

Global currents and the future of the university

Defending the integrity of academic work

David Robinson

Associate Executive Director



Political and economic pressures

- **Financing**
 - “scarcity” and “cost-sharing” ...or privatization of funding
- **New accountability demands**
 - Gov’t steering (governance changes, “new public management”)
 - assessments of learning outcomes
 - Commercialization of research
- **Globalization of PSE**
 - Education as a service to be traded

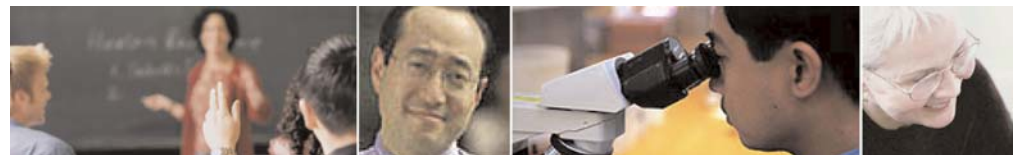


The economics of scarcity



“Economics is a science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses.”

- *Lionel Charles Robbins, 1932*

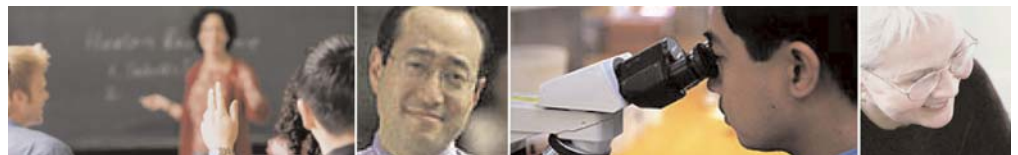


Don't trust economists



“The purpose of studying economics is not to acquire a set of ready-made answers to economic questions, but to learn how to avoid being deceived by economists.”

