



**LaGUARDIA**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**CUNY**

## World Language Enrollment at Community Colleges between 1960 and 2010

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Sunday, January 7, 2024 @ MLA

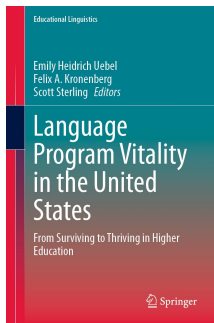
(printed on January 7, 2024)

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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 world 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](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 language section includes a text input field for typing a language name, a dropdown menu, and a 'Search now' button. The year section includes radio buttons for selecting years (2016 Fall, 2016 Summer, 2013 Fall, 2009 Fall) and a 'Refine your search' button. 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'. Below the search area, there are links for 'Narrow Search by Geography' and 'Organize Data'. At the bottom, there is a disclaimer about the database's comprehensiveness and a link to the 'complete data set'.

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](mailto:enrollments@mla.org).

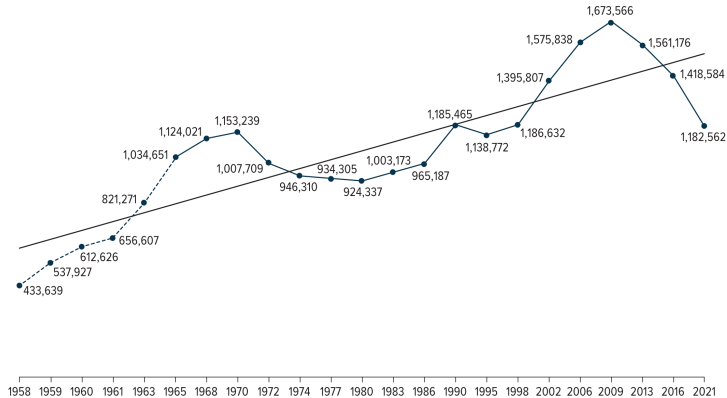
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## WL enrollment in the U.S. between 1960 and 2021 I

- World language enrollments between 1958 and 2021

**Fig. 1a**

**Fall Language Enrollments by Year**



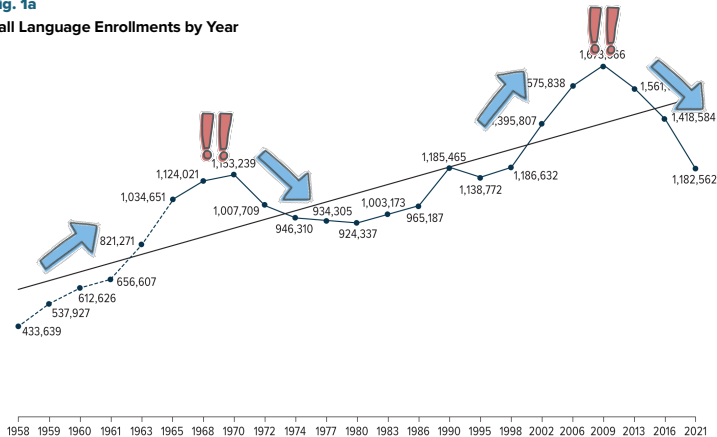
From Lusin et al. (2023). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in US Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2021*. MLA.

## 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**

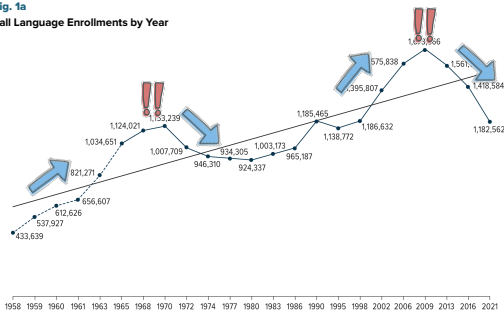


From Lusin et al. (2023). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in US Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2021*. MLA.

