

# Overview of Korean Higher Education

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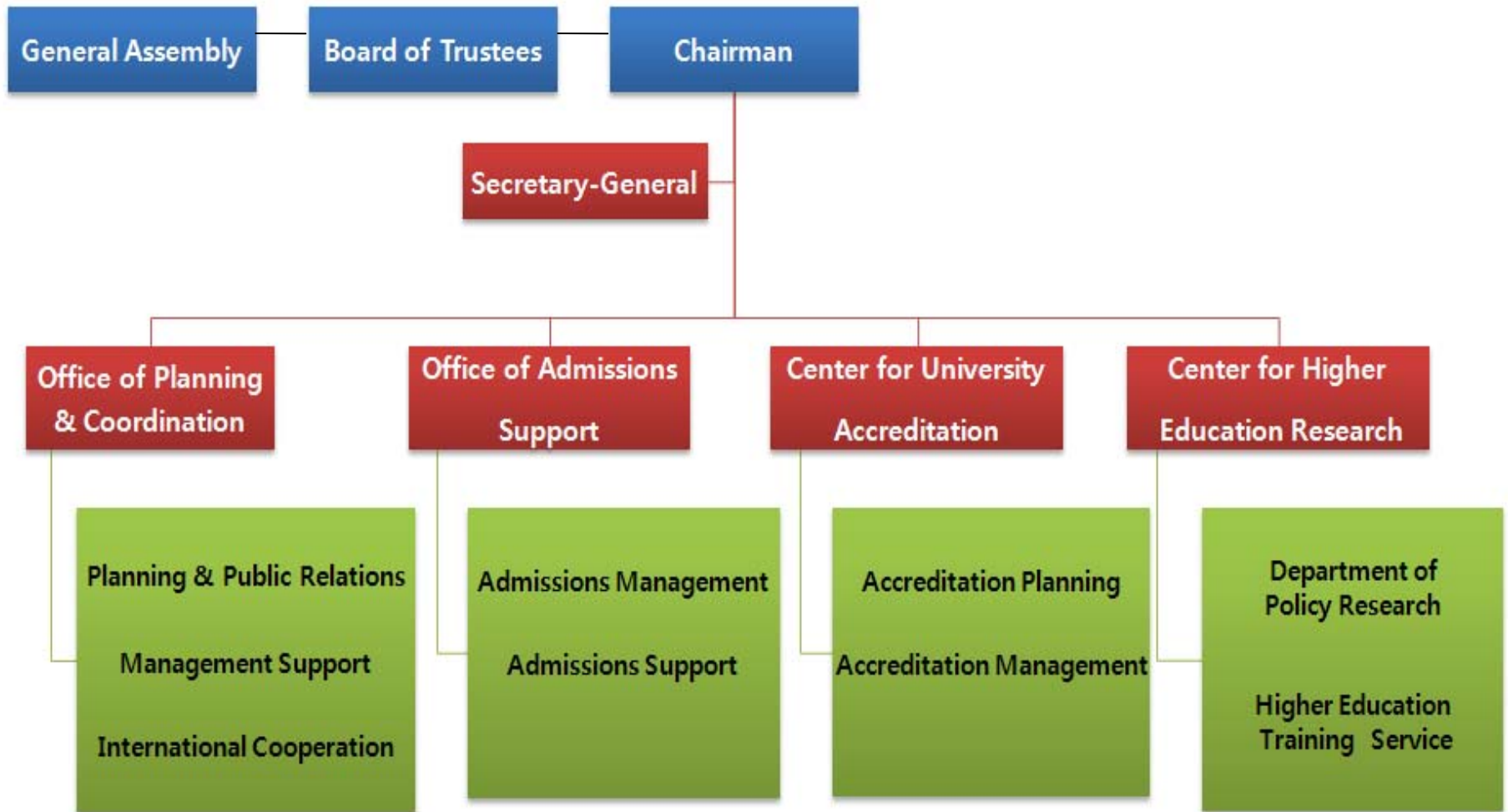


# **Korean Council for University Education (KCUE)**

## ■ Who we are:

- Non-profit, non-governmental association of 4-year universities (200 member institutions)
- Founded 1982
- Mission: Work for the development of HE system by...
  - Promoting inter-university cooperation
  - Supporting policies that increase autonomy, initiative, accountability, & quality of universities

