Background of the Study

- Yesterday’s panel on challenges and strategies of program building and other issues (enrollment, program visibility, personnel)
- AATK’s 20th anniversary and 70+ years since the first Korean class in U.S. college campus
- Korean language is ranked at the top: 44.7% enrollment increase between 2009 and 2013 (source: MLA 2015 Report)
- Factors of the increase and its implications?
Purpose of the Study: Qs

- How diverse Korean language learners’ backgrounds have become?
- What is the ratio between heritage and non-heritage learners, how has this trend changed over time, and what does this change mean to the field in general?
- How far do the students advance in their Korean language study? Are there enough advanced students to supply the need for teachers?
- How have the field and institutions responded and are responding to these climate changes (esp. enrollment increase)?
- What are the perceived challenges and projections by the teachers in the field?
- What the field in general, and each program in particular, need to do in order to effectively and strategically deal with such challenges based on these reflection and projection?
Eight schools in East Coast were surveyed in Dec. 2014, following my 2009 survey (focus was on the composition of the class)

Some general findings:

- Dramatic enrollment increase in virtually all schools
- Enrollment increase is most visible in the lower level classes (mostly in the beginner level class)
- Increase of Chinese international students is the largest contributing factor to the overall enrollment increase
- NHLs’ backgrounds are far more diverse than before
This Study (Data)

✧ Data Collection

- The head of 42 schools were contacted initially in May and a reminder was sent to those who did not return the survey a week later. 34 schools returned the survey (return rate: 81%), on which the final analysis is based.

✧ Main questions asked in the survey include,

- Changes in enrollment trend for the past few years

- Student composition by level (heritage vs. non-heritage; students taking K for language requirement; students taking Korean for requirement of Korean major, minor/certificate)

- Retention rate between levels

- Perceived reasons for the dramatic enrollment increase

- Most notable changes that the respondents have seen in recent years at their respective programs

- Challenges that the program head perceives in light of these changes in teaching environment
Results & Findings

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General Trend in enrollment

Increase: 31     Decrease: 0     No change: 3

Time when the notable trend has started in the program

Around 2005: 5         Around 2010: 15
Very recently: 12       No answer: 2

Level at which the program has seen the largest increase

1st year: 28     2nd year: 3     4th year: 1     No answer: 2

Levels offered by the program

up to 3rd year: 6     up to 4th year: 18     up to 5th year: 10
Major Reasons for the Increase

🌟 General Factors

- Hallyu (Korean pop culture)
- Korean economy (esp. increased internship opportunities in Korea)
- Increase of Chinese students and/or students of other Asian backgrounds

(Responses to an open-ended question.)
Major Reasons for Increase (cont’d)

- Institution-specific Factors
  - Good program/instructor reputation, Korean program faculty’s dedication
  - New content course(s) taught in English
  - Implementation of the two-track system
  - Establishment of Korean minor
  - Vibrant Korean campus community, increased Korea-related events/activities, active student organizations
  - Adding various new upper level courses (esp. 3rd & 4th)
Significance of Hallyu’s Influence (Respondents’ Perception)

- ES: Extremely significant
- VS: Very significant
- S: Significant
- SS: Somewhat significant
- NVS: Not very significant
Learners’ Perspective

• Why learning Korean? The benefits of it? How to use the skills?

• HL: almost all of them cited better connection and communication with family/relatives

• NHL: - interest in Korean culture (K-pop, drama, film)
  - work/career-related (‘perceived value’ for future job prospect)
  - like learning language (fun, personal interest)
  - travel or study abroad opportunities
  - friends (have lots of Korean friends or want to make Korean friends)

While these reasons are not novel, vast majority cite ‘culture’ as the main reason. Also notable is the reason related to work or career. (Based on Brown students.)
Student Composition by Level (Heritage vs. Non-heritage)
Wang (2009)
Comparison of Heritage Learner Ratio

Hyo Sang Lee (2000) : Heritage Learner ratio (based on 39 schools surveyed)

- 1\textsuperscript{st} year: 70~80\% (27\% in 2009, 20\% in 2015)
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} year: 90~100\% (48\% in 2009, 40\% in 2015)
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} year: 90~100\% (57\% in 2009, 50\% in 2015)

(Note: numbers in parentheses are from Wang.)

Some exceptional schools: ASU, Duke, FSU, IU, SUNY-Buffalo, Univ. of Texas - about 50\% in 1\textsuperscript{st} year)
Retention Rate between Levels (1)

From Level 1 (1st Year) to Level 2 (2nd Year)

(Note) vertical line: school average in %, horizontal line: retention rate in %
Retention Rate b/w Levels (2)

From Level 2 (2\textsuperscript{nd} Year) to Level 3 (3\textsuperscript{rd} Year)

(Note) vertical line: school average in %,  horizontal line: retention rate in %
Comparison of Intro and Adv Courses

Source: MLA 2015 Report (pp. 40-42)
Recent Faculty Hires

- No hire: 9/34 (26.5%)
- At least one hire: 24/34 (70.6%)
- No answer: 1/34 (2.9%)

(Note: schools with multiple hires – ASU, Emory, OSU, UCB, Umich, UNC-CH.)
Hires (Break-down)

1 PT: one part-timer     1 FTL: one full-time lecturer     1 FTP: one full-time Professor (of practice)
Perceived Concerns and Challenges

CS: Class size
SE: School’s expectation
IS: Instructional strategy
SS: School’s administrative and moral support
Other Concerns and Challenges

✧ Low enrollment in upper levels, keeping students interested in and motivated to move to upper levels, maintaining high retention rate

✧ Enrollment fluctuations (how to stabilize it?)

