



LaGUARDIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

CUNY

World Language Enrollment at Community Colleges between 1960 and 2010

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Outline

- The MLA Enrollment Survey
- ML Enrollments at 4-year and 2-year Institutions between 1958 and 2021
- ML Enrollments and diversity data at CUNY
- Implications

The MLA Enrollment Survey

MLA Enrollment Surveys

- The Modern Language Enrollment Survey (Looney and Lusin, 2019; Lusin et al., 2023)
 - Collecting modern language enrollment data of U.S. higher education institutions every 3-4 years
 - The last few surveys were conducted in 2009, 2013, 2016, and 2020/2021
 - Also known as "Enrollment Census" (2,547 institutions with a response rate of 95.8%)
 - Data are publicly available at http://apps.mla.org/flsurvey_search

The screenshot shows the 'Language Enrollment Database, 1958-2016' search page. At the top is the MLA logo and a 'Back to MLA Home' link. Below the title, a brief description of the database is provided. The main search area is divided into two columns: 'Select Language(s)' and 'Select Year(s)'. The 'Select Language(s)' column includes a text input field for language names, a dropdown menu, and a 'Search now' button. The 'Select Year(s)' column includes radio buttons for '2016 Fall', '2016 Summer', '2013 Fall', and '2009 Fall', along with a 'Previous census years' link. Below these columns are links for 'Narrow Search by Geography' and 'Organize Data'. A purple speech bubble with white text is overlaid on the right side of the search area, stating: 'The complete dataset is available on the MLA's website'. At the bottom, there is a disclaimer about the database's comprehensiveness and a contact email for questions.

MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

Back to MLA Home

LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT DATABASE, 1958-2016

Language Enrollment Database, 1958-2016

Data from MLA censuses of language enrollments in United States institutions of higher education. [Read more...](#)
Visit the [Enrollments home page](#) on the MLA site for additional enrollment links.

Select Language(s)
Begin typing a language name in the field below, then select the name in the drop-down menu. Click the X to remove a selected language.
begin typing language name
[Add another language.](#) You may add up to eight languages.
[Select from a full list of languages.](#)

Select Year(s)
Choose up to eight years. The 1969 and 1971 censuses cover the summer semester only. In 2016, there was a summer and a fall census. All other censuses cover the fall semester only.
☒ 2016 Fall
☐ 2016 Summer
☐ 2013 Fall
☐ 2009 Fall
[Previous census years](#)

[Search now](#) [Refine your search](#)

[Narrow Search by Geography](#)

[Organize Data](#)

While the database is comprehensive, for practical reasons the search interface only allows searches of up to eight languages, in eight censuses, in eight states or institutions. Available to researchers is the [complete data set for all censuses](#), as well as an [explanation of the use of the NCES UNITID](#) in the census.

A list of [institutions that did not respond](#) to the MLA census in 2009, 2013, or 2016 is available, as is a list of [institutions reporting no enrollments](#) in languages other than English in 2009, 2013, or 2016.

Please send comments and questions to enrollments@mla.org.

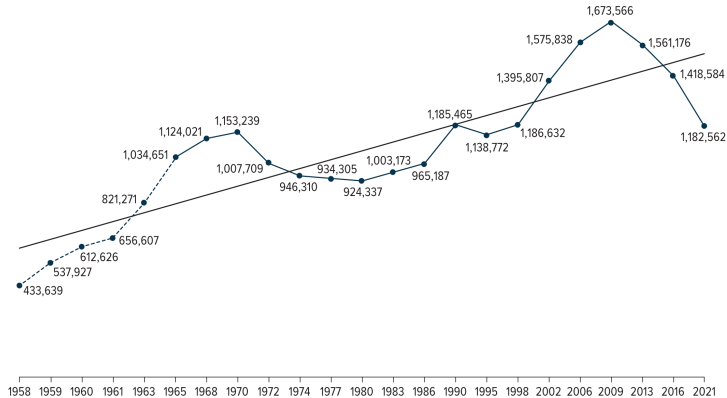
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WL enrollment in the U.S. between 1960 and 2021 I

