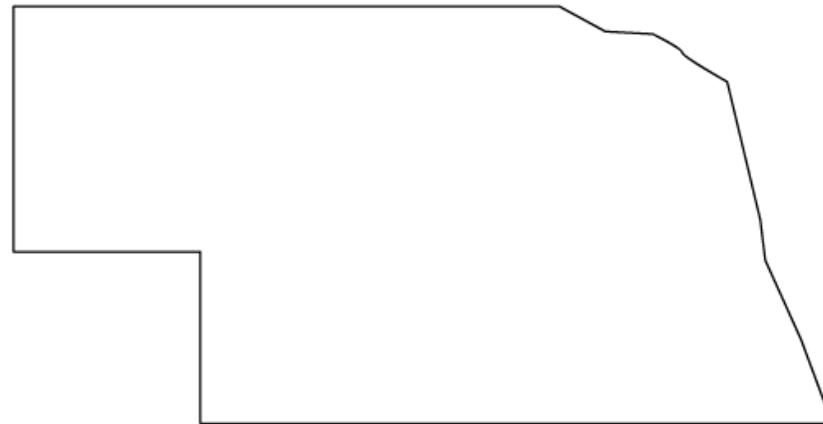


August
2015

A Report by the
Coordinating Commission
for Postsecondary
Education



***Delivering Courses Beyond
Campus Walls***

**Off-campus and Distance Education
at Nebraska Public Institutions
2013-2014**

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Delivering Courses Beyond Campus Walls

Highlights of the Report

2013-2014

What is distance delivery?

- Traditional delivery—instructor and students are in the same time and place away from the campus; for example, a face-to-face class in a different town or a location in the community other than the campus.
- Synchronous delivery—instructor and students are in the same time, but not the same place; for example, two-way interactive video, where the instructor is in one location, often on the campus with students in a classroom, and delivers the course at the same time by video to other students at a “receiving” site or sites.
- Asynchronous delivery—instructor and students are in a different time and place; for example, an online course where students work on their own and there is no specified time for the class as a whole to have contact with the instructor.

Which Nebraska public institutions offer courses at distance?

- All six community colleges, the three state colleges, and the University of Nebraska campuses offer courses at distance (Table I). Institutions were instructed to report all courses offered at a location other than a main campus or a branch campus.
- Overall, the number of courses offered at distance increased by 12.7% from 2011-12 to 2013-14. All sectors also increased the number of courses offered from 2012-13 to 2013-14, although four individual institutions reported a decline.
 - Between 2012-13 and 2013-14, the university increased their offerings by 30% with each institution increasing the number of courses.
 - The state college offerings increased by 3.1% overall, with a decline at CSC between 2012-13 and 2013-14. However, between 2011-12 and 2013-14 CSC increased distance courses by 53%.

- The number of distance courses at the community colleges decreased by 2.3%. Three of the six colleges (MPCC, SCC, and WNCC) experienced increases.
 - At MPCC, SCC, and WNCC the increases came in traditionally-delivered courses.
 - The number of courses offered by traditional delivery at MCC appears high because the college has three education centers that are not considered branch campuses but enroll large numbers of students (Sarpy, Applied Technology-Irvington, and Fremont with adjacent Washington County Technology).

What is the most popular method of delivery?

- When the Commission first collected this information in the early 1990s, traditional delivery was the primary method of reaching students who could not be present on campus. Synchronous delivery consisted of a few two-way interactive video courses and asynchronous delivery was mainly pre-recorded audio and video courses.
- Today asynchronous delivery is the most popular delivery mechanism in all three sectors, while synchronous is the least-used.
- The popularity of asynchronous courses is illustrated in Graph I. Asynchronous delivery surpassed synchronous delivery in 2000-01 and traditional delivery in 2004-05. The apparent minimal decline between 2010-11 and 2011-12 may be due to a possible anomalous report from CCC in 2010-11. Had their 2010-11 figure been closer to previous years, the total for 2010-11 would have been smaller and there would have been a slight increase in 2011-12.
- The number of traditional delivery courses declined steadily from 2005-06 to 2009-10, but increased in 2010-11, dropped only slightly in 2011-12, and rose in each of the next two years. Like the asynchronous courses at CCC, the “bump” in 2010-11 may be attributable to an anomalous report that year by NECC.
- Some of the increase in asynchronous delivery and decline in traditional delivery might be attributed to institutional enrollment policies. Traditionally-delivered courses often have a minimum enrollment of 8 or 10 students to ensure that the majority of instructional costs are covered by tuition. Likewise, receive sites for synchronously delivered courses may have a required threshold of 2 or 3 students. If these numbers aren’t reached, the class or receive site

