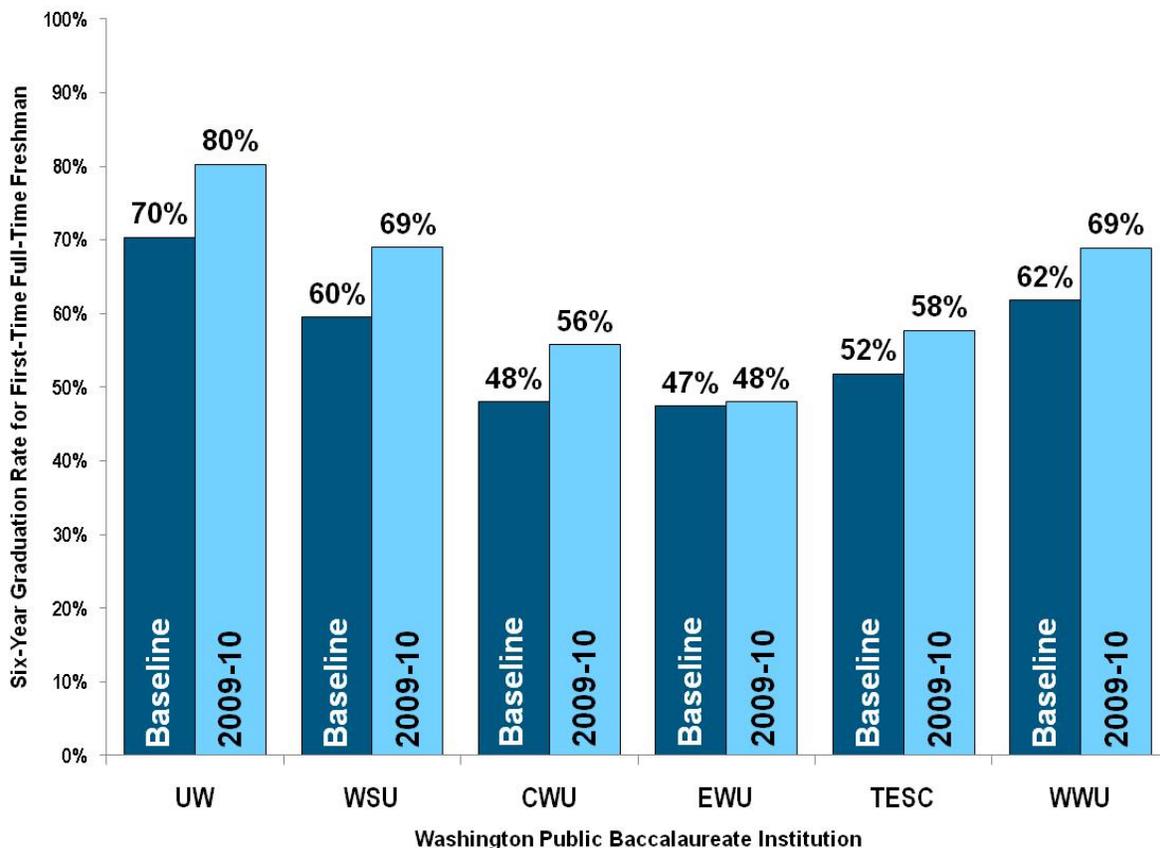
State baccalaureate institutions producing degrees at faster pace

Many students today take more than four years to finish college, often because of work and family commitments. The U.S. Department of Education reports that students earning bachelor’s degrees take, on average, about 55 months to complete degrees.

This sample includes only those who didn’t stop for more than six months during this time. Those who attended multiple institutions took longer to complete degrees—59 months on average for those attending two institutions and 67 for those attending three.¹

In Washington, the percentage of students who enter public four-year colleges and universities as freshmen and earn baccalaureate degrees within six years has increased. This is a measure of increasing efficiency on the part of institutions in the production of baccalaureate degrees.

**Six-Year Graduation Rates, First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen
Washington Public Institutions**



Note: Baseline is the annual average of 1997-98 to 2001-02.

Source: HECB, “Higher Education Accountability Report”, 2009-10.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved 12/10/09 from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40>.

