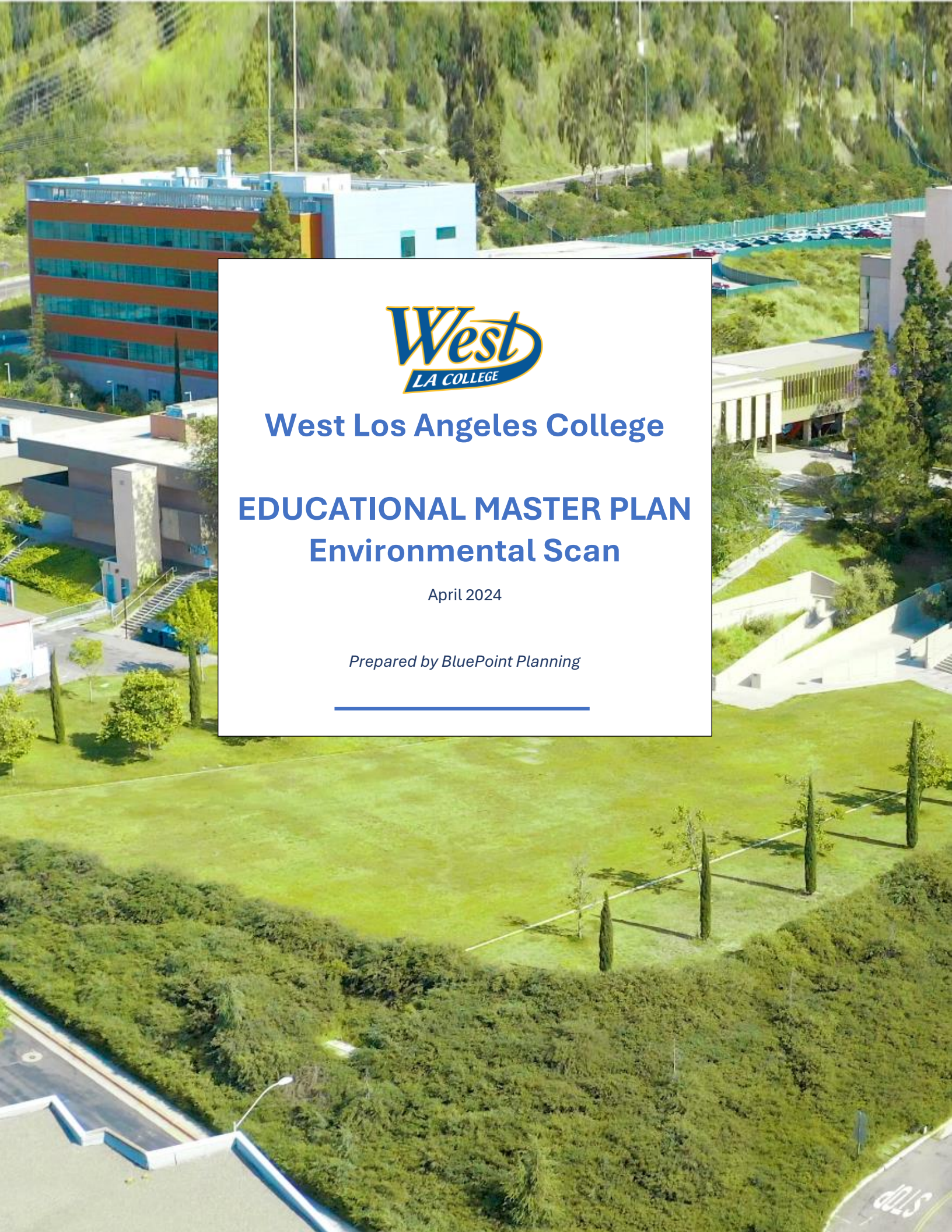

West Los Angeles College

EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN
Environmental Scan

April 2024

Prepared by BluePoint Planning

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

The 2025-2030 Educational Master Plan (EMP) is currently being developed for West Los Angeles College (WLAC). This Environmental Scan sets a critical foundation for the EMP to ground the document in current regional demographic and economic market data, as well as key trends affecting education design and delivery and facilities. The EMP will build on WLAC goals and define the areas of program growth and change.

The Environmental Scan includes:

- WLAC-specific and regional demographic data
- Market, educational, and facility trends
- WLAC enrollment and success trends
- Summary of listening session input from over 70 faculty and staff on challenges, needs, equity, and their vision for WLAC

Additionally, there will be a student survey and student focus groups to complement this information and hear from students about their preferences for online or in-person learning and their experience at WLAC. Program leads are also in the process of filling out Program Questionnaires to further detail the challenges and needs of their program, evaluate program courses/ services, and describe overall how they expect their programs to shift over the coming five years. These pieces of information will be collected by May, and this document will act as a draft until the information is added and the full picture of West's educational and program landscape is available.

Ultimately, the data from this Environmental Scan will shape the EMP, which will help WLAC understand the students that it currently serves and the opportunities to serve future students. Importantly, this data will also inform the resources, programs, and types of facilities the College should offer to best serve students and help them complete their educational and career goals.

Trends Overview

Listed below are the high-level **population trends** for Los Angeles County and the WLAC service area, which are explored in the Environmental Scan.

- The population in Los Angeles County is expected to **decrease significantly** in the coming decades. This leaves fewer younger people available to go to college.
- The most common ethnicity of **WLAC students is Hispanic, followed by Black**, and white, which largely reflects the makeup of Los Angeles County. This shows that WLAC has an opportunity to better market itself towards these populations, specifically Hispanic communities, which comprise almost half of the service area.
- The service area of **WLAC has a large low-income population** that would benefit from community college.

- A large percentage of the population in the WLAC service area have their highest **educational attainment as a high school degree or less**, demonstrating the opportunity for this population to benefit from a community college education.
- The pandemic shifted classes online, though an increasing number of classes at WLAC are transitioning back to either ground or hybrid modalities. Overall, there are higher student success rates for in-person classes compared to online classes. Overall success rates increased for all modalities, however the differences in success rates between online and in person classes grew between 2019-2023 pandemic, pointing to a larger disparity in online learning outcomes post-pandemic.

Below are the high-level **market trends** that relate to WLAC's programs.

- WLAC's **dental hygiene program, avionics program, and paralegal** program align with market trends, which indicate these are **growing fields with higher paying jobs**. There are opportunities to expand these programs to align with market trends and demand.
- While there are other fast growing jobs in the region, such as medical assisting, these are **not high paying jobs**.
- The number of physical therapy assistants, respiratory therapists, and diagnostic medical sonographers are projected to grow significantly in Los Angeles in the coming 5 years, and each are relatively high paying. There could be opportunities to offer programs that would allow students to move into these professions.

Below are **learning trends**, which inform how WLAC can create pedagogical shifts in program delivery.

- There has been an increase in technology to support online learning. This includes supporting synchronous hybrid classes through equipment like tracking cameras in the classroom.
- There is increased use of virtual reality (VR) tools, which can simulate hands-on learning opportunities. This includes the use of VR for dental and medical programs, biology, and other fields. Many of these tools allow users to simulate operating on a patient, which could be very useful for programs struggling with space and equipment constraints (such as dental hygiene which has limited chairs/ space).
- Artificial intelligence (AI) is a huge trend that can bring both positive and negative outcomes. There are opportunities to better integrate AI into certain fields such as film production (with the use of AI generated digital backgrounds). However, WLAC will need to ensure academic integrity and that students are not abusing AI and still produce original work including writing essays, solving math problems, etc.
- There is a move towards collaborative study spaces on campus and in classrooms. Many libraries are creating more group study rooms and some classrooms are utilizing movable furniture to support group collaboration.

Below are the high-level **needs of the College** to support students, as heard from the listening sessions.

- There needs to be more gathering spaces on campus to provide opportunities for socializing and collaboration, as well as provide spots for students to hang out between classes. Gathering spaces should also provide access to essential amenities for students, such as food service and microwaves, computers and charging, and lockers/ storage for students who need to be on campus all day.
- There is a need for better technology on and off campus. This includes updating computers, Wifi, and improving the Canvas learning platform.
- Wraparound student services are critical to student success. There is a need for better services and higher utilization of existing services including mental health counseling, the career center, academic counseling, and tutoring.

II. Los Angeles County and Service Area Demographics

The information in this section includes population demographics from Los Angeles County as well as the central service area for WLAC, including the main feeder high schools for WLAC. Information was taken from a variety of sources, including the United States Zip Code Database, the U.S. Department of Finance, the U.S. Census, and the Los Angeles Unified School District. The data in this chapter describes the pool of future students in the region. The demographics covered in this chapter include overall population trends, age, ethnicity, gender, income, language, and educational attainment. This information can help the College determine who current and future programs should target, help inform what programs would be valuable to this population and inform the wraparound services and support that may be needed for this group.

Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) is the largest Community College District in California and in the country. LACCD is home to nine community colleges, including West Los Angeles College, (WLAC), East Los Angeles College (ELAC), Los Angeles City College (LACC), Los Angeles Harbor College (LAHC), Los Angeles Mission College, Los Angeles Pierce College, Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC), Los Angeles Trade-Tech College (LATTC), and Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC). The LACCD service area covers the majority of Los Angeles County, excluding Santa Monica Community College District, El Camino Community College District, Compton Community College District, and the Glendale Community College District.

Figure 1 Map of Colleges in Los Angeles Community College District

Source: Los Angeles Community College District The Colleges of Los Angeles

Community Colleges and LACCD serve a wide spectrum of the population, and by understanding the regional, local, and student demographics, WLAC can better position itself to maintain and develop the best programs to serve the needs of the community. This chapter provides a

summary of demographics within the WLAC service area and the greater Los Angeles County, including current and projected populations, student residency, age, ethnicity, language and nationality, and gender.

WLAC is located in the central west area of Los Angeles County, approximately 5 miles inland from Los Angeles Airport (LAX). The WLAC service area has a total population of 712,680 residents[1] and served 3,041 students in 2023.[2]

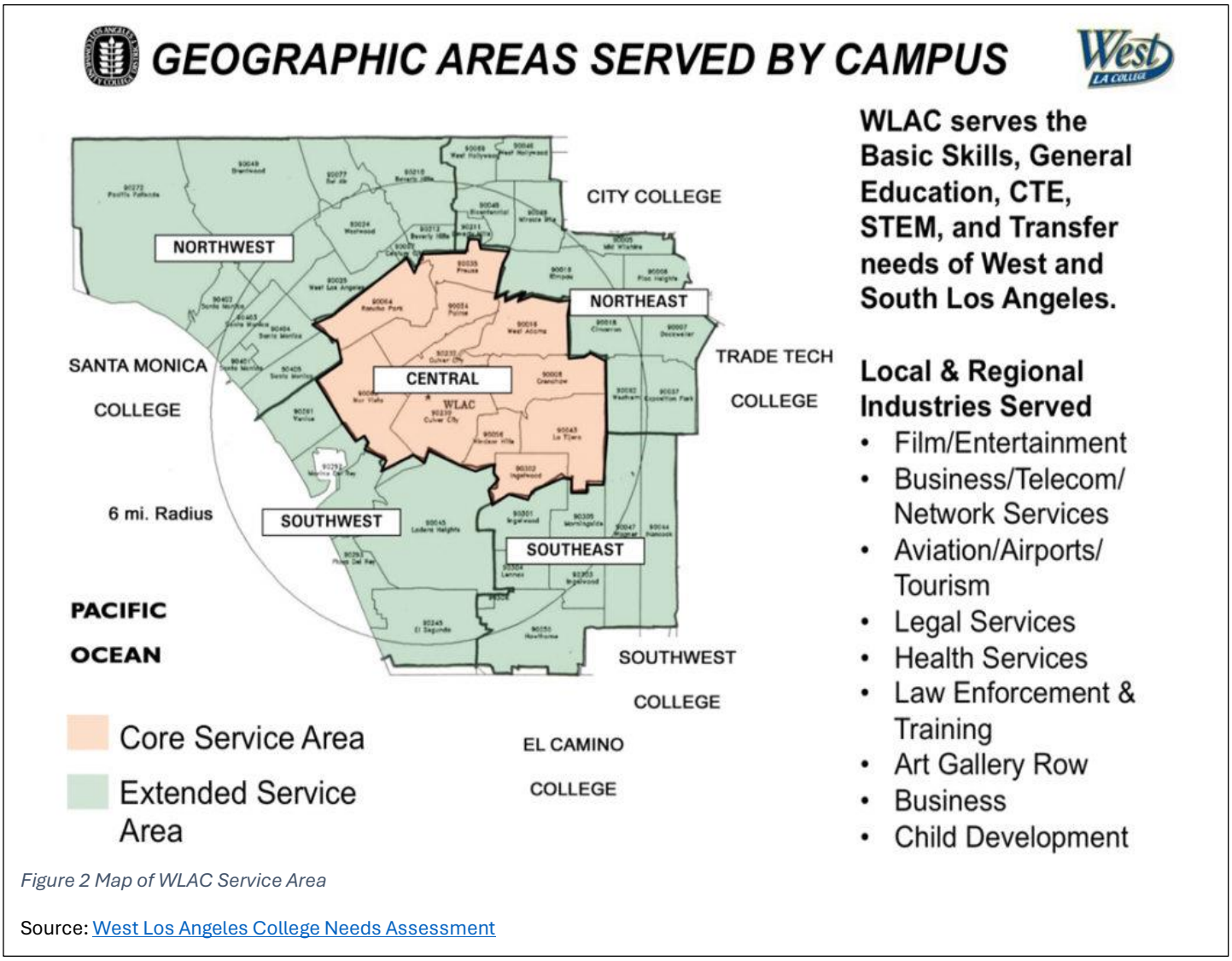

Figure 2 Map of WLAC Service Area

Source: West Los Angeles College Needs Assessment

[1] This data was collected from the United States Zip Code Data Base and totaled based on zip codes provided by the college

[2] Data was taken directly from WLAC enrollment data.

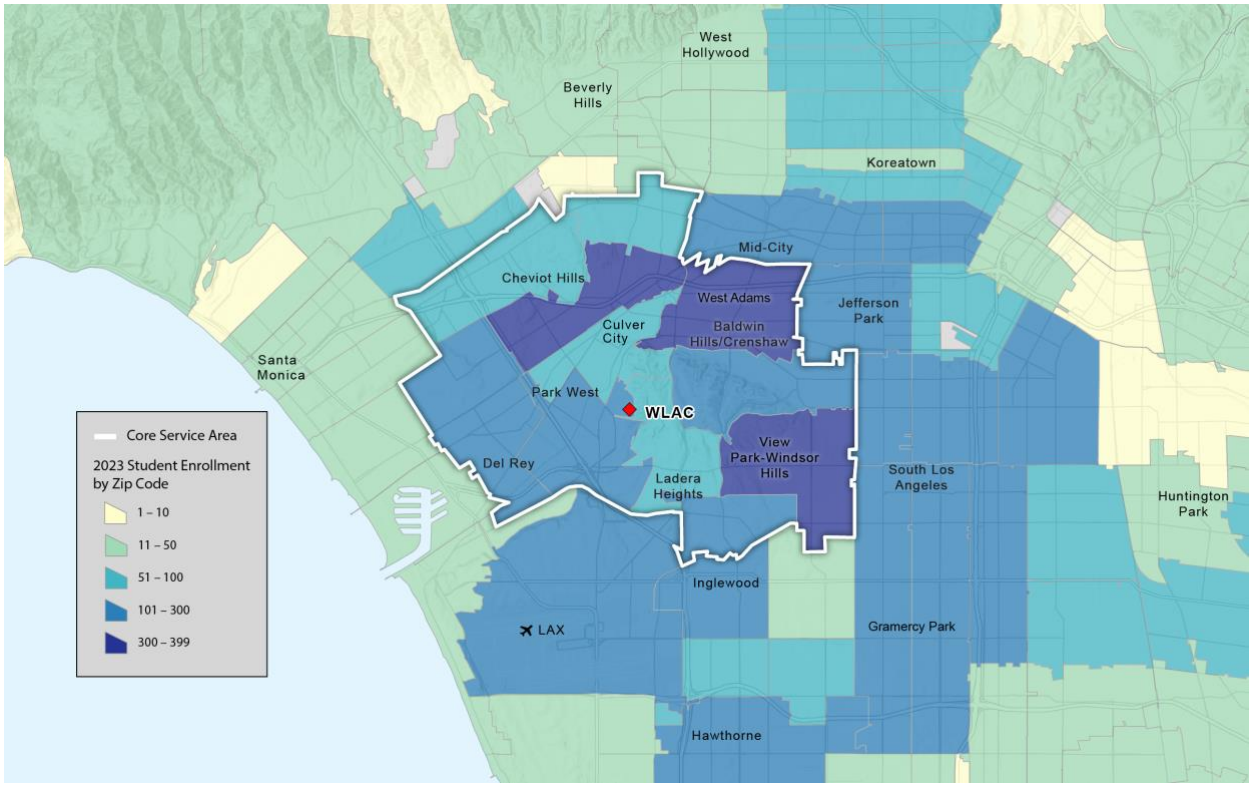

Figure 3 Student Density Map Fall 2023

Source: BluePoint Planning created this map from data provided by the college on enrollment by zip code.

Figure 3 is a student residential density map for WLAC by zip code in the Core Service Area (outlined in white), as well as the surrounding area. The darker the color, the more WLAC students that reside in that area. The specific numbers are indicated by the map legend.

Though there is a high density of students residing in the core service area, there are many students residing outside of the core service area, meaning many students are commuting to WLAC.

Currently, almost 70% of classes at WLAC are offered online. Due to the availability of online courses, more students are coming from beyond the service area. Many programs service students throughout the state, the country, and, in some cases, other countries.

Transportation and Access

WLAC is near the hills of Culver City and not easily accessible by public transportation. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) is the county agency that manages public transportation in Los Angeles County. LACMTA offers busses, trains, and light rail trains (the Metro) throughout the region covering much of Los Angeles County. Stations are more concentrated in the downtown region and there are not stops near the WLAC campus. The closest light rail Metro stop is La Cienega/Jefferson, which is 2.6 miles from campus.

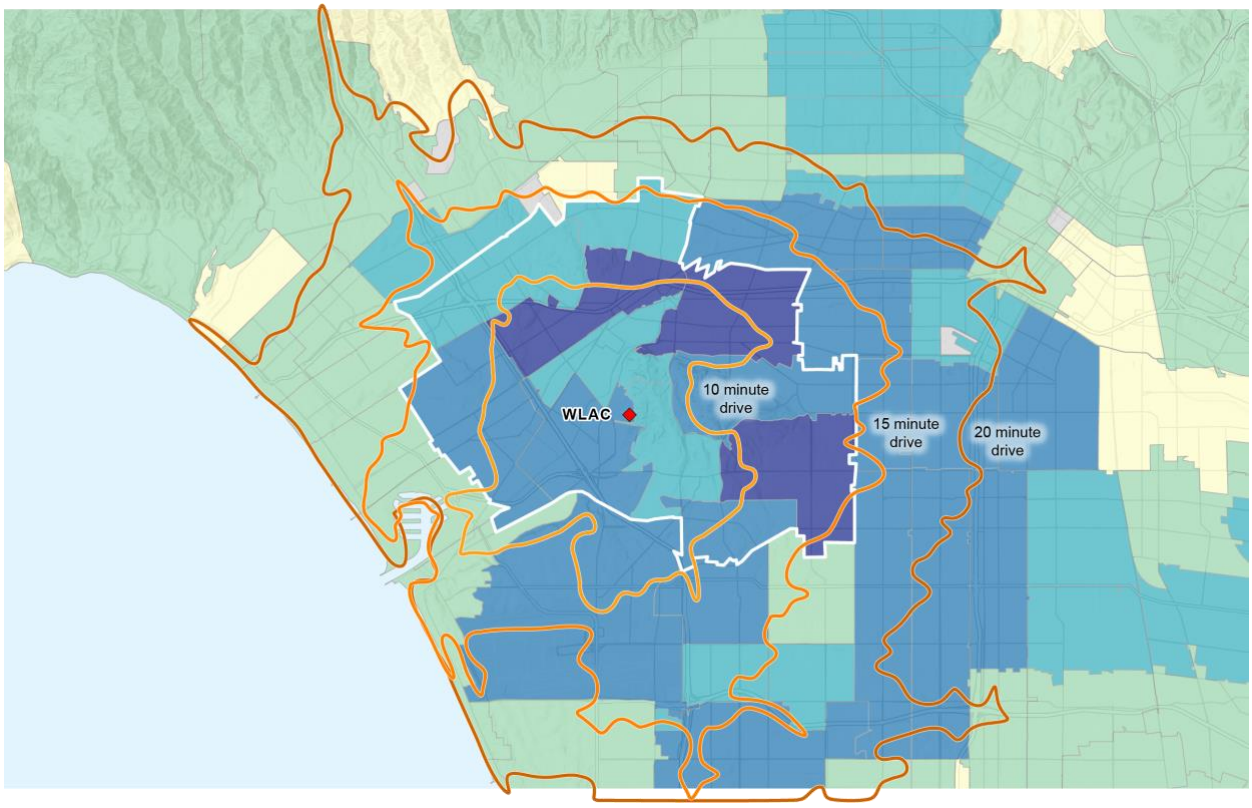

Figure 4. Average Driving Time based on Typical Traffic Patterns and Distances

Source: BluePoint Planning created this map from data provided by the college on enrollment by zip code.

Culver City has its own bus system which operates in the jurisdiction of Culver City and surrounding neighborhoods. WLAC is accessible via the 3 or 4 Culver City Bus. As many students do not live directly in Culver City, students must take a combination of LACMTA and the Culver City Bus to get to campus. This is difficult considering the two transit operators do not overlap service in many places, and it is time-consuming. The College used to operate a shuttle from the La Cienega/ Jefferson Metro stop to the college to make it easier for students to get to campus. However, since the Pandemic, the College has suspended this service.

While public transportation is not robust, the ability to get to the campus from most parts of the service area via car is between 10 and 20 minutes. For the areas with the highest enrollment, the typical time to campus is 15 minutes. Figure 4 shows the driving time to WLAC from within the central service area (in white) and throughout the County. This map shows that areas with a high concentration of students can access WLAC within a 10-, 15-, or 20-minute drive. (Drive times may vary based on traffic.) When evaluated at top traffic times – 9 am Inbound and 4 pm outward bound – the morning traffic is similar to the average, while the afternoon adds about 5 minutes of travel time.

Population Trends in Los Angeles County

LACCD covers nearly two-thirds of Los Angeles County, and much of WLAC's student population resides outside of the central service area, as well as the extended service area. Student enrollments will be impacted by changes taking place in the population beyond the formal boundaries of the WLAC. Notably, there is a projected decline in population in Los Angeles County. According to the 2022 American Community Survey, the population in the County is just over 9.7 million residents. However, as illustrated in Figure 5, the population of Los Angeles County is expected to decline by about 4% from 2025-2040.