is cancelled. Asynchronous courses may have a much lower threshold, or even no threshold, resulting in fewer cancellations and, therefore, a higher number of course offerings.

- The community colleges are by far the largest users of synchronous delivery. While synchronous delivery is the least used overall, the large number at the community colleges is due, in part, to dual enrollment courses offered to high school students at their high school building. The ability of colleges to offer synchronous courses to K-12 schools was enhanced by the passage of LB1208 in 2006. The bill provided for improvement in connectivity state-wide and offered incentives for K-12 schools to participate in distance delivery.

What courses are offered at distance?

- Almost every type of course is offered at distance, including courses requiring hands-on activities such as biology, nursing, and mechanics. (Also see the section on degrees and awards available at distance on page 5.)
- At the community colleges, the largest single category of courses is “liberal arts and sciences,” including those for academic transfer programs, that are reported together in a single category.
- At the four year institutions, large numbers of courses were offered in business, education, health professions, and computer and information sciences.

How many students are served at distance?

- In 1998-99, the first year the Commission collected enrollment data, there were 7,512 students (duplicated headcount¹) enrolled in courses offered either synchronously or asynchronously. Over three times that many were served at distance by traditional delivery (Graph II).
- By 2005-06 the numbers had shifted dramatically as the delivery methods shifted—a trend that continues in 2013-14. The number of students enrolled in asynchronous courses increased from just over 4,400 in 1998 to 143,600 (duplicated headcount*) in 2013-14.

¹ Duplicated headcount means that a student is counted every time that student takes a course.

- The total number of students served by some form of distance education was 198,910 (duplicated headcount*) in 2013-14 (Table II). This figure is a 7.3% increase from 2012-13 due in part to an increase of almost 8,000 students in traditional delivery. This counteracts the decline of over 10,000 students between 2011-12 and 2012-13.
- The only sector decline occurred in the community colleges although in other sectors UNMC and CSC reported fewer students. Large declines occurred at CCC, MCC, and NECC. These are also the three community colleges that offered fewer distance opportunities (Table I).

Are degrees or other awards available entirely by distance technology?

- A variety of awards are available at distance, ranging from certificates at the community colleges to master's degrees at the university and state colleges and an EdD at UNL.
- In 2008-09 the number of awards approached 100. In 2011-12 189 awards were reported, and in 2012-13 there were 209 available using technology (Table III). A small number are available utilizing strictly traditional delivery, and a greater number are delivered with a combination of distance and traditional delivery. By far, the largest number are delivered entirely by some type of distance delivery technology. That number appears to have declined in 2013-14, but two institutions who reported in 2012-13 did not report this year. Had UNMC and CCC reported, the number of awards in 2013-14 would likely have exceeded 2012-13.
- The awards are made in numerous disciplines. The following highlights apply only to awards available entirely at distance in 2013-14.
 - The majority of the awards reported at UNL and UNK are master's degrees and although the disciplines vary, many are in education. UNL has eight teaching endorsements and UNK has seven. UNL also offers an EdD in education, Master of Engineering, Master of Applied Science, MBA, LLM, and 20 certificates. UNO's degrees consist of the BGS in 12 fields, an MS in criminal justice, and the master of public administration. UNK offers five baccalaureate degrees. UNL reports only one four-year degree because not all the general education courses are available at distance for most baccalaureate degrees, even though all the courses for the major are available.