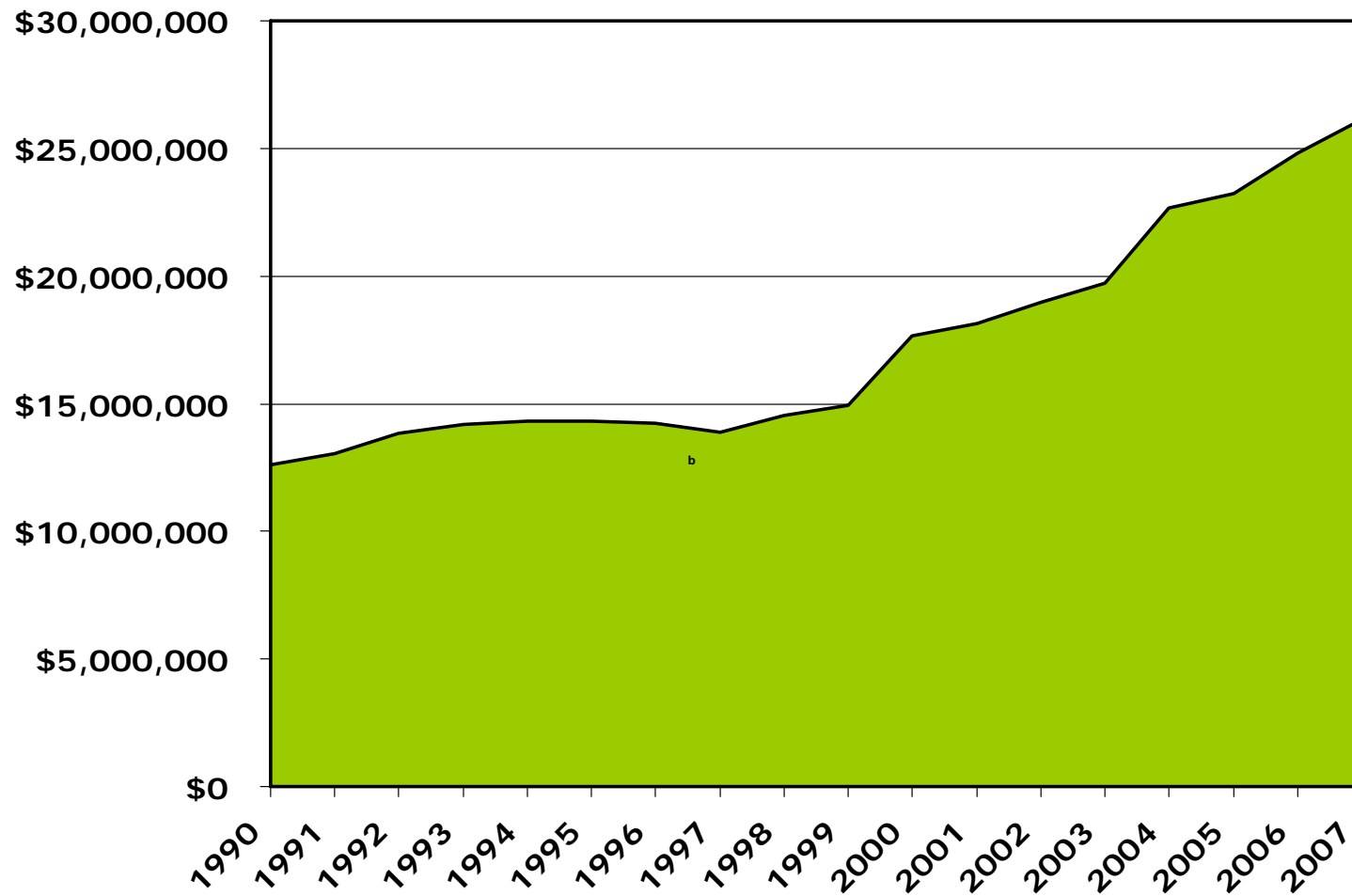
- *Joan Robinson, 1960*



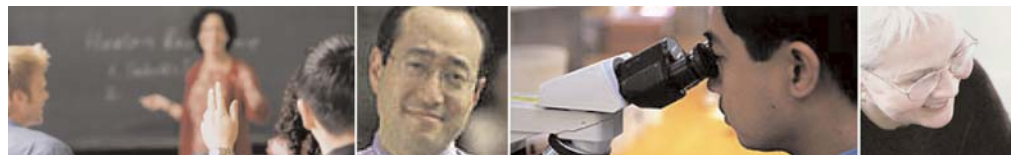