# ■ Organization



## ■ What we do:

- Represent common voice of universities
- Conduct research on higher education & promote sound government policies
- Accredite universities
- Coordinate university admissions system
- Provide training to university faculty/staff

# ***Overview of Korean Higher Education***

Explanatory Framework:

- Main Context
- Critical Challenges
- Key Trends

# *Main Context*

# Context 1: Historical Overview

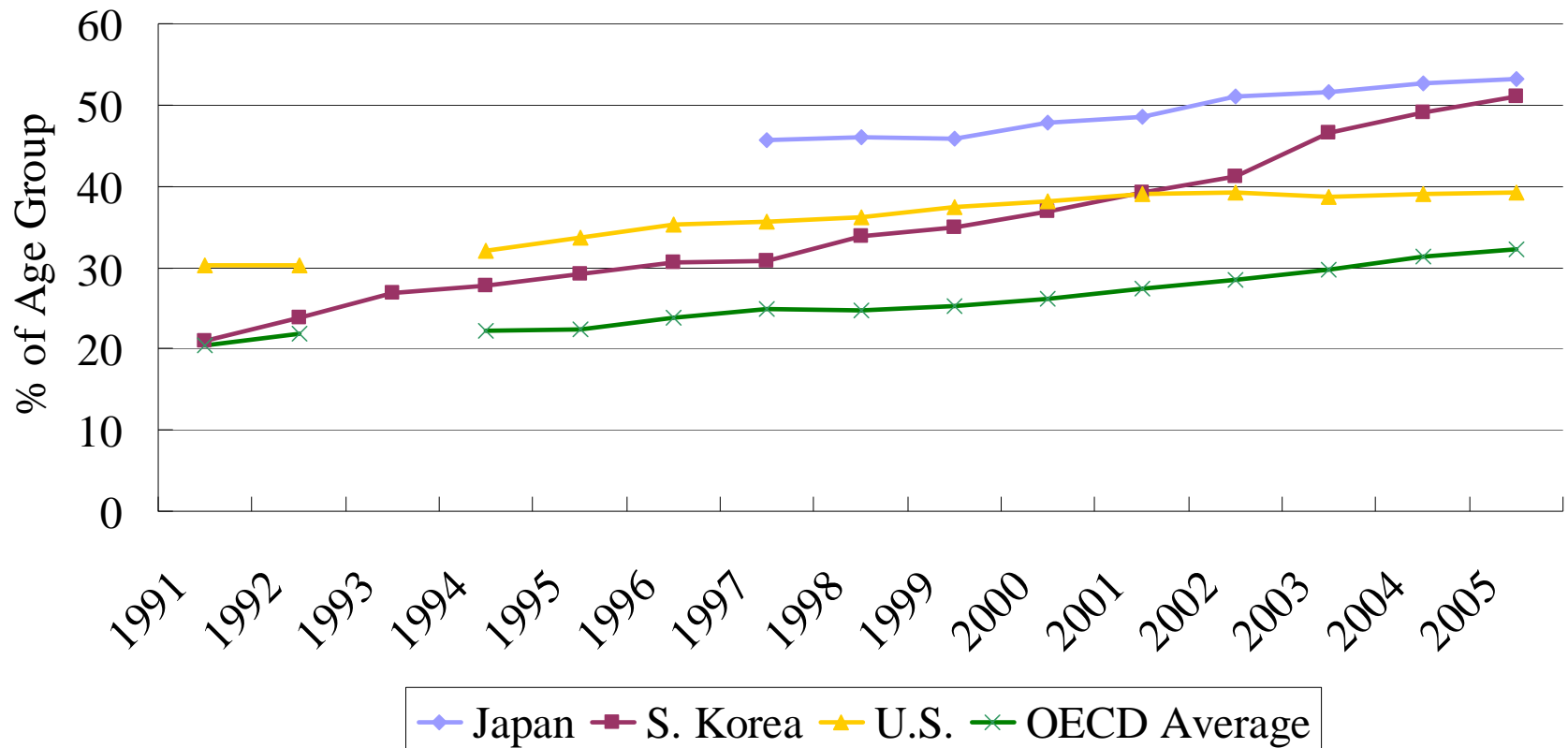
- Ancient beginnings: 372 A.D.
  - Sungkyunkwan established 1398
- Late 1800s: roots of modern HE system established
  - Private colleges established by missionaries
- Mid 1900s: Reestablishment following Japanese colonization