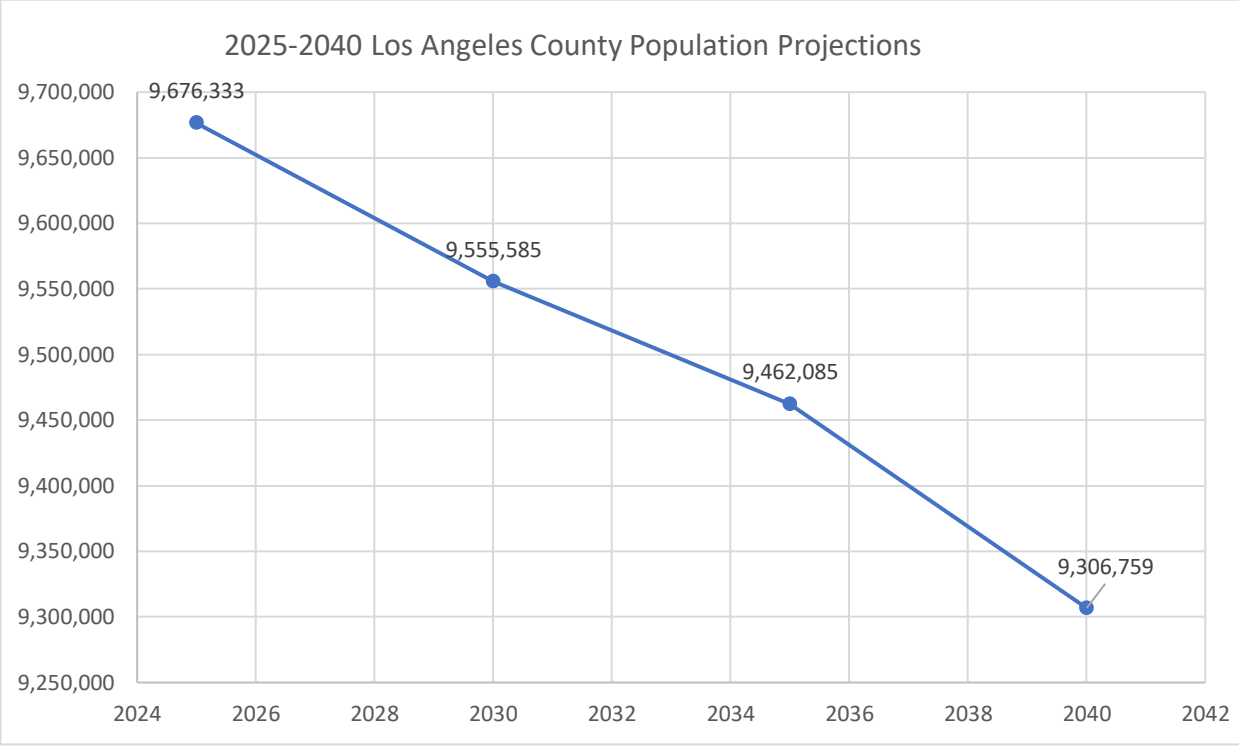

Figure 5 Los Angeles County Population Projections 2025-2040

Source: Department of Finance P-2C County Population by Sex and Age Group

Age Demographics

Age Projections

Figure 6 shows the projected age distribution in Los Angeles County population for 2020-2060 as projected by the United States Department of Finance.[3] Overall, the population of Los Angeles County is expected to get older in the coming decades. The majority of residents will continue to be 30 or older with most residents in the 70 years or older group. This chart shows a stark drop-off in younger aged population in the coming decades. The number of students who fall in the typical college age (20-24) is expected to decrease by almost 25% from around 800,000 to 600,000, which will reduce the pool of prospective students. Other common age brackets for community college students, including those ages 25-29 and high school or post-high school students will also decrease dramatically, with a decrease of almost 50% and about 40% respectively. This is a tremendous trend that the College will need to address.

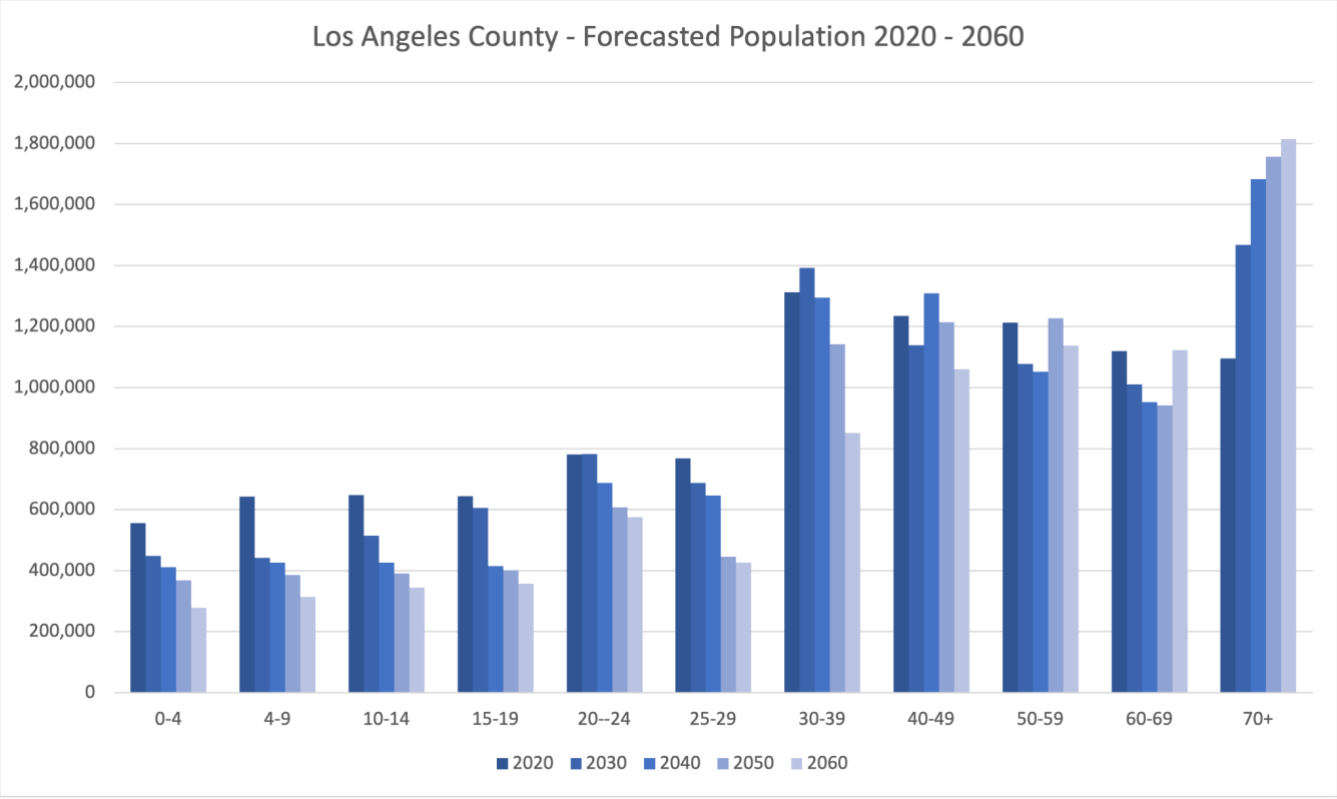

Figure 6 Projected Age Distribution from 2023-2040 Los Angeles County

Source: California Department of Finance. Demographic Research Unit. Report P-2B: Population Projections by Individual Year of Age, California Counties, 2020-2060

[3] https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/projections/

Current Age Distribution

The following table shows the age distribution for Los Angeles County and the WLAC Service Area in 2022.

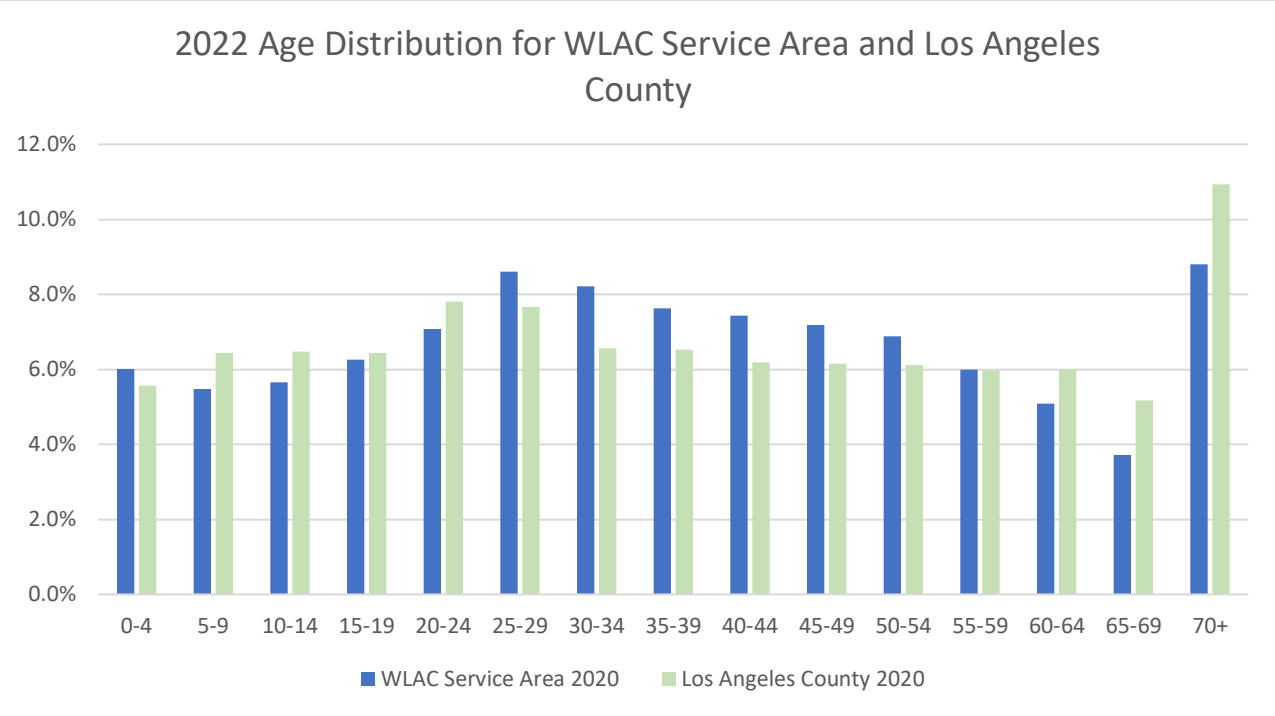

Figure 7 2022 Age Distribution for WLAC Service Area and Los Angeles County

Source: Los Angeles County Data is pulled from Department of Finance Table P-2C County Population by Sex and Age Group, and the WLAC Service Area data is from the United States Zip Code Data Base

The WLAC Service area closely reflects the Los Angeles County age distribution. There are slight differences in the 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, and 50-54 age groups but similar to Los Angeles County, there are fewer younger residents and more older residents.

Ethnicity Demographics

Los Angeles County is one of the largest and most diverse counties in California and understanding the ethnic background of students and the surrounding community can help identify which services and programs will be useful for the future of WLAC.

Table 1 shows the projected population for Los Angeles County from 2020 to 2060. The overall population is expected to decrease significantly - by 17.3% over the next 4 decades, or by about 1.8 million people. Forty eight percent of the population in Los Angeles identifies as Hispanic or Latino, roughly 8% identify as Black, 26% as white, and 15% as Asian. The distribution of ethnicity in Los Angeles County is expected to remain fairly constant throughout this period, signaling that WLAC's marketing, outreach, and support service needs may not have to change drastically in the future.

Table 1 2020-2060 Projected Los Angeles County Ethnic Diversity

	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
Total Population	**10,014,009**	**9,566,663**	**9,306,759**	**8,877,939**	**8,284,195**
American Indian & Alaskan Native*	*0.18%*	*0.19%*	*0.19%*	*0.19%*	*0.19%*
Asian*	*14.72%*	*15.04%*	*15.04%*	*15.04%*	*15.04%*
Black*	*7.60%*	*7.95%*	*7.95%*	*7.95%*	*7.95%*
Native Hawaiian & other Pacific Islander*	*0.20%*	*0.22%*	*0.22%*	*0.22%*	*0.22%*
White*	*25.60%*	*25.47%*	*25.47%*	*25.47%*	*25.47%*
Multiracial*	*3.13%*	*2.27%*	*2.27%*	*2.27%*	*2.27%*
Hispanic or Latino (All Races)	*47.98%*	*48.87%*	*48.87%*	*48.87%*	*48.87%*

Source: Projected Population 2030-2060 with 2020 Census Comparison Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Almanac

Figure 8 shows the ethnicity of the WLAC Service Area and Los Angeles County in 2020.

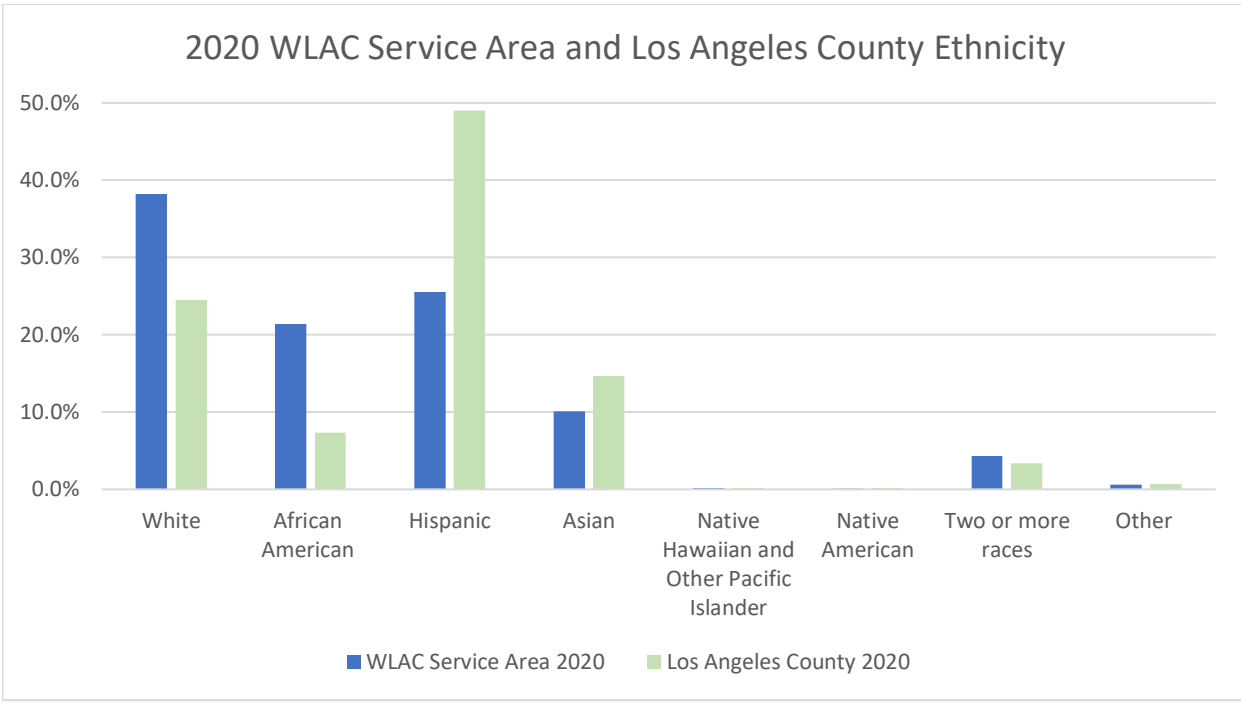

Figure 8 2020 WLAC Service area and Los Angeles County Ethnicity

Source: Los Angeles County data was pulled from the United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020 table P1 and the WLAC Service Area Data is from the United States Zip Code Data Base.

Los Angeles County has a very diverse population with the most common ethnicity being Hispanic residents (49%), followed by white residents (25%) and Asian residents (15%). In the WLAC Service area, the most common ethnicity is white (38%), followed by Hispanic (26%) and African American (21%). Compared to Los Angeles County, there is a much higher percentage of white and African American residents in the central service area, with only half of the proportion of Hispanic residents.

Gender

Figure 9 expresses the gender breakdown of Los Angeles County and the WLAC Service Area. Both Los Angeles County and WLAC have a fairly even distribution of male and female residents. In Los Angeles County, 50.5% of residents were female and 49.5% male. The WLAC Central service area has slightly more female representation, with 53% female and 47% male.

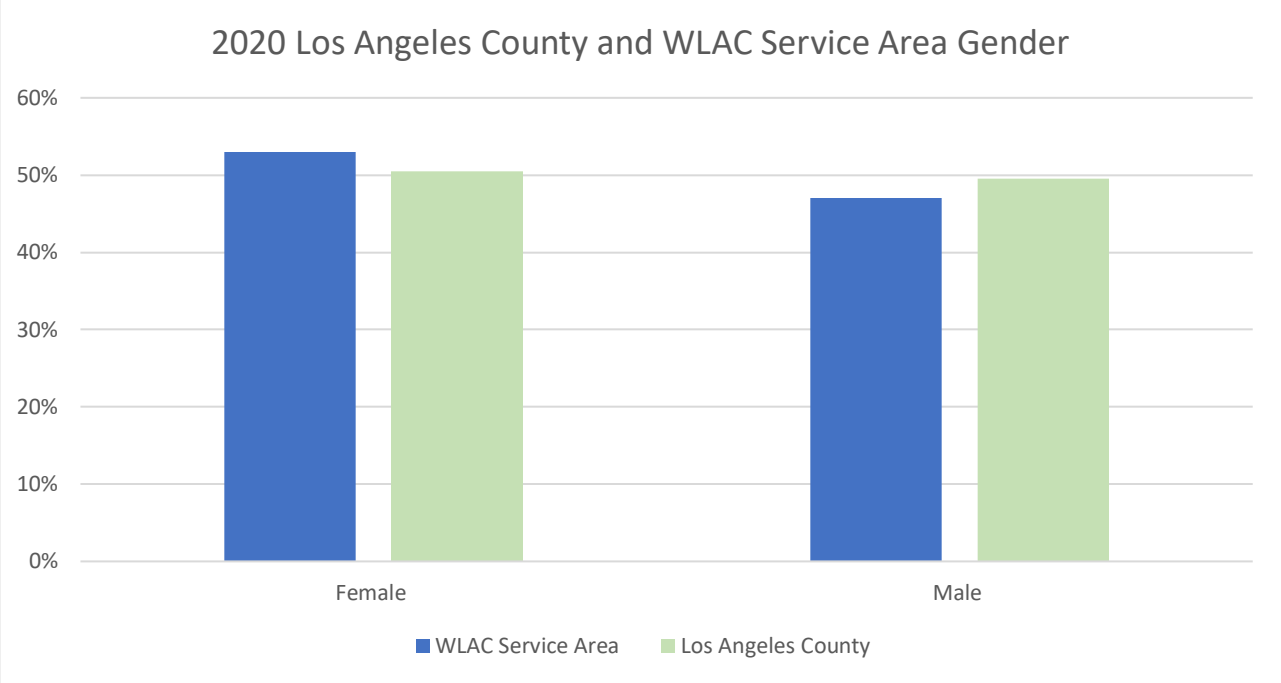

Figure 9 2020 Los Angeles County and WLAC Service Area Gender

Source: Los Angeles County data was pulled from Department of Finance Table P-2C County Population by Sex and Age Group, the WLAC Service Area Data is from the United States Zip Code Data Base

Household Income

Understanding household income trends in the central service area and Los Angeles County can help inform the college's programs and student services and demonstrates the potential value that community college has for students in the area. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines low-income households in Los Angeles County as making $70,650 or less for a household of one and $100,900 or less for a household of four. The following charts show the total household income in Los Angeles County and the WLAC Service Area. In Los Angeles County there are a large number of low-income households, with almost half of households making under $75,000, and an additional 12% of households making between $75,000-$99,999.

The WLAC service area has a lower income distribution compared to Los Angeles County as a whole, as shown in Figures 10 and 11. Twenty-four percent of households make under $25,000 in the central service area compared to 16% at the County level, and roughly 75% of the population make under $100,000 in the service area, compared to 58% for the County as a whole.

