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Who Are(n’t) Our Students? 
The Gender and Ethnoracial Distribution of U.S. Bachelor’s Degrees in Russian Language and Literature over Twenty Years, from 1999–2000 to 2018–2019

DIANNA MURPHY, HADIS GHAEDI

1. Introduction
This article is a report on the gender and race or ethnicity of students who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian language and literature in the United States over a twenty-year period, from 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, as either a first or second major (N = 9,161). This study complements national data available through organizations such as the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which, through the Humanities Indicators project (http://www.humanitiesindicators.org), publishes information on the gender and ethnoracial distribution of bachelor’s degrees in languages other than English (LOTEs) together but not for individual languages (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, n.d.). This study also complements reports from the Modern Language Association (MLA), which surveys U.S. postsecondary institutions to obtain data on enrollments in courses in LOTEs but does not collect information on the demographic profiles of the students enrolled in those courses (Looney and Lusin 2019). This article also extends the work of Murphy and Lee (2019), who reported on the gender and race or ethnicity of U.S. bachelor’s degree recipients in fifty individual programs in LOTEs—including Russian—over a four-year period, from 2009–2010 to 2013–2014. Murphy and Lee (2019, 56) found that of the top ten language programs in the United States in terms of the number of bachelor’s degrees conferred in 2010–2014, Russian had the smallest proportion—an average of just 0.9 percent per year—of Black or African American graduates. That percentage represents a shockingly small number of students: only seventeen Black or African American women and just three Black or African American men earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian in the United States in the four-year period from 2009–2010 to 2013–2014 (Murphy and Lee 2019, 91).
This article offers a longitudinal perspective to investigate whether these and other findings on the demographic profiles of Russian bachelor’s degree recipients were anomalies or representative of longer-term trends. This article’s primary research question is: What was the gender and ethnoracial distribution of students who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian in the United States in the twenty-year period from 1999–2000 to 2018–2019? In answering this question, this article also reports on the number of students who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian in this time period as either a first or second major. In providing these descriptive national data, this article aims to inform efforts to increase and expand access to participation in Russian language education in the United States. This article also provides a baseline against which the field can assess current and future efforts to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in U.S. Russian language education at the postsecondary level.

2. Data source: Integrated postsecondary education database
Data for this article are from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a project of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2019a). Information about the gender and race or ethnicity of degree recipients, among many other forms of institutional data, is submitted to IPEDS as part of mandatory reporting for all U.S. postsecondary institutions that receive any form of federal financial aid under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. For student demographic information submitted to IPEDS through the IPEDS Completion Survey, U.S. colleges and universities first collect information directly from students, then report it to IPEDS using categories required for federal reporting. For gender, those categories are Man and Woman. For race or ethnicity, the current categories are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. Other categories for race or ethnicity are Non-Resident Alien, Race or Ethnicity Unknown, and Two

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2 Definitions for the IPEDS categories for race or ethnicity can be accessed at https://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/report-your-data/race-ethnicity-definitions.
or More Races. This demographic information is linked in IPEDS to degree completions and to the students’ programs of study. This article, which reports on the gender and ethnoracial distribution of bachelor’s degrees in Russian in the United States, does not offer a critique of these categories for gender and race or ethnicity, although such a critique is very much warranted. (Regarding race or ethnicity alone, see, for example, Ladson-Billings [2012, 118], who challenges the use of “crude measures to sort and slot people into categories” in social science and education research, and Hudley, Mallinson, and Bucholtz [2020], who argue for the critical need to more adequately theorize race in the field of linguistics.)

To obtain the data for this report, the authors conducted IPEDS queries for each academic year, 1999–2000 through 2018–2019, using the six-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code 16.0402 for Russian Language and Literature for bachelor’s degree completions. All U.S. postsecondary institutions that conferred bachelor’s degrees in Russian Language and Literature in a given year were included in each query. To account for as many degree recipients as possible, and recognizing the large number of students who earn a degree in a language as a second major, the queries included U.S. undergraduate students who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian as either a first or second major.

3. Bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian Language and Literature
A total of 9,161 bachelor’s degrees in Russian (CIP code 16.0402: Russian Language and Literature) were conferred in the twenty-year period from 1999–

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3 Some institutions may use a CIP code other than 16.0402: Russian Language and Literature to report bachelor’s degrees that include advanced study of Russian. If the undergraduate Russian major is a track in a major for foreign or world languages, for example, the institution may use a CIP code such as 16.0101: Foreign Languages and Literatures, General. Or institutions that offer an undergraduate major in Slavic languages and literatures may report those degrees under 16.0400: Slavic Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics, General. To facilitate comparisons with other national reports, such as the MLA report on postsecondary enrollments (which includes some descriptive data on bachelor’s degrees conferred in different languages and uses only 16.0402: Russian Language Literature for Russian), data from those programs are not included in this longitudinal report.

4 Among all subject areas, languages other than English are the most common second major among U.S. undergraduates (Pitt and Tepper 2012; see also Modern Language Association 2015).

5 Given the differences among institutions in how (or even whether) second majors are reported, however, the IPEDS data on second majors are subject to nonsampling errors related to classification differences among institutions (U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2019b, 13).
2000 to 2018–2019 when both first \((n = 6,373)\) and second \((n = 2,788)\) majors were taken into account. Table 1 shows the breakdown by year. (IPEDS did not begin collecting data on second majors until 2000–2001, so there are no second majors for 1999–2000.) Overall, the trend in the number of bachelor’s degrees in Russian was of gradual growth beginning in 2004–2005 and continuing through 2011–2012, after which the trend is of gradual decline (with the exception of 2017–2018, in which there was a spike, followed by a sharp decline between 2017–2018 \([n = 472]\) and 2018–2019 \([n = 395]\)).

As table 1 shows, second majors comprised a substantial proportion of bachelor’s degrees in Russian throughout the twenty years of this report. Considering second majors as a percentage of first majors, the range is from a low of 31.6 percent, in both 2000–2001 and 2003–2004, to a high of 59.5 percent, in 2017–2018. The proportion of second majors relative to first majors for Russian is quite high compared to nonlanguage disciplines and is higher than for some other languages: the MLA (2015) reported that from 2001 to 2013, second majors as a percentage of first majors was 37.5 in “foreign languages” (Modern Language Association 2015, 7). For Russian, second majors as a percentage of first was 45.2 in that same thirteen-year period.

In this twenty-year period, the number of students earning bachelor’s degrees in the United States in any discipline increased steadily each year, with 1,237,875 bachelor’s degrees conferred in the United States in 1999–2000 and 2,012,854 in 2018–2019, an increase of 62.6 percent. Russian majors accounted for a very small percentage of those degrees. Given the increase in the overall number of students earning bachelor’s degrees in the United States and the relatively flat number of bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, the share of bachelor’s degrees in Russian—calculated as a percentage of all degrees conferred—decreased over the course of the twenty-year period of this report: in 1999–2000, .03 percent \((n = 340)\) of all bachelor’s degrees conferred in the United States were in Russian; in 2018–2019, the percentage of Russian bachelor’s degrees was .02 percent \((n = 395)\).

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\(^{6}\) Some of these data on the number of bachelor’s degree completions by first and second majors in Russian, through 2013, are also included in the 2015 MLA article *Data on Second Majors in Language and Literature, 2001–13*. They are reported here as well to show the twenty-year trend.

\(^{7}\) All data on the total number of bachelor’s degrees conferred in the United States, and on the gender and ethnoracial distribution of those degrees, are from table 322.20 in the *Digest of Education Statistics* (U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2020).
Table 1. U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, by first and second major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>First majors</th>
<th>Second majors</th>
<th>Second majors as a percentage of first majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999–2000</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2001</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2002</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–2004</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–2005</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–2006</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008–2009</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009–2010</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–2012</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012–2013</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013–2014</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015–2016</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016–2017</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017–2018</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018–2019</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20-YEAR TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,161</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,373</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,788</strong></td>
<td><strong>43.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Gender
For the twenty years of this study, women accounted for an average of 52.2 percent \((n = 4,777)\) of bachelor’s degrees in Russian; men accounted for an average of 47.8 percent \((n = 4,384)\). (See figure 1 and table 2 for the breakdown by year.) The gender distribution of bachelor’s degrees in Russian is thus very different than for LOTEs altogether: the Humanities Indicators project reports that among humanities disciplines, “languages and literatures other than English had one of the largest share of female degree completers in almost every year for which data exist (70% in 2015).” By examining the gender distribution of all fifty individual programs in LOTEs from 2010 to 2014, Murphy and Lee (2019) found that this high proportion of women earning bachelor’s degrees in languages was largely due to the large numbers of women in French (78.1 percent) and Spanish (75.3 percent) programs, which accounted by far for the largest number of bachelor’s degrees conferred in LOTEs (Murphy and Lee 2019, 54). As figure 1 shows, for bachelor’s degrees in Russian, the gender distribution is much more even between men and women, with the difference between the two decreasing over time and with men outnumbering women in four of the most recent six years of this report, albeit by a small margin.

