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A Comparative Analysis of Diversity Initiatives: Administrative Policies & Academic Curriculum

K.B. Jenny Kim

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Objective

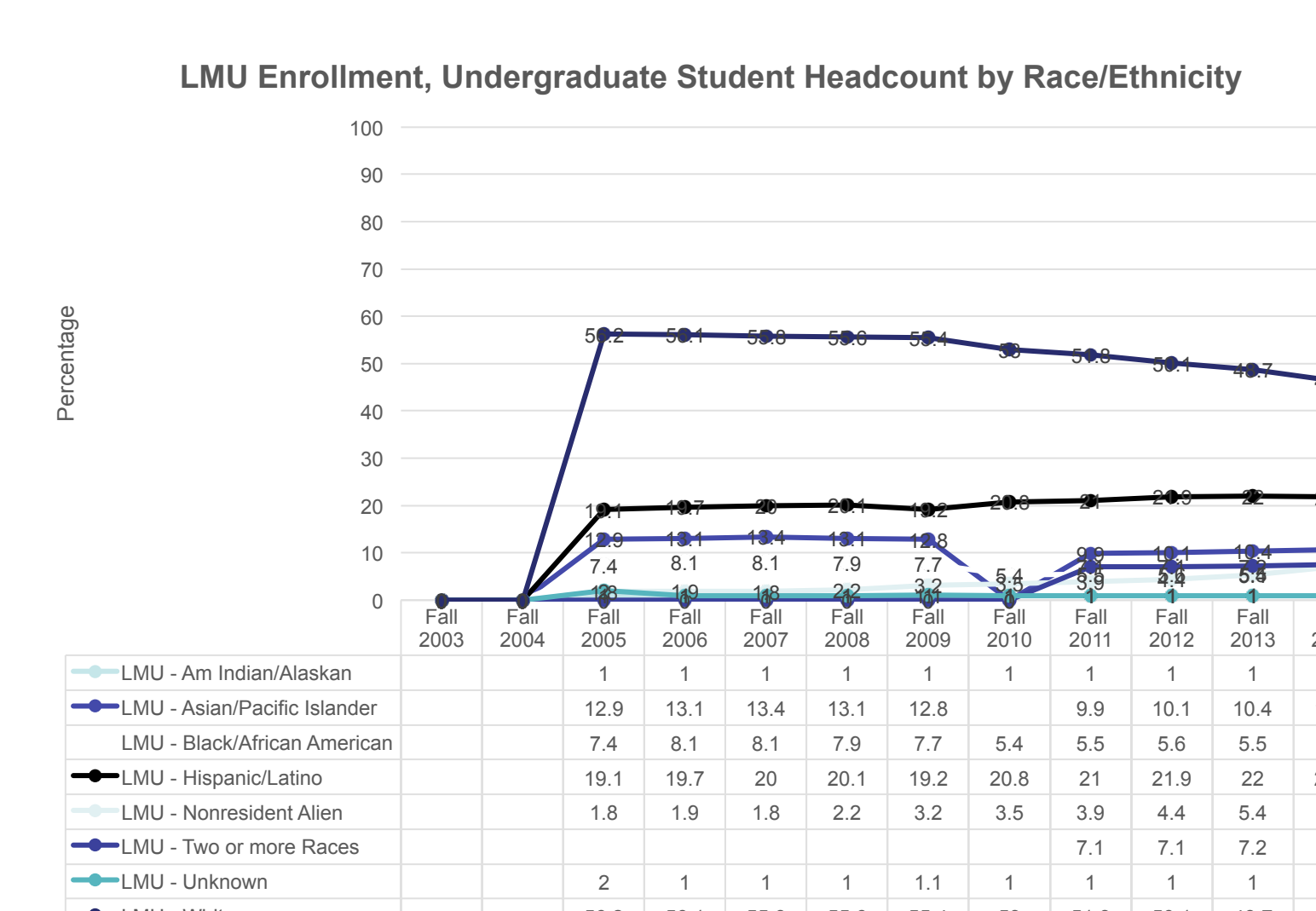