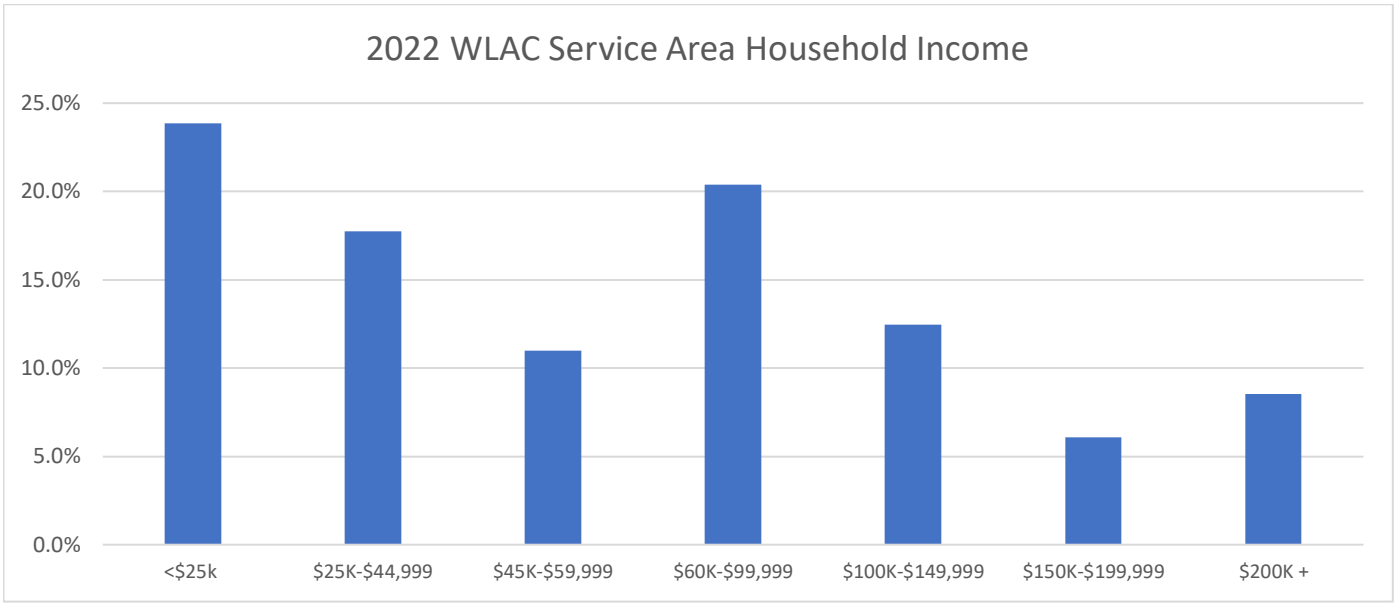

Figure 10 2022 WLAC Service Area Income Level

Source: United States Zip Code Data Base

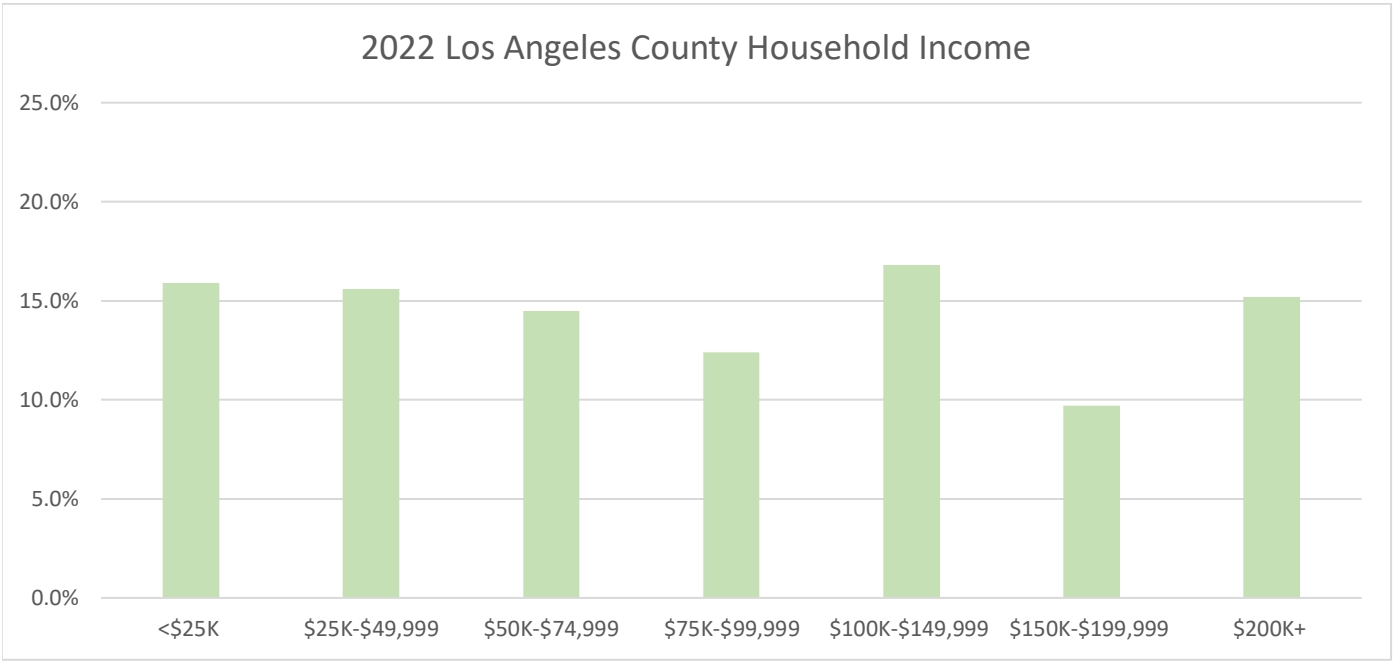

Figure 11 2022 Los Angeles County Income Level

Source: United States Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022, table DP03

K-12 School Enrollment Trends

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the largest school district in California, serving over 560,000 students in 2022-2023. Looking at trends among LAUSC students provides a proxy for incoming community college students.

Table 2 Los Angeles Unified School District Demographics

	Los Angeles Unified				
	2018-19	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**
Cumulative Enrollment	630,838	615,648	589,601	575,428	563,254
English Learners	123,579	119626	107,972	116,930	114,523
Free-reduced meal	476,628	473,334	467,410	439,990	436,299
Free-reduced meal percentage	75.55%	76.88%	79.28%	76.46%	77.46%
Ethnicity					
America Indian or Alaska Native	963	1,040	927	801	713
Asian	23,311	22,449	21,319	19,866	19,034
Black or African American	51,122	49,350	46,096	44,191	43,093
Filipino	11,758	11,511	10,942	10,086	9,517
Hispanic or Latino	465,566	454,450	436,145	425,904	416,070
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1,583	1,434	1,293	1,145	1,091
None Reported	1,913	2,563	2,834	7,506	8,497
Two or more Races	9,268	9,717	9,793	9,985	10,384
White	64,354	63,044	60,252	55,944	54,855
Gender					
Female	305,802	298,203	285,859	279,083	273,181
Male	325,036	37,434	303,716	296,248	289,917
Non-binary		11	26	97	154

Source: https://www.ed-data.org/district/Los-Angeles/Los-Angeles-Unified

In the 2022-2023 school year, the majority of students that attend LAUSD (77%) qualified for free-reduced meals, indicating that these students are low-income. The students in the school district are predominantly Hispanic or Latino (74%), followed by White (10%) and African American (8%). About 20% of students are English Learners.

There has been an overall decline from 1990 to 2020, and while there is a projected increase from 2020 to 2030 the enrollment levels do not recover to pre-2000 levels. With a decrease in the overall enrollment, there is a decrease in the amount of prospective students who are entering into the typical college age.

WLAC has partnerships with 16 high schools in the surrounding area for their Dual Enrollment Program. The high schools and their respective districts are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3 Active Dual Enrollment Partnerships

	High School Partnership	District
1	Animo Leadership - Green Dot	Public Charter
2	Animo Venice - Green Dot	Public Charter
3	Crenshaw HS	LAUSD, South
4	Culver City HS	CCUSD
5	Dorsey HS	LAUSD, South
6	Hamilton HS	LAUSD, WLAC
7	Hollywood HS	LAUSD, WLAC
8	LA Center for Enriched Studies	LAUSD, WLAC
9	Magnolia Science Academy 4	Independent Charter
10	Morningside HS	Inglewood USD
11	Palisades Charter HS	Independent Charter
12	STEM Academy of Hollywood	LAUSD, WLAC
13	University HS	LAUSD, WLAC
14	Venice HS	LAUSD, WLAC
15	Westchester Enriched (WESM)	LAUSD, WLAC
16	Wish Academy HS - Ind. Charter	Independent Charter

Information in the charts below is from the 16 high schools that WLAC is partnered with through their Dual Enrollment Program. While many students beyond this list decide to attend WLAC as well, understanding the profile of high school students can help WLAC understand who the college's future students may be and who they should aim to serve.

High school enrollment in the dual enrollment program high schools has decreased in the past five years, mirroring overall County trends in enrollment declines.

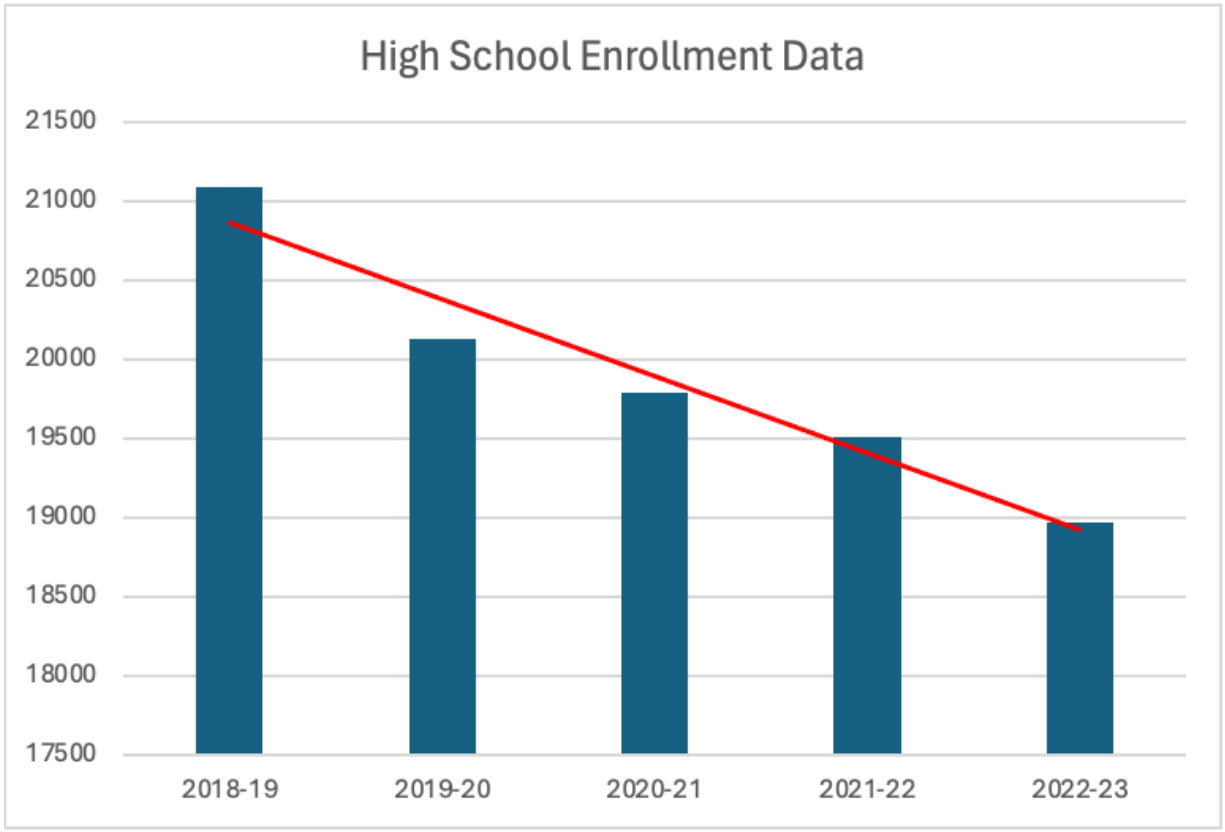

Figure 12 Enrollment Data from Dual Enrollment Program High Schools 2018-19 to 2022-2023

Source: https://www.ed-data.org/district/Los-Angeles/Los-Angeles-Unified

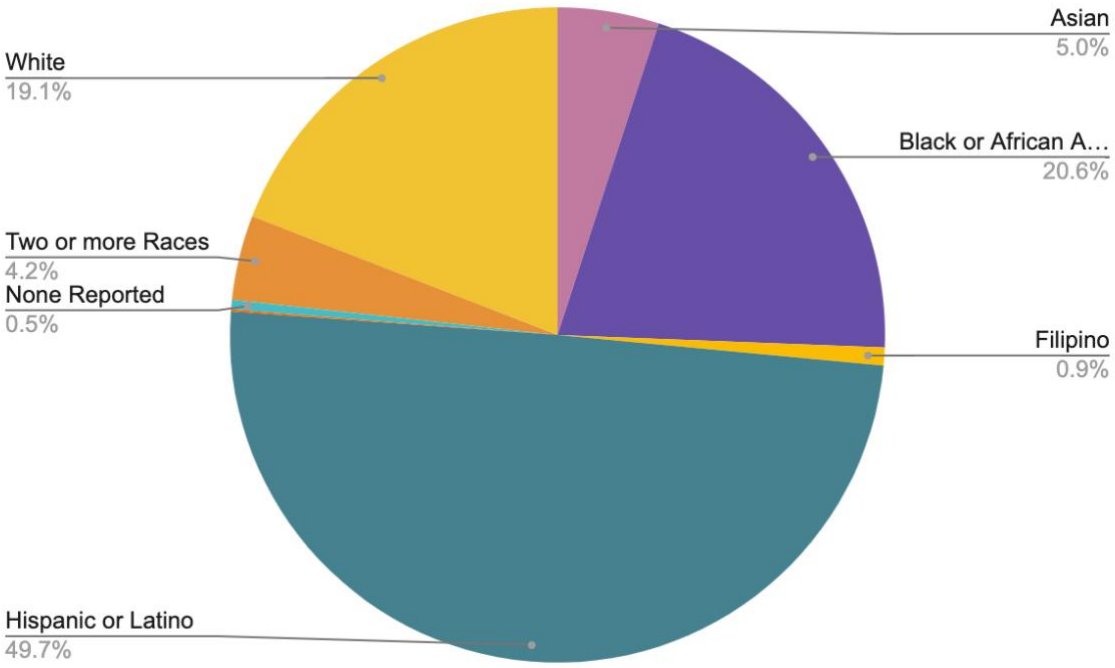

Figure 13 Ethnicity of Students from Dual Enrollment High Schools in Fall 2023

Source: https://www.ed-data.org/district/Los-Angeles/Los-Angeles-Unified

Similar to Los Angeles County, Hispanic students comprise about half of the high school students, followed by a large percentage of Black or African American students. White students make up a little under 20% of enrollment.

Language and Citizenship Status

Los Angeles County has a large population of Spanish speakers in addition to English speakers. Additionally, approximately 15% of the population in Los Angeles County is not a U.S. Citizen, which is important to consider when it comes to supporting students who may be undocumented.[4]

Figure 14 shows the language spoken at home in Los Angeles County.

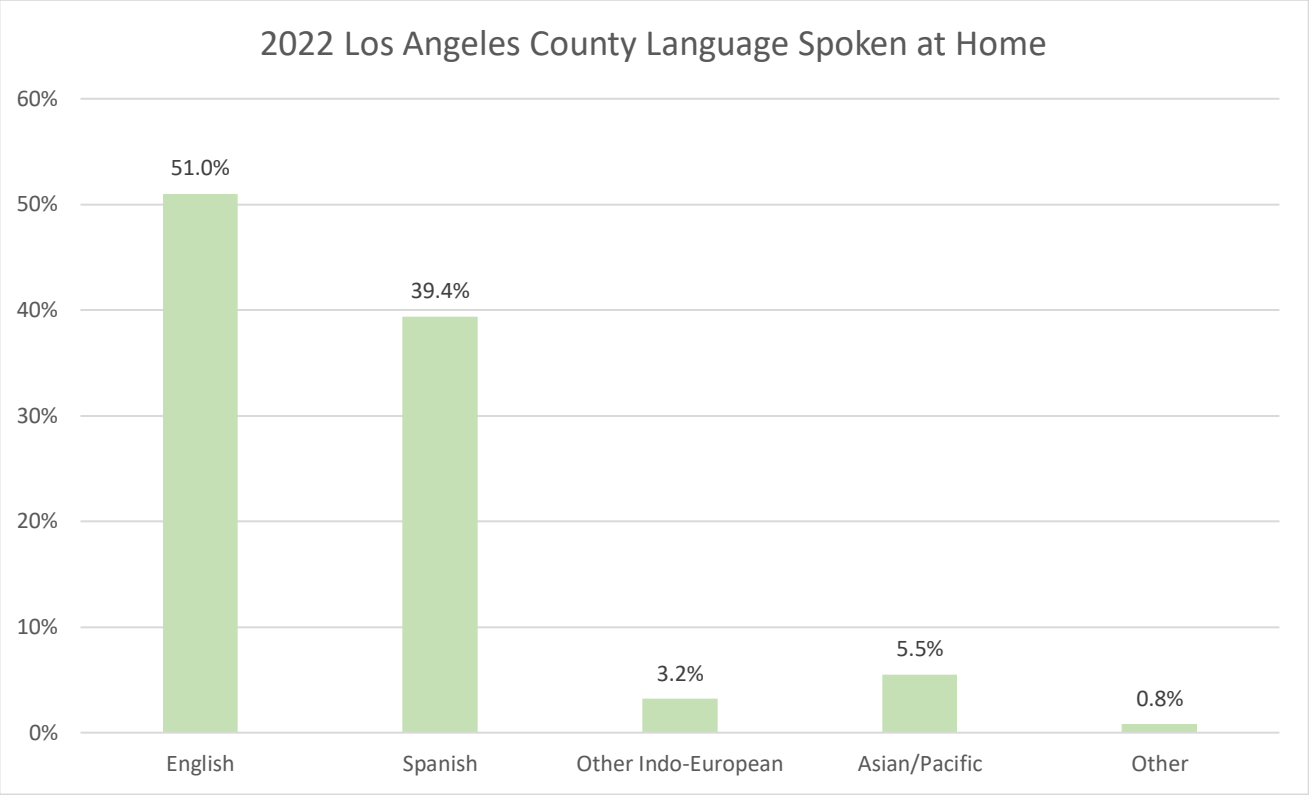

Figure 14 2022 Los Angeles County Language Spoke at Home

Source: Unites States Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey S1601

A very significant percentage of the population in Los Angeles speaks Spanish at home. This highlights that WLAC should consider how it markets and caters to Spanish-speaking populations. While some students themselves speak Spanish, many who come from Spanish speaking households may speak English but have parents who speak Spanish. This includes many first-generation college students as well, whose parents may have difficulty navigating the college application process and filling out necessary forms to enroll their student. This points to opportunities for the College to support students from Spanish-speaking households. This includes providing outreach materials in Spanish as well as translating materials, such as registration and administrative forms, to ensure that students from Spanish-speaking households are able to navigate the college process.

[4] https://data.census.gov/profile/Los_Angeles_County,_California?g=050XX00US06037

Educational Attainment

Different communities may have different cultural expectations around going to college. Young people whose parents did not go to college, or who live in communities where not many people go to college, may not necessarily be expected or encouraged to pursue higher education. Understanding the educational attainment landscape of both Los Angeles County and WLAC can help understand the extent of the college-going culture, while also highlighting opportunities to fill in gaps as they exist. Figure 15 shows the highest level of educational attainment for adults over 25 in Los Angeles County and the WLAC Service Area.

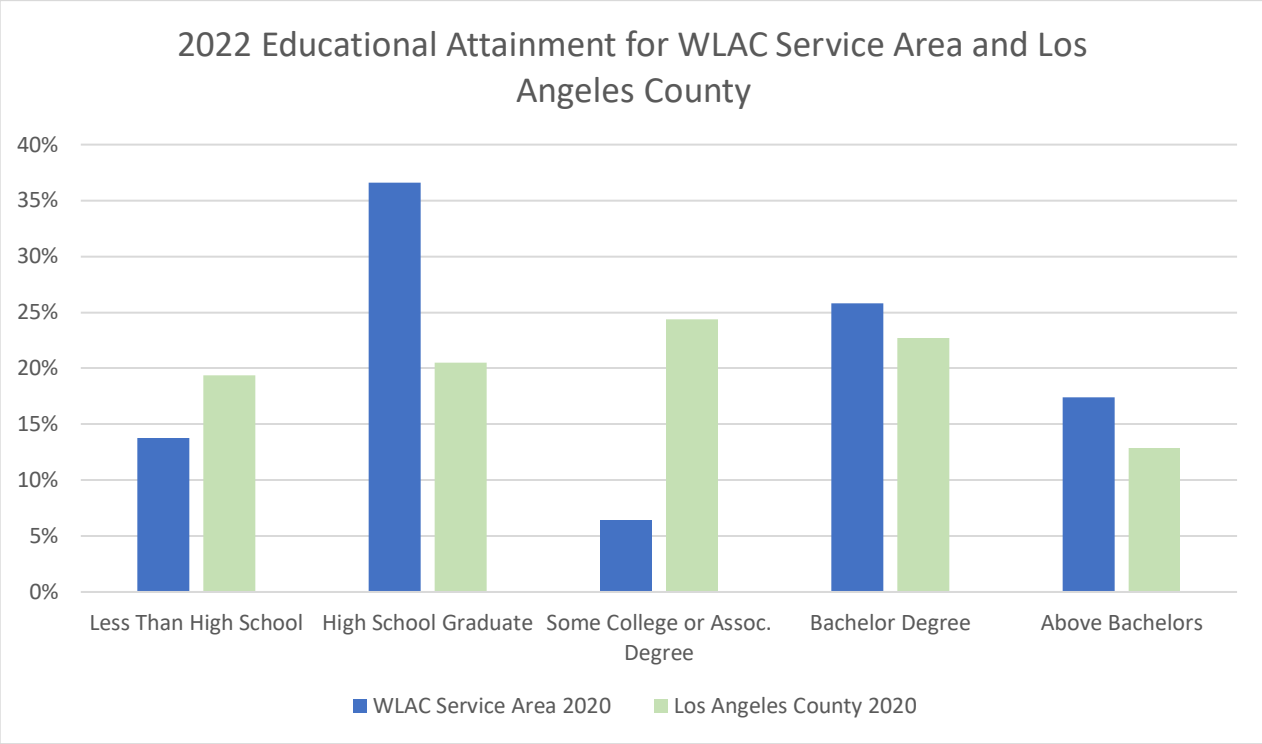

Figure 15 2022 Los Angeles County and WLAC Service Area Educational Attainment

Source: WLAC Service Area Data was pulled from United States Zip Code Data Base, Los Angeles County Data is from United States Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022, S1501

Roughly 65% of residents in Los Angeles County have an Associate's Degree or less, and roughly 40% have a high school diploma or less. The WLAC central service area somewhat reflects Los Angeles County. In the WLAC service area, 56% percent of residents have an Associate's Degree or less, while 50% have a High School diploma or less. (At the County level, "Some college" and "Associate degree" are in the same category while the WLAC chart does not include "Some college" as a separate category, instead counting it in the "High school graduate" category.) Overall, this data points to a large opportunity for WLAC to reach students who have finished high school but have not attended college, while being aware of the challenges of reaching populations who may not be part of a college-going culture.

III. WLAC Student Characteristics

The information in this section includes demographics for WLAC. Information was taken directly from the college, utilizing WLAC's PowerBI tool and data from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness data portal. The data in this chapter shows the current students that WLAC serves and covers overall enrollment trends, age, ethnicity, and gender demographics, and includes trends of first generation and veteran student enrollment. Understanding current demographics points to the types of students WLAC is attracting, which can be compared to the overall service area to identify which students should be further targeted for outreach. Additionally, understanding demographic trends can help identify students that need additional support to increase retention rates.

Enrollment

Figure 16 shows the number of enrolled students from Fall 2018 to Fall 2023.