- UNMC did not report this year, but in the past they offered a BSN, three BS degrees in radiologic science technology, a BS in clinical laboratory science, a masters in clinical perfusion, a masters for physician assistant, and two certificates.
- All of the state colleges offer the master of organizational management at distance and CSC and WSC offer the MBA. PSC has baccalaureate degrees in business, criminal justice, and psychology. CSC offers four baccalaureate degrees in four different fields. WSC provides the Education Specialist and MSE in school administration entirely at distance, while CSC and PSC offer masters in education.
- Of the four community colleges that reported the information in 2013-14, two offered their academic transfer program entirely at distance. Three offered a certificate, diploma, or degree in at least one area of business. All four offered some type of program related to allied health such as nursing or health information management. For some this was limited to medical billing and insurance coding, and some were offered with a combination of traditional and distance delivery. Awards in information technology and criminal justice are also common.

Where are the distance courses offered?

- Most asynchronous courses are available anywhere a student has access to a computer, including his or her home, work place, or on campus. Because students enrolled in asynchronous courses could be anywhere in the world, the Commission does not ask the institutions to report this information.
- Synchronous and traditionally-delivered courses were once offered in the majority of Nebraska counties, but this number has declined as the popularity of asynchronous courses has increased.
- Most synchronous courses require a location capable of receiving a live transmission from the campus. Many high schools and public buildings have this capability. Some institutions utilize this capability to offer college courses to high school students, especially after the passage of LB1208 in 2006 that was the impetus for the creation of a statewide network for distance education.

How are high school students served?

- The courses counted in this report are frequently offered for both high school and college credit and are usually called “dual enrollment” courses in Nebraska. Also included in this report are college courses offered in high schools for which students receive only college credit although they are still enrolled in high school. These are sometimes called “concurrent enrollment” courses.
- Students who live near a college campus or who elect to take an online course can also earn college credit. These students are not generally counted separately and are not reflected in the high school data.
- In 2011-12 there were 1,579 college courses offered to 14,515 high school students. In 2013-14 the number of courses offered increased to 1,990, but the number of students served increased by more than 25%. (Table IV).
- All sectors increased the number of students served over the three years reported. There were some declines at individual institutions, most notably fewer students at WNCC. All sectors also increased the number of courses offered, with some declines at individual institutions.
- As in 2012-13, the largest number of courses was reported by UNO (Graph III) as well as the largest number of students served (Graph IV). Much of UNO’s success can be attributed to a partnership between UNO and the Omaha area high schools by which UNO accepts Advanced Placement courses taught in high schools for college credit.
- MCC ranked second in both the number of courses and students served. This is expected since most high schools partner with community colleges for their dual enrollment courses.

NOTE: All data were self-reported by the institutions.
Anomalies were investigated as time allowed.