- 1960s to 1980s: Building of HE system linked to central economic development plans
- 1980s to mid-1990s: Reflection of social demand in HE policies
- Mid-1990s to present: Expansion & reinforcement of HE system, beginnings of autonomy

## Context 2: Mass Education

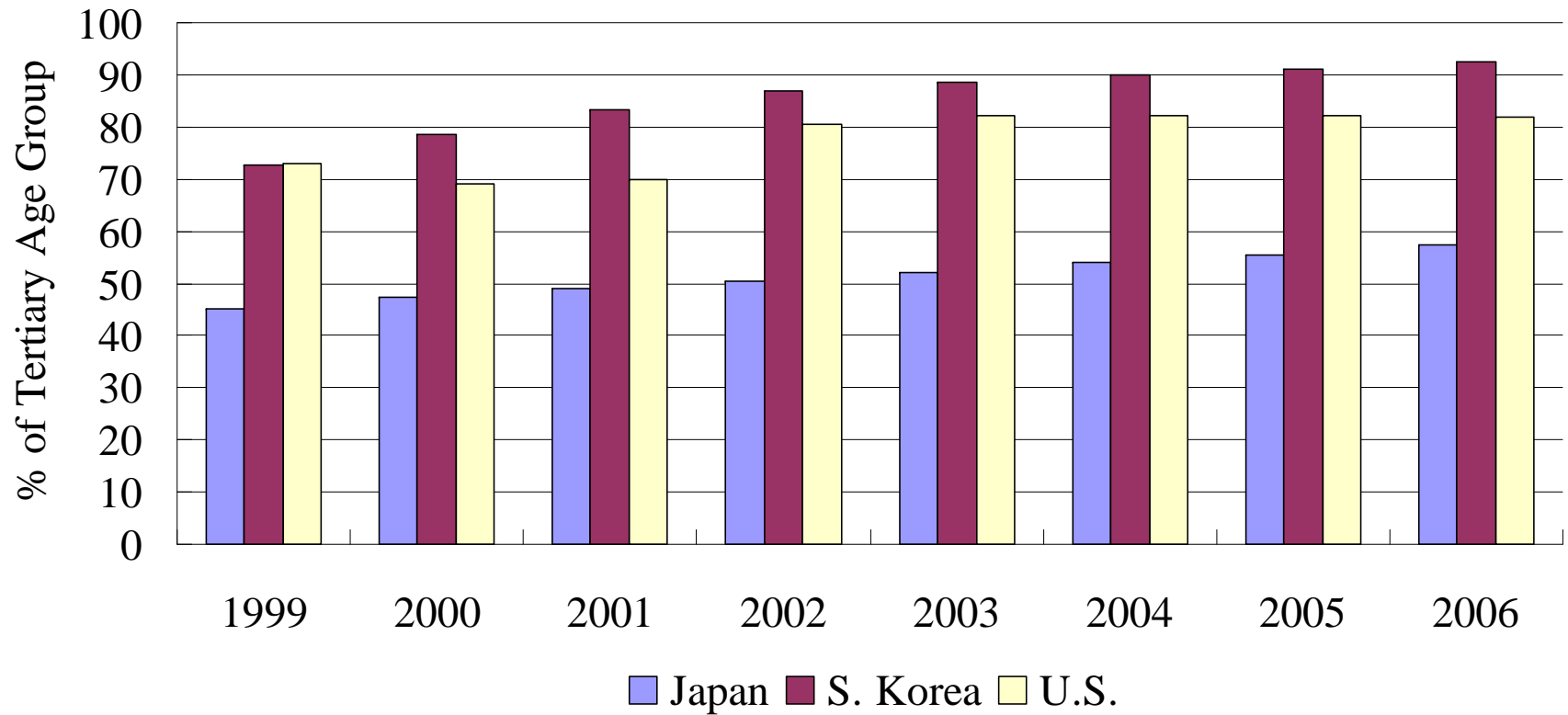
- “Education Fever”: Remarkably high demand for education from all social strata since end of WWII
  - Average total household expenditure on education estimated between 20-25% of income
  - Near universal enrollment in higher education