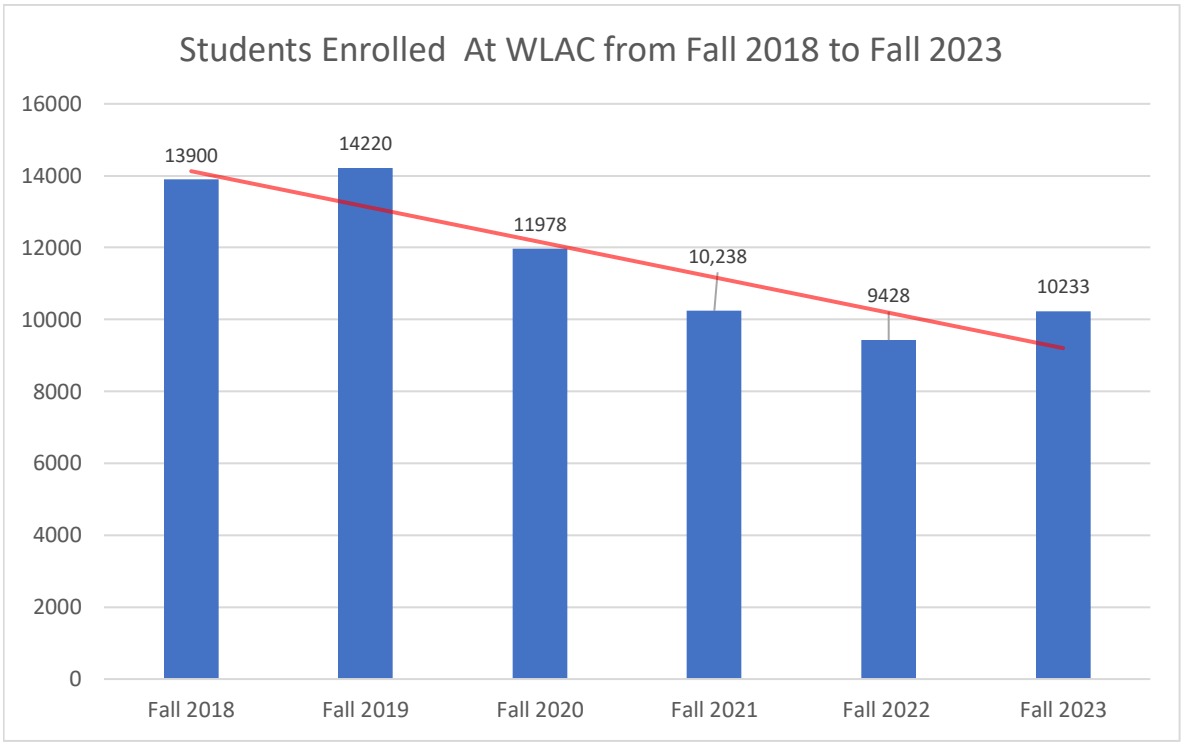

Figure 16 WLAC Student Enrollment from Fall 2018 to Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

Since 2019 there has been a dramatic decline in enrollment at WLAC, due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 28% decline in the number of students between 2019- 2023. However, there has been an uptick in Fall 2023 which could indicate a new trend in increasing enrollment.
There is a small proportion of non-credit students at WLAC. In the Fall of 2023, there were 10,233 enrolled students at WLAC. Of those, 704 students are non-credit (7%).[5]

[5] WLAC PowerBi

A full time student at WLAC is considered to be taking 12 credits or more during a semester. The vast majority of students at WLAC are taking courses part-time, with many working one or multiple jobs at the same time as attending WLAC. As of Fall 2023:

- 5,348 students (52%) are taking between 0.5 and 5.5 units.
- 2,620 students (26%) are taking between 6 and 11.5 units.
- 1,521 students (15%) are taking 12 units or more (full time students).

Online vs. In-Person Learning

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of online students at WLAC since the pandemic. In the year before the pandemic, 40% percent of students were primarily online and now 70% of students are primarily online[6]. WLAC had a strong online presence before the pandemic, providing many with online options that were not offered elsewhere. While most classes at WLAC are now primarily online, WLAC is also competing with other schools in the region and across the country, who have shifted their programs online due to the pandemic. Defining the modality of courses will be key in shaping the future of WLAC programs and its campus.

Figures 17-19 show changes in enrollment for different learning modalities. Overall, ground course enrollment has slowly but steadily increased after the pandemic, hybrid courses have grown as well, and online course enrollment has declined but steadied since the pandemic. At WLAC, the vast majority of hybrid classes refer to one class that has distinct h online and in-person learning components (such as online lecture and in-person lab). Currently, only two classrooms in the entirety of WLAC's campus are set up for synchronous hybrid classes.

[6] WLAC, Office of Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard

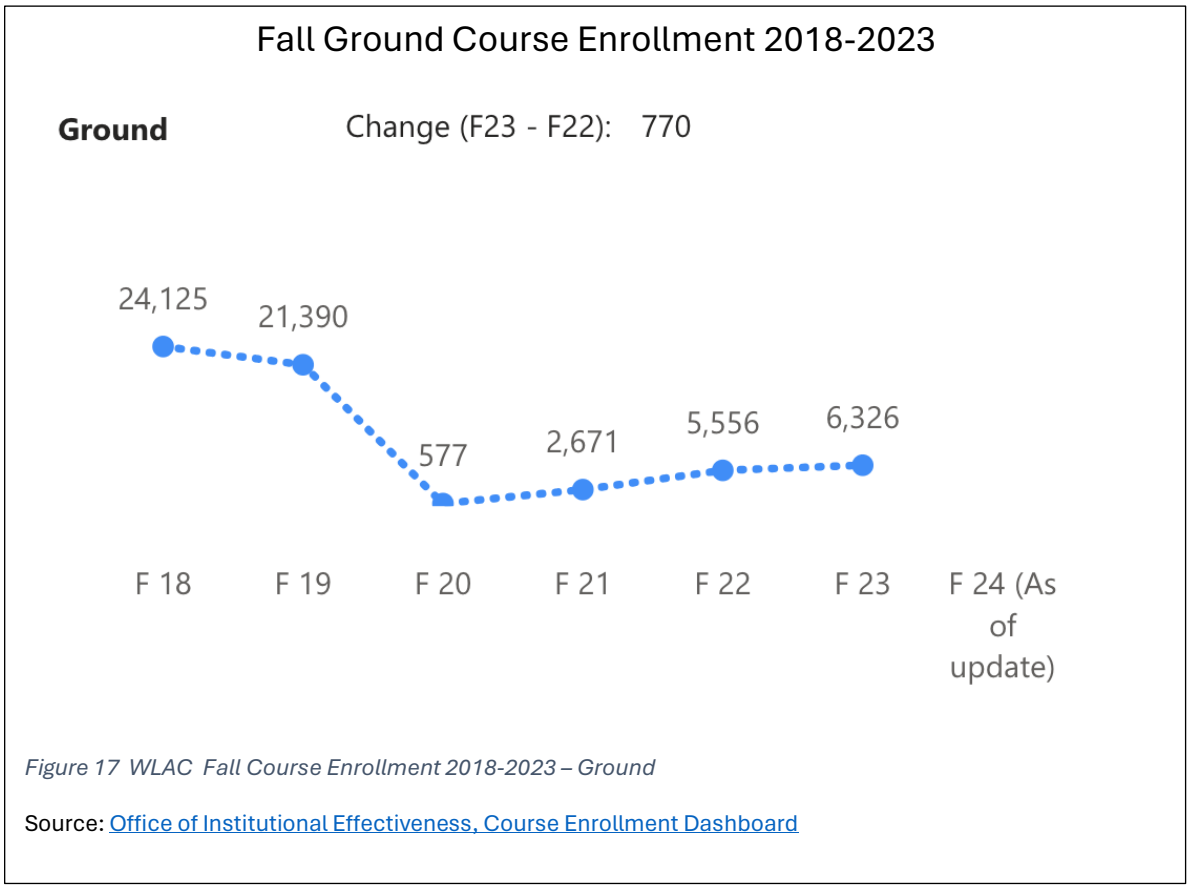

Figure 17 WLAC Fall Course Enrollment 2018-2023 – Ground

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Course Enrollment Dashboard

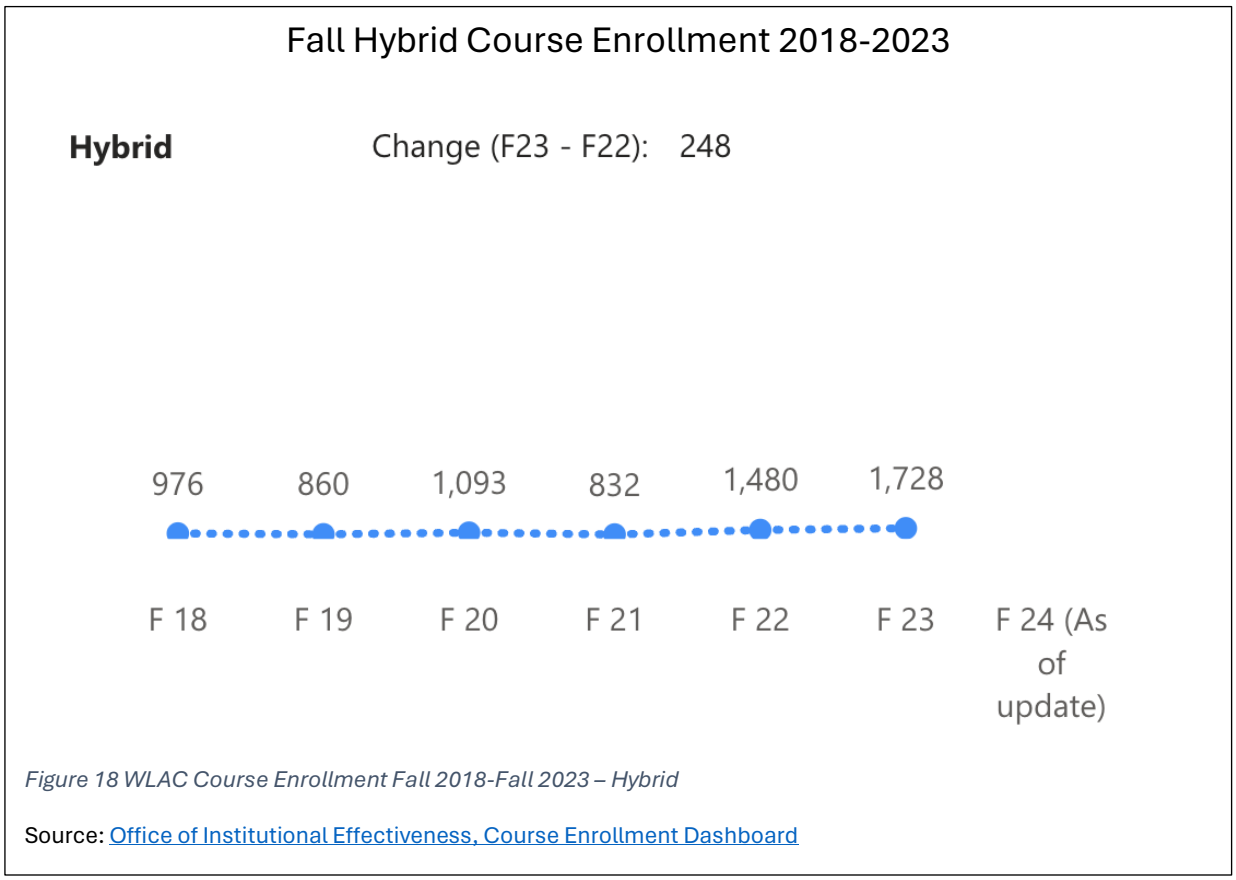

Figure 18 WLAC Course Enrollment Fall 2018-Fall 2023 – Hybrid

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Course Enrollment Dashboard

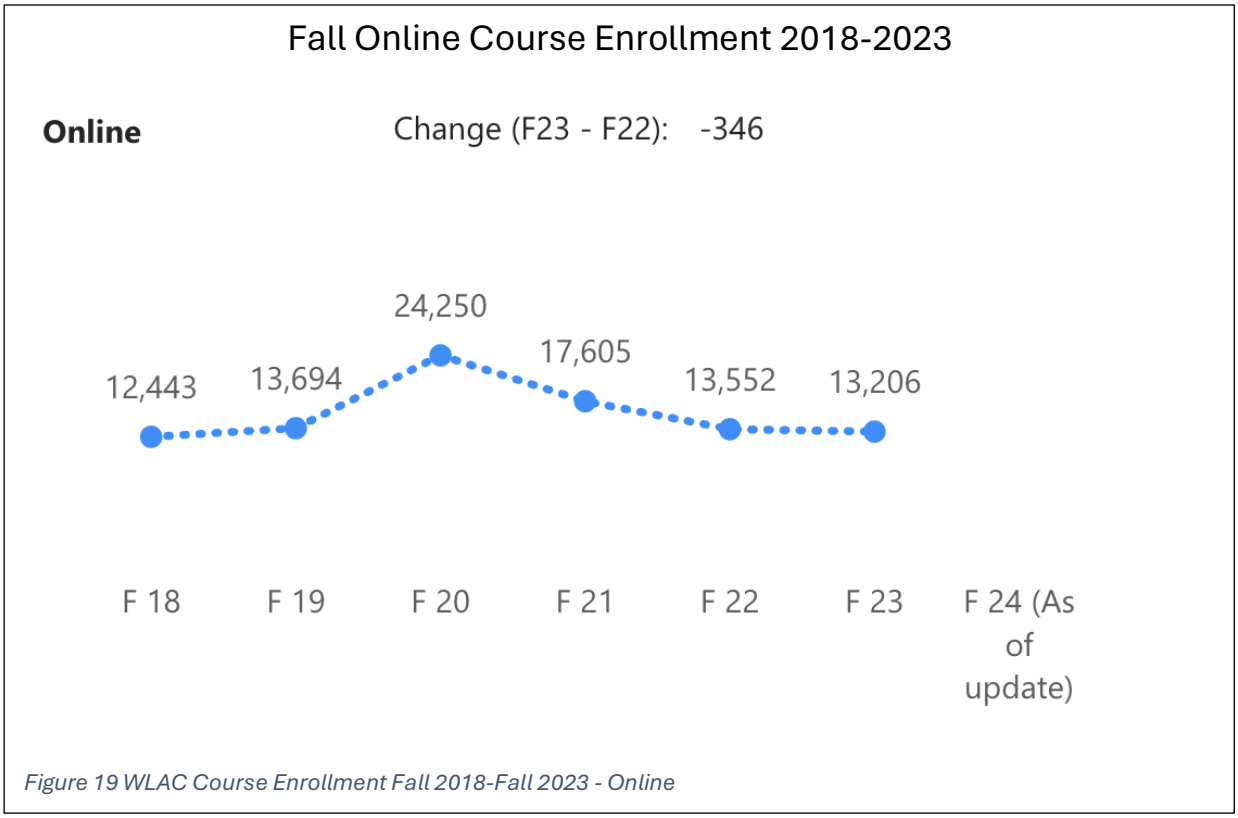

Figure 19 WLAC Course Enrollment Fall 2018-Fall 2023 - Online

Age

To understand who WLAC is serving it is important to understand the age of students and why they might be attending community college.

Typically students who enroll in community colleges are broken up as follows:

- Students under the age of 17 are typically concurrent high school students looking to complement high school coursework or gain transferable credits.
- Students between the ages of 17 and 25 are typically high school graduates interested in securing a two-year degree, looking to gain transferable credits to a four-year institution, or looking to build vocational skills and basic skills to transition into the workforce
- Students in the age group of 25 and older often attend community college to learn a new skill to better compete in the workforce, to earn a certificate applicable to a specialized field of practice or earn credits to transfer to a four-year school.
- Students in the 60+ age group are typically people who have retired and are looking to continue learning for fun, develop a new skill, and/or build their social network or community.

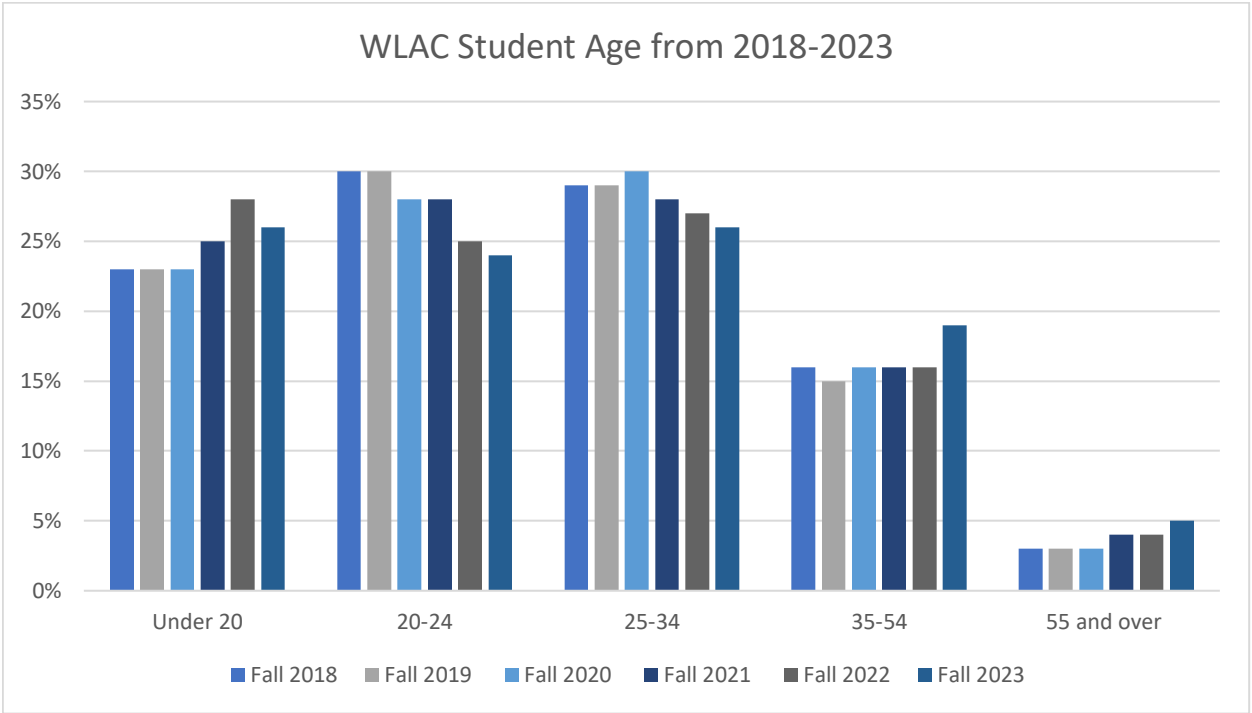

Figure 20 WLAC Student Age from Fall 2018 to Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

Figure 20 shows the age distribution of students at WLAC. Between 2018-2023 there was a slight increase in students under 20, and a significant decrease in students between 20-24, or the typical college aged students. Students aged 25-34 also saw a decrease. This trend stands somewhat in contrast to the overall age distribution in the service area and Los Angeles County, which is skewing older. Understanding the implications of these variations is difficult and may or may not illustrate future trends, but instead reflect consequences of the pandemic.

Ethnicity

To understand the type of programs and services that WLAC should offer in the future, it is important to understand the ethnic groups of each student and any associated needs. The following chart shows the ethnicity of students from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023. While the pandemic overall decreased enrollment starting in 2019, different ethnicities were disproportionately impacted by the effects of the pandemic.

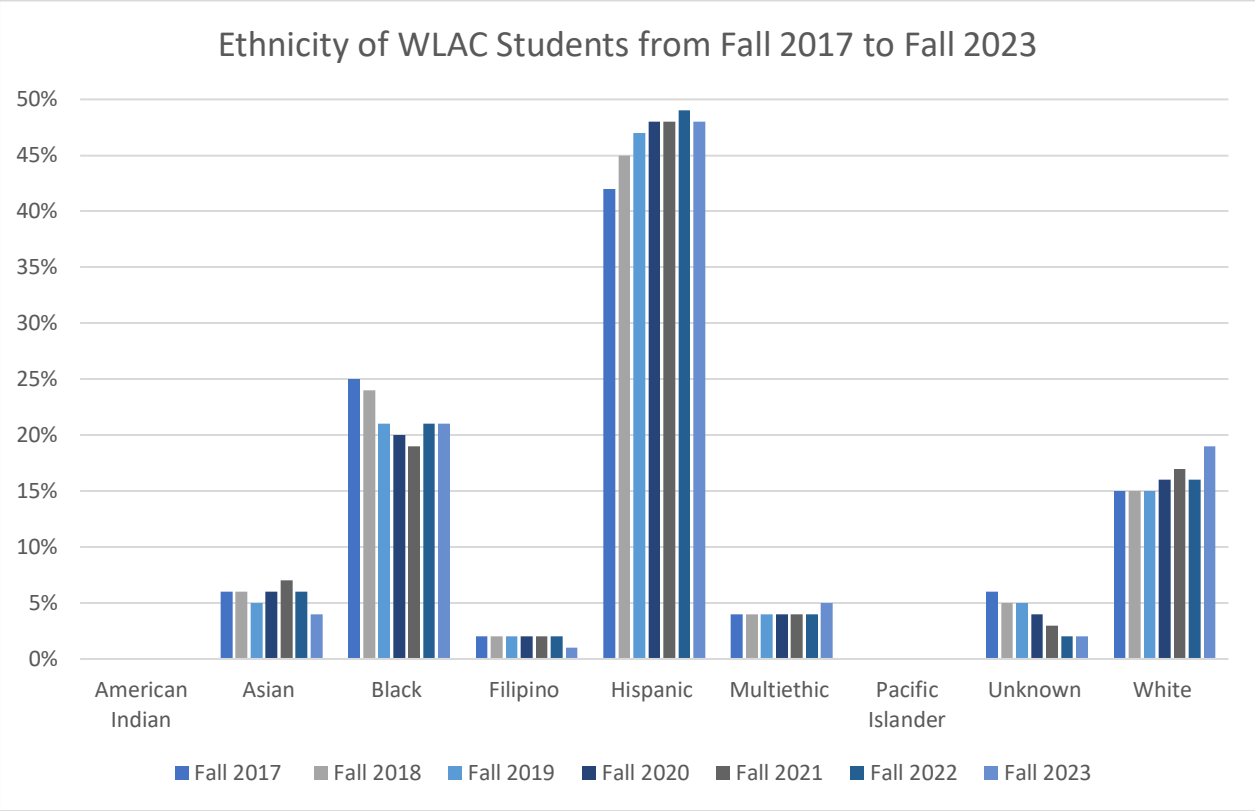

Figure 21 Ethnicity of WLAC Students, Fall 2017 to Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

There has been an increase in the percentage of Hispanic students at WLAC from 2017 to 2023, with almost half of the students (47%) identifying as Hispanic in 2023. There has been an overall decline in the percentage of Black students during this time period, with a slight increase from 2021 to 2023. In Fall 2023 approximately 21% identified as Black, down from 25% in 2017. National trends also show a decrease in enrollment of Black students in community colleges between 2019-

2021 (before and after the pandemic).[7] This data highlights the need for additional support for Black students on campus.

There was an increase in the proportion of white students from 2017 to 2023. Students who identify as Asian have varied from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023, but there was an overall decline with 4% of students identifying as Asian in Fall 2023. Notably, there are also no Pacific Islander or American Indian students at the college. While these populations are not represented in the central service area, there is an opportunity to increase diversity at WLAC by doing better outreach to these students.