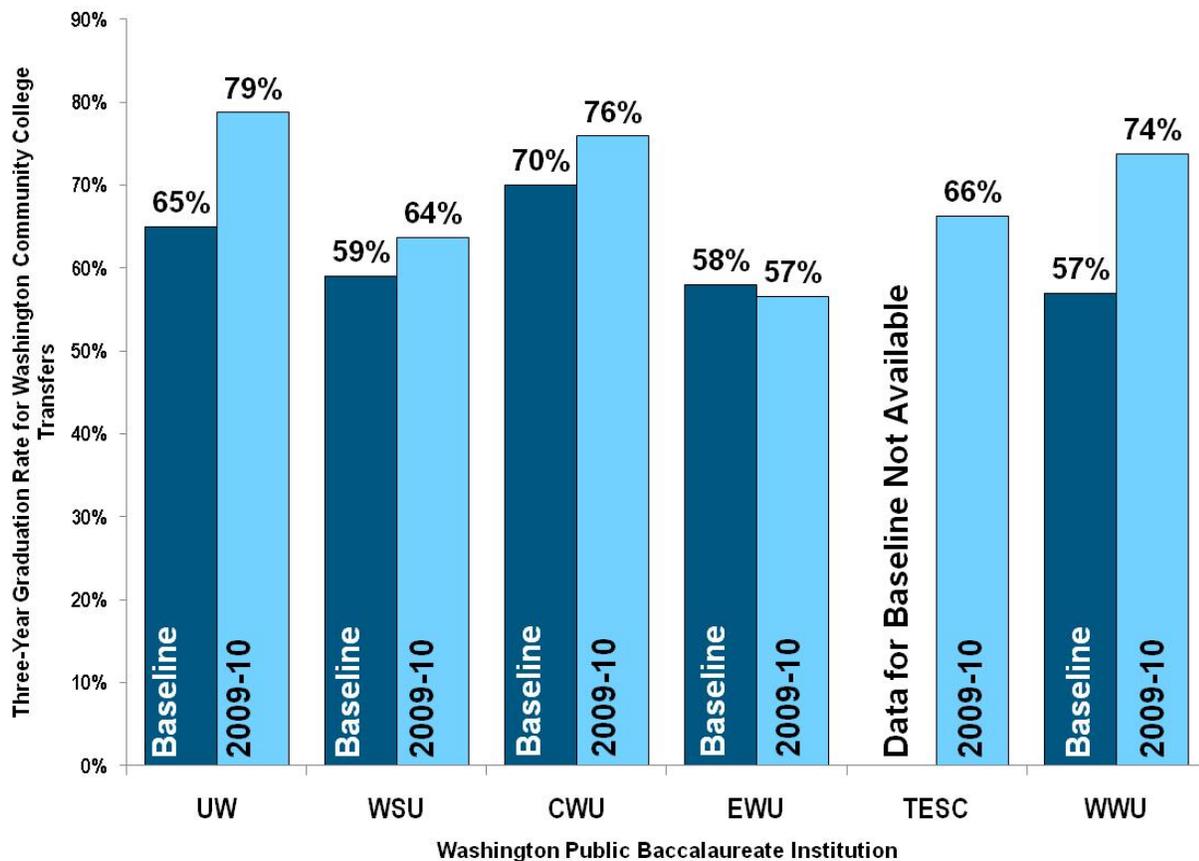
Graduation rate for transfer students has improved

The number of students who graduated within three years after transferring to Washington’s public baccalaureate institutions increased by nearly 9 percent, from a baseline period of 1997-98 to 2009-10. This measure represents the performance of the higher education system as a whole, not just the two-year college system.

Completing degrees in a timely manner helps students launch their careers earlier and become productive members of society sooner. Timely completion also frees up space at colleges to serve more students. It is difficult to improve outcome measures like graduation rates, but Washington institutions are doing just that.