TABLE I
Summary of Delivery Methods and Number of Courses
2011-2014

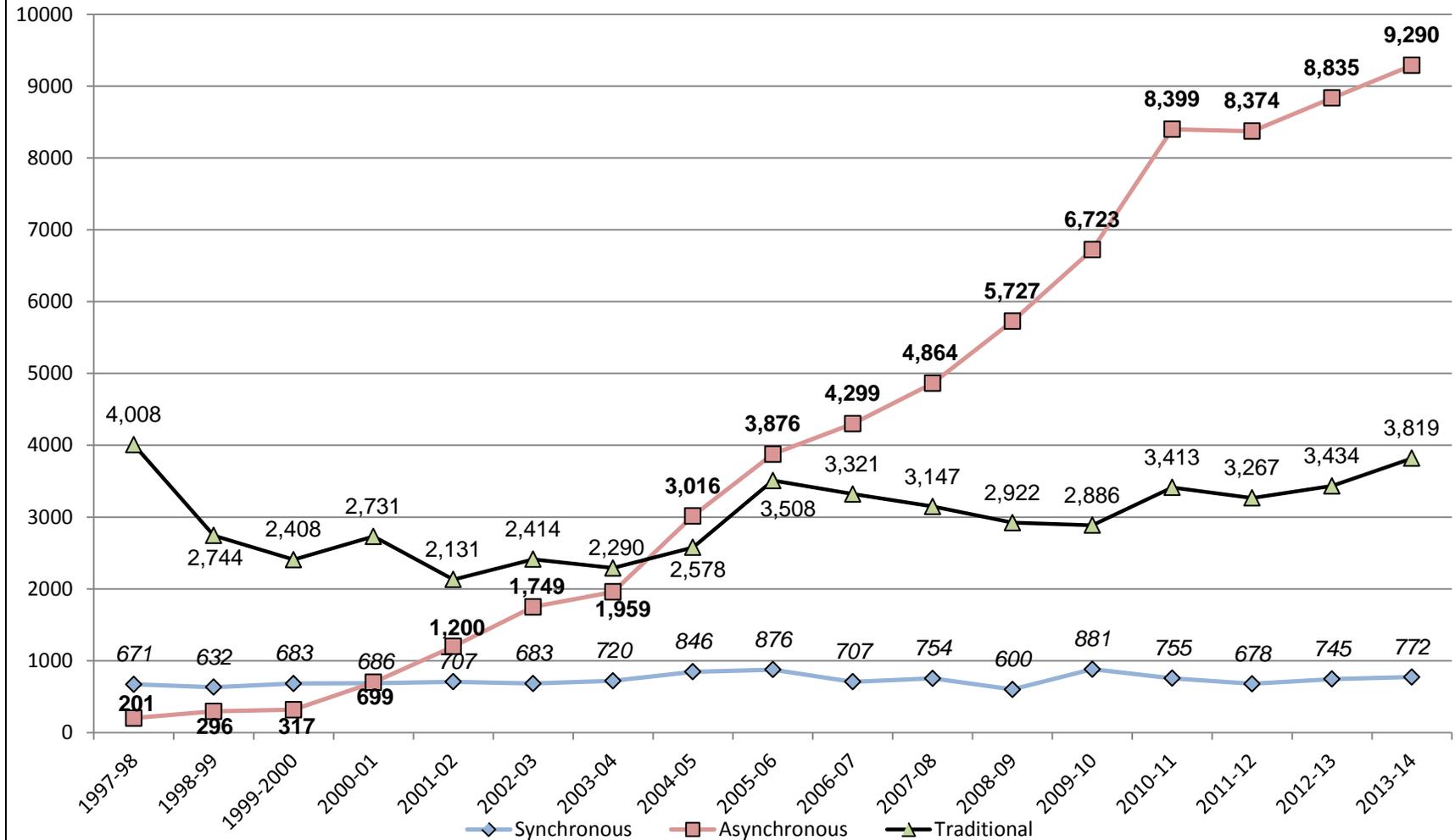
Institution	2011-12				2012-13				2013-14			
	Synch	Asynch	Tradition	Total	Synch	Asynch	Tradition	Total	Synch	Asynch	Tradition	Total
UNK	7	676	3	686	6	545	4	555	5	823	4	832
UNL	0	829	22	851	0	1,025	11	1,036	0	1,287	5	1,292
UNMC	105	243	0	348	99	254	0	353	101	449	0	550
UNO	0	649	574	1,223	1	730	623	1,354	0	936	677	1,613
NCTA	0	27	0	27	0	26	0	26	0	32	0	32
University Total	112	2,424	599	3,135	106	2,580	638	3,324	106	3,527	686	4,319
CSC	67	443	32	542	41	733	56	830	23	728	48	799
PSC	0	345	163	508	0	310	143	453	0	335	135	470
WSC	8	281	89	378	8	316	105	429	8	360	128	496
State College Total	75	1,069	284	1,428	49	1,359	304	1,712	31	1,423	311	1,765
CCC	149	878	399	1,426	148	842	306	1,296	139	578	284	1,001
MCC	21	1,898	1,432	3,351	59	1,855	1,343	3,257	132	1,751	1,335	3,218
MPCC	87	216	0	303	137	260	73	470	176	275	189	640
NECC	141	341	144	626	158	413	574	1,145	134	366	548	1,048
SCC	8	1,395	131	1,534	0	1,391	63	1,454	2	1,286	181	1,469
WNCC	85	153	278	516	88	135	133	356	52	84	285	421
Community College Total	491	4,881	2,384	7,756	590	4,896	2,492	7,978	635	4,340	2,822	7,797
Grand Total	678	8,374	3,267	12,319	745	8,835	3,434	13,014	772	9,290	3,819	13,881

