

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Postsecondary education in Nevada is provided chiefly by the institutions of the public Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). Nevada's nonpublic higher education sector is comprised of two nonprofit, private four-year colleges; several for-profit, two-year and four-year institutions; and numerous proprietary institutions.

NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The NSHE consists of two research universities, one State college, four community colleges, and one research institute (<http://system.nevada.edu/>). It is governed by the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada, which has stated the following mission:

The mission of the Nevada System of Higher Education is to provide higher education to the citizens of the state at an excellent level of quality consistent with the state's resources. It accomplishes this mission by acquiring, transmitting, and preserving knowledge throughout the region, nation, and world. The System provides an educated and technically skilled citizenry for public service, economic growth and the general welfare, contributes to an educated and trained workforce for industry and commerce, facilitates the individual quest for personal fulfillment, and engages in research that advances both theory and practice.

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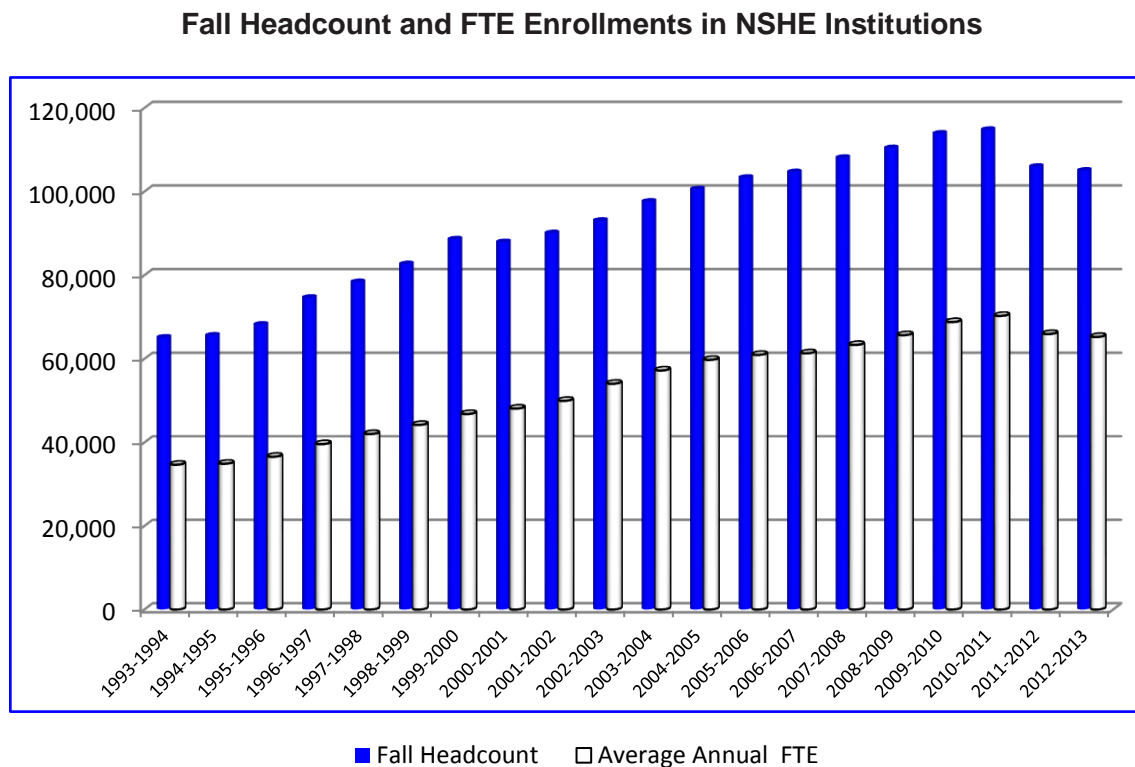
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Campuses

The System's four-year institutions include the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Nevada State College (NSC) in Henderson offers baccalaureate degrees with special emphasis in nursing and teacher education. The System's two-year institutions include the College of Southern Nevada with three main campuses and 11 academic centers. Truckee Meadows Community College includes a main campus and four satellite sites in Reno. Western Nevada College has a main campus in Carson City, two satellite centers, and several rural instructional centers. Great Basin College, in Elko, operates four branch campuses and numerous satellite centers. In 2007, the Board of Regents approved requested name changes to reflect their authorization of selected baccalaureate degrees at three of the two-year institutions, thus dropping the word "community" from their names.