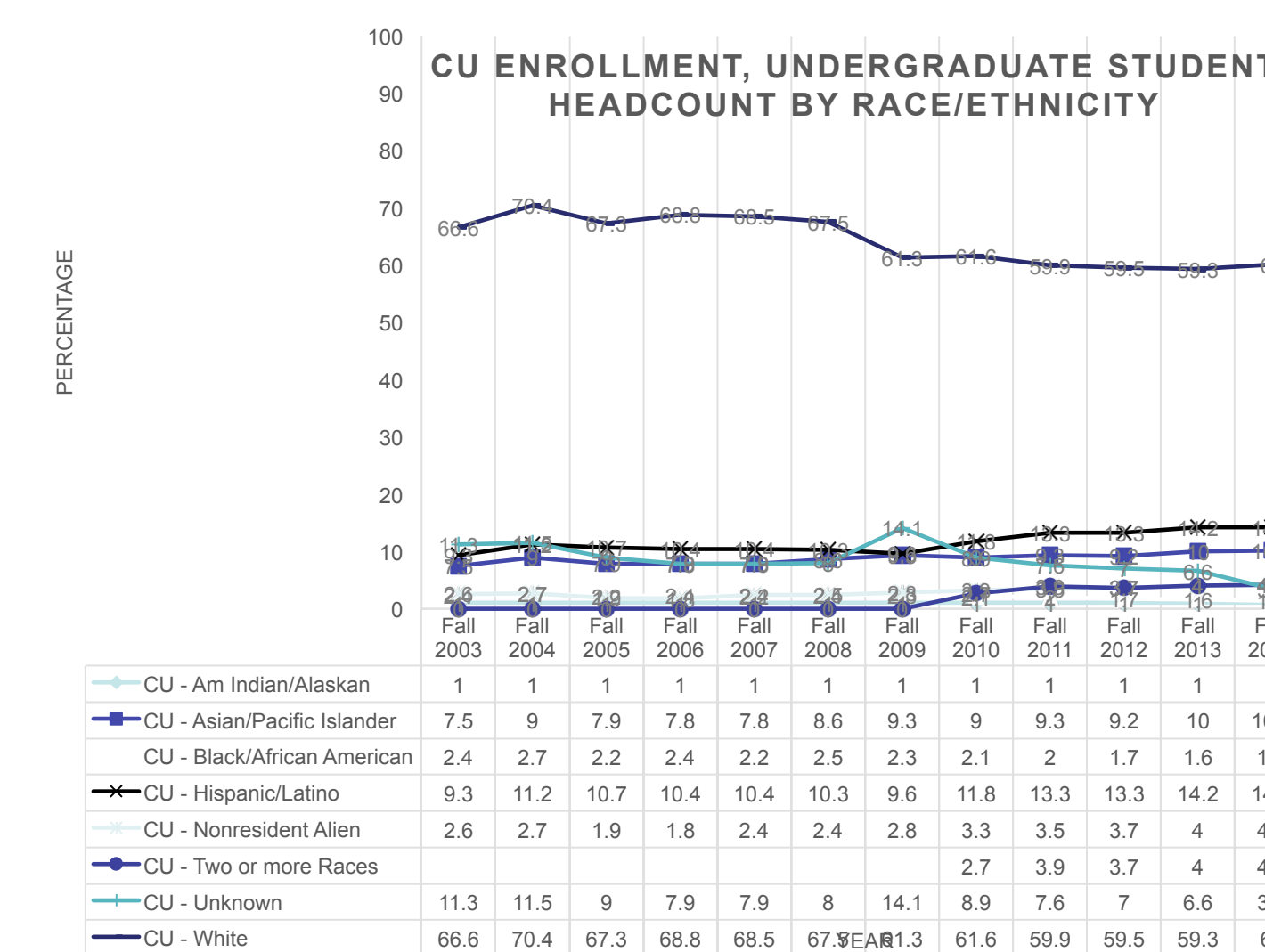
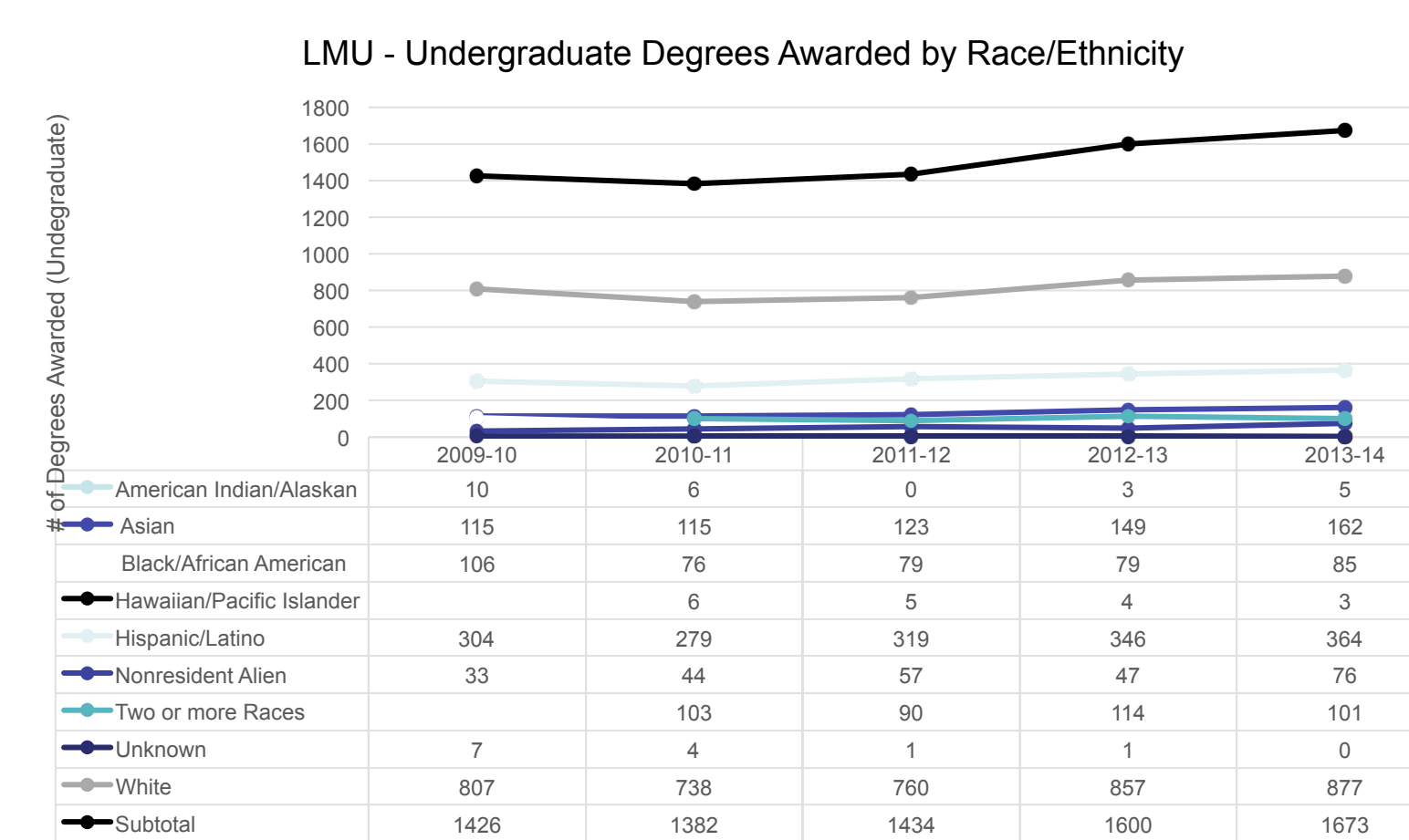
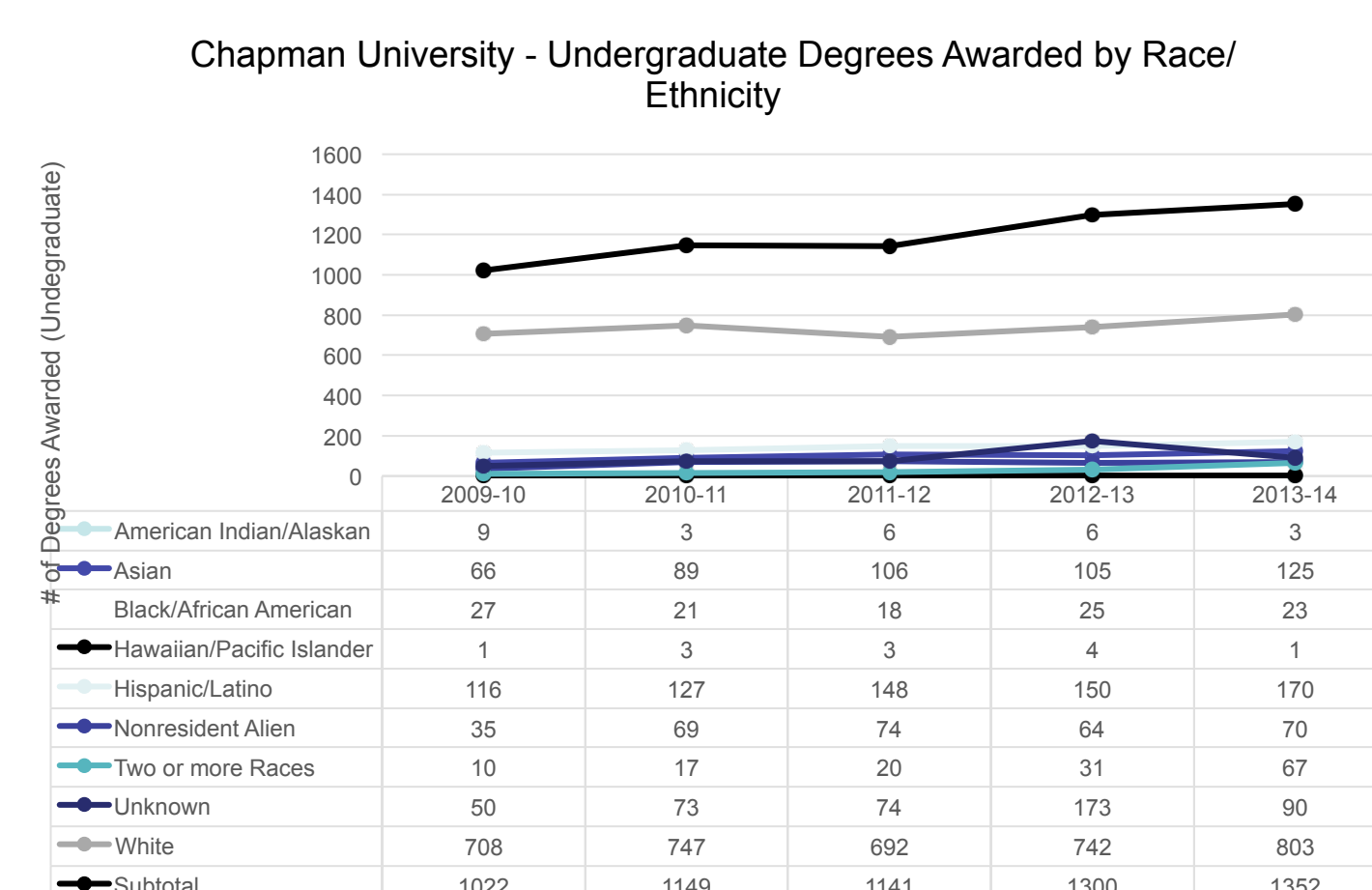
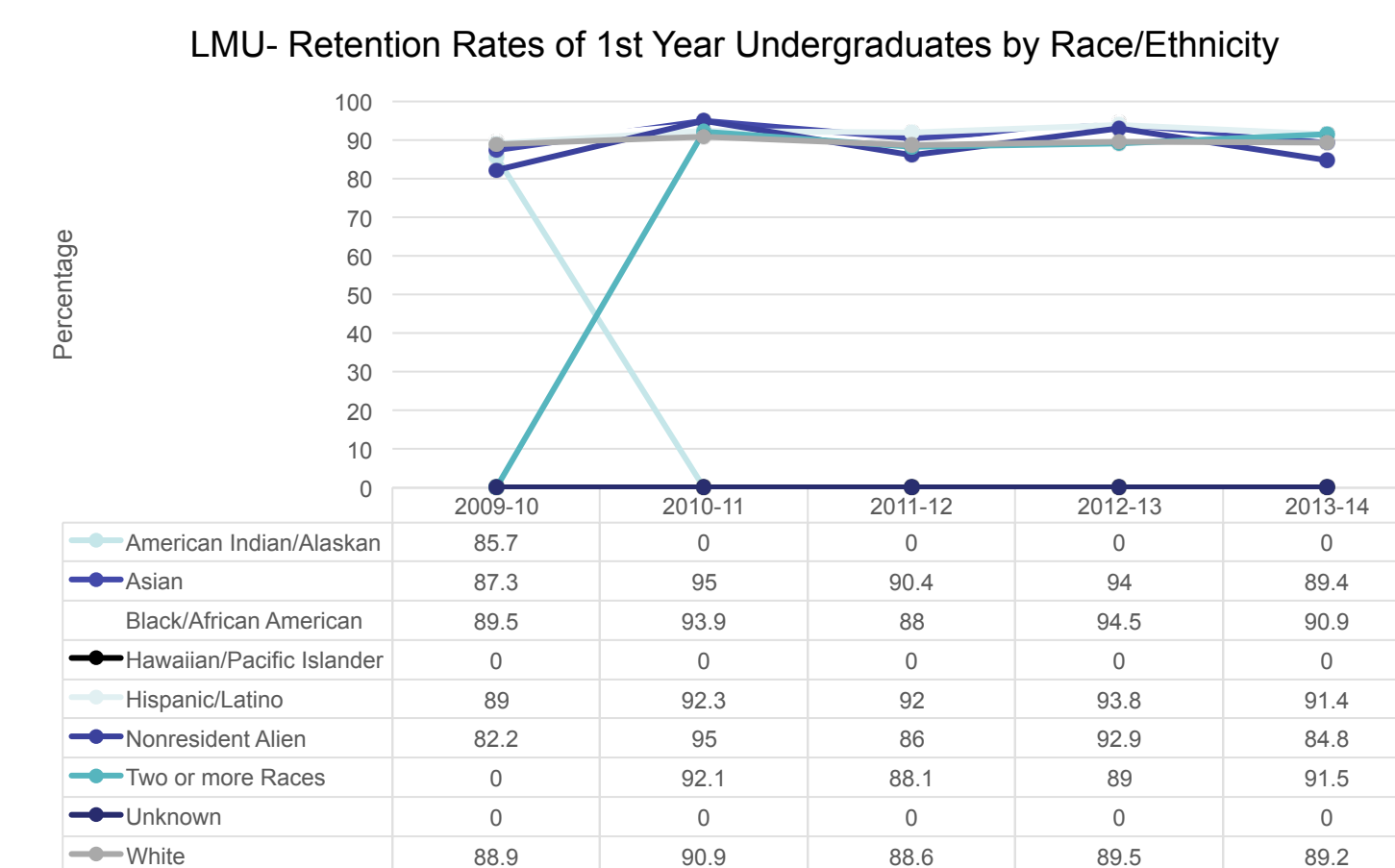
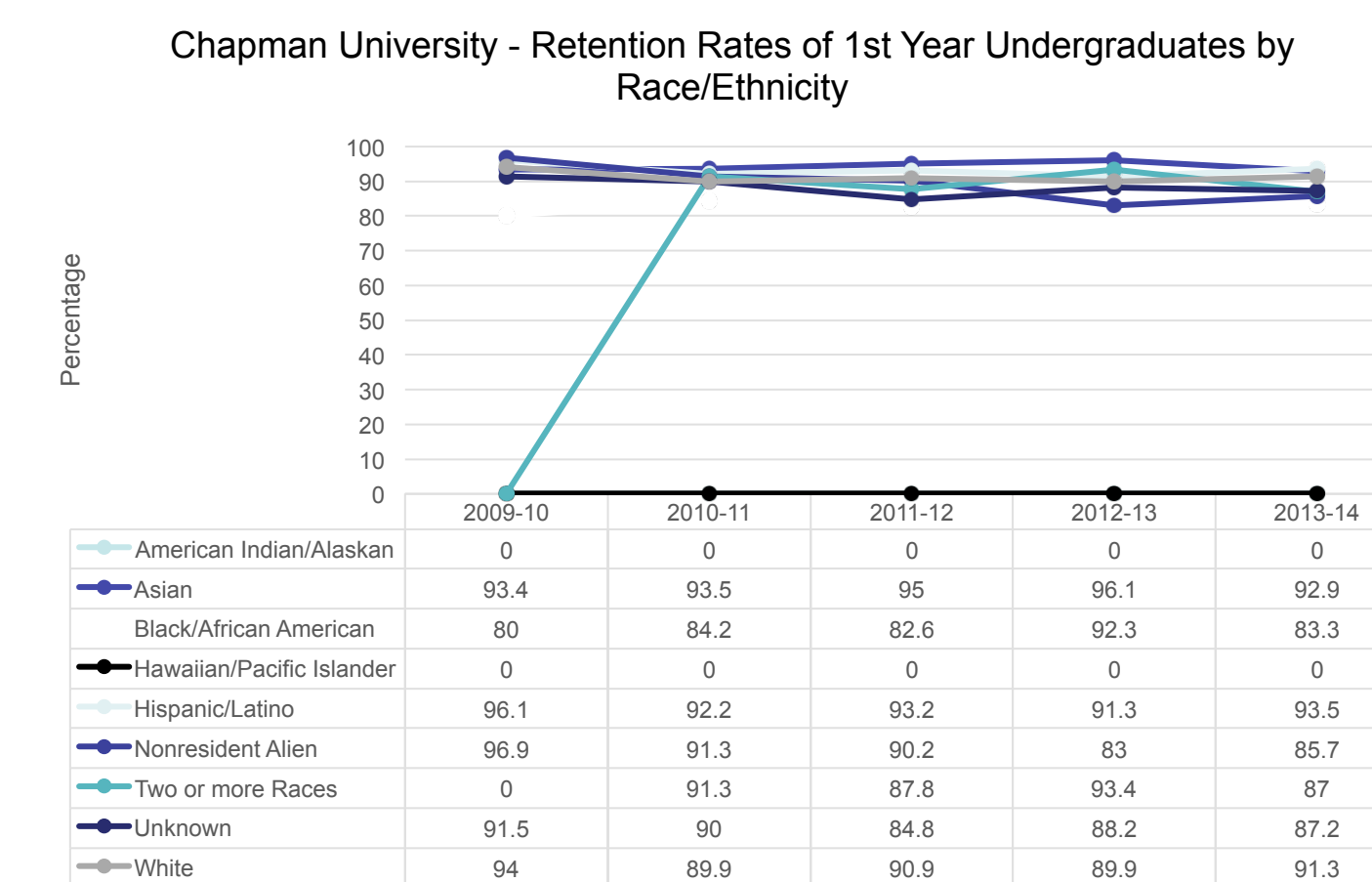
The objective of my thesis research is to examine the existing diversity initiatives and campus climate of Chapman University and a comparative institution, Loyola Marymount University. The focus area of study will be racial/ethnic diversity within the various levels of the institution, with the primary focus on organizational structure, administrative policies and the resulting implementation. This topic by nature is nuanced and complex, with interwoven layers of hierarchy and various scopes of campus climate including but not limited to: academic curriculum, co-curricular programs, expert human resources, and general accessibility of resources pertaining to diversity. The main objective is to examine the social campus climate of the student body, most specifically undergraduate students, at these two institutions of higher education and utilize the observational and qualitative research to guide future endeavors at Chapman University; to create a sense of urgency to improve our existing diversity initiatives to better reflect the mission statement and values of our community by utilizing the voices of current students and those in our surrounding competitive circle.