Washington Public Baccalaureate Three-Year Graduation Rates for Transfer Students with an Associate Degree from a Washington Community College

Baseline (Annual Average of 1997-98 to 2001-02) to 2009-10



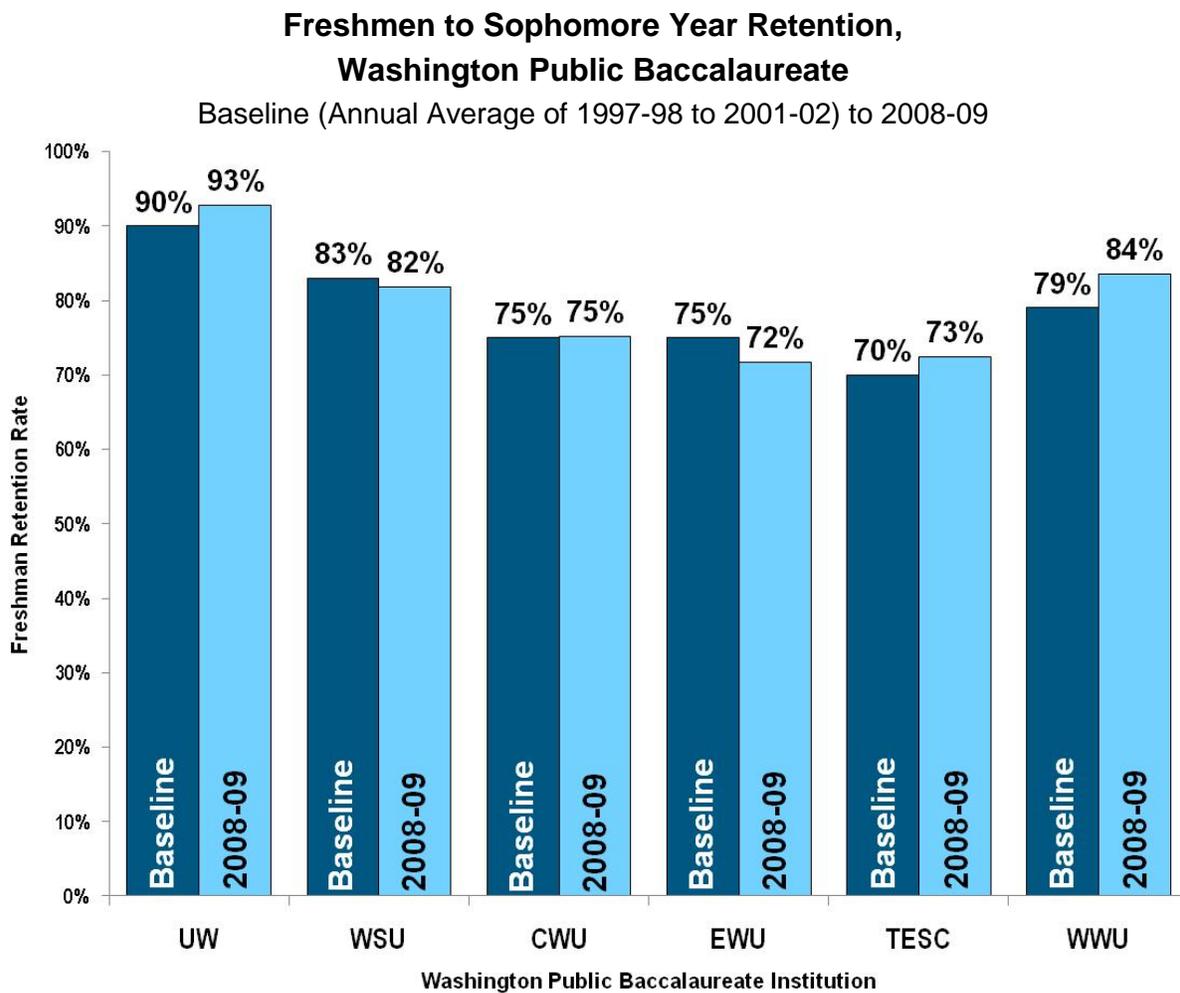
Source: HECB, “Higher Education Accountability Report,” 2009-10.

A large majority of Washington freshmen who attend four-year public institutions return for the sophomore year

Washington’s baccalaureate institutions are highly efficient in moving students through years of college to graduation. One reason is relatively high freshman retention rates that average about 80 percent.

Still, striving for even higher freshman retention rates offers great benefits for students, institutions and the state. By helping more freshmen make the transition to their sophomore year, institutions will produce more degrees and, ultimately, increase access to higher education for Washingtonians.