✧ Placement and/or assessment issues (esp. upper levels)

✧ Training part-time teachers

✧ Establishing a degree program/diversifying course offerings

(Note: based on 11 added responses, in addition to choices provided.)
Notable Changes (1)

- Increase of NHL and decrease of HL (esp. 1st year class)

- Increase of Chinese international students and other students of Asian backgrounds among NHL (e.g. almost 60% of entire enrollment is Chinese; Emory, WUSTL)

- Dept. of Homeland Security statistics
  - Total foreign students in U.S. colleges/universities: 1,132,636
  - #1 Chinese: 331,371 (29% of all foreign students)
  - Increase from about 70,000 (07-08), 194,029 (11-12), 235,597 (12-13)

(Source: Hankyung, 2015. 6. 1.)
Notable Changes (2)

- Increase of low-proficiency HL - 3rd generation Koreans in the picture?

- More NHL continue to upper levels (Princeton, Umich), more HL continue to advanced level (Yale)

- Increase in upper level courses (Chicago) – isolated case?

(Note: Based on responses to open-ended questions. 27 respondents provided answers, and 7 did not.)

-> The situation appears to vary from school to school.
Summary of Findings

- Enrollment increase is across the schools, although the increase rate varies from school to school.
- The largest increase is seen in the first year class in the majority of schools.
- Increase of Chinese international students is the most notable contributing factor to enrollment increase across the Korean programs.
- Retention rate from 1st year to 2nd year is low (simply put it, in three schools out of ten, a half of their students doesn’t move up to the 2nd year)
- Retention rate from 2nd year to 3rd year is low (in more than five schools out of ten, a half of their students doesn’t move up to the 3rd year)
- Retention rate is worse from 1st year to 2nd year than it is from 2nd year to 3rd year. -> may have to do with general language requirements.
Discussion

Are we pleased to see enrollment increase? Yes? What does this mean?

- Increase of enrollment cap without more and timely hires?
  
  (14~16: 21%  
  18-19: 23%  
  20-22: 15%  
  25: 12%)

- More time commitment from the teachers?

- Difficulty with ensuring quality instruction for optimal learning?

- Imbalance between demand and supply?

- Sustainability of the enrollment? (post-Hallyu era?)

(Note: enrollment cap could vary from level to level, lecture class vs. practice class.)
Discussion (cont’d)

- Are we pleased to see the increase of NHL? Yes? What does this mean?
  - How diverse is NHLs’ background? (See pilot study data-next slide)
    Knowing our students is the first step to come up with better instructional strategies.

  Is Korean becoming a true foreign language? Is it achieving a different status than before? Do we need to shift focus?

  - How to encourage HL enrollment? (dual mission of KLE?)

  - How to best meet the demands of both groups? (dual track system, accelerated course, individualized instruction, different grading system, extra sessions, etc.)
## Composition of NHL

<table>
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<th>Race/Heritage</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</th>
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<td>4%~24%</td>
<td>0%~33%</td>
<td>0%~25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14%~34%</td>
<td>15%~47%</td>
<td>13%~25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino American</td>
<td>0%~10%</td>
<td>0%~16%</td>
<td>0%~15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: This is based on the Pilot Study data.
Note 2: The composition of Heritage Learners varies 6%~29% in 1<sup>st</sup> year, 0%~46% in 2<sup>nd</sup> year, and 0%~100% in 3<sup>rd</sup> year class.
Discussion (cont’d)

- How to increase and/or maintain high retention rate through advanced level(s)? – ultimate goals of KLE?

- Eun Joo Kim (2003, p. 58) suggests
  - Offer more Korean studies courses beyond language (for a synergy effect)
  - Establish degree programs in Korean
  - Diversify Korean language course offering (e.g. KSP: Business Korean, Academic Korean)

- Challenge: Reality vs. practicality
Reflection

- Korean language education in America
  - Columbia (1934)/ Univ. of California at Berkeley (1943) : seven/eight decades of history
  - Major changes and accomplishments (source: MLA)
  - Still make up 0.8% of entire foreign language course takers
  - Much fewer than Chinese and Japanese in sheer numbers
Projection

✧ Instability of enrollments
✧ Prospect of Hallyu and Korean economy
✧ Support from each institution

Korean language study is susceptible to economic situation and greatly affected by international affairs unless it develops into Korean studies. How can we make this happen?
Limitations & Suggestions

- All the schools were not represented.
- Accuracy of information relies on the survey respondents.
- Situation is school-specific. This study only shows a general trend.
- Follow-up studies on a few major issues are encouraged.

Suggested topics include:

- survey on students who continue/discontinue after 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year to find out the reasons why (retention rate issue #1)

- effective instructional strategies for different groups of learners (intergroup research as well as intragroup research)
Implication and Conclusion

- Every school surveyed showed a similar trend (general fact) and yet it is so uniquely different at the same time.
- Program head needs to be more aware of the program’s overall change.
- Research should be done on the various aspects of these trends on a regular basis (e.g. every five years) to gain a clear understanding, reflect, project and prepare in a timely manner -> teach our students better and keep our history alive.
Closing

📍 Thank you for listening!!
📍 Please send your questions to me if you have any. Those of you who did not or were unable to participate in the survey, you can still send it to me. I would appreciate it.