Finally, the Desert Research Institute is the nonprofit research campus of the NSHE, which is overseen by the Chancellor and the Board of Regents.

The following graph displays the fall headcount and average annual full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollments for the system institutions since 1993.



The Fall 2012 headcount enrollment for the NSHE was 105,045 students at all institutions, including all divisions and degree levels. According to the NSHE Office of Academic and Student Affairs, the calculations to determine FTE are based upon 15 credit hours for undergraduate students, 12 credit hours for master's level students, and 9 credit hours for doctoral students.

Governance of the NSHE

The NSHE is governed by an elected 13-member Board of Regents. Article 11 of the *Nevada Constitution* provides for the establishment and administration of the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada. Section 4 of Article 11 provides that the State university shall be controlled by a Board of Regents whose duties shall be prescribed by law. Section 5 authorizes the Legislature to establish normal schools (teacher training institutions) and other grades from primary level to university as needed. Section 6 directs the Legislature to appropriate revenues for the support and maintenance of the schools and university. Finally, Section 7 provides that the Board of Regents is to control and manage the affairs and funds of the university under such regulations as may be provided by law.

Because of the constitutional status of the Board of Regents, the Nevada Supreme Court has ruled on the question of the freedom of Regents from legislative control. The first major opinion stems from a 1947 act of the Legislature, establishing a board of advisory regents. The Court ruled that the advisory board violated the constitutional provision that the State university be controlled by the Board of Regents. Legislative Counsel has stated:

The Nevada Supreme Court has interpreted the Nevada Constitution as vesting the Board of Regents with exclusive executive and administrative control of the university subject to the “right of the legislature to prescribe duties and other well-recognized legislative rights.” [*King v. Board of Regents*, 65 Nev. 533, 565, 569 (1948)]

The second opinion resulted from a 1979 Board of Regents’ policy, enacting mandatory faculty retirement. Since *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 281.370 prohibits the discharge of a person because of age, a suit was brought by a university professor. In 1981, the Court modified the *King* ruling somewhat. Legislative Counsel stated:

The Nevada Supreme Court subsequently carved out an exception to its holdings in *King* when it required the [NSHE] to comply with policies that are imposed on a statewide basis. In *Oakley*, the Court held that a state statute . . . may be applied constitutionally to the [NSHE] because the statute “reasonably and properly impose[d] . . . the same obligation that it impose[d] on other state, county and municipal boards.” However, the Court noted that “the legislature may not invade the constitutional powers of the Board through legislation which directly interferes with essential functions of the University.” [*Board of Regents v. Oakley*, 97 Nev. 605 (1981)]

Most statutes relating specifically to the Regents and NSHE are codified in Chapter 396 (“Nevada System of Higher Education”) of NRS. In addition to the overall control of the NSHE interpreted by the Supreme Court, the Board of Regents by statute may:

- Direct the NSHE, composed of branches and facilities, as the Regents deem appropriate;
- Prescribe rules for its own government;

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- Employ a Chancellor of the system and establish personnel contract policies;
- Receive and disburse State appropriations to the NSHE;
- Accept property in the name of the NSHE;
- Admit students without discrimination; and
- Determine the courses of study and issue diplomas.

Admission

The Board of Regents' general admission policy encourages member institutions to increase student participation and completion of degrees by minority groups, women, and members of other protected classes. Online application to the institutions is available through their individual websites.