Gender

The gender distribution of WLAC has remained consistent with an average of 60% female students and 40% male students from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023. This reflects overall higher education enrollment trends by gender.[8]

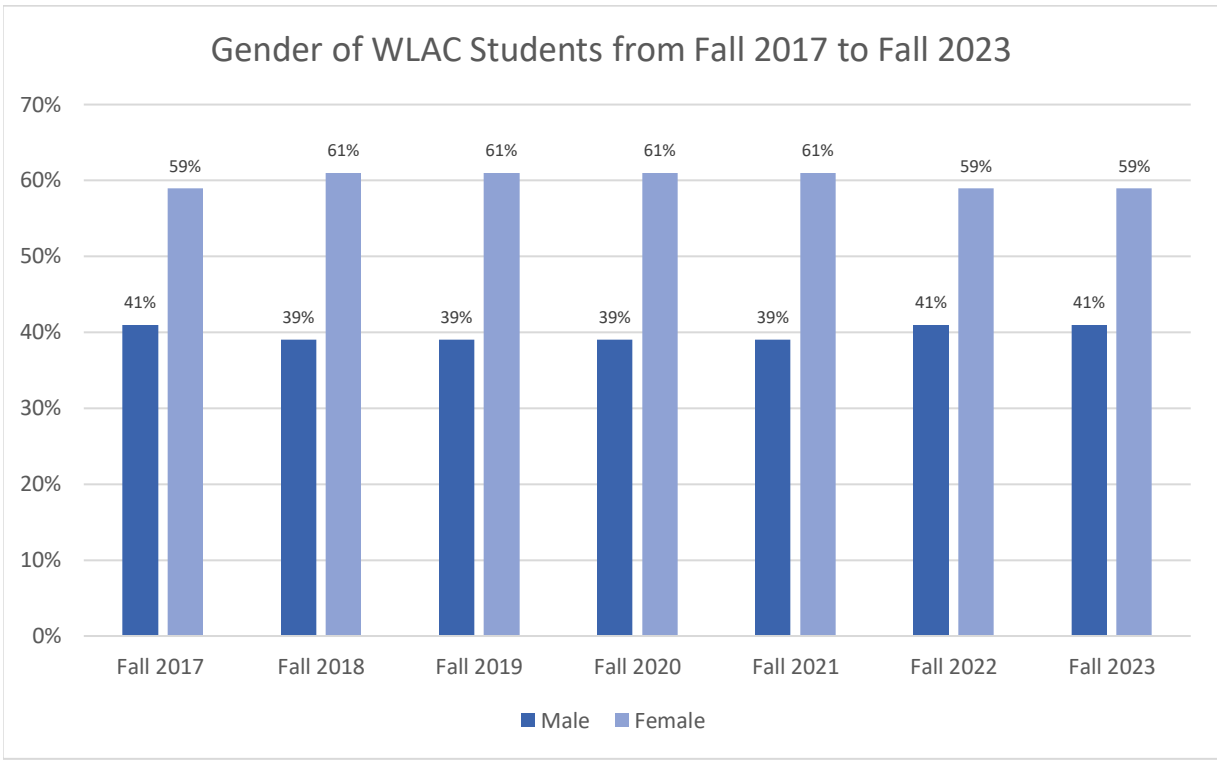

Figure 22 Gender of WLAC Students from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

[7] Illuminating Innovations: protecting Student Enrollment at California Community Colleges Amid a Pandemic, The Campaign for College Opportunity (2023)
[8] Enrollment, National Center for Education Statistics (2022)

First Generation Students

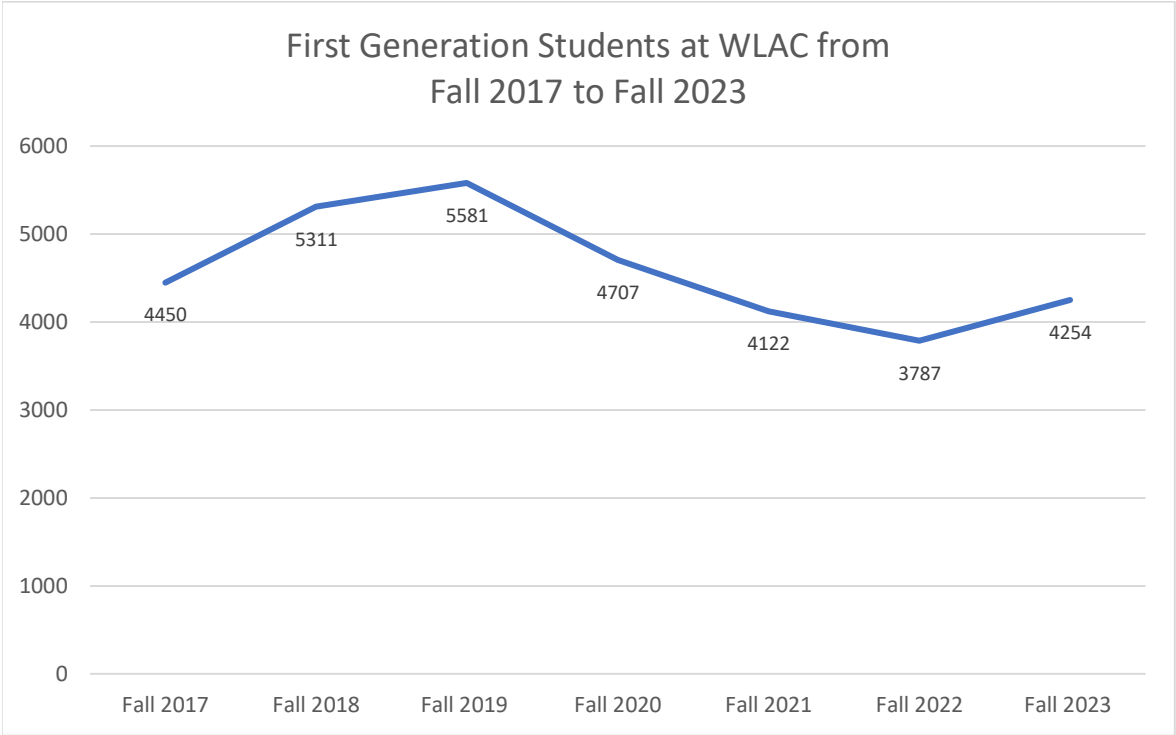

Figure 23 First Generation Students at WLAC from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023

Source WLAC PowerBI

First-generation students are the first generation in their families to attend a higher education institution. First-generation college students typically require more support in and access to resources in their student journey, as their parents may not be familiar with the college enrollment process. These students may need more guidance from college administration when it comes to college and course enrollment, degree completion, and other aspects of the college journey.

While the number of first-generation students grew before the pandemic, there was a significant decline after the pandemic. From Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 there has been a slight increase, and hopefully this trend will continue with the right outreach and support for these students.

Veteran Students

The number of Veterans at WLAC stayed consistent from Fall of 2017 to 2018 but has since seen a steady decline. This points to a further opportunity to support Veterans students at WLAC.

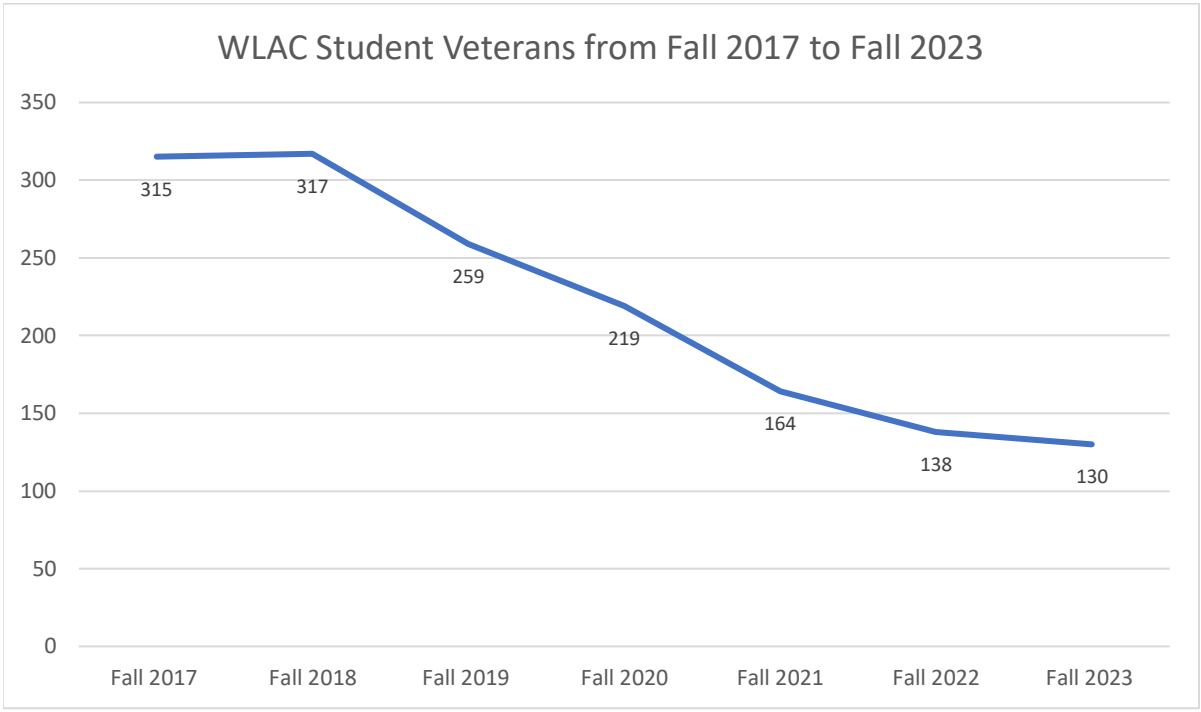

Figure 24 WLAC Student Veterans from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

IV. WLAC Enrollment and Success Trends

This section outlines student educational goals, evaluates college enrollment and the popularity of WLAC's programs, and discusses course success rates by ethnicity, highlighting achievement gaps in the college community. Information was taken directly from the college, utilizing WLAC's PowerBI tool and data from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness data portal. This information highlights popular as well as unpopular programs and can help the college prioritize funding and resource allocation to each program. Additionally, course success information shows which students may need additional support in classes. Acting on this information is even more critical due to the new student-centered funding formula from the State's Chancellor's office, which allocates 20% of overall WLAC funding to student success.

Changing the way Community Colleges are Funded

California is instituting a new Student-Centered Funding Formula that will fund community colleges based on student success. This formula is aligned with the goals and commitments of the California Community College Vision for Success and is intended to close achievement gaps and boost student success outcomes.

Community Colleges will now receive funds based on three calculations[9]:

- A base allocation, reflecting enrollment numbers (70% of funding).
- A supplemental allocation based on the number of students receiving a College Promise Grant, students receiving a Pell Grant, and students covered by AB 540 (10% of funding).
- A student success allocation (20% of funding) based on the number of:
    - Degrees awards and credit certificates
    - Students transferring to a 4-year institution
    - Students completing transfer-level math and English in the first year
    - Students who complete nine or more career education units
    - Students who have attained a regional living wage

Academic Planning is a key tool in student success. Academic planning gives students preparation and relief in their student journey and allows them to make institutional connections. Academic planning can help students with tools like:

- Overcoming financial hardships
- Developing leadership opportunities
- Gaining a career development
- Honing study skills
- Building a resumé
- Making connections on campus
- Creating a graduation pathway

[9] Student Centered Funding Formula, California Community Colleges

- Finding mental health services

Enrollment by Division

Table 4 Enrollment by Division

	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
Applied Technology	583	632	579	609	722	757
Arts & Performance	2430	2265	1834	1502	1890	1974
Business	2866	2735	1980	1773	1655	1518
College and Career Prep	8299	7034	1891	1650	2494	2376
Computer Science & Application	1832	1645	1236	941	1026	890
Counseling	186	206	119	195	29	68
Health Sciences	3817	3840	3256	2686	2867	3535
Human Development & Family Studies	3934	4169	3054	2273	2012	1928
Language Arts	4565	4774	3864	2838	3059	2956
Library	55	62				20
Mathematics	2501	1900	1780	1304	1025	980
Public Safety & Paralegal Studies	1089	1104	963	847	692	846
Sciences	2661	2370	2716	2589		1807
Social Sciences	2712	3205	2619	1834	1763	1571

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Course Enrollment Dashboard

Type of Student Enrollment

Understanding where students are in their educational journey will help WLAC better serve its students in the future. Below are different student types divided by where students are in their journey:

- Continuing students refers to students who have been enrolled in WLAC and are continuing their educational journey at WLAC. This includes students in their 2nd semester or beyond and who have attended courses in the previous semesters and have returned.

- First-time students in college refer to students who are starting their educational journey and are their first semester of college. This includes recent high school graduates enrolling in their first semester of college.
- Transfer students from another college refer to students who have started their educational journey at another institution and have decided to transfer to WLAC. For example, this includes students who completed their freshman year at another institution, like Pierce College, and who complete their next year at WLAC.
- Concurrent high school students are high school students who are enrolled at WLAC and are taking college classes while in high school. For example, this includes high school student who would likely gain college credit or complete the A-G requirements (college application requirements) by taking credited courses from WLAC at their high school.
- "Returning student to this college after absent for main term" refers to students who were enrolled in WLAC, took a gap semester then returned to WLAC to complete their educational journey. For example, a student who was enrolled in Fall 2021, did not attend the Spring 2022 semester, but returned in Fall 2022 would be included in this category.

The majority of students from Fall 2017 to Fall 2023 are continuing students. There has also been an increase in the amount of concurrent high school students and first-time students in college and a decrease in Transfer students from another college.

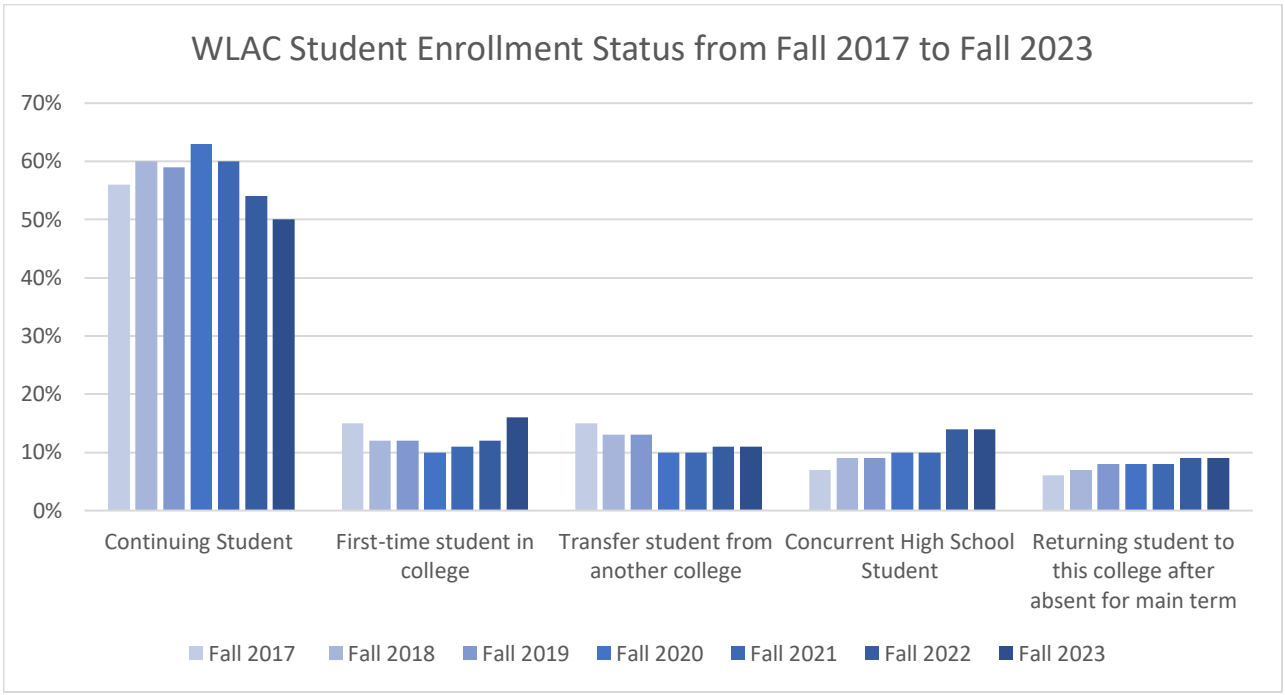

Figure 25 WLAC Student Enrollment Status, Fall 2017 to Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

Student Goals

The chart below describes WLAC student goals between Fall 2017-Fall 2023, which have mostly stayed consistent throughout this time period. Overall, almost half of students during these years have the goal of transferring to another institution (with decrease of 2% between 2017-2023). About 17% of students have the goal of completing general education requirements. A similar percentage of students are undecided on their goals. About 14% have the goal of completing a trade certificate or other vocational skill.

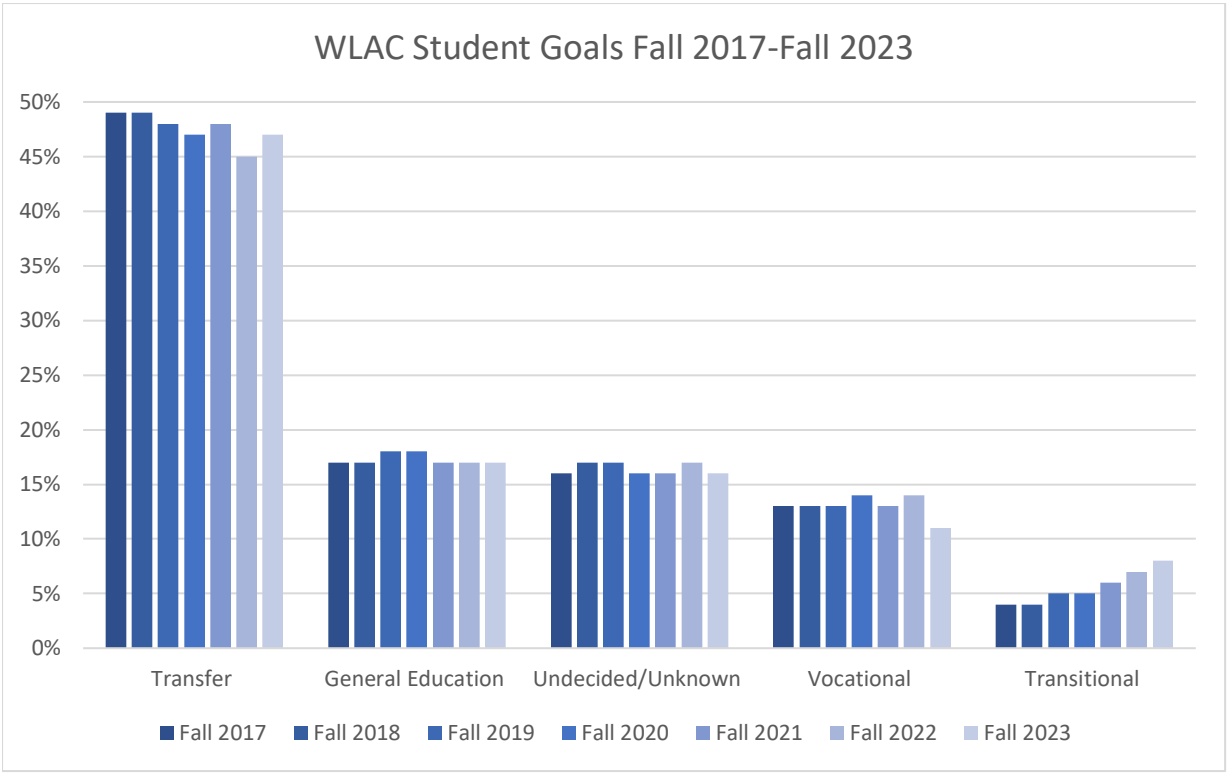

Figure 26 WLAC Student Goals by Term Fall 2017-Fall 2023

Source: WLAC PowerBI

Course Enrollment

In Fall 2018 and 2019 most courses were ground courses (held in-person). There has been a sharp increase in online courses since the pandemic and WLAC has not returned to the pre-pandemic levels of in-person courses.

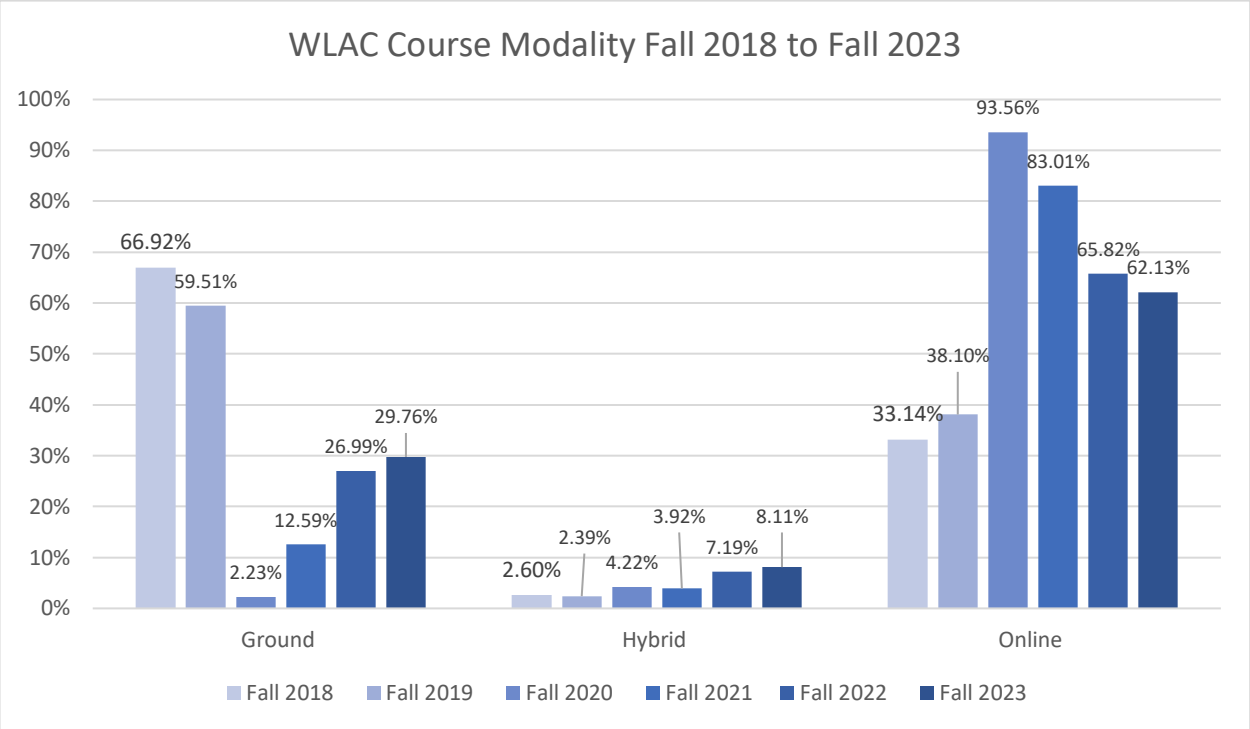

Figure 27 WLAC Course Modality for Fall 2018 to Fall 2023

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Course Enrollment Dashboard

Course Success

Figure 28 illustrates overall course modality success rates. In 2019 (pre-pandemic), there were 8% higher course success rates for ground learning compared to online, and 5% higher course success rates for ground learning compared to hybrid learning. The gap between online and in-person learning success outcomes was exacerbated by the pandemic, leading to an overall 20% difference in success between online and in-person learning in 2023.