## Tertiary Attainment of 25-34 Age Group



Source: OECD Statistics Portal

## Gross Enrollment Ratio



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

# Context 3: High Regulation

- Rooted in planned, sequential development of education system from 1960s to 1980s
  - Higher education linked to government's development goals
- Strong ministry of education
  - Top-down system of control
  - Public institutions operated & funded by MOE
  - Various regulations on private institutions without investment

# Context 4: Privately Owned & Funded

- Korean HE institutions & enrollment

	2/3-Yr. Institutions		4-Yr. Institutions	
<i>Institution</i>	<i># of Schools</i>	<i>Enrolled Students</i>	<i># of Schools</i>	<i>Enrolled Students</i>
<b>Private</b>	137 (92.6%)	499,963 (97.2%)	158 (79.0%)	1,597,037 (75.5%)
<b>National/ Public</b>	11 (7.4%)	14,644 (2.8%)	42 (21.0%)	518,163 (24.5%)
<b>Totals</b>	148	514,607	200	2,115,200

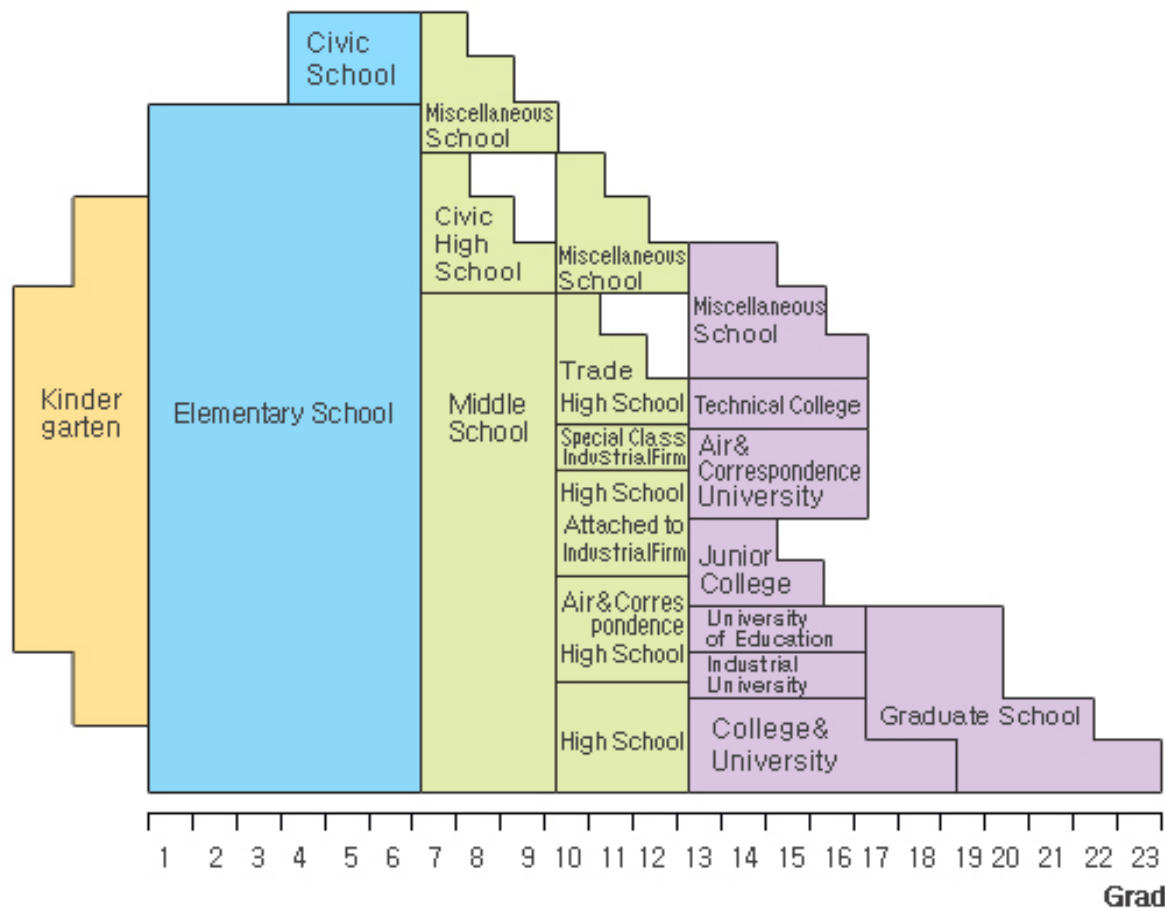
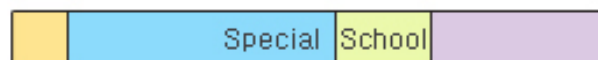
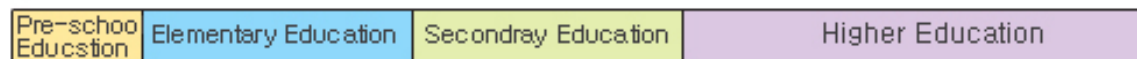
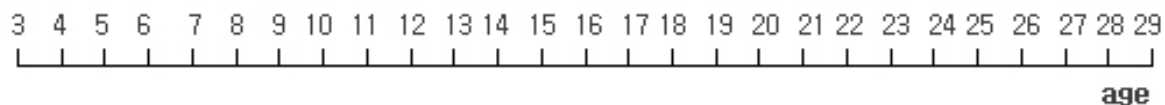
# Context 5: HE Model Similar to U.S.