Considering all bachelor’s degrees conferred in the United States between 1999–2000 and 2018–2019, the proportion of women earning bachelor’s degrees increased at a greater rate than it did for men. Given this fact, as well as the increasing number of bachelor’s degrees conferred in the United States overall, the share of bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian decreased for both men and women in this time period, with a larger decrease in the share of bachelor’s degrees earned by women majoring in Russian. In 2000–2001, 531,840 men earned a bachelor’s degree in the United States; first and second majors in Russian accounted for .036 percent \((n = 191)\) of bachelor’s degrees earned by men that year. In 2018–2019, 857,545 men earned a bachelor’s degree, with Russian accounting for .023 percent \((n = 195)\) of the total. In 2000–2001, 712,331 women earned a bachelor’s degree in the United States; Russian accounted

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8 See https://www.amacad.org/humanities-indicators/higher-education/gender-distribution-bachelors-degrees-humanities#32166.
9 The authors chose 2000–2001 instead of 1999–2000 here given that second majors were not reported in 1999–2000.
for .035 percent \((n = 250)\) of those degrees. In 2018–2019, 1,155,309 women earned a bachelor’s degree in the United States, and Russian accounted for just .017 percent \((n = 200)\) of those degrees.

*IPEDS did not begin collecting data on second majors until 2000–2001, so the data for 1999–2000 in figure 1, and in all subsequent figures and tables in this article, are for first majors only.

**Figure 1. Gender distribution of U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019. See also the online appendix**

11 For high-resolution color images of all the figures and tables in this article see the online appendix at https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/data/36/ or by scanning this QR code:
Table 2. Number of U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, by gender of degree recipients. See also the online appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000–2001</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2002</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–2004</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–2005</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–2006</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008–2009</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009–2010</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–2012</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012–2013</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013–2014</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014–2015</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015–2016</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016–2017</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017–2018</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018–2019</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4,777</td>
<td>4,384</td>
<td>9,161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Race or ethnicity
The overwhelming majority of recipients of bachelor’s degrees in Russian in the twenty years of this report were White, with very few graduates from other ethnoracial groups (see figure 2 and table 3). This finding is true without exception for each of the twenty years of the study, with the proportion of White degree recipients ranging from a high of 93.5 percent \( (n = 405) \) in 2006–2007 to a low of 85.8 percent \( (n = 303) \) in 2018–2019. (See the note with table 3 for an explanation of how percentages for race or ethnicity were calculated.) In fact, the percentage of bachelor’s degrees in Russian awarded to White students remained over 90 percent for thirteen years straight, from 1999–2000 until 2012–2013, when this percentage decreased slightly to 89.1%; then, beginning in 2015–2016, the percentage of White students began to decrease slightly in each of the remaining four years of the study.

Among non-White students, the picture is somewhat different for Hispanic or Latino students than for other non-White ethnoracial groups, although the numbers for all non-White groups were very small. Figure 3, which displays bachelor’s degrees earned in Russian by non-White students only, shows that the greatest growth was among Hispanic or Latino students. As figure 3 shows, the percentage of U.S. bachelor’s degrees in Russian earned by Hispanic or Latino students was fairly flat until 2010–2011, when it began to increase—albeit unevenly—through 2018–2019, when Hispanic or Latino students accounted for 7.9 percent \( (n = 28; \text{table 3}) \) of bachelor’s degrees in Russian in the United States. This trend tracks with the overall increase in participation by Hispanic and Latino students in U.S. higher education, although not to the same degree. The absolute number and relative proportion of bachelor’s degree recipients in other ethnoracial groups are shockingly small, and consistently so, over the twenty years of this study. After Hispanic or Latino students, the next largest group of bachelor’s degree recipients in Russian in 2018–2019 were Asian students, at just 3.7 percent \( (n = 13) \) of the total. American Indian or Alaska Native students, who accounted for just 0.5 percent to 0.8 percent of bachelor’s degrees conferred in the United States between 1999–2000 and 2018–2019, likewise accounted for a very small percentage of bachelor’s degrees in Russian.