Course modality may not be the only driver of the level of success. Access to reliable Wifi, computers, quiet space, as well as additional burdens such as a second job or childcare may be at play in determining the different course modalities students sign up for and the overall student pool.

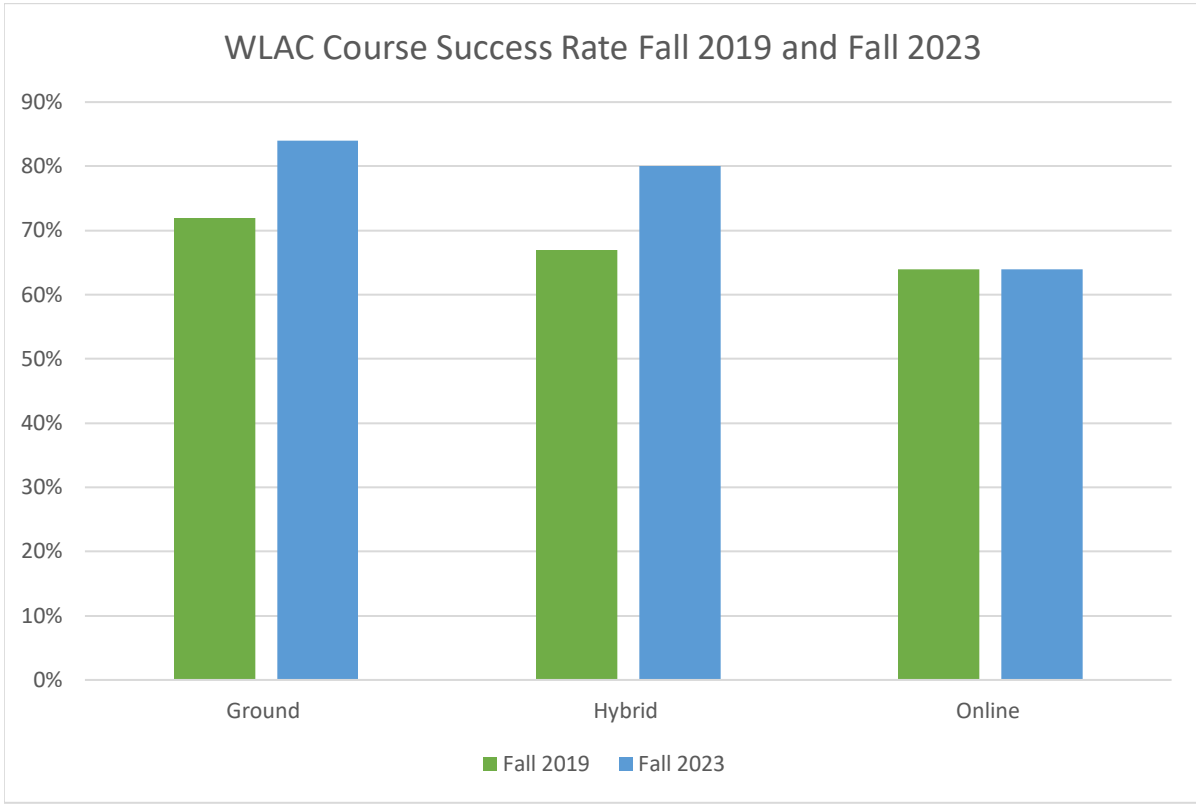

Figure 28: WLAC Couse Success Rate Fall 2019 and Fall 2023

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Student Equity Dashboard

Table 5 illustrates the differences in success by ethnicity. In 2023, 59% of Black students were successful online and 77% were successful for ground courses, while 66% percent of Hispanic were successful online in 2023 and 85% were successful in ground classes. Online success rates for Black and Hispanic students increased slightly between 2019-2023 (5% increase and 4% increase respectively), with a large decrease in success rates for white students (19% decrease). However, the success of ground courses increased for all ethnic groups between 2019 and 2023, with more stark increase in success rates for Black students (12% increase), Hispanic students (15% increase) and multiethnic students (14% increase), as well as a 7% increase for white students. This shows that students in ground classes have seen higher success outcomes than online students. Hybrid courses had mixed results in terms of course success, with most groups seeing equal or lower success rates than ground classes.

Table 5 Course Success Rate by Ethnicity, Fall 2019 to Fall 2023 by Modality

	Online		Ground		Hybrid	
	Fall 2019	Fall 2023	Fall 2019	Fall 2023	Fall 2019	Fall 2023
American Indian/Alaskan Native	63%	61%	64%	77%		50%
Asian	80%	79%	85%	91%	75%	85%
Black	54%	59%	65%	77%	54%	57%
Hispanic	62%	66%	71%	85%	71%	85%
Multiethnic	55%	61%	67%	81%	52%	85%
Pacific Islander	64%	57%	72%	92%	33%	
Unknown	78%	71%	70%	90%	61%	50%
White	80%	61%	82%	89%	77%	89%

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Student Equity Dashboard

Course Retention

Similar trends are true for rates for course retention (whether students complete their course) as course success rates. In 2023, overall course retention was higher for all groups in all modalities. There was 7% higher retention for ground courses than hybrid courses in 2019, and this gap increased to a 9% higher retention rate for ground courses compared to online courses in 2023. However, the gap between hybrid and ground modalities decreased from 2023 compared to 2019, turning a 4% gap into a 1% gap. Trends in course retention rates may also be impacted by the decrease in enrollment and by the change in number of students attending WLAC with competing priorities or financial hardship due to the pandemic.

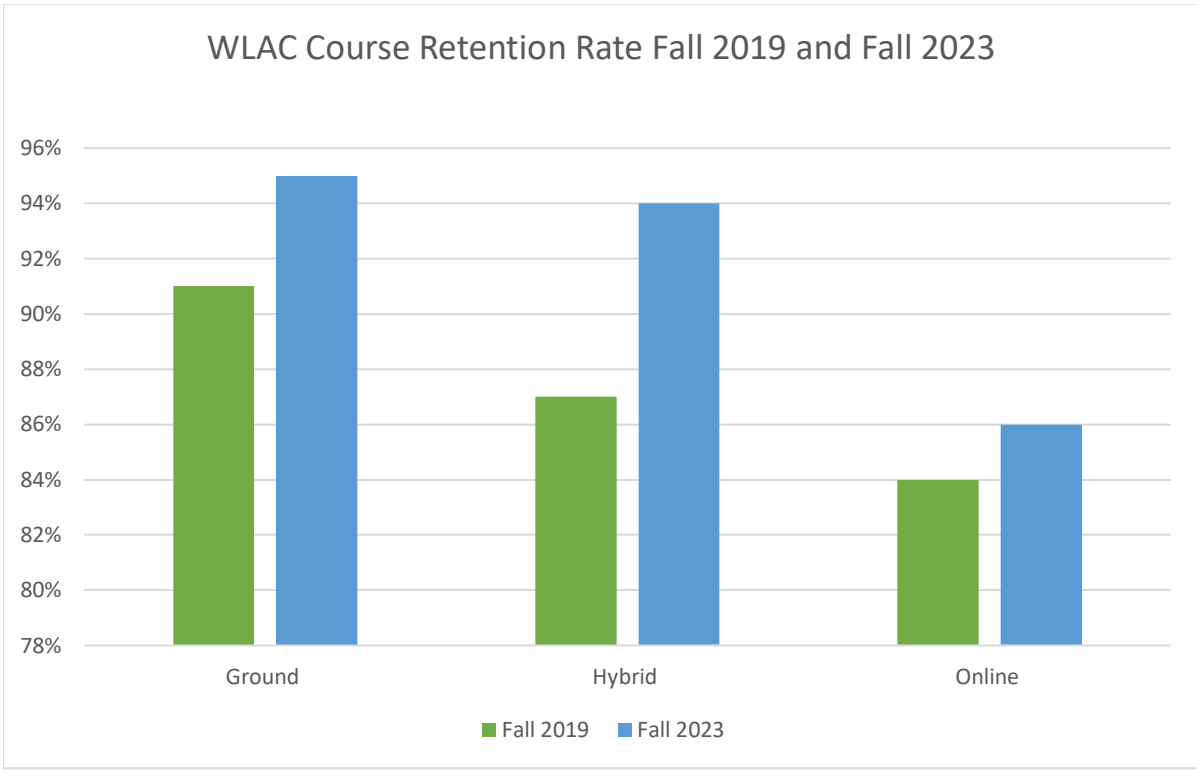

Figure 29: WLAC Couse Retention Rate Fall 2019 and Fall 2023

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Student Equity Dashboard

Table 6 shows that in 2023, most ethnicities had higher overall course retention for ground courses compared to online courses (ranging from 3%-8% higher), with the exception of American Indian/ Alaskan Native students, who had a 6% lower retention rate.

Table 6 Course Retention Rate by Ethnicity for Fall 2019 to Fall 2023 by Modality

	Online		Ground		Hybrid	
	Fall 2019	Fall 2023	Fall 2019	Fall 2023	Fall 2019	Fall 2023
American Indian/Alaskan Native	79%	87%	92%	86%		50%
Asian	90%	90%	94%	98%	94%	97%
Black	79%	83%	89%	92%	80%	88%
Hispanic	83%	87%	91%	96%	89%	96%
Multiethnic	81%	86%	90%	95%	78%	92%
Pacific Islander	83%	89%	89%	97%	33%	
Unknown	90%	90%	93%	98%	83%	75%
White	90%	88%	94%	98%	93%	96%

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Student Equity Dashboard

Awards

Table 7 shows the awards by division for the years 2018-2019 and 2022-2023. The College and Career Prep division experienced the most significant increase in awards, with Health Sciences experiencing growth as well. The IGET, General Education, and Liberal Arts divisions experiences significant decrease in awards.

Table 7 Awards by Division 2018-2019 and 2022-2023

	2018-2019	2022-2023	Change
Applied Technology	140	123	-17
Arts & Performance	47	52	5
Business	201	212	11
College and Career Prep	560	920	360
Computer Science & Application	110	61	-49
Health Sciences	203	389	186
Human Development & Family Studies	109	112	3
IGET, GEN ED & Liberal Arts	1162	998	-164
Language Arts	37	28	-9
Mathematics	13	12	-1
Public Safety & Paralegal Studies	100	114	14
Sciences	14	28	14
Social Sciences	47	74	27

Source: Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Awards Dashboard

Table 8 shows the total number of certificates awarded has stayed fairly constant since 2018-2019, with a slight increase in the number of credit certificates awarded. The total number of degrees awarded has decreased slightly since 2018-2019. There was an increase in the number of noncredit awards given.

Table 8 WLAC Award Type 2018-2023

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total	**2,730**	**3,463**	**3,179**	**3,292**	**3,158**
Baccalaureate of Science (B.S.) degree	48	42	43	61	58
Associates in Science for Transfer (A.S.-T) Degree	204	274	239	260	198
Associates in Arts for Transfer (A.A.-T) Degree	128	183	191	151	184
Associates of Science (A.S.) degree	67	59	72	91	91
Associates of Arts (A.A.) degree	837	863	724	663	656
Certificate requiring 30 to < 60 semester Units	722	746	821	740	711
Certificate requiring 16 to fewer than 30 semester unit	164	96	123	86	167
Certificate requiring 8 to fewer than 16 units	5	20	26	75	163
Certificate requiring 6 to < 18 semester units	1				
Other Credit Award < 6 semester units	3				
Noncredit award requiring from 288 to < 480 hours			5	33	
Noncredit award requiring from 192 < 288 hours				1	33
Noncredit award requiring from 144 to < 192 hours		21	19	62	33
Noncredit award requiring from 96 hours to < 144 hour	23	20	20	113	78
Noncredit award requiring from 48 to < 96 hours	242	819	476	279	305
Noncredit award requiring < 48 hours	286	320	420	677	481

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

College Comparables

As illustrated in Table 9, comparable colleges have seen a significant decline in enrollment from Fall 2018 to Fall 2023. However, WLAC has seen the sharpest decline with 27% reduction with the next worse decline being 9% less than WLAC.

Despite the decline in enrollment, the amount of awards have continued to grow. From 2018 to 2023, LA South West has seen the most growth, 56% in degrees awarded followed by LA Trade Tech with 44%. WLAC falls in the middle of the five colleges with a 16% increase in awards.

All colleges have seen a significant decline in the amount of in person classes, but LA Trade Tech has the most in-person courses (62%) in 2023, followed by El Camino with 54%. WLAC and LA Southwest have the least amount of in-person classes, and support 74% and 75% of online learning classes respectively.

All Colleges have support services available for students, but overall Santa Monica College has the highest proportion of students who have received these services. The low percentage among all colleges shows the need for increased outreach to students and support for staff offering these services. WLAC has the lowest level of use for counseling services with just 9% or 997 students using those services.

Table 9 Community College Comparables

	El Camino		LA City		LA South West		LA Trade Tech		Santa Monica		West LA	
	Fall 2018	**Fall 2023**	**Fall 2018**	**Fall 2023**	**Fall 2018**	**Fall 2023**	**Fall 2018**	**Fall 2023**	**Fall 2018**	**Fall 2023**	**Fall 2018**	**Fall 2023**
Enrollment												
Total	24819	21971	19014	17157	7341	6053	15544	13497	32535	26748	13719	9955
Enrollment Change 2018-2023		-11%		-10%		-18%		-13%		-18%		-27%
Program Awards												
Award Count	5164	3685	3,195	3,916	1,181	1,837	1,813	2,614	9,024	9,027	2,730	3,158
Award Changes 2018-2023		-29%		23%		56%		44%		0%		16%
Credit Courses												
Total	62,682	56,734	35,275	29,467	13,419	8,918	30,268	26,736	83,349	63,725	28,078	18,111
In person (%)	89%	54%	85%	40%	79%	25%	94%	62%	83%	47%	54%	26%
Distance Learning (%)	11%	46%	15%	60%	21%	75%	6%	38%	17%	53%	46%	74%
Student Support Services, Directed												
Total Services Offered	117256	106610	76772	65204	32679	23080	66074	50288	52553	48387	55106	41816
Services Received	24%	26%	15%	19%	13%	12%	17%	20%	60%	60%	15%	26%
Services Not Received	76%	74%	85%	81%	87%	88%	83%	80%	40%	40%	85%	74%
Service Received												
Total	28012	28211	11611	12277	4283	2867	11037	9853	31790	28931	8070	11070
Academic/Progress Probation Services	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Counseling/Advertisement Services	29%	33%	21%	20%	19%	15%	26%	20%	50%	58%	20%	9%
Education Plan Services	27%	26%	12%	16%	14%	8%	13%	22%	37%	36%	17%	13%
Initial Assessment Services Placement	9%	11%	5%	7%	3%	6%	5%	8%	13%	2%	1%	18%
Initial Orientation Services	5%	12%	5%	6%	4%	2%	4%	4%	71%	67%	5%	4%
Other Services	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: California Community College Chancellors Office

V. Market Analysis and Employment Trends

This section provides a market analysis and outlines employment trends for the United States, California, and Los Angeles region. The section provides an outlook on the highest paying jobs, the jobs experiencing the most growth, and the top employers in the county. Together, this information can help guide the types of programs offered by WLAC, including the potential addition of new programs and the prioritization of current programs.

Below is a high level overview of the market analysis, employment trends, and opportunities for program growth at WLAC.

- Overall, the typical salary for an Associate Degree ranges considerably from $30,000-100,000 a year.
- Both avionics and dental hygiene are growing fields in Los Angeles County with relatively high salaries, signaling an opportunity to devote more resources to and expand these programs at WLAC.
- Paralegals are also a growing profession in Los Angeles County, although it is a mid-salary position (between $50-60,000 per year). WLAC's Paralegal program is well-attended, and there is opportunity to further expand this as well.
- The healthcare field in Los Angeles County is greatly expanding, similarly to U.S. trends as a whole, offering fairly high paying jobs. There is an opportunity to expand WLAC's Health Sciences offerings to support high growth jobs in Los Angeles County, including therapy assistants, physical therapy assistants, respiratory therapists, and diagnostic medical sonographers.
- Computer and Information Technology occupations are experiencing growth, with the potential for high paying jobs. The

WLAC Career and Academic Pathways

Applied Technology & Computer Science

Applied Technology and Computer Science programs study computers, aviation maintenance, and fire technology to help business keep these technologies functioning. Graduates can find jobs in aviation maintenance, computer information, computer network management, computer application design, and the fire service.

Arts & Humanities

Arts and Humanities programs study human creativity and languages to help us express ourselves and communicate effectively. Graduates may find jobs in journalism, graphic design, academics, museums, film production, entertainment and government.

Behavioral & Social Sciences

Behavioral and Social Sciences programs study people to help solve social issues, improve quality of life, and plan for our future. Graduates may be self-employed or may find jobs in academics, anthropology, law and public policy, government and education.

Business

Business programs study finance and management to help businesses and offices function smoothly and plan for the future. Graduates can find jobs in accounting, business administration, hospitality, marketing, paralegal, and real estate.

Climate Studies & Environmental Justice

Students in the Climate Studies & Environmental Justice pathway study the impact of climate change on the biosphere, local environments and our physical and mental health. Students also learn how these changes are an environmental justice issue as a result of disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized groups. Students in this pathway can also choose programs that will enhance their scientific foundation or provide them with workforce and business skills in anticipation of working within the developing "green" and "blue" economies.

Health Sciences

Health Sciences programs study human biology, medical care, and support to help keep people healthy and offer assistance in emergencies. Graduates can find jobs in athletic training and sports medicine, pharmacy tech, medical assisting, dental assisting, dental hygiene, and emergency medicine.

STEM

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs scientifically study ourselves and the physical world to help us produce products, structures, systems, and technologies that improve our lives. Graduates can find jobs in many areas, including engineering, climate science, biotechnology, agriculture, forensics, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and the health sciences.

expansion and promotion of Computer and IT programs at West would set students up for success in the job market with strong financial outcomes.

- The Film Industry is experiencing a multitude of technological changes across script-writing, background and set, and more. Students going into the film industry will need to have a strong foundation in these upcoming technologies.
- The climate change field is growing as well, and there are opportunities to align with growing jobs in the sector including clean energy engineers and sustainable construction positions.

United States

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics identified the following 20 occupations with the highest projected numeric change in employment in the US, listed in Table 10. Five of these 20 occupations are in the Healthcare field and three are in shipping and movement of goods. While the highest growth occupation is home health and personal care aides, the pay is quite low. The same is true for medical assisting. Expanding these programs at WLAC may not provide good financial outcomes to these students.

Other occupations that WLAC provides programs for that have high expected growth includes computer and information system managers and accountants. These two occupations have higher salaries. There could be an opportunity for expansion and promotion of these programs at WLAC.

Table 10 Occupations with the Highest Projected Numeric Change in Employment in the US

Occupation	Number of new jobs (projected), 2022-32	2022 median pay
Home health and personal care aides	804,600	$30,180 per year
Software developers	410,400	$127,260 per year
Cooks, restaurant	277,600	$34,110 per year
Stockers and order fillers	178,600	$34,220 per year
Registered nurses	177,400	$81,220 per year
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	158,800	$36,110 per year
General and operations managers	147,300	$98,100 per year
Medical and health services managers	144,700	$104,830 per year
Light truck drivers	133,800	$40,410 per year
Financial managers	126,600	$139,790 per year
Nurse practitioners	118,600	$121,610 per year
Market research analysts and marketing specialists	116,600	$68,230 per year
Medical assistants	105,900	$38,270 per year
Management analysts	95,700	$95,290 per year
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	89,300	$49,920 per year
Computer and information systems managers	86,000	$164,070 per year
Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors	71,500	$49,710 per year
Accountants and auditors	67,400	$78,000 per year
Lawyers	62,400	$135,740 per year
Construction laborers	61,900	$40,750 per year

Source: 20 occupations with the highest projected numeric change in employment, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Table 11 shows the top 10 highest-paid jobs requiring an Associate's Degree in the United States. Six out of the programs are in the medical field, including radiation therapist, nuclear medicine technologist, and respiratory therapist. There is an opportunity for WLAC to expand its medical programs to include certificate programs in these areas. Dental hygienist is on this list as well, for which WLAC has a well-attended program.

Three of the occupations on this list are in the aviation or aerospace sector, including avionics equipment mechanic/ technician, for which WLAC has a well-attended program. There is also a potential to continue WLAC's aviation program focus, which could expand to offer Associate's Degrees for air traffic controlling.

Table 11 Highest Paid Jobs Requiring an Associate Degree in the US

	Job Description	Median Annual Salary	# of jobs	Educational Requirements	Work experience required
1	Air traffic controller	$132,250	23,000	Associates Degree or equivalent	Must pass FAA assessment and training
2	Nuclear technician	$100,420	5,900	Associates Degree in nuclear science or related field	On-the-job training provided
3	Radiation therapist	$89,530	15,900	Associates or bachelors degree in radiation therapy or related field	Licensing or certification depending on state regulation
4	Nuclear medicine technologist	$85,300	18,100	Associates degree in nuclear medicine technology	Licensing
5	Dental hygienist	$81,400	219,400	Associates degree in dental hygiene	Licensing
6	Diagnostic medical sonographer, cardiovascular technologist/ technician	$78,210	142,800	Associates Degree or post-secondary certificate	Certification may be required
7	Aerospace engineering and operations technologist/technician	$74,410	10,200	Associates degree in engineering technology or related field	Varies by position
8	Aircraft and avionics equipment mechanic and technician	$70,740	161,000	Associates Degree	FAA certification required
9	Respiratory therapist	$70,540	133,100	Associates Degree in respiratory therapy	Licensing required in most states
10	Radiologic and MRI technologist	$67,180	264,100	Associates degree	Certification often required for radiologic technologist; experience may be required for MRI technologist

Source: 10 Highest-Paying Associates Degree Jobs in 2024, Forbes

California

The following table shows the top 5 projected job openings in California by Education Level. Job openings in California that require some college, a postsecondary award or Associate's degree for which WLAC has programs includes accounting and medical assisting. However, the pay for these

positions is fairly low, and WLAC should take these financial outcomes into when considering expanding these programs.