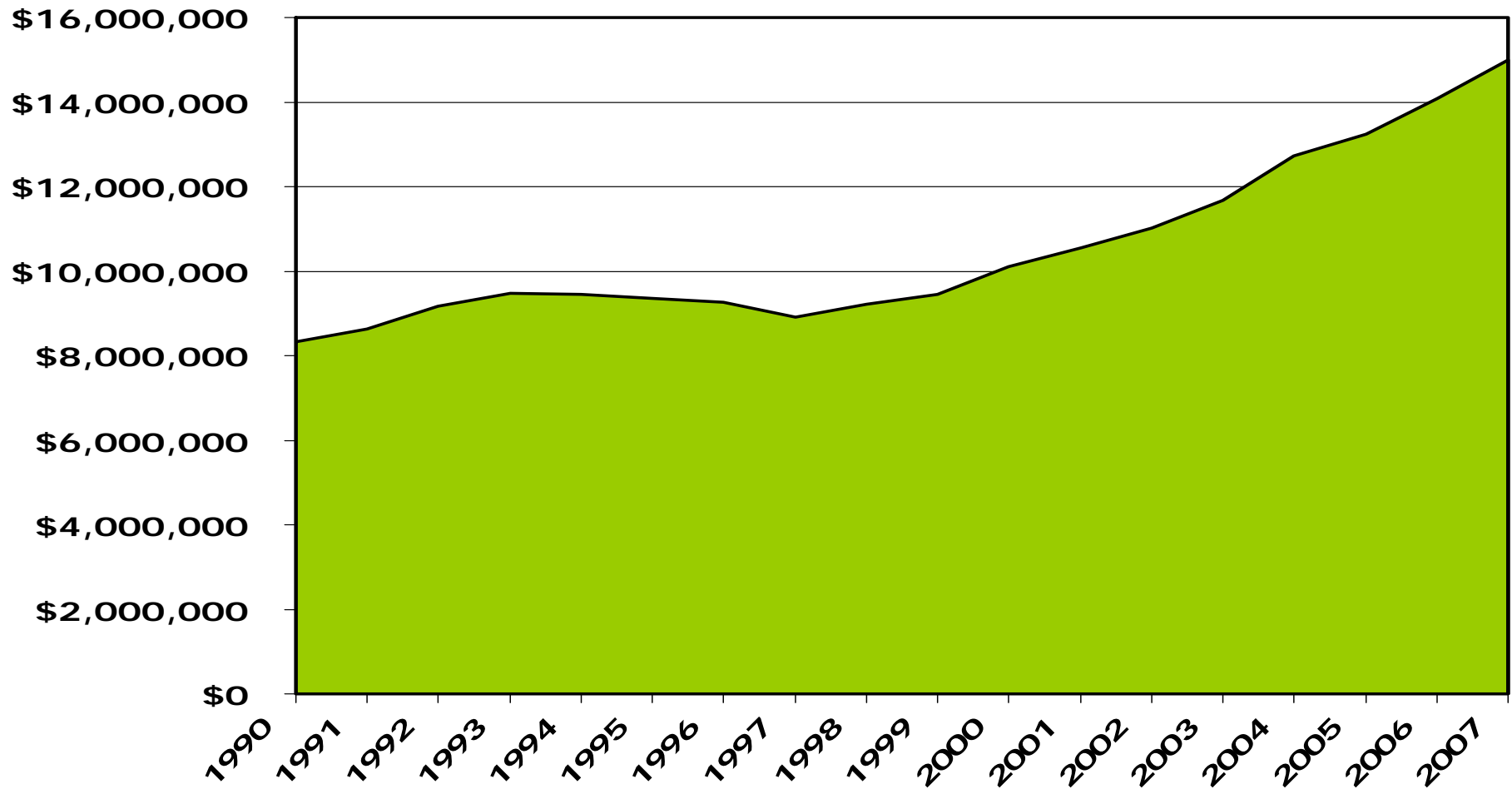
A time of scarce resources?



