



**Library Worklife:**  
HR E-News for Today's Leaders.  
growth • advancement • opportunity  
for all library workers

Volume 2, No. 3 • March 2005

[Library Worklife home](#)

**Statistics**

[Download this article in PDF format.](#)

## Are Our Numbers Rising or Falling?

By Jenifer Grady, Editor

How should we interpret the statistics we hear? Most of the profession is retiring, there are fewer people going to library school, people of color aren't going to library school, there are lots of jobs available, there are no jobs available, salaries are low, salaries are adequate? I'm (again) coming to the conclusion that it depends. Where you are (geographically and in your professional life), who you are, what you read and who you are asking are only some of the variables influencing the answers. ALA-APA and *Library Worklife* will continue to report, collect, analyze, and question the statistics that we take for granted. I invite your feedback or your own analysis of this and other data.

I received a call last week from an LW reader who wanted to know where the statistics from the article I wrote with Tracie Hall called "[The World Is Changing: Why Aren't We?](#)" in terms of recruitment of people of color to the profession. The statistics from the US Census Bureau revealed a sharp decline in librarianship overall from 1990 to 2000 (-10,656 librarians), and an even greater decline in numbers of librarians of color.

I promised to follow up with additional data, and called Denise Davis, Director of the Office for Research and Statistics. Denise pointed me to an article by Mary Jo Lynch, written in 2004, called "[Retirement and Recruitment: A Deeper Look.](#)" *Library Worklife* will continue to publish articles about how to analyze the statistics about how many of us are entering and leaving the field, but I wanted to point out this article because it illustrates the need to examine even tried-and-true data with the benefit of new information.

Briefly, in the 1990 census, 197,089 people wrote that they were librarians. However, matching librarians with people with masters degrees (although there is no way to say that they were all in library science) whittled the number to 87,409, or less than half. In 2000, the number of masters-degree-holding census-takers who identified themselves as working as librarians had increased to 106,228. That's a full 21.5 percent increase. So that's one interpretation for the trend of librarians who are working in the field.

When we look at students in library school, we get a similar mixed impression. The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) reports each year the number of students in ALA-accredited library schools (as well as a host of other statistics about faculty and non-ALA-accredited schools). In the 1991 report of statistics from 1990, all 59 schools participated in the survey and in the 2001 report of statistics from 2000, all 56 schools participated.

We see that although schools closed, there was an increase of 19.12 percent in enrolled students, though the increase is mostly seen in part-time programs. There were 11,020 students enrolled in 1990 and 13,127 in 2000, but there was a 24.13 percent increase in part-time enrollment, compared with a 9.47 percent increase in full-time enrollment. The increase is seen even if full-time equivalents

are counted. Enrollment was up for every ethnic group and for both genders, but one must study actual numbers and percentage of total to see that the changes do not approximate the percentage that each group represents in United States society.

There were 484 more masters degrees awarded in 2000 than 1990, a change of 11.02 percent. However, the number of male recipients dropped by 1.33 percent, while the number of women rose 14.91 percent.

When we factor in ethnicity, we see that there was a 61.90% jump for Asian Pacific male librarians awarded degrees, but it was the difference between 21 and 34 men. For White men, the number declined by 59, or 7.40%. The numbers of Black women and men awarded degrees rose 6.90 percent and 98.92 percent respectively, which would be impressive, but we see that Blacks (men and women) represent 2.93 percent of the total masters degrees awarded in 1990 and 4.43 percent in 2000.

Now it's 2005. What has changed? None of these statistics deny or allay any of the rumors or the concerns that we all should have about the need to improve our numbers on every count, but it does say, at least to me, that we have to be willing to dig deeper to see if additional information or a new perspective is available. And perhaps someday we can answer some of the "why" questions.

The following tables are for ALA-Accredited Library Schools Masters Programs.

<b>Enrollment (numbers and FTEs)</b>	<b>Fall 1990</b>	<b>Fall 2000</b>	<b>% change</b>
Total Enrolled	11,020	13127	19.12
Total, Full-time	3,769	4126	9.47
Total, Part-time	7,251	9001	24.13
Female students, Full-time	2,799	3051	9.00
Male students, Full-time	970	1075	10.82
Female students, Part-time	5,941	7305	22.96
Male students, Part-time	1,310	1696	29.47
Female students, Part-time (FTEs)	2,634.93	3342	26.83
Male students, Part-time (FTEs)	619.63	751	21.20

<b>Enrollment by Ethnicity and Gender</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>% change</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
American Indian	5	17	21	44	320.00	158.82
Asian Pacific	38	183	64	247	68.42	34.97
African-American	64	270	118	470	84.38	74.07
Hispanic	66	176	111	242	68.18	37.50
White	1682	6613	2011	8051	19.56	21.75

International	89	281	128	288	43.82	2.49
N/A	373	729	318	1014	-14.75	39.09
Total*	2317	8269	2771	10356		

<b>Enrollment, Ethnicity by Percent of Total</b>	<b>% 1990 (n=11020)</b>	<b>% 2000 (n=13127)</b>
American Indian	0.20	0.50
Asian Pacific	2.01	2.37
African-American	3.03	4.48
Hispanic	2.20	2.69
White	75.27	76.65
International	3.36	3.17
N/A	10.00	10.15
Total*	96.06	100.00

#### **Degrees and Certificates Awarded**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% change</b>
Total	4393	4877	11.02
Men	1054	1040	-1.33
Women	3339	3837	14.91

#### **Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Ethnicity**

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>% change</b>
American Indian	17	14	-17.65
Asian Pacific	90	128	42.22
African-American	122	216	77.05
Hispanic	115	267	132.17
White	3,377	3,576	5.89
International	205	140	-31.71

N/A	232	536	131.03
Total*	4,158	4,877	

<b>Degrees and Certificates Awarded</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>% M</b>	<b>% F</b>
American Indian	4	13	3	11	-25.00	-15.38
Asian Pacific	21	69	34	94	61.90	36.23
African-American	29	93	31	185	6.90	98.92
Hispanic	44	71	42	225	-4.55	216.90
White	797	2580	738	2,838	-7.40	10.00
International	51	154	57	83	11.76	-46.10
N/A	56	176	135	401	141.07	127.84
Total*	1,002	3,156	1,040	3,837	3.79	21.58
	4,158		4,877			

\*Discrepancy between totals by ethnicity and totals by gender noted in source.

## **Bibliography**

*Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report 1991*, ed. Timothy W. Sineath. Sarasota, Fla.: Association for Library and Information Science Education, 1991.

*Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report 2001*, eds. Evelyn H. Daniel and Jerry D. Saye. Reston, Va.: Association for Library and Information Science Education, 2001.

Copyright 2004–2006 ALA-APA. Contact Jenifer Grady, 50 E. Huron, Chicago, IL 60611, 312-280-2424, [jgrady@ala.org](mailto:jgrady@ala.org) for more information.