Table 12 Top 5 Projected Job Openings by Education Level in California

Occupation	Projected 2022-2024 Job Openings [6]	2023 Median Annual Wages [7]
Requires a Bachelor's Degree or Higher		
Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers[9]	64,330	$170,646
General and Operations Managers	60,420	$118,793
Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other[10]	55,950	$106,177
Registered Nurses	41,340	$137,759
Accountants and Auditors	33,940	$85,301
Requires Some College, Postsecondary Non-Degree Award, or Associate's Degree		
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	52,680	$54,100
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	44,850	$52,226
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary[11]	31,140	$40,271
Medical Assistants	29,640	$46,669
Nursing Assistants	27,160	$41,850
Requires a High School Diploma or Equivalent or Less		
Home Health and Personal Care Aides[12]	248,760	$32,496
Fast Food and Counter Workers	197,650	$35,453
Cashiers	155,520	$34,736
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	115,850	$39,522
Retail Salespersons	106,410	$35,956

Source: 2023 California Jobs Market Briefing, EDD

The following table shows the top 20 Highest Paying Jobs in California. Similar to the highest paying jobs in the United States, over half (13) of the following jobs are in the Healthcare sector, including nurse anesthetists, emergency medicine physicians, and other family medicine and general medicine physicians. WLAC could consider expansion of pre-med certificates that would lead students into the nursing and medical field.
Job openings in California for which WLAC has direct programs includes computer and information system managers and research scientists, and flight engineers. WLAC should consider how it dedicates resources to and promotes its Computer Science programs, which could set up students for success as Computer and IT professionals. Additionally, this data shows that West's Avionics program can lead to high paying jobs for students.

Table 13 Top 20 Highest Paying Jobs in California

Rank	Job Description	Average Salary	Entry Level Salaries	No. of Employees
1	Nurse Anesthetists	$235,120	$94,130	2,000
2	Emergency Medicine Physicians	$232,590	$66,990	N/A
3	All Other Physicians	$230,940	$65,980	20,840
4	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons	$230,300	$169,000	240
5	Airline Pilots, Copilots, and Flight Engineers	$225,040	$97,300	9,670
6	Family Medicine Physicians	$223,980	$81,510	10,920
7	General Internal Medicine Physicians	$218,640	$81,880	7,150
8	General Pediatricians	$215,150	$125,990	3,130
9	Judges, Magistrate Judges, and Magistrates	$214,320	$191,320	1,420
10	Chief Executives	$212,360	$89,690	36,710
11	Neurologists	$207,060	$179,590	3,050
12	Computer and Information Systems Managers	$198,950	$111,020	94,550
13	All Other Surgeons	$195,870	$112,590	2,480
14	Dermatologists	$195,820	$78,560	420
15	Natural Sciences Managers	$189,990	$107,150	13,810
16	Orthodontists	$187,510	$163,300	1,120
17	Medical Dosimetrists	$181,440	$137,500	40
18	Architectural and Engineering Managers	$179,080	$123,790	34,600
19	Nurse Midwives	$177,800	$88,710	910
20	Computer and Information Research Scientists	$177,770	$94,950	7,510

Source: Top 100 highest-paying jobs in California, USA Wage

Los Angeles County

Table 14 shows the Top 15 Occupations with the highest projected growth in Los Angeles County. The text in red indicates over 25% in expected growth. There is growth in occupations in the medical industry (4 occupations) as well as in the gaming industry (3 occupations). While this list points to areas of job growth, it is important to note that most of these occupations pay a low to very low wage.

Table 14 Top 15 Occupations with the Top Projected Growth in Los Angeles County

Occupation	Employment Estimate 2018	Employment Estimate 2028	Percent Change	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
Personal Care Aides	203,170	297,260	46.30%	$---	$---
Rail Transportation Workers, All Other	100	140	40.00%	$18.89	$39,306
Home Health Aides	8,020	10,030	25.10%	$---	$---
Physical Therapist Aides	1,680	2,080	23.80%	$15.51	$32,263
Septic Tank Servicers & Sewer Pipe Cleaners	210	260	23.80%	$25.87	$53,811
First-Line Supervisors of Gaming Workers	550	680	23.60%	$---	$---
First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	13,070	15,940	22.00%	$---	$---
Gaming Dealers	3,600	4,380	21.70%	$13.41	$27,889
Gaming Surveillance Officers & Gaming Investigators	190	230	21.10%	$18.19	$37,836
Veterinary Assistants & Laboratory Animal Caretakers	1,690	2,030	20.10%	$15.17	$31,567
Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	1,420	1,700	19.70%	$23.00	$47,841
Social & Human Service Assistants	15,860	18,770	18.30%	$19.58	$40,726
Crane & Tower Operators	1,090	1,290	18.30%	$38.30	$79,663
Medical Secretaries	20,110	23,760	18.20%	$20.64	$42,933
Entertainment Attendants & Related Workers, All Other	170	200	17.60%	$13.41	$27,891

Source: Fastest Growing Occupations Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Almanac

Table 15 shows the fastest growing jobs in Los Angeles County requiring an Associate's Degree. eleven out of 20 of these jobs are in the medical field, aligning with overall strong presence of the medical field in the County and State. This includes dental hygienists, for which WLAC has well-attended programs, an area which WLAC continue to grow to keep pace with job growth. Similar to the US trends in employment, there are many medical professions for which WLAC could create programs for which would lead to high-paying jobs. These potential programs could include occupational therapy assistants, physical therapy assistants, respiratory therapists, and diagnostic medical sonographers among others.

Also of note on this chart are paralegals, for which West has a well-attended program. There is opportunity to expand this program at West as well.

Table 15 Fastest Growing Jobs in Los Angeles County requiring an Associate Degree

	Employment Estimate 2018	Employment Estimate 2028	Percent Change	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
Occupational Therapy Assistants	400	530	32.50%	$32.65	$67,912
Physical Therapist Assistants	1,330	1,700	27.80%	$34.17	$71,072
Respiratory Therapists	4,990	6,290	26.10%	$39.61	$82,399
Environmental Engineering Technicians	900	1,130	25.60%	$26.05	$54,186
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	1,640	2,050	25.00%	$46.38	$96,473
Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	1,760	2,130	21.00%	$20.20	$42,029
Funeral Service Managers	370	440	18.90%	$---	$---
Environmental Science & Protection Technicians, Including Health	950	1,130	18.90%	$---	$---
Paralegals & Legal Assistants	12,270	14,250	16.10%	$25.78	$53,632
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	690	790	14.50%	$48.39	$100,638
Web Developers	6,120	7,000	14.40%	$---	$---
Radiologic Technologists	4,540	5,180	14.10%	$39.53	$82,225
Morticians, Undertakers, & Funeral Directors	290	330	13.80%	$23.95	$49,804
Life, Physical, & Social Science Technicians, All Other	2,110	2,400	13.70%	$26.80	$55,742
Radiation Therapists	220	250	13.60%	$60.21	$125,249
Dental Hygienists	4,620	5,250	13.60%	$---	$---
Dietetic Technicians	1,350	1,510	11.90%	$14.86	$30,908
Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians	1,310	1,450	10.70%	$36.70	$76,331
Nuclear Medicine Technologists	390	430	10.30%	$54.84	$114,072
Geological & Petroleum Technicians	300	330	10.00%	$---	$---

Source: Fastest Growing Occupations in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Almanac filtered by Education Needed: Associates Degree

Table 16 shows the Top 30 employers in Los Angeles County. The County and the City of Los Angeles employs a significant number of public employees. The Los Angeles Unified School District and the University of California Los Angeles also employ many people in public education.

Table 16 Top 30 Employers in Los Angeles County

Employer	Type of Employer	Employees
County of Los Angeles	Public - Local Government	100,800 [A]
Los Angeles Unified School District	Public - Education K-12	90,900 [B]
City of Los Angeles	Public - Local Government	68,300 [D]
University of California, Los Angeles	Public - Colleges/ Universities	51,700 [E]
Federal Government - All Agencies Except Defense & State	Public - Federal Government	44,600 [A]
Kaiser Permanente	Private - Health Care	37,400 [F]
State of California (non-education)	Public - State Government	33,900 [A]
University of Southern California	Private - Colleges/ Universities	21,000 [F]
Northrop Grumman Corp.	Private - Aerospace Manufacturing	16,600 [F]
Amazon	Private - Online Retail	16,200 [G]
Providence Health & Services	Private - Health Care	15,900 [F]
Target Corp.	Private - General Retail	15,000 [F]
Ralphs / Food 4 Less (Kroger Co.)	Private - Retail Groceries	14,900 [F]
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	Private - Health Care	14,900 [F]
Walt Disney Co.	Private - Amusement	13,000 [F]
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	Public - Transportation	12,900 [D]
Allied Universal	Private - Security & Janitorial Services	12,800 [F]
NBCUniversal	Private - Amusement	12,000 [F]
Long Beach Unified School District	Public - Education K-12	11,900 [C]
AT&T Inc.	Private - Telecommunications	11,500 [F]
Home Depot	Private - Retail Building Material & Garden	11,200 [F]
Los Angeles Community College District	Public - Colleges/ Universities	11,100 [D]
Albertsons / Vons / Pavilions	Private - Retail Groceries	10,200 [F]
United Parcel Service (UPS)	Private - Transportation Couriers	9,500 [F]
California Institute of Technology	Private - Colleges/ Universities	8,600 [F]
Wells Fargo & Co.	Private - Banking	8,500 [F]
ABM Industries Inc.	Private - Facility Services	8,000 [F]
Fedex Corp.	Private - Transportation Couriers	7,000 [F]
City of Long Beach	Public - Local Government	6,700 [D]
Bank of America Corp.	Private - Banking	6,500 [F]

Source: Largest Employers in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Almanac

Table 17 shows the top 10 Highest Paying Jobs in Los Angeles County. Similar to the trend of high paying jobs in the medical sector for the US and California, eight of Los Angeles County top 10 highest paying jobs are in the medical field.

Notably, aviation is also on this list. WLAC's Avionics program would be a pathway for students to become flight engineers.

Table 17 Top 10 Highest Paying Jobs in Los Angeles County

Occupation Title	Number Employed	Average Annual Wage or Salary
Orthopedic Surgeons, Except Pediatric	1,100	$405,729
Radiologists	290	$400,450
Surgeons, All Other	190	$334,858
Psychiatrists	1,740	$332,645
Cardiologists	770	$330,698
Chief Executives	9,220	$313,798
Airline Pilots, Copilots, & Flight Engineers	6,110	$265,534
Neurologists	140	$264,646
Family Medicine Physicians	1,840	$256,475
Physicians, All Other	3,940	$244,862

Source: Highest Paying Occupations in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Almanac

Market for WLAC's 4-year Programs

WLAC currently has two four-year Bachelor's Degree Programs which are the Dental Hygiene and Aviation Maintenance Technology/ Avionics Programs. WLAC is expected to offer an additional four year program in Climate Change and Environmental Studies. Below is an overview of future workforce trends and opportunities regarding these programs,

Dental Hygiene

The dental hygiene field has been named one of the top 10 highest paying jobs in the United States,[10] and one of the fastest growing jobs requiring an Associate's Degree in Los Angeles County[11] and is expected to continue growing. This field encompasses diagnosing and treating conditions regarding teeth, gums, and mouth such as cavities, tooth loss, and gum disease. Below are five popular dental careers, their education requirements, and their expected salary as identified by Forbes.[12]

- **Dentist:** Median salary $159,530 requiring a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Medicine in Dentistry (DMD)
- **Dental Assistant:** Median salary $44,820 requiring graduation from an accredited dental assisting program or on-the-job training
- **Dental Hygienist:** Median salary $81,400 requiring an Associates degree in dental hygiene
- **Orthodontist:** Median salary $174,360 requiring a DDS or DMD plus two to three years in orthodontic residency program
- **Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery:** Median salary $309,410 requiring a DDS or DMD plus four to six years in orthodontic residency program.

Avionics

Travel, specifically airplane travel, faced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic with increased precautions, travel restrictions, and grounded flights. Despite these challenges the industry has returned to normal with increased passenger flights. Avionics industry has experienced sustained growth over the years and has lead to increased demand for skilled workers across all roles. Below are the top 5 in-demand avionics jobs as identified by Odyssey Pilot Hours.[13]

- **Commercial Pilots:** The demand for commercial pilots is soaring, with airlines looking for experienced pilots and cadets willing to undergo rigorous training programs.
- **Aircraft Maintenance Technicians:** As airlines expand their fleets, aircraft maintenance technicians are in high demand to ensure the safety and airworthiness of the aircraft.
- **Air Traffic Controllers:** These quick minded, strategic, and calm individuals play a crucial role in ensuring safe and efficient air traffic management.
- **Aerospace Engineers**: The field of aerospace engineering offers opportunities to work on cutting-edge projects, from designing aircraft to developing space exploration technology.
- **Cabin Crew**: Airlines are always looking for attentive individuals to provide service and ensure the comfort and safety of passengers.

[10] 10 Highest-Paying Associate Degree Jobs in 2024, Forbes
[11] Fastest Growing Occupations in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles Almanac filtered by Education Needed: Associate Degree.
[12] 5 Dental Career Paths To Consider, Forbes (2023)
[13] Soaring Opportunities: Unveiling the Demand for Aviation Jobs (2023)

Climate Change

As the economy continues to shift to clean renewable energy, related occupations are continuing the shift to green jobs. Green jobs, as defined by the UN's International Labour Organization (ILO), are jobs that "reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials, limit greenhouse gas emissions, minimize waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems and enable enterprises and communities to adapt to climate change." Below are five jobs, as identified by Zurich Insurance Group[14] that will be pivotal in this transition.

- **Clean energy engineer:** Jobs such as hydroelectric power, biofuels, wind turbines, and solar photovoltaics are on the rise and expected to grow. The solar photovoltaics sector currently employs 3.9 million workers and could grow to 6.6 million by 2030. Employment in wind power generation could see similar growth from 1.5 million to almost 5 million by 2030.
- **Eco-builder:** The building industry is a major contributor to pollution, but the increasing use of natural and environmentally friendly building materials, along with modern construction methods, can reduce emissions. The ILO predicts that there will be 6.5 million jobs in sustainable construction by 2030.
- **Recycler in the new 'circular economy':** The shift towards a circular economy, which emphasizes recycling, reuse, and repair, can create new jobs in waste management, recycling, and services. The ILO predicts that almost 6 million jobs can be created in this sector.
- **Urban farmer:** Urban or vertical farming, which uses innovative architecture and agricultural technology, can help reduce land and water usage, pesticide use, and fuel consumption. It also provides employment and food to city dwellers.
- **Sustainability expert**: All companies have a role to play in greening the economy, and sustainability officers or consultants are responsible for transforming business models, reducing energy and water use, emissions, and waste,

Film Industry

Though WLAC does not have a four year program in Film it is very popular both at WLAC and in Los Angeles overall given the location and proximity to networks like Disney, Sony, and Paramount.

Despite the demand of entertainment, recent strikes by the Writers Guild of America (WGA) and the Screen Actors Guld-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG_AFTRA) has had a lasting impact on the industry. The amount of on-location filming or "shoot days" in 2024 has seen a significant decrease in each quarter in comparison to 2023, as shown by the Figure 32.[15]

[14] Green Jobs: How will climate change impact employment trends? Zurich Insurance Group (2021)

[15] 2024 Economic Forecast: Addressing Lingering Challenges and Positioning for Opportunity, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (2024)

The decrease in shoot days lead to cascading effects in the employment in studios, post-production facilities, craft services, studio equipment rental houses, prop and costume houses, and marketing firms.

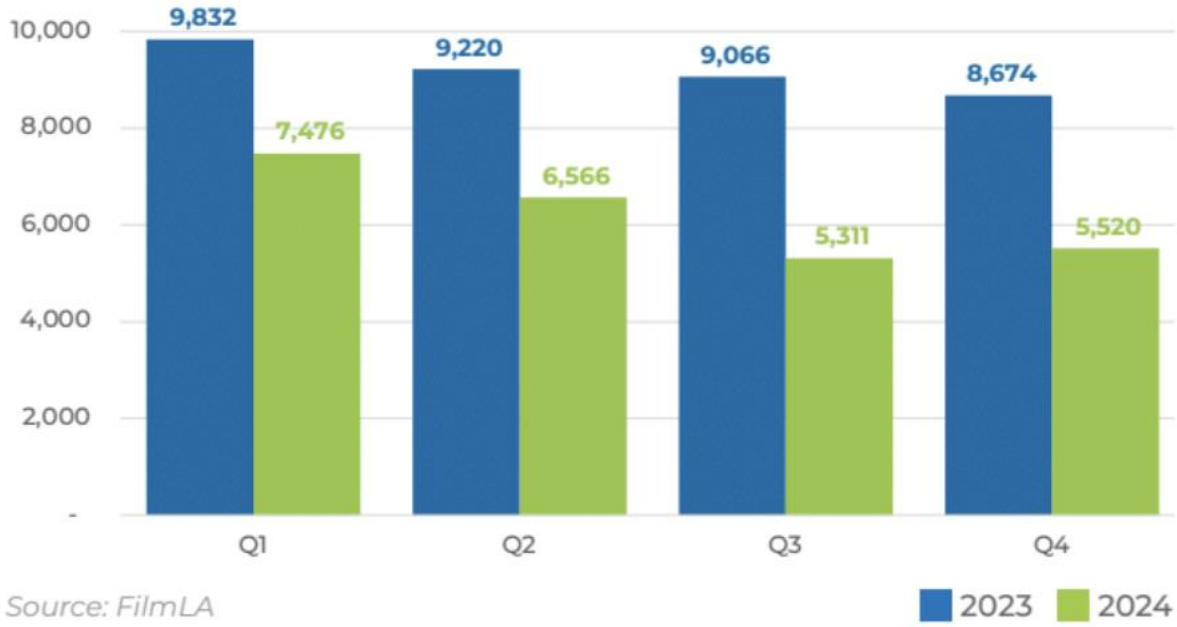

Figure 30 Shoot Days in Los Angeles County, 2022-2023

Source: 2024 Economic Forecast: Addressing Lingering Challenges and Positioning for Opportunity, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (2024)

As the market recovers and evolves to new technology there are some expected changes. The top four expected changes to the Film Industry as identified by Medium[16] are as follows.

- Major changes driven by technology and streaming platforms has increased demand of produced content leading to growing demand for professionals.
- Computer-generated imagery is creating new job opportunities in areas like visual effects, animation and virtual set design.
- Artificial intelligence is taking on increased importance in tasks such as script analysis, data-driven casting decisions, and color correction.
- Increase training and education will be critical. As the want for in-demand content training and educating professionals with up-to-date technology is essential.

[16] The Future of Film Jobs: What to Expect in the Next 5 Years? Medium (2023)

Market Skills

As labor markets continue to evolve it is crucial for higher education institutions to not only educate their students but to prepare them with the skills needed to enter the workforce.

Adapting to the evolving labor market, HR specialists are looking for skills, more than just a certificate or a degree, in their recruiting process. Employers are also looking for graduates that have "soft skills," which include general and interpersonal skills not specific to any job, but which help employees exceed in the workforce. These skills include[17]:

- Communication Skills
- Listening Skills
- Critical Thinking
- Interpersonal Skills
- Memory
- Ability to Repeat Task
- Teamwork
- Adaptability

[17] Employers Say Students Aren't Learning Soft Skills in College, SHRM (2019)

VI. Relevant Educational Trends

This section includes educational trends that affect the delivery of education at WLAC. WLAC's switch towards online learning since the pandemic is an enormous change that has implications for student success and educational access. It also affects how WLAC will need to market itself to attract students. This is a pivotal issue to address moving forward, as WLAC will need to decide its emphasis on in-person versus virtual programs. This section also discusses other key trends related to student services, as well as trends in higher education technology.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic caused lasting physical, financial, and emotional effects for populations across the globe. The following chart shows how enrollment in Community Colleges, State Colleges, and UCs between Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 was affected by these changes.

There was an overall decline of 19% in all undergraduates during this time period, but different ethnic groups were affected disproportionately. American Indian and Alaskan Natives saw the highest rate of decline at 25%, followed by Black students, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

Though state colleges and UCs did not see as drastic of a decline, all levels of colleges were affected by the pandemic. The decline in community college enrollment subsequently affects the other levels of colleges. Many community college students transfer to UCs and State Colleges after completing the necessary requirements, but with the decline in community college enrollment, there was a decline in the amount of students transferring.

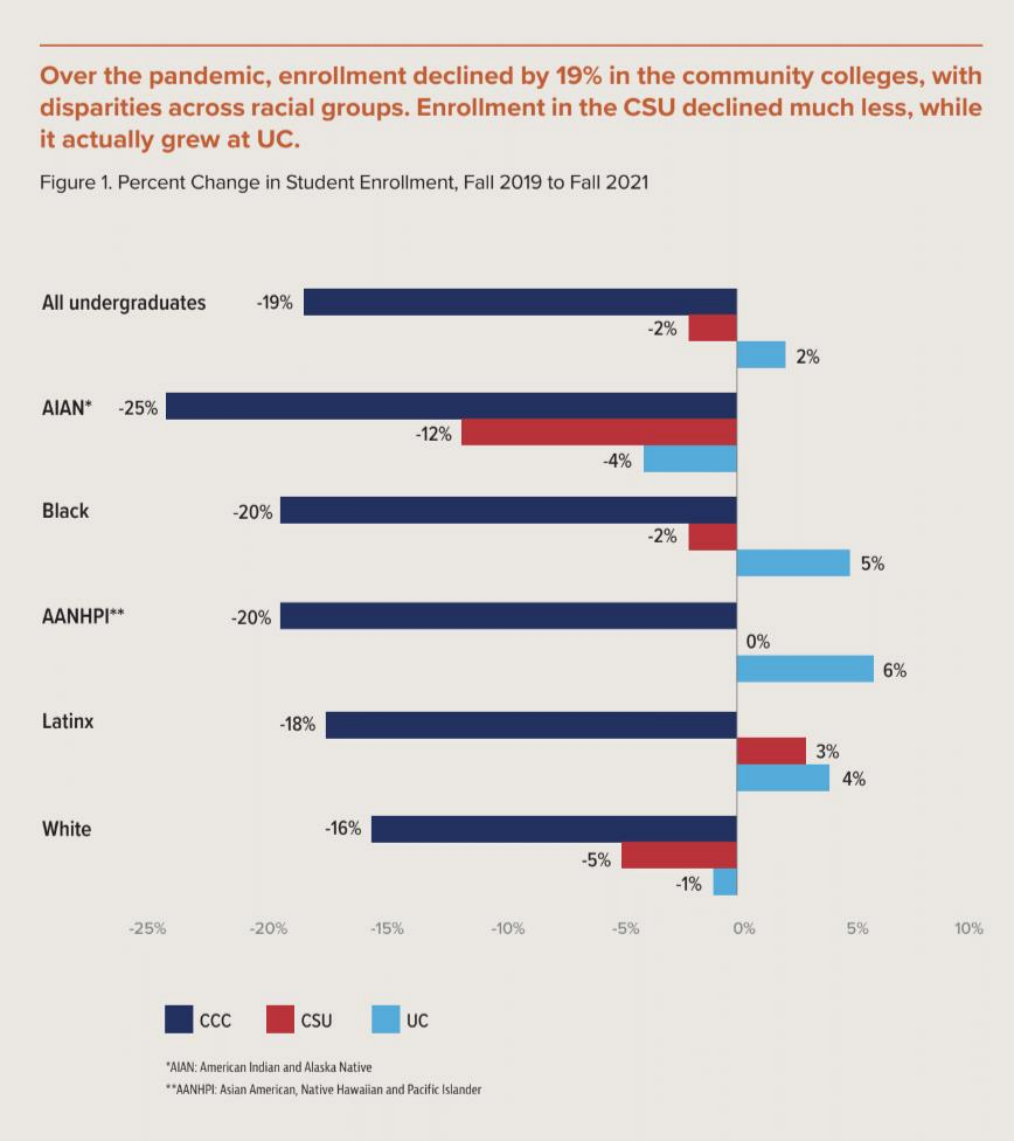

Figure 31 Percent Change in Student Enrollment Fall 2019 to Fall 2021

Source: 2023, "Illuminating Innovations: protecting Student Enrollment at California Community Colleges Amid a Pandemic," The Campaign for College Opportunity

Online Learning

Technology and educational curriculum is ever evolving and with that, the way students learn has changed. Since the pandemic, many classes have moved online or to hybrid modalities, and students have had to adjust. There is not a definitive consensus on student learning modality preferences. Some studies indicate a roughly equal preference for fully in-person and fully remote,[18] while a larger scale 2022 survey of 2,600 respondents from 2-year, 4-year, public and private institutions in the U.S. showed a student preference for hybrid learning (Barnes and Noble College survey, 2022). Results from the West LA Student survey will be gathered and added here when available. It is also important to note that overall, students have higher interest in online or hybrid learning that faculty, who tend to prefer in-person instruction.