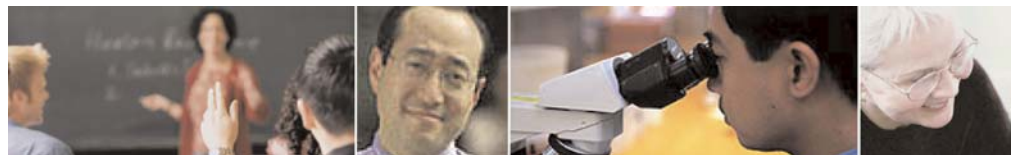
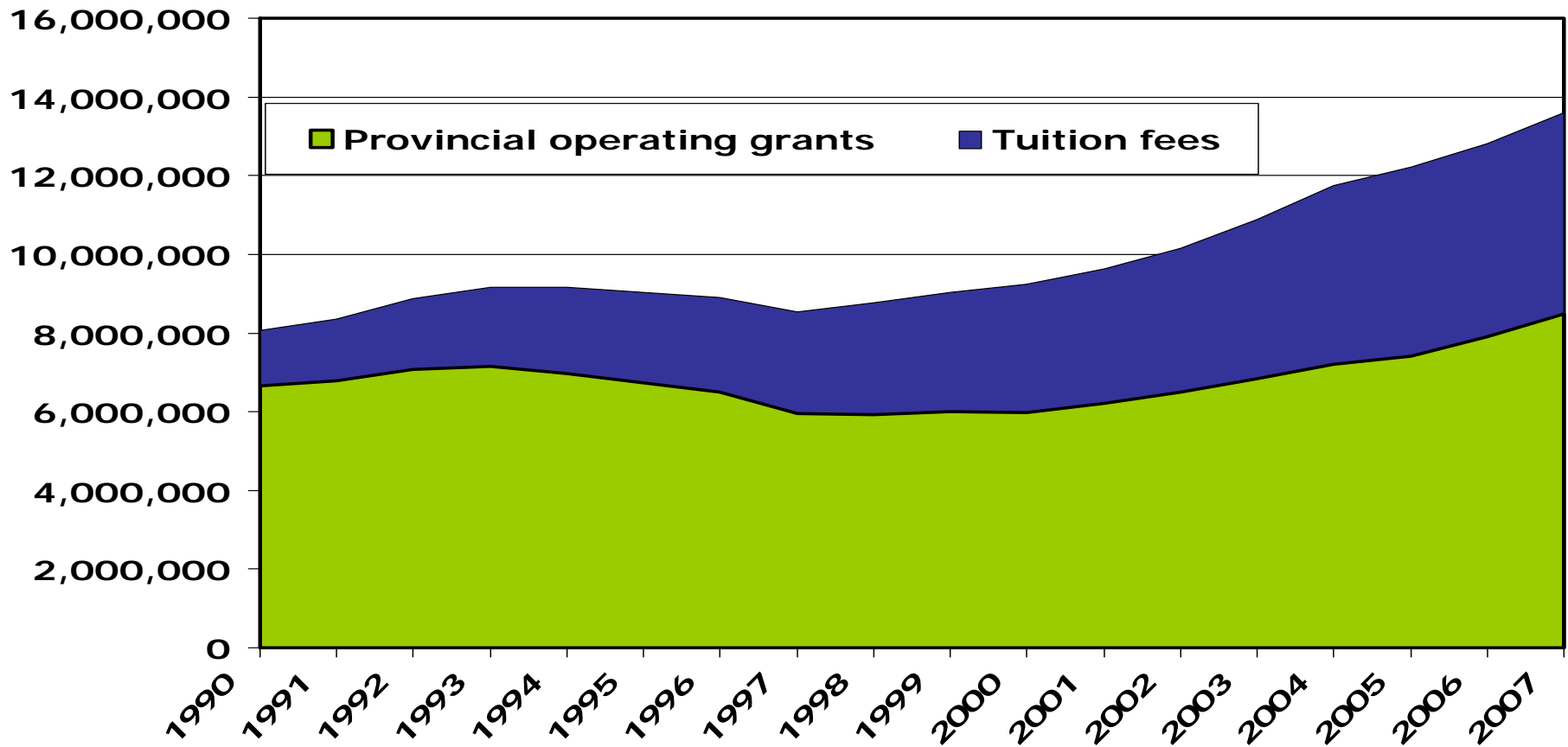
University Revenues, 1990-2007