- Modern language enrollments between 1958 and 2021

Fig. 1a

Fall Language Enrollments by Year



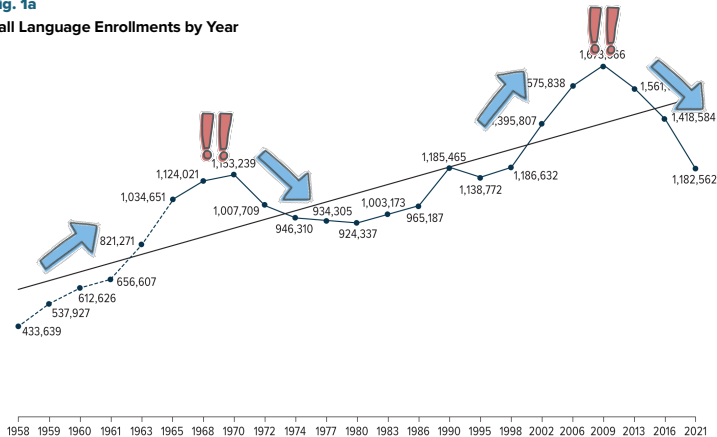
From Lusin et al. (2023). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in US Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2021*. MLA.

WL enrollment in the U.S. between 1960 and 2021 II

- Enrollment trends in 1958-1970, 1970-1980, 1980-2009, and 2009-2020

Fig. 1a

Fall Language Enrollments by Year

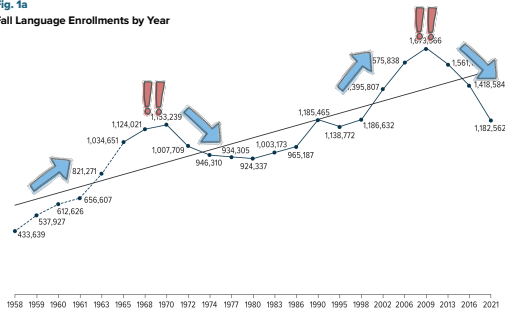


From Lusin et al. (2023). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in US Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2021*. MLA.

WL enrollment in the U.S. between 1960 and 2021 III

- Highs in 1958-1970 and 1980-2009

Fig. 1a
Fall Language Enrollments by Year



From Lusin et al. (2023). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in US Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2021*. MLA.

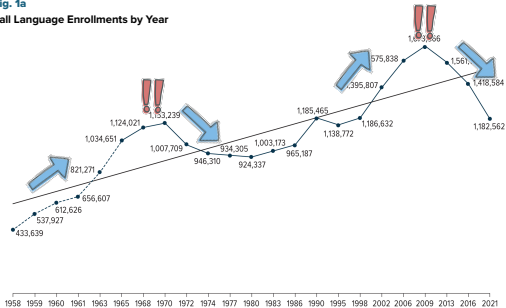
- "[this survey] reported over 800,000 enrollments in modern foreign languages in Fall 1963, an increase of almost a third since 1960" (Marron et al., 1964)
- "Course enrollments in languages other than English reached a new high in 2009 ... Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew are the only two languages that posted losses in enrollments for 2009." (Furman et al., 2010)

WL enrollment in the U.S. between 1960 and 2021 IV

- Lows in 1970-1980 and 2009-present

Fig. 1a

Fall Language Enrollments by Year

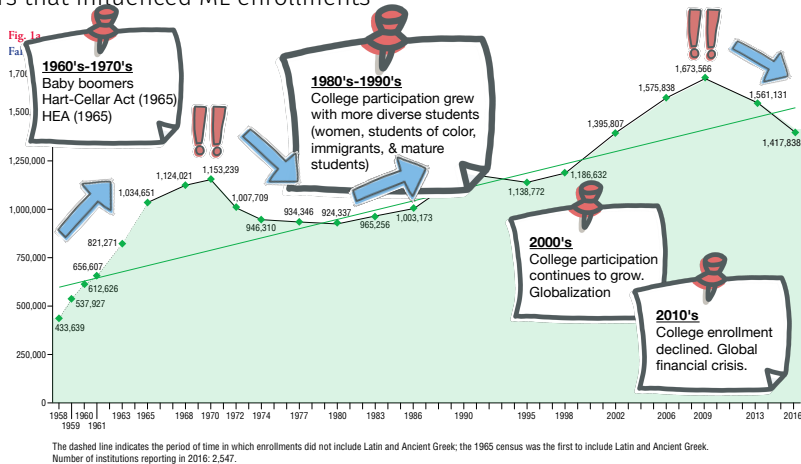


From Looney, D. & Lusin, N. (2019). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016 Final Report*. MLA.