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

- Lows in 1970-1980 and 2009-present

Fig. 1a  
Fall Language Enrollments by Year

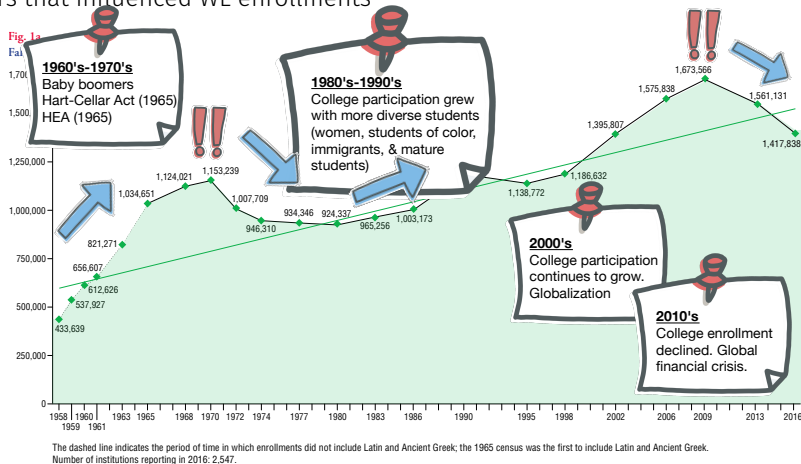


From Looney, D. & Lusin, N. (2019). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016 Final Report*. MLA.

- "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)
- The decline of the WL enrollment in the 1970's is interesting because:
  - We managed to reverse the declining trend (and enjoyed a significant increase up until 2009).
  - The decline occurred while college enrollment was increasing.

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

- Factors that influenced WL enrollments

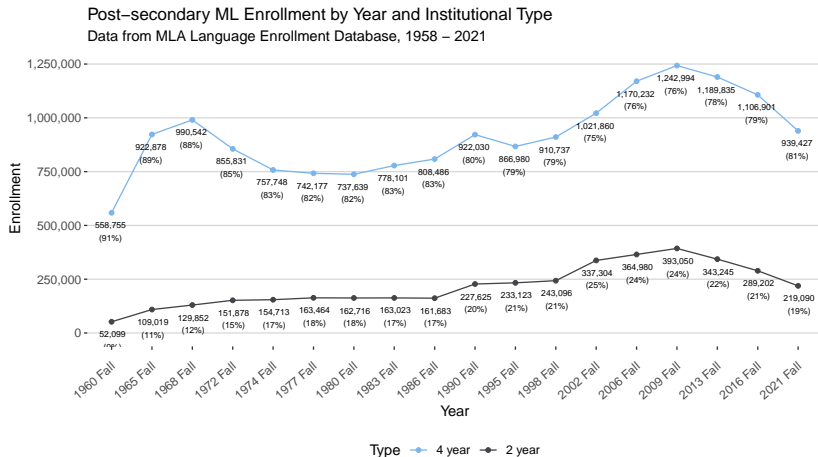


From Looney, D. & Lusin, N. (2019). *Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Summer 2016 and Fall 2016 Final Report*. MLA.



## WL Enrollments at 4-year and 2-year Institutions

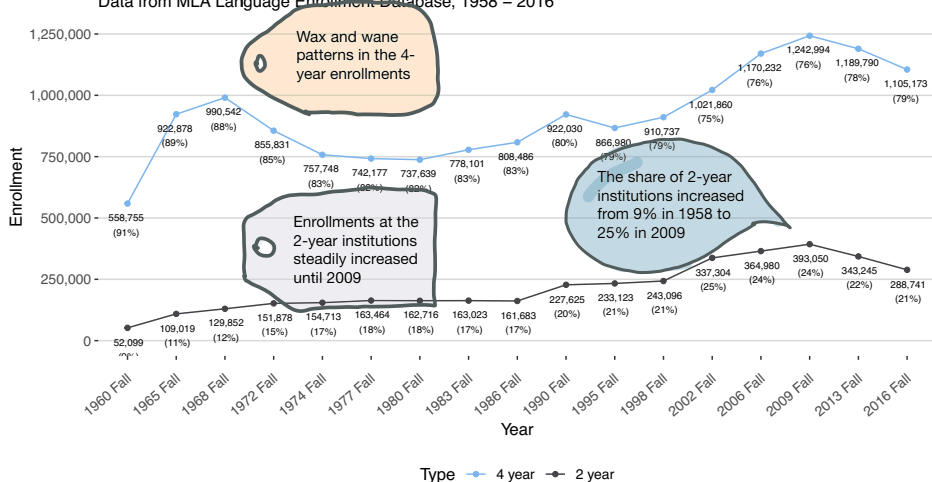
# WL enrollments of 4-year and 2-year institutions I



# 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

### WL enrollments at Community Colleges (Nagano, 2023)

- Community colleges after the 1970's
  - 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 enrollments at CC (Cohen et al., 2013; Snyder, 1993)
  - Non-traditional students (women, working-class, students of color, mature students)
  - Immigrant-background students

### Current question

- Which factor played a more important role in the change of WL enrollments?
  - The overall increase in the number of community college students
  - The change in the student demographics, specifically towards individuals from a wider range of backgrounds.