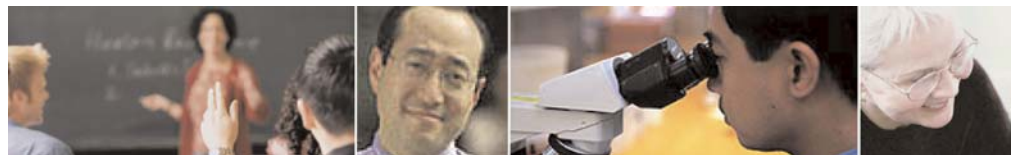
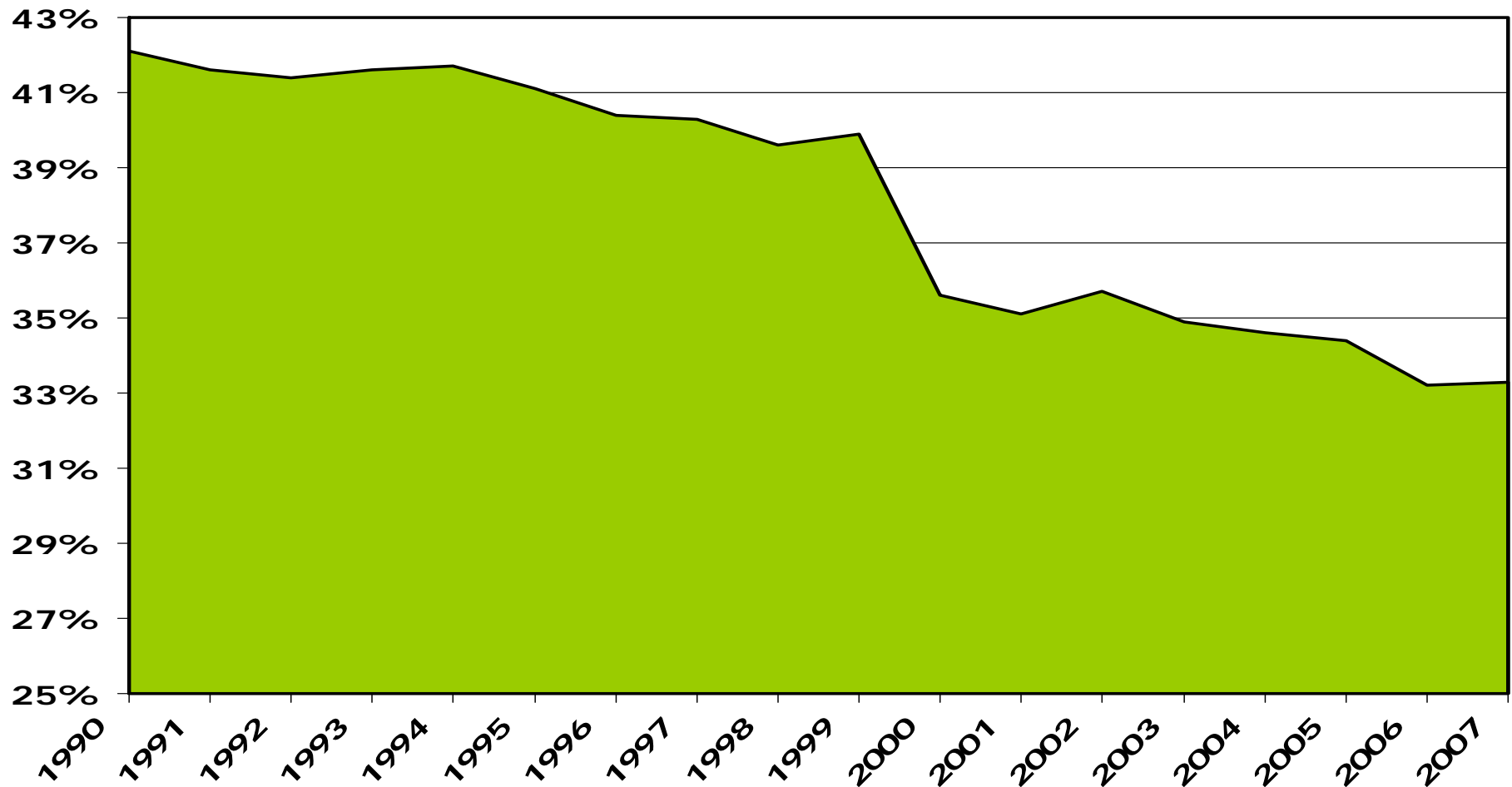
Operating Revenues, 1990-2007