Thesis Questions:

1. How do administrative policies and implementation of academic curriculum affect retention rates of undergraduate students of color?
2. How is this institutional data presented and thus interpreted, in the context of recruiting and retaining these students of color?
3. How do peer institutions such as Chapman University and Loyola Marymount University relate in providing tangible, strategic plans of actions to address concerning issues about student body demographics and ultimately campus body satisfaction?

Methods of Evaluation:

The main method of observation will be through qualitative and quantitative research, specifically observational research, digital ethnography and data collection. Observational research will include an in-depth look at available resources on each respective websites, diversity departments, and on-campus resources.



Observations:

Chapman University's administration is organized into 5 sectors under the following leadership positions – Board of Trustees, President, Chancellor, EVP & Chief Operating Officer, and EVP of University Advancement. CU provides a succinct mission statement regarding diversity available and accessible through online and print forms. However, CU offers limited curriculum through first year foundation courses and general education, specifically relating to ethnic studies.

Loyola Marymount's administration is organized into 4 sectors under the following positions – Board of Trustees & Regents, President, Provost and Executive VP, and Senior Administration. LMU is in the process of developing and implementing a strategic plan relating to pushing forward university-level initiatives and aligning resources with such priorities, including its Ethnic & Intercultural Services Department.

After the Institutional Data – Questions

1. How can we examine the causes and effects of racial/ethnic demographics within the context of a collegiate institution?
2. How are student body demographics constructed to represent changes or improvements in areas such as student retention rate, graduation, enrollment, etc.?
3. How can the university be pursuing alternative or an improved data collection system – to accurately gauge student body demographics?
4. How can institutional data be presented or provided to assist existing or newly formed initiatives that revolve around “fixing” diversity or campus climate issues?

Notes for Chapman University: Quantitative data is provided through online publications or sources such as Chapman Fact Books and the Institutional DataMart. However, as quantitative data indicates that the proportions of white students have been decreasing with the increase of minority-identifying students, **these numbers** cannot be the main indication factor in determining these students' satisfaction or integration into the campus body.

Notes for Loyola Marymount University: Though LMU's institutional data may seem less accessible in terms of visual presentation through an online format and the requirement of certain software proficiency, their data is transparent through the Office of Institutional Research's provision of Excel sheets with consistent categorizations and year-to-year presentation.

Questions for Administration:

1. Have institutional resources been tailored to the “majority” of the student body? And if so, how?
2. Who are the key administrative figures who address these issues? What is their current plan?
3. How has administration used this quantitative data to address campus climate issues, outreach to prospective students and providing extensive and specific resources to current students?
4. Has administration been providing enough institutional support in the form of direct services and academic resources for minority student groups?
5. Have racial/ethnic identity been considered as an integral part of the learning experience at Chapman University and its peer institutions? In what forms can these learning experiences be realized?

References

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