Black or African American students, however, earned approximately 9 percent to 10 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in the
United States in each of the twenty years of this study. As figures 2 and 3 show, however, the percentage of bachelor’s degrees in Russian earned by Black or African American students was consistently low, not rising above 2.3 percent (n = 11), in 2009–2010, and with a low, in the very next year (2010–2011), of just 0.2 percent (n = 1). The percentage of Black or African American students who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian in each of the twenty years of this study represents a very, very small number of individuals (table 3). The underrepresentation of non-White students earning bachelor’s degrees in Russian reported by Murphy and Lee (2019) for 2010–2014 was thus not characteristic of just those four years; this underrepresentation is a long-term trend.

See Figure 2 on the next page
Figure 2. Ethnoracial distribution of U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019. See also the online appendix.

Because there were only three Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander graduates in the entire twenty-year period, that category was collapsed with Asian, aligning with the reporting categories for race and ethnicity prior to 2008–2009. In calculating percentages based on ethnoracial group, the following groups were excluded: Race or Ethnicity Unknown, Non-Resident Alien, and Two or More Races. (The category for Two or More Races, which was a new reporting category after 2007–2008, was excluded to enable comparisons across the twenty years.) See the note with table 3.
Figure 3. Percentage of U.S. bachelor’s degrees in Russian earned by non-White students, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019. See also the online appendix\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} excluded: Race or Ethnicity Unknown, Non-Resident Alien, and Two or More Races. (The category for Two or More Races, which was a new reporting category after 2007–2008, was excluded to enable comparisons across the twenty years.) See the note with table 3.
Table 3. Number of U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, by race or ethnicity of degree recipients. See also the online appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>SUBTOTAL</th>
<th>Race and Ethnicity unknown</th>
<th>Non-Resident Alien</th>
<th>Two or more races</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999–2000</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2001</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2002</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–2004</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>396</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005–2006</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>448</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008–2009</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>466</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009–2010</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010–2011</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–2012</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>572</td>
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<td>223</td>
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Note: Table 3 shows the actual number of recipients of bachelor’s degrees in Russian for each year of the report. The subtotal of White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, and American Indian or Alaska Native graduates is provided to show how the percentages in figures 2 and 3 were calculated. (Those percentages were calculated by excluding the categories of Race and Ethnicity Unknown, Non-Resident Alien, and Two or More Races.) Also recall that because there were only three Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander graduates in the entire twenty-year period, that category was collapsed with Asian, aligning with the reporting categories for race and ethnicity prior to 2008–2009. See table 6 in the appendix for the disaggregated totals for all nine 2008–2009+ IPEDS categories for race and ethnicity.

Table 4. U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, by the gender and race or ethnicity of degree recipients (summary, in descending order)

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<tr>
<th>Gender and race or ethnicity</th>
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<td>White Women</td>
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<td>White Men</td>
<td>3,773</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
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<td>Hispanic or Latino Women</td>
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<td>Hispanic or Latino Men</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Women</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Women</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Men</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Men</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native Women</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native Men</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (^{14})</td>
<td>8,326</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{14}\) Total of bachelor’s degree recipients in Russian, excluding the following ethnoracial categories: Non-Resident Alien, Race or Ethnicity Unknown, and Two or More Races.
Figure 4. Gender and ethnoracial distribution of U.S. bachelor's degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019. See also the online appendix.
6. Race or ethnicity and gender
This section presents data on race or ethnicity and gender together. See table 4 for a summary of the twenty years of the study, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, and figure 4 for the breakdown by year. (See table 6 in the appendix for the full dataset for all gender and ethnoracial categories.) Table 4 shows that for White students, the difference between the number of men and women who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian was very small, with 45.5 percent \( (n = 3,786) \) of bachelor’s degrees in Russian over the twenty years of the study earned by White women and 45.3 percent \( (n = 3,773) \) earned by White men. Although the absolute numbers are much, much smaller, the gender distribution was similar among Hispanic and Latino students, with 2.4 percent \( (n = 200) \) of bachelor’s degrees in Russian earned by Hispanic or Latino women and 2.1 percent \( (n = 177) \) earned by Hispanic or Latino men. For other ethnoracial groups, however, women far outnumbered men. The number of Asian women who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian \( (n = 153) \) was more than double that of Asian men \( (n = 65) \). The number of Black or African American women who earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian \( (n = 93) \) was more than triple the number of Black or African American men \( (n = 29) \).