MCC's Traditional total includes courses offered at Sarpy Center, Applied Technology Center, Washington County Center, and Fremont Center

WNCC's Traditional total includes courses offered at Regional West Medical Center, Pine Ridge Job Corps, and at the Alliance & Sidney Centers

GRAPH I

**Distance Education Courses Offered by Nebraska Public Institutions
1997-2014**



GRAPH II

**Distance Education Enrollments at Nebraska Public Institutions
(duplicated headcount)**

1998-2014

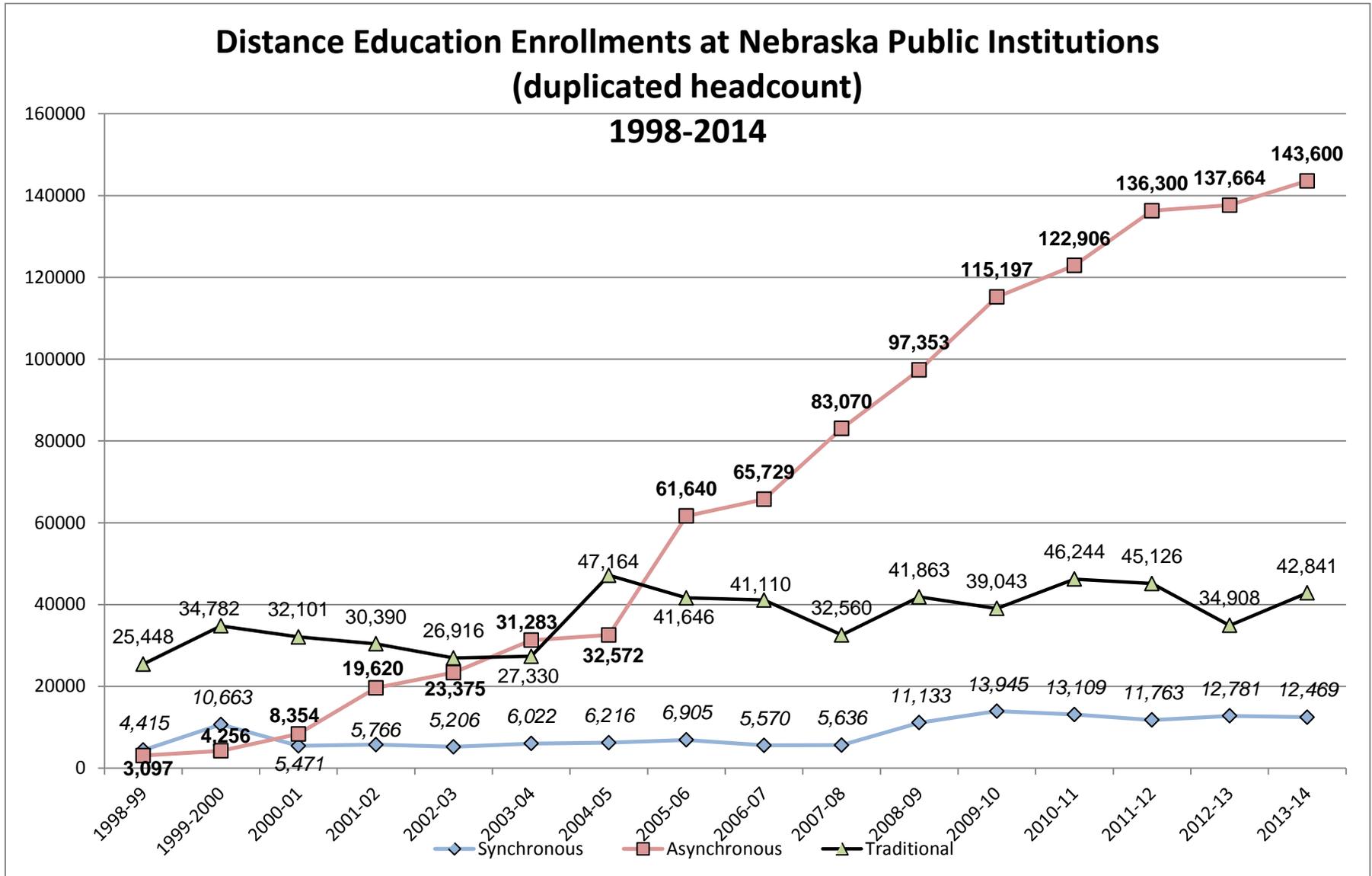


TABLE II
Estimate of the Number of Students Served by Nebraska Public Institutions by Distance Learning
(duplicated headcount)
2013-2014