Universities

To qualify for admission to the two universities, an applicant must be a graduate of an accredited or approved high school with a minimum of 13 high school credits in specified subjects and at least an overall 3.0 weighted grade point average (GPA). Effective Fall 2013, students seeking university admission must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and achieve a combined score on the Critical Reading and SAT Math sections of at least 1040, or take the American College Testing, Inc. (ACT) assessment and achieve a composite score of at least 22; this provision is not applicable to international or transfer students. A student may also submit a Nevada Advanced High School Diploma as qualification for admission. Students with a transferable associate's degree from a NSHE community college will be admitted into the universities regardless of their GPA at the community college.

A student who does not meet the university admission requirements may be admitted through other criteria, such as a combination of test scores and GPA that indicate a potential for success, special talents or abilities in the visual or performing arts or athletics, overcoming adversity or special hardship, or other special circumstances. The number of students admitted under these criteria must not exceed 15 percent of the previous year's admissions.

Nevada State College

Incoming freshmen must have graduated from an accredited high school with a minimum GPA of 2.0 plus a minimum of 12 high school credits in specified subjects. High school students who are at least 15 years of age may be enrolled as non-degree students in a maximum of six undergraduate credits or equivalents per semester. Students who have completed the junior year of high school with at least a 2.0 GPA may be provisionally admitted.

Two-Year Colleges

Effective Fall 2012, the four community colleges require all applicants seeking a degree or certificate to qualify for admission by showing they are a graduate of a high school or its equivalent, or a qualified international student. Admission to a NSHE community college implies general admission to

the college only and does not constitute admission to a specific curriculum or course of study that may require additional admission criteria.

Tuition and Fees

Pursuant to NRS 396.540, tuition at all NSHE institutions is free to legal residents of Nevada; however, registration fees apply. Nonresident students pay tuition in addition to the registration fees that are required of residents. The Board of Regents establishes the tuition and fee rates for all NSHE institutions, and the Legislature concurs in the rates used to establish General Fund Appropriations as part of the NSHE budget.

The following tables provide the registration fees and nonresident tuition rates for 2011-2014.

NSHE Registration Fees Schedule Per Credit			
	2011-2012*	2012-2013*	2013-2014
Universities (undergraduate)	\$177.25	\$177.25	\$191.50
Universities (graduate)	\$251.50	\$264.00	\$264.00
NSC (undergraduate)	\$128.00	\$128.00	\$138.25
Community Colleges (upper division)	\$128.00	\$128.00	\$138.25
Community Colleges	\$78.25	\$78.25	\$84.50
*Includes student surcharges.			

Source: Board of Regents, *Procedures & Guidelines Manual*, June 2013.

NSHE Nonresident Tuition Assessed in Addition to Registration Fees Per Year			
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Full-time*, Universities	\$13,595	\$13,910	\$13,910
Full-time*, NSC	\$10,045	\$10,275	\$10,275
Full-time*, Community Colleges	\$6,495	\$6,645	\$6,645
*Nonresident tuition is assessed on the basis of full-time or part-time enrollment. Full-time nonresident tuition rates are assessed to students enrolled in seven or more credits. Part-time students pay on a per-credit basis.			

Source: Board of Regents, *Procedures & Guidelines Manual*, June 2013.

The registration fees include surcharges that were put in place for academic years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. These ranged from \$24.50 per credit hour at the universities to \$9 per credit hour at the community colleges.

Articulation

Articulation refers to the process whereby individual higher education institutions agree to accept for transfer the academic credits earned at other higher education institutions. The Board of Regents has established a NSHE Articulation Board to review and evaluate current articulation policies and formulate additional policies. The Board of Regents has also mandated a website outlining the transfer process and protections given to baccalaureate degree-seeking students. The site includes the rights and responsibilities of a transfer student and the responsibilities of all the NSHE institutions.

The NSHE general credit transfer policy for all campuses provides that students who transfer with a NSHE associate degree of arts, business, science, or applied science are considered to have satisfied lower-division curricular requirements necessary for admission to upper-division study with full junior status. Students who complete baccalaureate level credits without receiving an associate degree may transfer the credits to the State college and universities at a minimum as general elective credit.