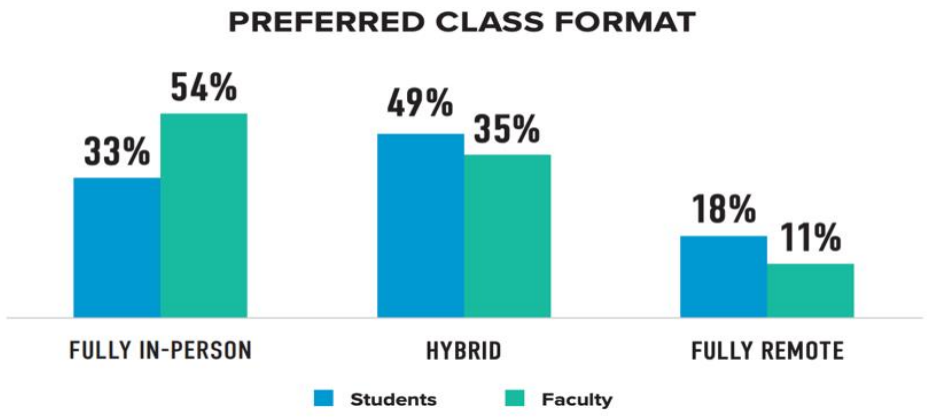

Figure 32 Preferred Class Format

Source: Barnes and Noble College survey (4 year and 2 year institutions)

Regardless of student preference for learning modality, students have more success in in-person classes. The University of Florida's Institute of Higher Education published a working paper finding that "on average students enrolled in online courses complete degrees at lower rate" than their in-person counterparts.[19] This could be, in part, because students in in-person classes have access to resources like immediate face time with the professor, interactive lectures, and peer sharing. However, it is also important to account for the causality of this relationship –as students who have fewer competing priorities and more time to dedicate to their studies may be the ones able to attend in person classes.

What is clear, though, is that the shift towards online learning has disproportionately affected the BIPOC community. "Low-income community college students in fully online classes struggle with

[18] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10047520/#:~:text=Most%20students%20preferred%20online%20learning,online%20or%20on%2Dcampus%20learning. Osaili TM, Ismail LC, ElMehdi HM, Al-Nabulsi AA, Taybeh AO, Saleh ST, Kassem H, Alkhalidy H, Ali HI, Al Dhaheri AS, Stojanovska L. Comparison of students' perceptions of online and hybrid learning modalities during the covid-19 pandemic: The case of the University of Sharjah. PLoS One. 2023 Mar 28;18(3):e0283513. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0283513. PMID: 36976823; PMCID: PMC10047520.

[19] Report: Online Education Completion Lags Behind Face-to-Face Instruction, Inside Higher Ed (2024)

social distance, lack of support, lack of structure, and technical difficulties."[20] Black and Latinx communities are less likely to persist or achieve high academic marks in online instruction[21] (discussed more fully in the subsequent equity section). This phenomenon mirrors the difference in success rates for online vs in person courses at WLAC, as described in Section 4.

Remote Work

The pandemic created a huge shift in remote work, with huge swaths of white collar workers moving from the office to their homes in 2020. While remote work seemed to be the standard for typical "office" jobs early in the pandemic, this trend is shifting. Thirty six percent of households had someone working remotely at least one day a week in early 2021, but this figure now stands at 26% as of November 2023.[22] While much hybrid work is still occurring, more people are returning to the office. Young people entering the workforce need to be able to work in person, and have the soft skills that come along with it, which can be better fostered through in-person learning.

Learning Trends and Technology

With the changing technology Artificial Intelligence (AI) is on the rise, and how to manage and utilize AI in a productive way is a looming question. AI can be a great tool to support the education of many students and could be seen as a collaborative partner assisting students, [23] such as helping students figure out how to approach math problems. However, it can also be used in place of student learning. With tools like ChatGPT, students are able to produce a 6-page essay with full citations in a matter of seconds, increasing the threat of plagiarism in all institutions. Though there is new technology being developed to identify when tools like ChatGPT or other AI have been used in academic work, institutions are still figuring out how to address AI in higher education.

Higher education institutions are beginning to look at new technology to support students' success. This has included gamification of curriculum through game-based quizzes or learning, or using Virtual Reality to enhance learning in many subjects such as architecture, chemistry, biology, dental, and medical fields. Virtual Reality can be used to create virtual environments where students can explore complex objects and create simulated situations to improve students critical thinking and reaction times. Nova Southern University has used VR to teach its first-year medical students about the human body,[24] and there are similar efforts for dental students. Though VR is a relatively new technology it has the potential to change how students learn and create opportunities for more interactive learning.

Technology is constantly improving and being integrated into the workforce. This includes simple tools like emailing, data management, and video conferencing to advanced career specific tools like 3D printing for dental prosthetics[25] or accelerometer technology used to identify and track

[20] Distant Equity: The Promise and Pitfalls of Online Learning for Students of Color in Higher Education, American Council on Education (2020)
[21] The impact of online learning on students' course outcomes: Evidence from a large community and technical college system, ScienceDirect (2013)
[22] Future of Work: Is A Return To The Office Inevitable, Forbes (2023)
[23] AI-Assisted Technologies are Increasing Critical Thinking Skills, Fierce Network (2023)
[24] Metaverse Technologies Are Creating New Opportunities for Teachers to Inspire Students, Meta (2023)
[25] Influence of New Technology in Dental Care: A Public Health Perspective, National Library of Medicine (2023)

activity in kinesiology.[26] It is important for colleges to stay update with new technology in the workforce to better prepare its students for the workforce and give them a competitive edge when trying to find employment.

Value of College

With increased tuition and rising minimum wage students are beginning to question the rate of return on college tuition and anticipated income levels. In a study completed by the HEA Group, students who graduated college (ranging from colleges that offered certificate programs to Bachelor's degrees) 10 years ago were surveyed and asked their salary. The graph below shows how many students were above the threshold in different increments.[27]

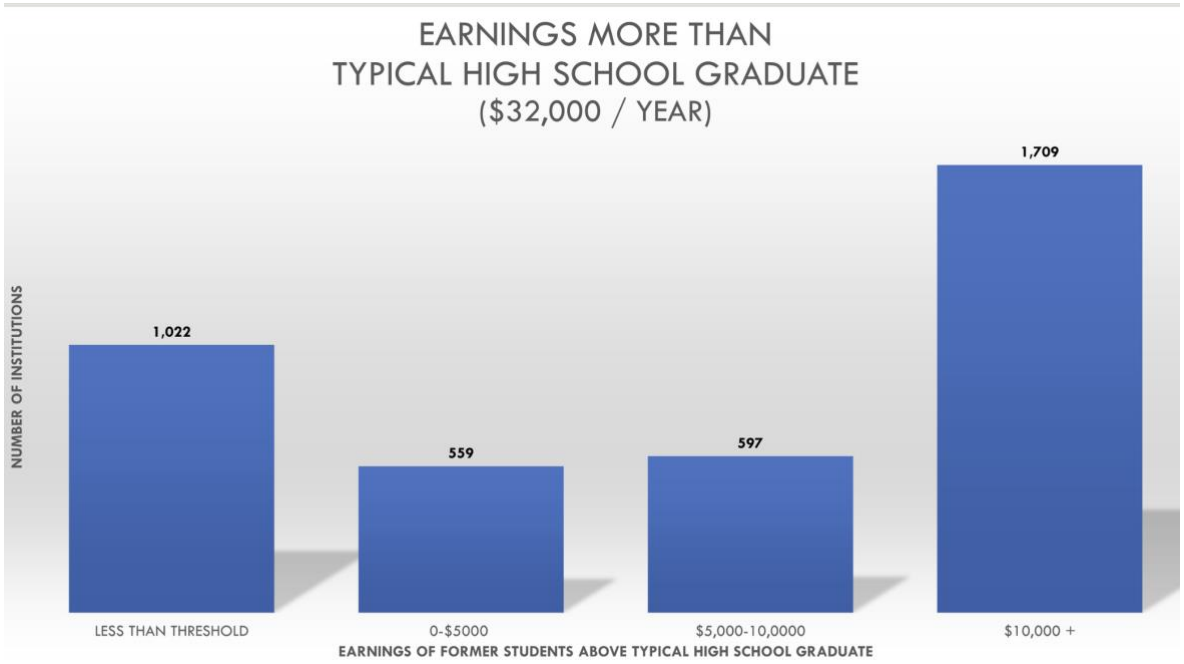

Figure 33 Earnings More Than Typical High School Graduate

Source: Ensuring a Living Wage Through Higher Education, HEA Group 2024

The majority of college graduates have made over $10,000 more per year than a typical high school graduate, expressing that college does have a financial incentive. The Economic Value of West LA College report from WLAC also found that students received $6.50 in higher future earnings on every dollar they invested in their West LA education.[28]

[26] Emerging Technology in Promoting Physical Activity and Health: Challenges and Opportunities, National Library of Medicine (2019)
[27] Ensuring a Living Wage Through Higher Education, HEA Group (2024)
[28] The Economic Value of West LA College, prepared by Lightcast, November 2023

Equity

Equity is a cornerstone mission and value for all community colleges, but with recent events including the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and the inequitable impacts of the pandemic, this is even more at the forefront.

Historically disadvantaged communities must face additional barriers to completing a college education, especially when it comes to online instruction. Many students when working from home have responsibilities, like taking care of younger siblings or children, or other household needs that do not allow them to solely focus on their schoolwork.[29] Other students may not have access to reliable internet, equipment to access the internet, or a quiet place to dedicate to schoolwork.

While all students were affected in some way by the COVID-19 Pandemic, not everyone was equally impacted.[30] Studies indicate that online only classes have disproportionately lower success outcomes for Black and Latinx students.[31] (Other literature has mixed findings on whether online only college classes decrease overall student performance, however findings are clear for these populations). One study found that Latinx students had a nine-percentage point lower success rate, a .2 lower grade point average and course withdrawal rates over twice as high compared to Latinx students in face-to-face sections of the same classes.[32] It's important to note that hybrid classes do have this disparity.

With the increase in tuition costs and burden of student loan debt, working while in college has become very common. Forty three percent of full-time college students in the US, and 81% of part-time students work while enrolled in college.[33] Working students are 20% less likely to complete their degree and often take longer to finish their programs. To support these students, who are typically juggling many responsibilities, many colleges have begun offering accessible classes on nights, weekend, or completely asynchronous classes. Colleges have also continued on-campus employment opportunities for students.

Additionally, student parents face similar challenges. One in five students in California colleges are parents, with more than 200,000 in California colleges. These students often have limited time and financial resources and juggle day care, jobs, school work, and more, which often lead to many not completing their degree.[34] To support student parents, colleges are offering on-campus childcare centers with flexible hours, and flexible courses[35].

[29] Household Tasks and Academic Functioning Among African American Adolescents, The Pennsylvania State University (2017)
[30] Distant Equity: The Promise and Pitfalls of Online Learning for Students of Color in Higher Education, American Council on Education (2020)
[31] Distant Equity: The Promise and Pitfalls of Online Learning for Students of Color in Higher Education, American Council on Education (2020)
[32] The gap between Latino and White student achievement in online classes, The California State University (2011)
[33] College Students who have jobs are much less likely to graduate than their privileged peers, shocking study finds, Fortune (2023)
[34] Boosting the Rising Tide of Change for Student Parents in California, Imaginable Futures (2024)
[35] 4 Ways Colleges Can Support Student Parents, Best Colleges (2023)

Climate Change and Sustainability

As the impacts of climate change become increasingly dire in LA and beyond, colleges are recognizing their role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and becoming environmental stewards in their communities. Many colleges are transitioning to being carbon-neutral and are instituting more aggressive sustainability policies.

WLAC is no exception to this and is working to position itself as a model for sustainability and climate change in the region. WLAC will be starting a new four-year climate change program with a new Climate Center. The College recently added a Climate Studies and Environmental Justice pathway for students, focusing on the social impacts of climate change. WLAC will aim to utilize the Climate Center as a gathering space to bring together climate leaders, professionals, and students. LACCD is also planning to develop a Sustainability Plan to reduce emissions on campus as well as shift student, facility, and staff behavior.

Mental Health

Over the past few years we have embarked on a new era of higher education that prioritizes student mental health. Mental health is critical to academic and life success and there has been rising rates in mental health issues among students. The amount of students demanding mental health services has increased almost 40% from 2009 to 2015.[36] In the 2020-2021 school year, more than 60% of college students met the criteria for at least one mental health problem, according to the Health Minds Study.[37] Another study, conducted by the American College Health Association expressed that almost three quarters of college students are under psychological distress.[38] The increase in mental health issues among students has increased demand for counseling services on college campuses.[39] Higher education institutions are dedicated to providing a proactive effort to mental health and student success.

Student's academic success is directly tied to mental health, especially in a higher education environment that is surrounded by stress and pressure to succeed. "Stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues can seriously impact their capacity to learn, retain information, and apply knowledge"(2024 Predictions: Emerging Trends in Higher Education).[40]

Higher education institutions are taking steps to proactively support students, like adding mental health awareness, signs, coping methods, and awareness of resources into their curriculum. Resources like counseling services, digital treatment options, and onsite specialists are expected to grow. Some institutions are looking into peer accountability programs lead by Mental Health Professionals to have students look after each other. Additionally, institutions can institute academic policies like flexible deadlines, exam accommodations, and mental health leaves of absence to support students.

[36] Center for Collegiate Mental Health Annual Report, Penn State (2015)
[37] Trends in college student mental health and help-seeking by race/ethnicity: findings from the national healthy minds study 2013-2021, Journal of Affective Disorders (2022)
[38] National College Health Assessment, American College Health Association (2021)
[39] Student mental health is in crisis. Campuses are rethinking their approach, American Psychological Association (2022)
[40] 2024 Predictions: Emerging Trends in Higher Education, Expert Education Consulting (2023)

Community Connection

College Experience

While hosting online classes may extend the geographical reach of WLAC students, online classes and fewer in-person opportunities make it difficult for students to collaborate and learn from peers. During listening sessions, campus faculty and staff shared that students lack places to socialize and work together on campus, and that there is a desire from students for more of these spaces. Additionally, there is evidence that in-person classes, with more opportunities for discussion and in-person collaboration, have a higher persistence rate compared to online classes (and students earn higher grades in-person as well).[41]

Housing

Figure 34 Housing Affordability by Quarter

Source: 2024 Economic Forecast: Addressing Lingering Challenges and Positioning for Opportunity, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (2024)

Los Angeles County is one of the most expensive areas to live in California with 137% higher housing prices compared to the national average and 20% higher than the state average.[42] As shown in Figure 36, less than 20% of households in Los Angeles County can afford to purchase a

[41] The impact of online learning on students; course outcomes: Evidence from a large community and technical college system, Economics of Education Review Volume 37t (2013)
[42] Cost of Living in Los Angeles, CA, Rent Cage (2024)

median-priced, single-family home. This translates to renters as well with more than half of renters qualifying as rent-burdened, or paying more than 30% of their household income on rent.[43]

To combat the incredibly high housing prices and support students, nearly two dozen Community College systems are proposing affordable housing projects aimed at bringing stability to underserved community college students.[44] Though the funding and eligibility of these projects are not figured out completely, students who live on campus have benefits such as making friends, improving academic outcomes, reduced commutes, and saving money as identified by James Madison University.[45]

[43] 2024 Economic Forecast: Addressing Lingering Challenges and Positioning for Opportunity, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (2024)
[44] Community colleges push for more affordable housing. But will California pay for it? Los Angeles Times (2023)
[45] Seven benefits of living on campus, James Madison University (2020)

VII. College Engagement

Below is a summary of input from listening session with faculty. Full notes from listening sessions are included separately. The project team met with over 70 faculty and staff from every division. Faculty and staff were asked about the following:

- Changes, challenges, and needs in their programs since the pandemic/ over the last 5 years
- Equity gaps
- How they envision WLAC in 5-10 years

Key Trends and Concepts

Below are the key trends and concepts from the listening sessions with faculty.

Online Learning

The pandemic has had a lasting effect on online learning. Faculty expressed that it has been difficult to get students to return to campus for classes, with low registration rates for in-person classes. In turn, low in-person registration has also meant that many students who want to take in person classes cannot, as many of these classes end up getting cancelled. Some faculty expressed that WLAC needs more services and on-campus activities to help draw students back. It would be useful to determine the high-value in-person elements that would encourage students to come back to campus.

Faculty also expressed that an increase in online courses now means that WLAC must compete with all other online courses from colleges around California and the United States. WLAC must work harder to differentiate its online programs from others, as many other colleges, which had previously only offered in-person classes, switched to online classes during the pandemic.

Gathering Spaces

There is a strong need for more gathering spaces on campus for students, both to allow for opportunities to socialize and collaborate, as well as to access basic services. This includes more collaborative study spaces on campus for students to work on coursework together. Additionally, classroom spaces and furniture should be flexible to serve multiple uses and configurations, including both formal lecture spaces as well as collaborative group work.

Critically, faculty expressed that gathering spaces need to provide basic amenities for students. This includes reliable food service, microwaves, air conditioning, chairs and lounge areas, computers, and lockers (particularly for the dental hygiene program for which students have a lot of their own equipment). Most services on campus close at 5pm, which poses a challenge for students taking night classes.

Better Technology

There is a need for better technology at WLAC to support learning both in and out of classrooms. On campus, there is a need for improved WiFi availability to support student use of their phones or laptops for their courses. WLAC also needs more outlets available in its buildings for students to charge their

devices. Computers and technology in classrooms also need to be updated, and there is an opportunity to improve technology to support classes with hybrid learning modalities (e.g. in person and online synchronous classes).

Additionally, some programs have specific technology needs. The Math program has an interest in creating a math computer lab for students (or at least having more math computers). The Film program wants an LED wall, a volume stage, and Unreal Engine software for virtually generated sets. The Computer Science program needs up to date computers.

There also needs to be better technology infrastructure to support distanced learning. Faculty expressed that WLAC should invest in improving the capability of online learning platforms (i.e. Canvas) to make it easier for students and faculty to use. Additionally, not all students know how to use Canvas, Zoom, or other online platforms or technology. There is a need for classes or resources to help students learn how to use this technology.

Wraparound Services

Another key theme that emerged from the listening sessions was that increasing wraparound services is crucial to student success. Overall, there is a need for more staffing for Student Services (among other divisions) to support this success. WLAC should offer better guidance for program completion so that students know the exact courses they need to take to complete their educational goals and do not need to take more credits than are required to achieve their goal. Additionally, staff expressed that the Career Center could be better utilized throughout the Student Journey, from entry to completion, not just as students are looking to graduate. This could include providing job opportunities that align with students' current area of studies, so students can support themselves while enrolled at WLAC while also gaining experiences in their field or completing program requirements.

In addition, there is a need for better mental and physical health support on-campus, including better advertising of these services to students where they exist. There is also a need for more tutoring staff and services being offered to students. Many faculty and staff also expressed that the Childcare Center is great resource but could be better utilized.

As listed above, in the previous section, additional computer and technology use support would benefit students. This could be offered through formal classes through the library.

Connection to Community

Overall, the campus is not well-connected to surrounding community. While workforce partnerships in the surrounding community have been growing, there is still a large opportunity to grow connections with local industry.

Closing Equity Gaps

There are multiple equity issues that faculty raised. As described above, faculty and staff expressed that having student gathering spaces was an equity issue. This is especially true for commuters who come from far away and need a place to hang out between classes.

Faculty and staff also expressed that there is not a currently an identity around Hispanic students at WLAC. WLAC could have a Latinx Student Union, and could better align its marketing with its larger Hispanic population. Additionally, Spanish-speaking students and student with Spanish-speaking parents would benefit from more widespread document translation.

Additionally, multiple faculty members mentioned the need to better support Black students on campus. In particular, there are few Black male students on campus, and this population may benefit from specific support.

Cost and accessibility of technology and equipment was also raised as a large equity issue. Students need Wifi, phone, and computer access to support their learning. Also, many students do not have a laptop and take classes or do work on their phone, significantly affecting their success. These students would benefit from more available computers or lendable laptops. In general, there should be more lendable tools and equipment to support success for students who are unable to afford equipment. This also includes textbooks, film equipment, and equipment health sciences. Additionally, as described in the technology section, technology savviness is a large equity issue, and there is opportunity for the college to increase students understanding of how to use technology through formalized classes, which could be offered through the library.

Future of WLAC

When faculty were asked about how they envisioned the future of WLAC in 5-10 years, faculty expressed that they wanted to see more in-person learning and a vibrant campus with more collaborative learning spaces. There is also an overall desire to be better connected to the community and have more industry partnerships.