WL Enrollments and diversity data at CUNY between 1957 and 2021

## A short introduction to CUNY

### About CUNY

- The City University of New York (CUNY) consists of 25 colleges spread across New York City's five boroughs.
- 11 senior (4-year) colleges and 7 community colleges (and a few graduate and professional schools).
- The first campus (The Free Academy) was founded in 1847. The first community college campus was created in 1955.
- Typical student backgrounds include racial/ethnic minority, first-generation, working class, and immigrants.



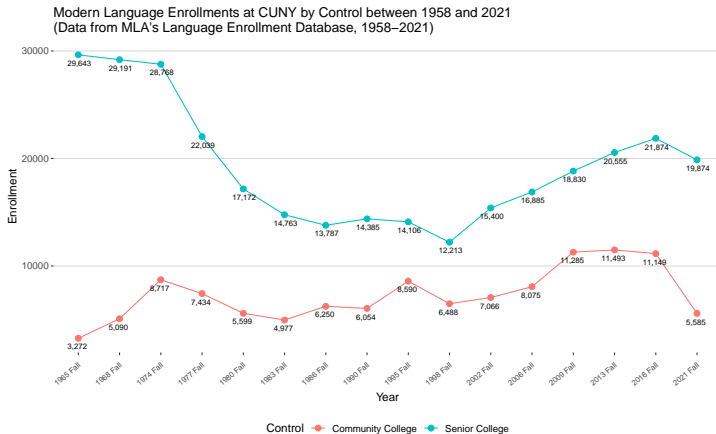
## WL enrollments and diversity at CUNY I

- The student head counts increased from 79,785 in 1967 to 174,219 in 2022
- The minority rate increased from 12.9% in 1967 to 80.6% in 2022
- As of 2022, 87% of CC students identify themselves as minority (77% at 4Y)

|      | Am. Indian | AAPI   | Black  | Hispanic | Other  | White  | Total # | Minority% |
|------|------------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|
| 1967 | 0          | 0      | 4,588  | 1,923    | 3,808  | 69,466 | 79,785  | 12.9%     |
| 1975 | 492        | 5,008  | 51,180 | 20,781   | 10,036 | 99,830 | 187,327 | 46.7%     |
| 1980 | 2,214      | 5,783  | 44,305 | 26,399   | 0      | 64,206 | 142,907 | 55.0%     |
| 1986 | 2,291      | 13,050 | 49,421 | 34,328   | 0      | 60,479 | 159,569 | 62.0%     |
| 1990 | 414        | 17,965 | 56,058 | 37,899   | 0      | 61,829 | 174,165 | 64.4%     |
| 1995 | 294        | 19,722 | 54,242 | 43,232   | 0      | 47,128 | 164,618 | 71.3%     |
| 2000 | 278        | 20,978 | 49,202 | 40,520   | 0      | 42,050 | 153,028 | 72.5%     |
| 2005 | 298        | 25,960 | 53,054 | 46,746   | 0      | 48,149 | 174,207 | 72.3%     |
| 2010 | 583        | 37,646 | 56,798 | 61,591   | 0      | 53,919 | 210,537 | 74.3%     |
| 2015 | 736        | 45,382 | 58,726 | 70,214   | 0      | 48,264 | 223,322 | 78.3%     |
| 2020 | 744        | 46,483 | 53,668 | 65,067   | 0      | 41,800 | 207,762 | 79.8%     |
| 2022 | 641        | 41,122 | 45,995 | 52,680   | 0      | 33,781 | 174,219 | 80.6%     |

## WL enrollments and diversity at CUNY II

- WL enrollment at CUNY at 4-year and 2-year campuses.





## WL enrollments and diversity at CUNY III

### To conclude...

- Community colleges played a significant role in the rebound of WL enrollment in the 1970's
- The higher college attendance rate among non-traditional students (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, women, working-class students, and students with immigrant backgrounds) may have also played a role in the rebound of the WL enrollment after the 1970's.
- What about the WL enrollment crisis after 2009?
  - Community colleges are capable of making innovative solutions to the enrollment crisis.



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