Institution/Sector	Synchronous*		Asynchronous	Sub-Total	Traditional	Grand Total
	Sending	Receiving				
UNK	101	16	13,140	13,257	29	13,286
UNL	0	0	21,446	21,446	90	21,536
UNMC	980	1,679	2,150	4,809	0	4,809
UNO	0	0	20,844	20,844	5,502	26,346
NCTA	0	0	399	399	0	399
University Total	1,081	1,695	57,979	60,755	5,621	66,376
CSC	182	214	10,837	11,233	482	11,715
PSC	0	0	7,346	7,346	1,711	9,057
WSC	101	13	4,450	4,564	1,349	5,913
State College Total	283	227	22,633	23,143	3,542	26,685
CCC	750	1,681	8,130	10,561	3,298	13,859
MCC	1,646	150	27,767	29,563	14,233	43,796
MPCC	1,404	1,041	3,429	5,874	1,240	7,114
NECC	998	824	5,207	7,029	4,072	11,101
SCC	0	18	17,346	17,364	1,640	19,004
WNCC	358	313	1,109	1,780	9,195	10,975
Community College Total	5,156	4,027	62,988	72,171	33,678	105,849
Grand Totals	6,520	5,949	143,600	156,069	42,841	198,910

*The location from which instruction originates (i.e., the location of the teacher) is called the sending site.
Receiving sites are the remote locations where students are participating in class by two-way audio-video.

TABLE III
Awards Available at Distance from Nebraska Public Institutions
2012-2014

Institution	2012-13			2013-14		
	Synchronous & Asynchronous Delivery	Traditional Delivery	Combination of Synchronous, Asynchronous, & Traditional	Synchronous & Asynchronous Delivery	Traditional Delivery	Combination of Synchronous, Asynchronous, & Traditional
UNK	26	0	1	36	0	1
UNL	33	0	0	68	0	7
UNMC	9	0	1	NR	NR	NR
UNO	11	0	20	14	0	20
NCTA	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
University Total	79	0	22	118	0	28
CSC	9	0	5	9	0	5
PSC	11	0	0	11	0	0
WSC	3	5	1	4	6	1
State College Total	23	5	6	24	6	6
CCC	55	0	0	NR	NR	NR
MCC	24	0	0	25	0	0
MPCC	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
NECC	14	11	19	14	11	19
SCC	12	0	0	2	0	10
WNCC	2	0	6	2	6	5
Community College Total	107	11	25	43	17	34
Grand Total	209	16	53	185	23	68