Institutional freshman retention rates vary, in part because of the students served. Rates also can change over time. For example, Western Washington University’s retention rate rose from about 79 percent at the start of the decade to about 84 percent in 2008-09.



Source: HECB, “Higher Education Accountability Report,” 2009-10.

Universities experience moderate growth in production of graduate degrees

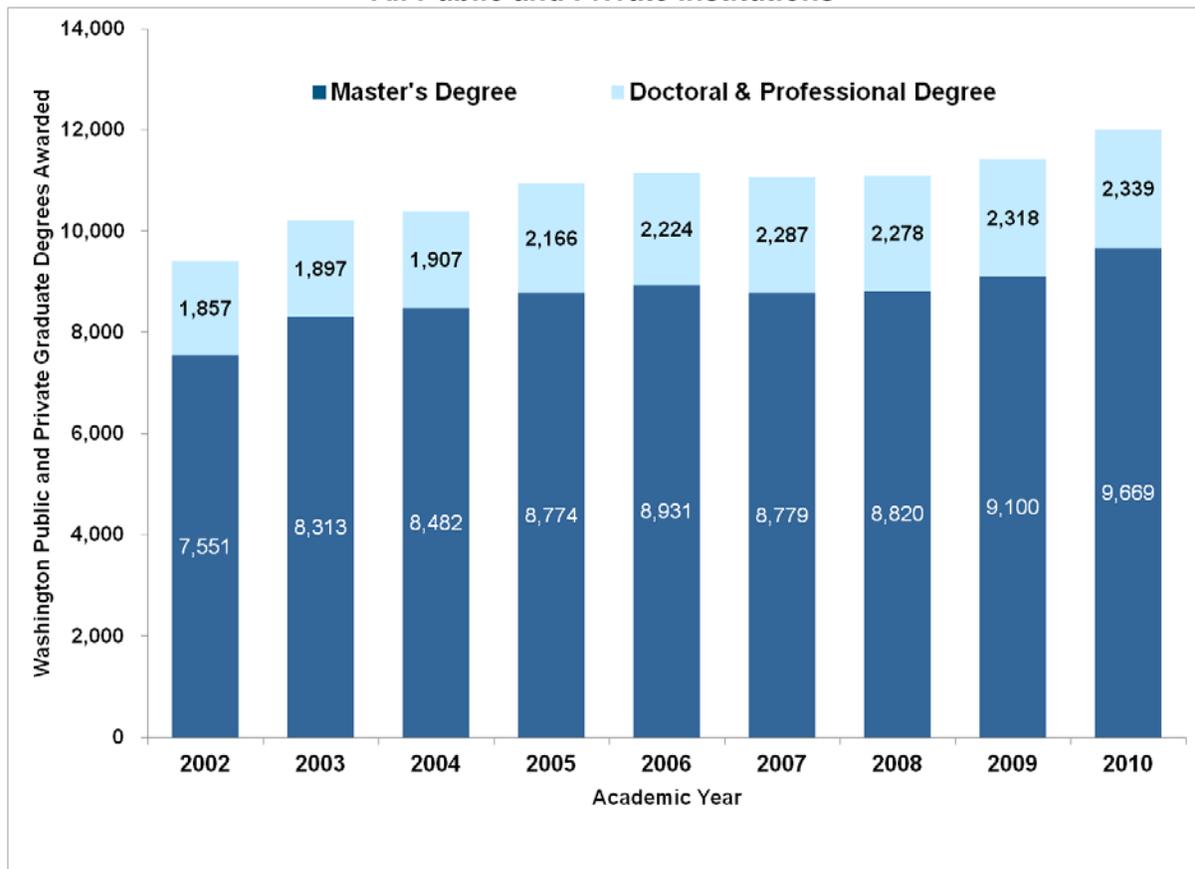
The annual production of graduate degrees at Washington’s public and private colleges and universities showed a moderate increase of nearly 22 percent between 2002 and 2010.

Since the early part of the decade, graduate degree growth has been driven primarily by the University of Washington. A notable increase occurred at Eastern Washington University prior to 2004-05, but production has declined since then.

Not surprisingly, master’s degrees are by far the most common graduate degree awarded. Business, Education, Health, and Social Sciences are the most common major areas of study.