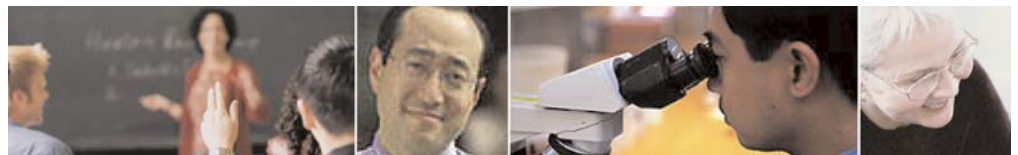
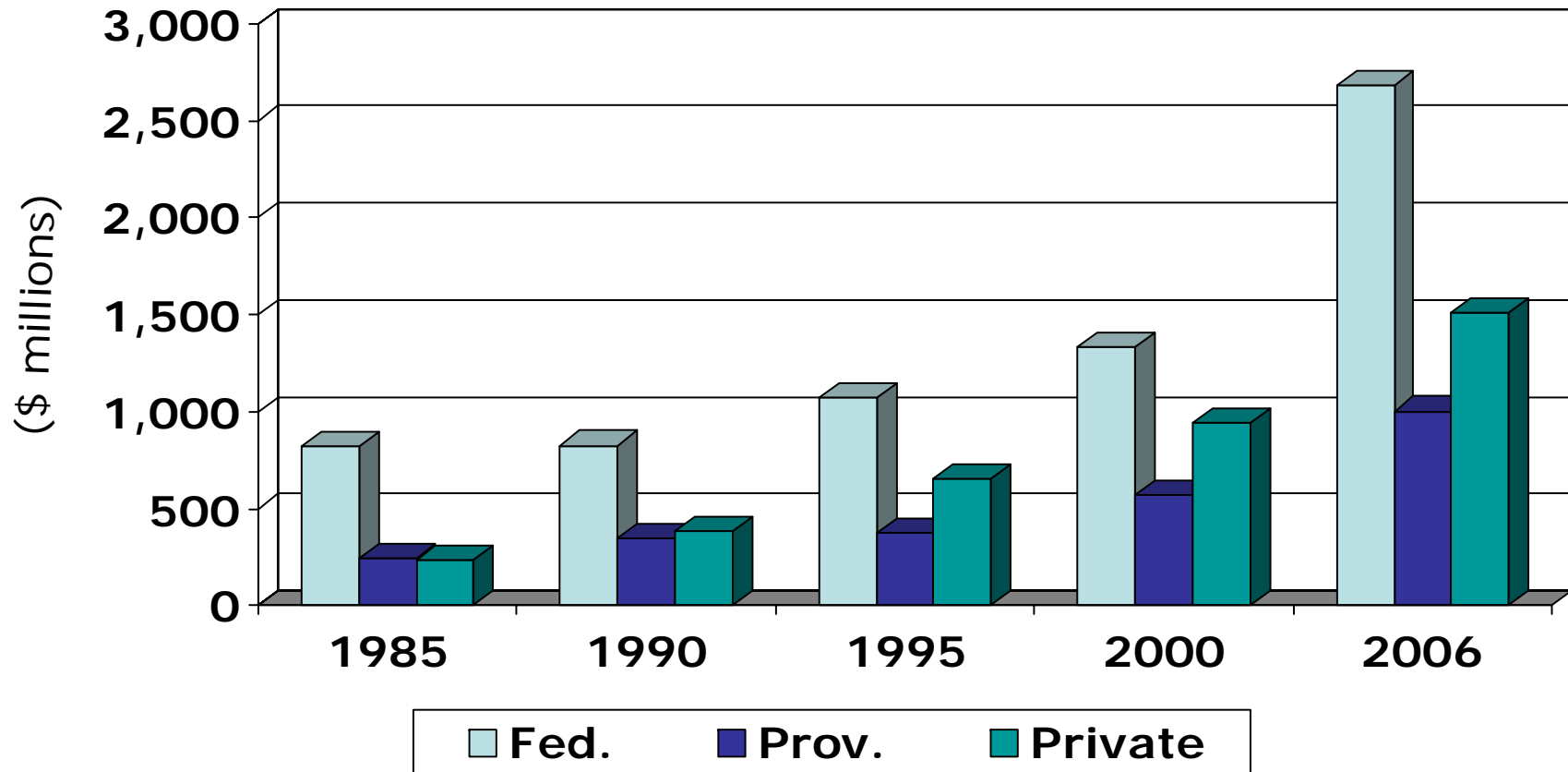
Operating Revenues