## ■ Primary/secondary education

- Single-track 6-3-3-4 system
- 9 years compulsory education

## ■ Tertiary education: 405 institutes

- 2/3-year junior colleges: 147
- 4-year universities: general universities (174), industrial universities (13), teachers' universities (10), etc.



# ***Critical Challenges***

# 1. Over-Education (?)

- Education attainment ahead of economic development
- Supply-demand gap of HE graduates
  - University graduate employment rate: ≈56%

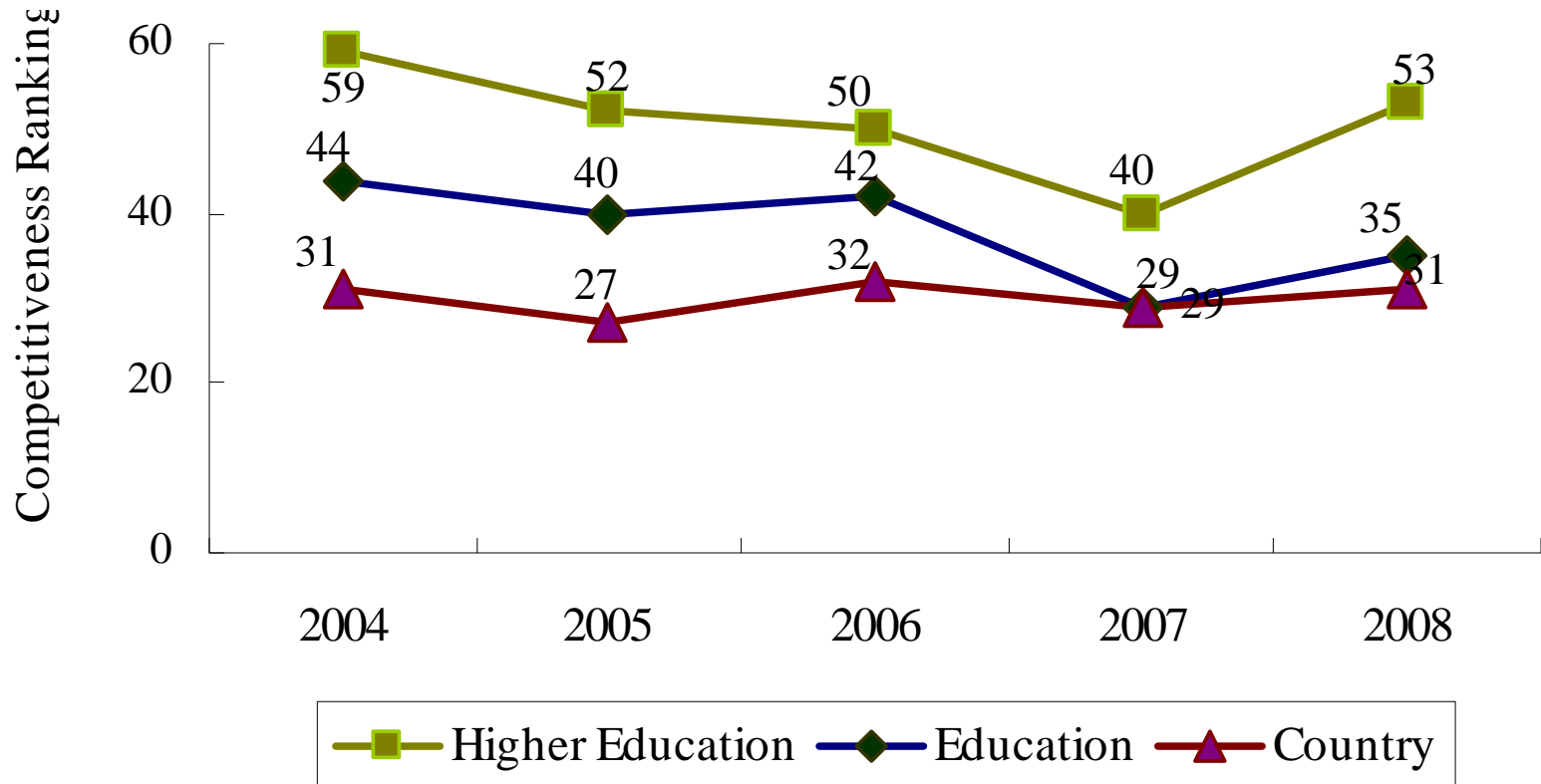
# 2. Low Institutional Diversity

- Uniform curriculum, organization, governance, & goals
- Strong hierarchical ordering of schools

# 3. Quantity-Quality Gap

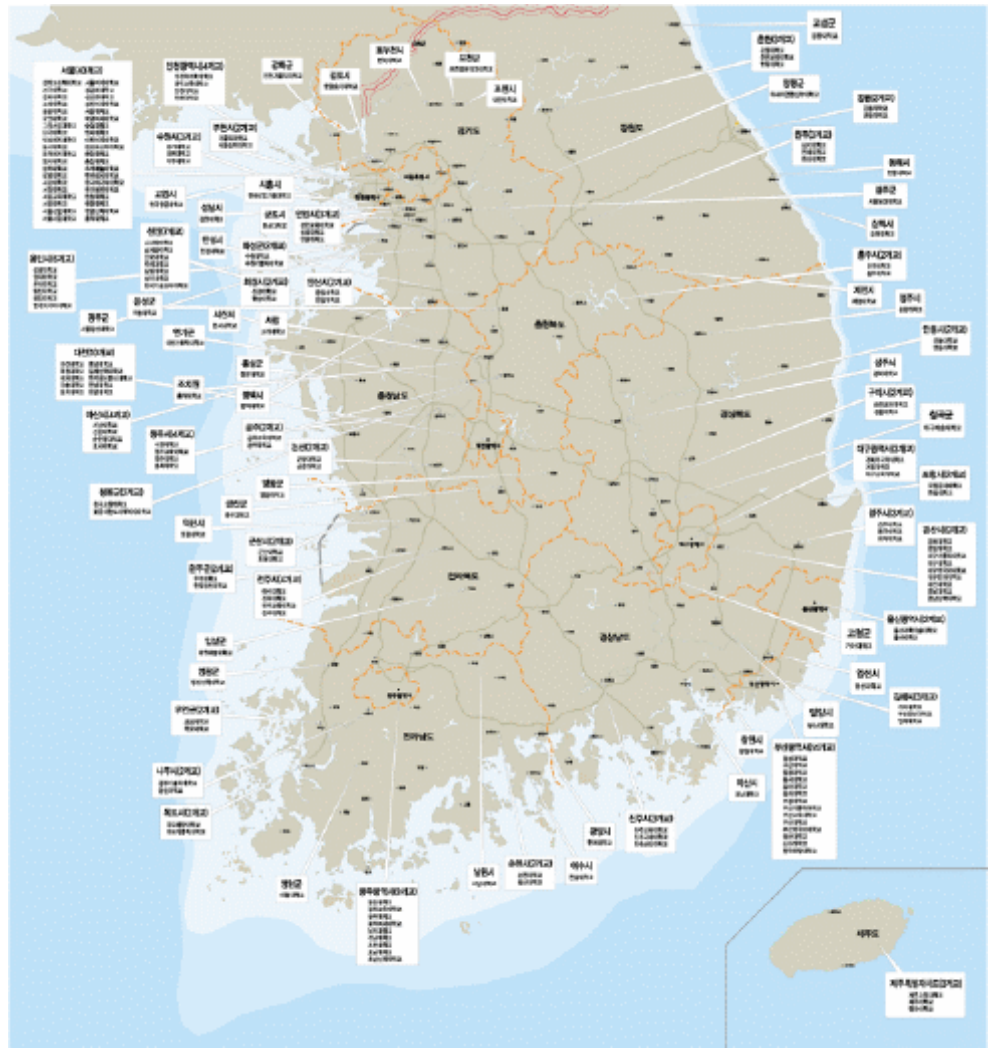
- Perceived academic-business gap
- Low international recognition