All baccalaureate academic majors at a university or college must have transfer agreements with NSHE community colleges. These agreements must provide clear information for community college students as to those courses that will transfer efficiently to another NSHE institution within each major. Information on these agreements must be available to all students on each campus.

Financial Aid

All State-supported institutions are accredited by organizations recognized by the United States Department of Education and, therefore, are eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs, which include grants, loans, and work-study. Forty percent of the State's annual revenues from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement have been allocated to fund the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship, which is overseen by the State Treasurer. In the 26th Special Session, however, the Legislature revised that allocation to permit the money in the Millennium Scholarship Trust Fund to be used for any other purpose authorized by the Legislature.

Statutorily, any qualifying Nevada high school graduate who has resided in this State for a minimum of two years may use the scholarship funds to attend a State institution or a nonprofit accredited institution organized in Nevada. To be eligible, a student must obtain a specified high school GPA and apply for the scholarship within a designated period of years following graduation. A postsecondary student must maintain a certain GPA to retain the scholarship. Nevada does not have a statewide need-based student financial aid program similar to the merit-based Millennium Scholarship, although the NSHE institutions allocate State appropriations and revenues for such purposes from student registration fees, according to Board of Regents policies and institutional procedures. In addition, the institutions allocate some of their resources to financial aid in the form of scholarships, grants, employment, and loans.

Financing the NSHE

The 2013 Legislature approved a higher education budget totaling \$1.5 billion over the 2013-2015 Biennium. This includes State General Fund support equaling \$971 million, which is 2.8 percent more than in the previous biennium. Also approved were non-General Fund revenues totaling \$525 million from authorized sources including student registration fees, nonresident tuition, student application fees, federal and county revenues, and operating capital investment income.

The following table displays the summary of appropriations for the NSHE for the 2013-2015 Biennium:

NSHE Appropriations for 2013-2015 Biennium			
	2013-2014	2014-2015	Total
General Fund ¹	\$480,643,898	\$492,758,693	\$973,402,591
Federal Funds	\$3,009,979	\$3,015,459	\$6,025,438
Other	\$258,680,574	\$260,697,089	\$519,377,663
Total	\$742,334,451	\$756,471,241	\$1,498,805,692
¹ Total General Fund appropriations include approximately \$1 million annually for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, which was transferred to the NSHE, effective in Fiscal Year 2010.			

Source: Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, *Nevada Legislative Appropriations Report*, 2013.

The 2013 Legislature's review and discussions of the *Executive Budget* focused primarily on the adoption of a new funding formula to distribute State General Fund dollars to institutions within the NSHE. During the 2011-2012 Interim, a study was conducted that proposed a new funding formula based upon the credit hours successfully completed by students, instead of simple enrollment counts. Under the new system, colleges and universities are rewarded for student achievement.

There was concern expressed during the legislative session that the new funding formula could have unintended negative consequences on Great Basin College and Western Nevada College. The Legislature appropriated \$9.4 million to these two schools over the biennium to mitigate these potential consequences of the new funding formula.

The old funding formula also included a disincentive for schools to generate their own revenue, because any supplemental revenue generated was offset by a reduction in State funding. Under the new funding formula, these revenues will not offset the amount of State General Fund dollars appropriated.

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The new funding formula also introduces a separate pool of performance-based funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014–2015. Five percent of each institution’s base General Fund appropriation—about \$19 million statewide—will be set aside to further incentivize each school to pursue specific performance goals, such as:

- Assisting and encouraging students to complete certificates and degrees;
- Awarding degrees in preferred fields like engineering, health care, science, and technology; and
- Supporting lower income and minority students toward graduation.

If this performance-based funding proves effective, the current intent is to increase it by 5 percent each year until it reaches 20 percent annually.

NONPUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Most postsecondary education in Nevada is provided by state-supported institutions. A number of two-year and four-year nonpublic institutions in Nevada are regionally accredited by organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Nevada’s Commission on Postsecondary Education (<http://www.cpe.state.nv.us/>) is the sole authority for licensing a proprietary postsecondary educational institution in this State.