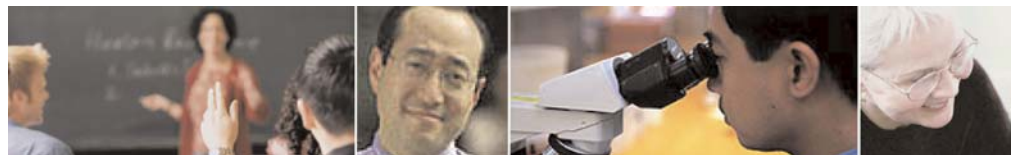
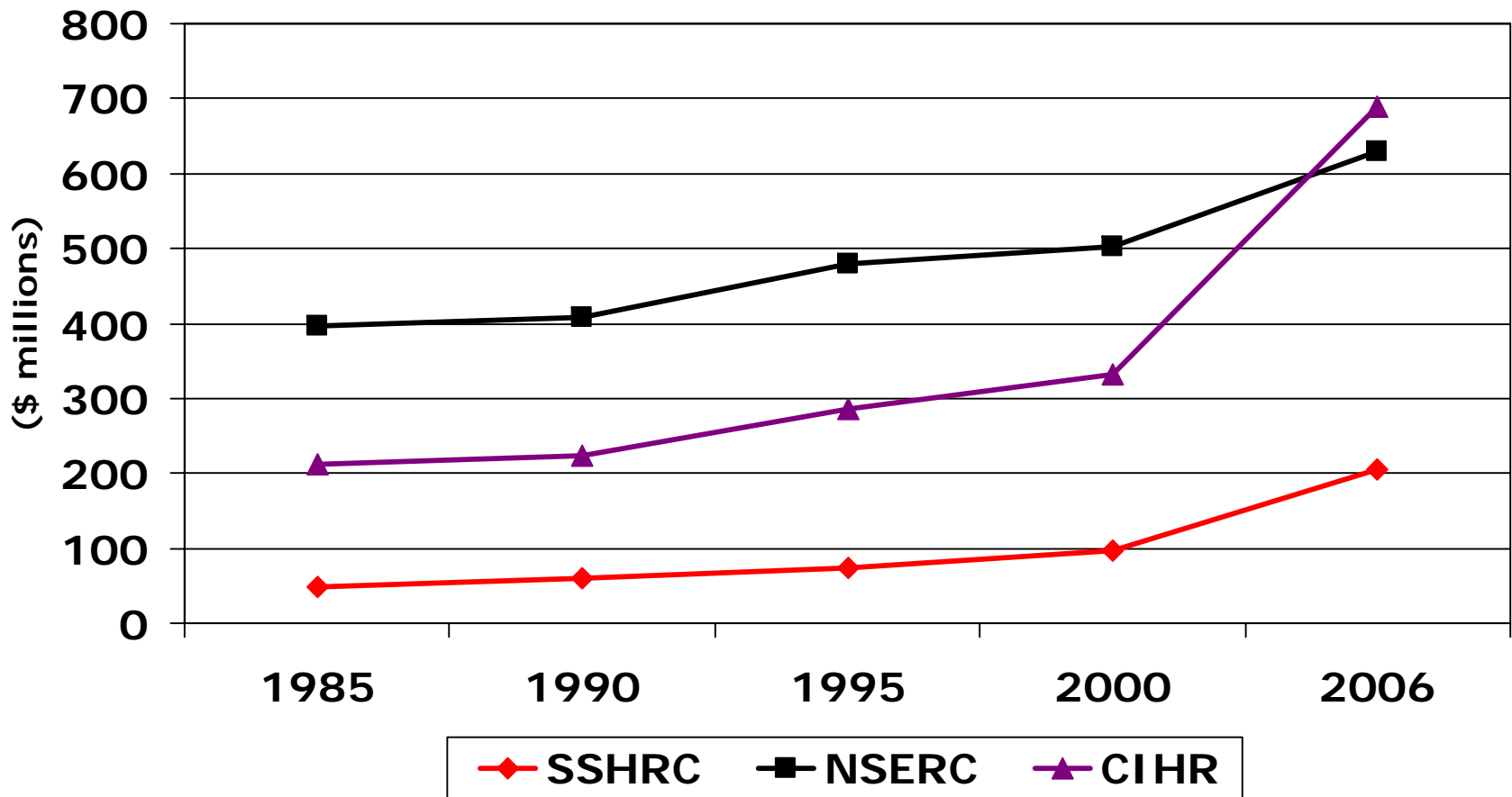
Academic rank salaries