7. Conclusion
The data in this report show that over the twenty-year period from 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, the ethnoracial profile of bachelor’s degree recipients in Russian can be characterized as overwhelmingly and persistently White, despite the increase in this same time period in the participation in U.S. higher education of students from other ethnoracial groups (U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2020). The gender distribution of bachelor’s degrees in Russian was fairly even between men and women but only for White, Hispanic or Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native students: for Asian and Black or African American students, far more women earned bachelor’s degrees in Russian than did men. For students identifying with non-White ethnoracial groups, the total number earning bachelor’s degrees in Russian in the United States over twenty years, as well as in each individual year, was very, very small.

The purpose of this article is to present these descriptive data; this article does not attempt to explain them. However, the applied
linguist Uju Anya, in her 2020 review article on the experiences of Black or African American students in world language study more broadly, summarizes scholarship that describes widespread systemic issues in U.S. society and in U.S. educational institutions that result in lack of access to or unsuccessful world language learning experiences among Black or African America students. Anya argues that “black students ... are more likely to attend schools or be tracked into programs where world languages are not available. ... In schools that do offer languages, Black students are frequently placed into academic tracks without them, and institutional gatekeepers (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators) with deficit notions of their supposed linguistic and cultural disadvantages and their families’ purported lack of value for education encourage black students to pursue ‘less intellectual’ or ‘more practical’ subjects” (98). Anya also reviews research that describes the generally positive attitudes about world language study that many Black or African American students hold but also relates their negative experiences in the world language courses in which they enroll. Anya concludes her review article with the call “Let us do better” (Anya 2020, 110). As Russian language educators, if we believe that the study of Russian language and literature is beneficial for our students (which surely we must), it is incumbent on us to ensure that those benefits extend to all students, not just to those who have traditionally earned degrees in our programs in the past. Let us do better.

Appendix
The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) changed the reporting categories for race and ethnicity beginning in 2008–2009 to comply with federal standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget (Sykes 2012, 2).

Table 5 is a crosswalk of those reporting categories, modified slightly from Sykes (2012).
Table 5. Crosswalk of IPEDS race and ethnicity reporting categories

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<th>Prior to 2008–2009 (7 categories)</th>
<th>2008–2009+ (9 categories)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native →</td>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
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<td>Asian/Pacific Islander →</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic →</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
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<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic →</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Resident Alien →</td>
<td>Non-Resident Alien**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Unknown →</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Unknown**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Two or More Races**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only three students who identified as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander earned a bachelor’s degree in Russian in the twelve years of this report for which this category was an option for IPEDS reporting. Given that number, this category was merged with Asian for those twelve years. It is reported separately only in table 6, which shows the total number of bachelor’s degree recipients by gender and race or ethnicity for all possible reporting categories.

** These categories were excluded in calculating percentages of bachelor’s degrees earned by students of different ethnoracial groups. For Non-Resident Alien and Race and Ethnicity Unknown, the groups were excluded because the reporting categories do not actually refer to an individual’s race or ethnicity. For Two or More Races, the category was excluded so that the percentages of bachelor’s degrees earned by students of different ethnoracial groups would be consistent across the twenty years of the study. The categories are included in table 6, which shows the total number of bachelor’s degree recipients by gender and race or ethnicity for all possible reporting categories.
See Table 6 on the next page
Who Are(n’t) Our Students?
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See Table 6 in the online appendix for the Number of U.S. bachelor’s degrees conferred in Russian, 1999–2000 to 2018–2019, by the gender and race or ethnicity of degree recipients (all categories)

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<td>168</td>
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TOTAL 340 441 400 386 396 437 434 470 448 466 521 514 572 564 521 494 451 439 472 395 9,161
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References