Colleges and Universities

Nevada has one accredited private, nonprofit, four-year degree-granting institution—Sierra Nevada College—which was founded in 1969 and is located in Incline Village. Since the college’s inception, many academic programs have been integrated with the environment of Lake Tahoe. Another accredited, nonprofit institution—Roseman University of Health Sciences—began in Las Vegas as the Nevada College of Pharmacy, enrolling its first class in 2001. Emphasizing health care professions, the university offers degrees in nursing and business as well as other postdoctoral training and continuing education.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, several accredited private, for-profit, four-year institutions operate in Nevada, including:

- Art Institute of Las Vegas;
- DeVry University;
- ITT Technical Institute;
- Morrison University; and
- University of Phoenix.

Other accredited private, for-profit institutions in Nevada include:

- Advanced Training Institute;
- Career College of Northern Nevada;
- Everest College;
- Healthcare Preparatory Institute;
- International School of Hospitality;
- Kaplan College; and
- Nevada Career Academy.

Proprietary Schools

Proprietary schools represent another form of postsecondary education. Such schools may be distinguished from other educational entities based largely on their for-profit education and training programs. According to the Commission on Postsecondary Education, many of these for-profit schools provide training in a variety of occupational fields including, but not limited to, bartending, construction, culinary arts, and real estate.

COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS

Nevada's two college savings plans are codified in Chapter 353B ("College Savings Plans of Nevada") of NRS.

Nevada Prepaid Tuition Program

In 1997, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 271 (Chapter 687, *Statutes of Nevada*), providing for a prepaid tuition program to be administered by the State Treasurer. Family members can choose to pay a lump sum, spread the payment out over five years with 60 equal payments, or pay each month from the time of enrollment until the child is ready to start college. This program is fully transferable to private or public out-of-state colleges and universities and can be transferred to another family member. The purchaser does not have to pay federal tax on any interest or the increased contract value each year. This program qualifies under Section 529 of the *Internal Revenue Code*. Additional information may be obtained at the website of the State Treasurer at <https://nvprepaid.gov/>.

Nevada College Savings Program

The Legislature provided for a college savings program in 2001 with the enactment of Assembly Bill 554 (Chapter 445, *Statutes of Nevada*). The State Treasurer was authorized to adopt regulations to establish a qualified tuition program pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 529 (2012). To implement

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this program, the State Treasurer has contracted with private providers to offer these savings plans. Additional information may be obtained at <https://nevadatreasurer.gov/CollegeSavings.htm>.

ACTIONS OF THE 2013 LEGISLATURE

The 2013 Nevada Legislature considered a number of bills relating to the State colleges and universities and approved a higher education budget totaling \$1.5 billion over the 2013-2015 Biennium. Significant legislation related to postsecondary education included:

- Senate Bill 102 (Chapter 68, *Statutes of Nevada*) expanded the privately-funded scholarship, created in memory of the late Governor Kenny Guinn. The program will now assist two students each year—one enrolled in a northern Nevada institution and one in the south;
- Senate Bill 487 (Chapter 523, *Statutes of Nevada*), and S.B. 2 (Chapter 2, *Statutes of Nevada 2013, 27th Special Session*), added an additional \$7 million in State General Funds to the Millennium Scholarship program; and
- Senate Bill 391 (Chapter 494, *Statutes of Nevada*) requires an interim study of community college governance, including recommendations for other governance options in Nevada.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACT—college entrance and placement examination produced by American College Testing, Inc.

ECS—Education Commission of the States

GED—General Educational Development credential

GPA—grade point average

ICR—indirect cost recovery

IPEDS—Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems

NCES—National Center for Education Statistics

NCHEMS—National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

NSHE—Nevada System of Higher Education

SAT—Scholastic Assessment Test, college entrance and placement examination produced by the Educational Testing Service

SHHEO—State Higher Education Executive Officers

WICHE—Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education