- "This abrupt reversal of the growth trend enjoyed by foreign languages throughout the sixties is especially serious in the light of continued, steady growth of college enrollments in general" (Brod, 1972)
- A decline in 2013 is "the beginning of a trend rather than a blip" (Looney and Lusin, 2019)

WL enrollment in the U.S. between 1960 and 2021 V

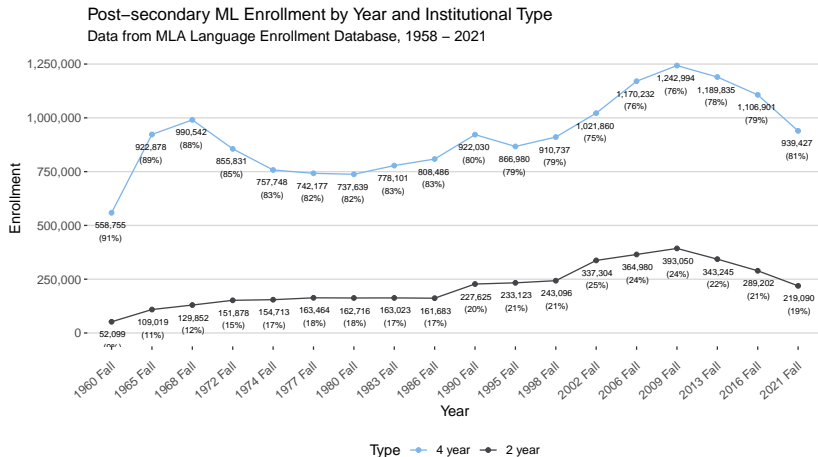
- Factors that influenced ML enrollments



From Looney, D. & Lusin, N. (2019). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016 Final Report*. MLA.

ML Enrollments at 4-year and 2-year Institutions

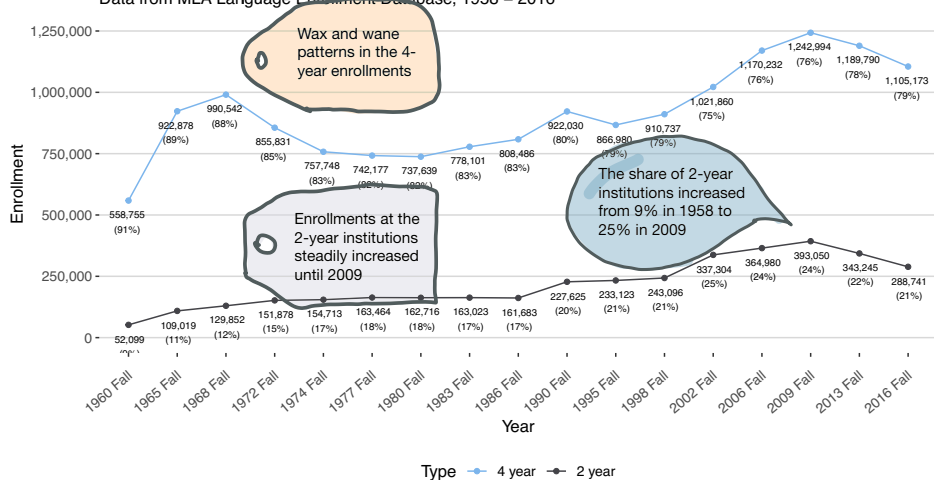
WL enrollments of 4-year and 2-year institutions I



WL enrollments of 4-year and 2-year institutions II

Post-secondary ML Enrollment by Year and Institutional Type

Data from MLA Language Enrollment Database, 1958 – 2016



WL enrollments of 4-year and 2-year institutions III

ML enrollments at Community Colleges (Nagano, 2023)

- Community colleges after the 1970's
 - WL enrollment at community colleges increased fivefold between 1960 and 2009 while 4-year institutions saw only a modest increase (128.9%) during the same time period.
 - To put it differently, WL enrollment at community colleges accounted for only 9% of the total WL enrollment in 1959, but its proportion in WL enrollment had increased to 24% in 2009.
- Two causes for the increase of the ML enrollments (and overall enrollments) at community colleges (Cohen et al., 2013; Snyder, 1993)
 - Non-traditional students (women, working-class, students of color, mature students)
 - Immigrant-background students

ML Enrollments and diversity data at CUNY between 1957 and 2021

ML enrollments and diversity at CUNY I

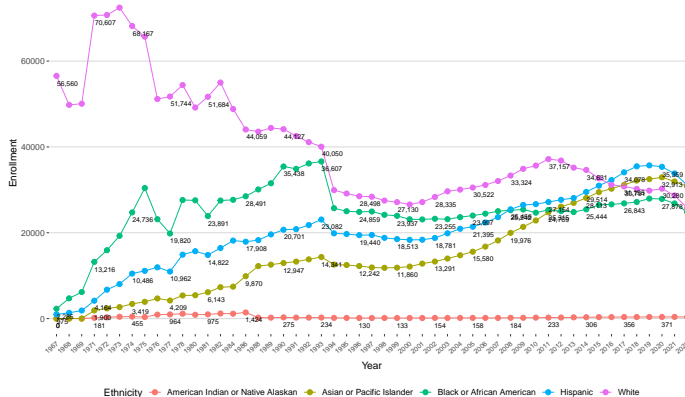
- Race and Ethnicity (just one of many diversity criteria)
- The minority rate increased from 12.9% in 1967 to 80.6% in 2022