About 94 percent of the state’s doctoral degrees are produced in the state’s public institutions, while private institutions play a more significant role in the production of master’s and “first-professional” degrees (almost exclusively degrees in law and medicine). In 2010, nearly 47 percent of the state’s master’s and first-professional degrees were awarded by private institutions.

Graduate Degrees Awarded in Washington by Type, 2002-2010
All Public and Private Institutions



Source: HECB staff analysis of data from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics, fall 2002 through 2010.

Public institutions produce biggest share of degrees in high demand fields

Although continuing problems in the economy have reduced demand for workers in many occupations, demand remains strong in certain occupations such as engineers and computer/software specialists. The long-term outlook, particularly in high-demand fields, remains bright. Fields that are expected to continue to be in high demand include engineering, software engineering, computer science, architecture, and health care.

Washington relies heavily on public colleges and universities to produce baccalaureate and graduate degree holders in the high-demand health and STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). In 2008-09, public institutions produced 80 percent of the baccalaureate and graduate degrees in the STEM fields. In 2009-10, they produced 74 percent of the degrees in the health fields.

Public institutions have greatly increased high-demand degree production since 2002. The total number of high-demand degrees and certificates awarded by public institutions has grown by 42 percent since 2002-03. Allied Health and Health Sciences and Construction Management have shown consistent and steady increases in degrees conferred since 2002-03. Allied Health and Health Sciences have grown 77 percent since 2002-03. The number of graduates in math, biological, and physical sciences has increased by 33 percent since 2002-03. The number of new four-year degrees awarded in engineering declined in 2009-10 and was at approximately the same level as in 2004-05.

Annual High-Demand Degree Awards, 2002-2010

High-Demand Instructional Program Areas	Academic Year							
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Allied Health & Health Sciences	5,018	5,946	6,395	6,995	7,019	7,226	8,393	8,867
Computer and Information Sciences	1,877	1,899	1,516	1,222	1,191	1,183	1,212	1,597
Engineering Technologies and Technicians	1,936	2,176	1,823	1,821	1,840	1,915	2,429	2,844
Engineering, Four-Year Only	1,264	1,255	1,262	1,293	1,347	1,343	1,375	1,263
Math, Biological & Physical Sciences, Four-Year Only	1,974	1,949	2,133	2,215	2,396	2,374	2,537	2,619
Transfer High-Demand (STEM), Two-Year Only	1,056	1,281	1,111	1,059	1,013	1,129	1,051	1,187
Construction Management, Two-Year Only	44	84	94	125	253	304	270	332
Public Higher Education Total	13,169	14,590	14,334	14,730	15,059	15,474	17,267	18,709

Source: GMAP - Economic Vitality Measures. Retrieved from <http://performance.wa.gov/EconomicVitality/EV101509/WorkforceSkills/HighDemanddegreesand/Pages/default.aspx>

Chapter VIII: Progress Toward Washington's Higher Education Goals

Diversity increasing among new faculty members

Across all sectors of Washington's public higher education system, today's students are ethnically more diverse than the faculty who teach them. However, new faculty hires at the public colleges and universities are helping increase diversity to levels that more closely reflect the student population in the future.

Statistics show that public four-year institutions rely more heavily on the international pool of faculty candidates to fill positions than do private four-year institutions or community and technical colleges. About 16 percent of new faculty hires at public institutions between fall 2008 and fall 2010 were nonresident aliens, compared to about 8 percent at private baccalaureate institutions and less than 1 percent at community and technical colleges.

**Faculty and Student Population by Race/Ethnicity
Washington Public Higher Education Institutions**

Race/Ethnicity	Washington Public Undergrad. Student Population 2010	Washington Public Graduate Student Population 2010	All Public Faculty, Fall 2007	Public Newly Hired Faculty, Fall 2008-10
White Non-Hispanic	61.3%	62.5%	80.5%	44.5%
Black Non-Hispanic	4.2%	2.5%	2.0%	1.5%
Hispanic	7.5%	4.3%	3.0%	5.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	8.5%	9.9%	6.5%	5.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.4%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%
Multiple / Other	3.4%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%
Unknown	10.5%	7.8%	4.3%	29.2%
Non-resident Alien	3.2%	11.5%	2.1%	12.9%
TOTAL*	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Center for Education Statistics, 2011.