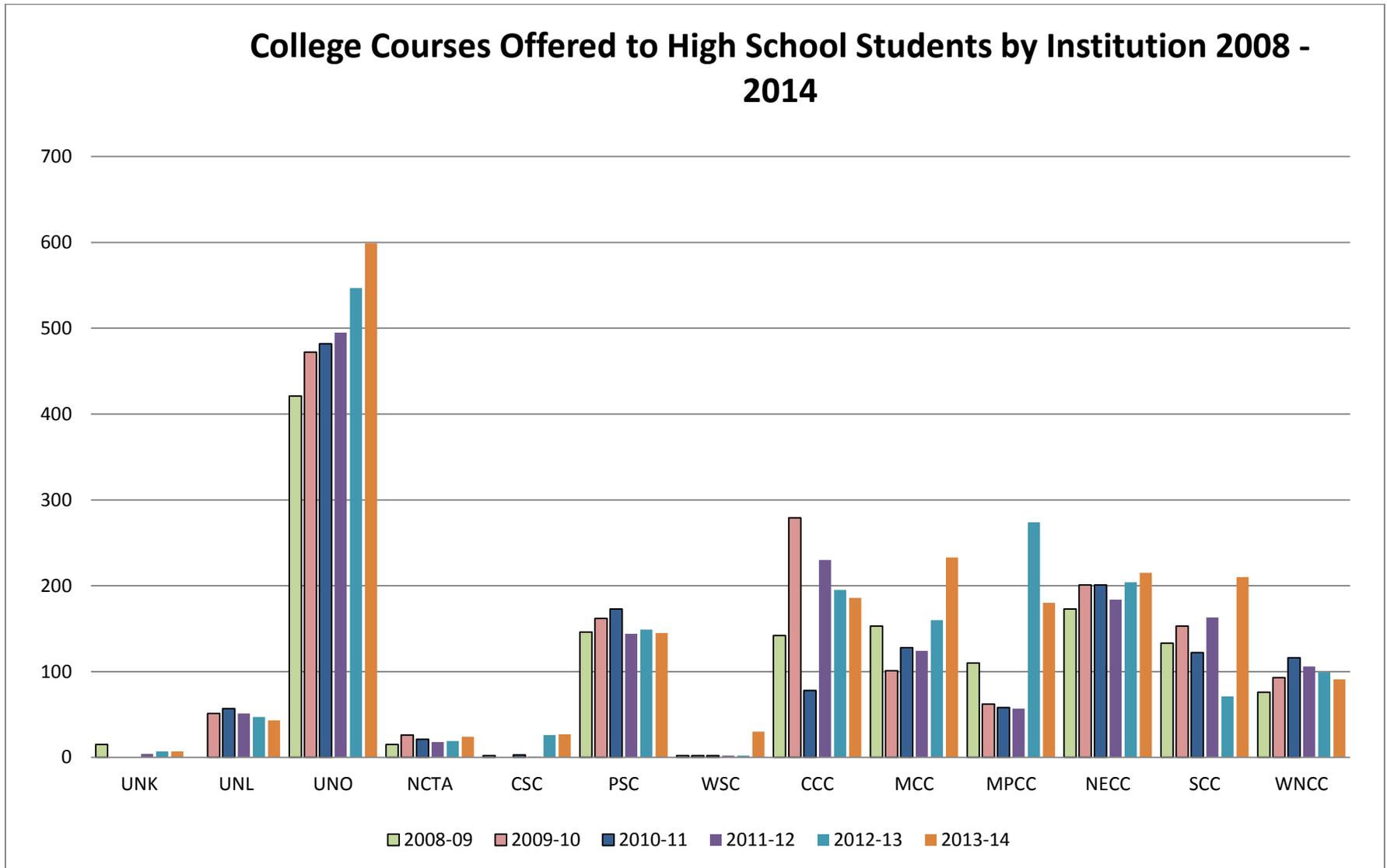
*NR – Not Reported

TABLE IV
Summary of College Courses Offered to High School Students in Nebraska by Public Institution
(duplicated headcount)
2011-2014

Institution	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	# Courses	# Students	# Courses	# Students	# Courses	# Students
UNK	4	105	7	95	7	73
UNL	51	203	47	235	43	174
UNMC	0	0	0	0	0	0
UNO	495	3,885	547	3,945	599	4,403
NCTA	18	133	19	139	24	139
University Total	568	4,326	620	4,414	673	4,789
CSC	1	9	26	241	27	325
PSC	144	1,748	149	1,889	145	1,959
WSC	2	10	2	27	30	294
State College Total	147	1,767	177	2,157	202	2,578
CCC	230	1,778	195	2,541	186	2,409
MCC	124	1,741	160	2,188	233	3,422
MPCC	57	358	274	1,724	180	970
NECC	184	1,652	204	1,479	215	1,586
SCC	163	2,013	71	781	210	1,920
WNCC	106	880	99	728	91	551
Community College Total	864	8,422	1,003	9,441	1,115	10,858
Grand Total	1,579	14,515	1,800	16,012	1,990	18,225

GRAPH III

College Courses Offered to High School Students by Institution 2008 - 2014



GRAPH IV

High School Students Participating in College Courses by Institution 2008 - 2014