	Am. Indian	AAPI	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	Minority%
1967	0	0	4,588	1,923	3,808	69,466	12.9%
1975	492	5,008	51,180	20,781	10,036	99,830	46.7%
1980	2,214	5,783	44,305	26,399	0	64,206	55.0%
1986	2,291	13,050	49,421	34,328	0	60,479	62.0%
1990	414	17,965	56,058	37,899	0	61,829	64.4%
1995	294	19,722	54,242	43,232	0	47,128	71.3%
2000	278	20,978	49,202	40,520	0	42,050	72.5%
2005	298	25,960	53,054	46,746	0	48,149	72.3%
2010	583	37,646	56,798	61,591	0	53,919	74.3%
2015	736	45,382	58,726	70,214	0	48,264	78.3%
2020	744	46,483	53,668	65,067	0	41,800	79.8%
2022	641	41,122	45,995	52,680	0	33,781	80.6%

ML enrollments and diversity at CUNY II

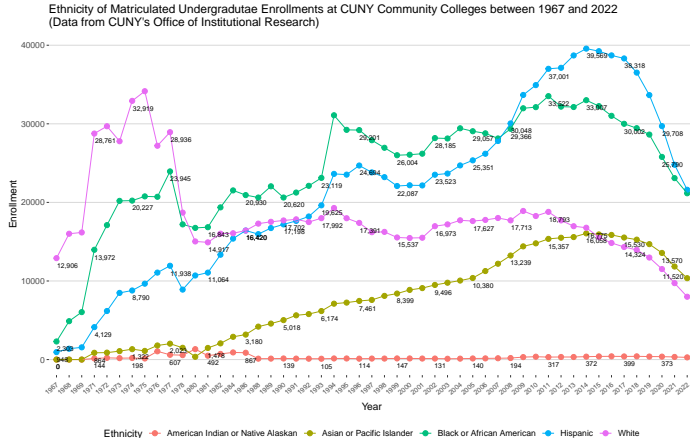
- 50%+ of students were minority backgrounds only after mid 1980's. 77% minority in 2022.

Ethnicity of Matriculated Undergraduate Enrollments at CUNY Senior Colleges between 1967 and 2022
(Data from CUNY's Office of Institutional Research)



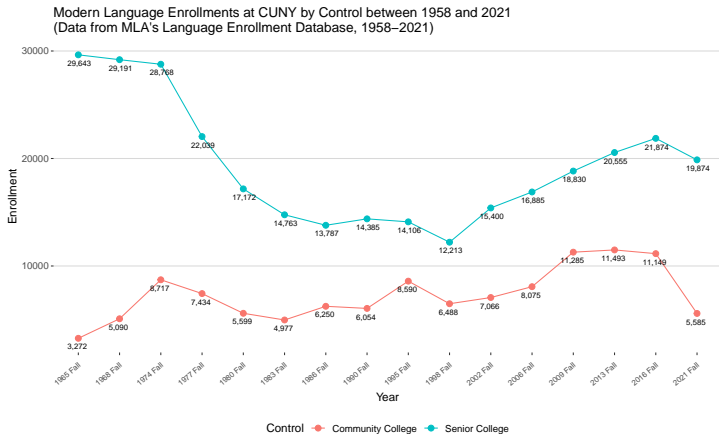
ML enrollments and diversity at CUNY III

- 50%+ of students were minority backgrounds in the 1970's. 87% minority in 2022.



ML enrollments and diversity at CUNY IV

- The increases of ML enrollments show similar patterns as those with minority enrollments



ML enrollments and diversity at CUNY V

To conclude...

- It is true that the change of the undergraduate enrollment largely accounts for the change in the ML enrollment.
- However, the change of the undergraduate enrollment after the 1970's was caused by the higher college participation rate among non-traditional students (racial/ethnic minority, women, working-class students, students with immigrant backgrounds etc).
- Community colleges are capable of meeting the needs of these students by design.
 - Open-admission policy: Accessibility is in the ethos of community colleges' mission



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