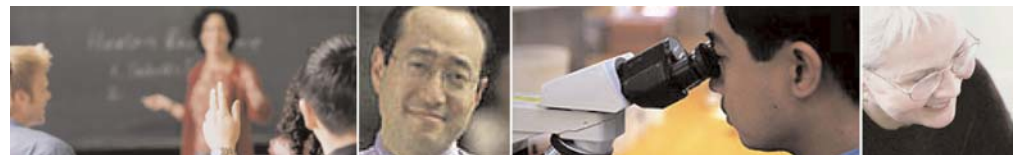
Research Funding



Granting Council Funding

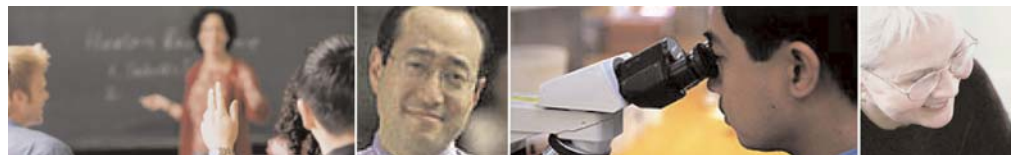


How does this affect our work?



Production-driven work culture

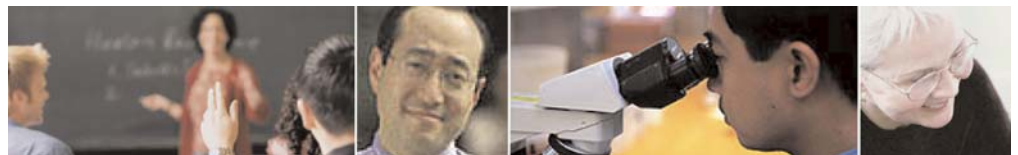
- **Increased demands to “produce”**
 - Government policies: RAE (UK); RQF (Australia)
 - Internal reward structures (merit pay, market supplements)
- **Increased demands for academic staff to be entrepreneurial and to secure outside funding and contracts**
 - Linked to access to equipment, facilities, travel funds, graduate students, etc.



Fabrikant Inquiry

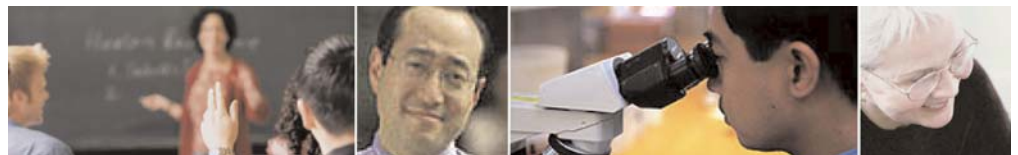
“Access to [research] funding...depends upon a demonstrated capacity to ‘produce’.... [T]oo often university honours, research grants and industrial contracts are awarded on the basis of numbers of publications, rather than on their quality and significance.”

- Arthurs' Report, 1994



A global market

- **PSE seen as a commodity to be traded:**
 - Franchising, branch campuses, cross-border e-learning, joint ventures, recruitment of full fee-paying international students
 - Pressure to include this “trade” in agreements like the GATS
- **Impact on academic values?**



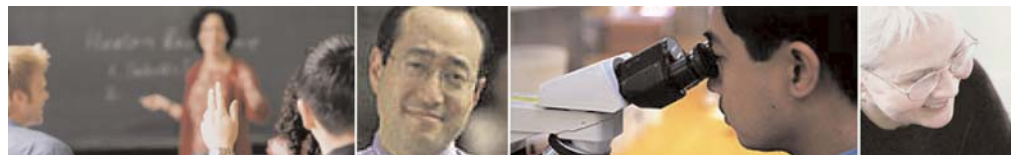
THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Australian Universities Fear a Dangerous Dependence

August 8, 2008

"[M]any of the less competitive universities have reduced their entrance standards to raise overseas enrollments, appointed part-time staff to teach those students, and made due with inadequate infrastructure."

"The Australian system is in danger of just rubber-stamping degrees."



Carol★
Simpson
©2000

The Trial of Socrates

- **Culture of assessment**

- Assessment of research outputs, but also new tools to assess effectiveness of teaching (standardized student tests)

- **What are the biases in these assessments?**

- **Impact on curriculum and professional autonomy?**

“...and is it true that you never once administered a single standardized test?”

Defending the integrity of academic work?

- How and why are our institutions being restructured?
- What is the impact on academic values?
- What is our vision and how can it be achieved?
- What role for individuals in their daily practices? What role for academic staff associations and unions?