## 4. Competitiveness of Korean Higher Ed.



Source : IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook

# 5. Imbalance between Seoul and Provinces



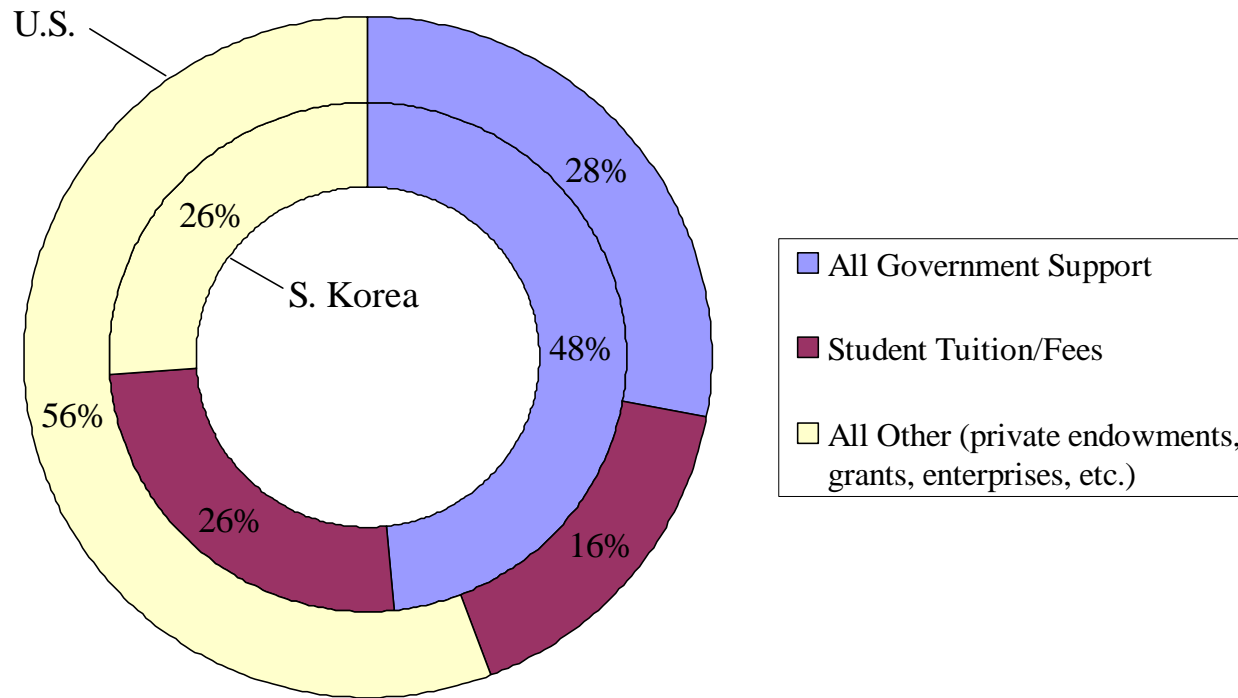
## 6. Low Institutional Autonomy

- Regulation of admissions system: “3 nots” policies
    - No institution-specific exams (student essays permitted)
    - No ranking of high schools
    - No admissions in return for donations
  - Gov. funding tied to MOE evaluations
  - Regulation of private institutions’ governing boards
  - Indirect limits on tuition/fee increases
- ↓
- Limited flexibility & innovation in public and private institutions

## 7. Lack of Public Funding

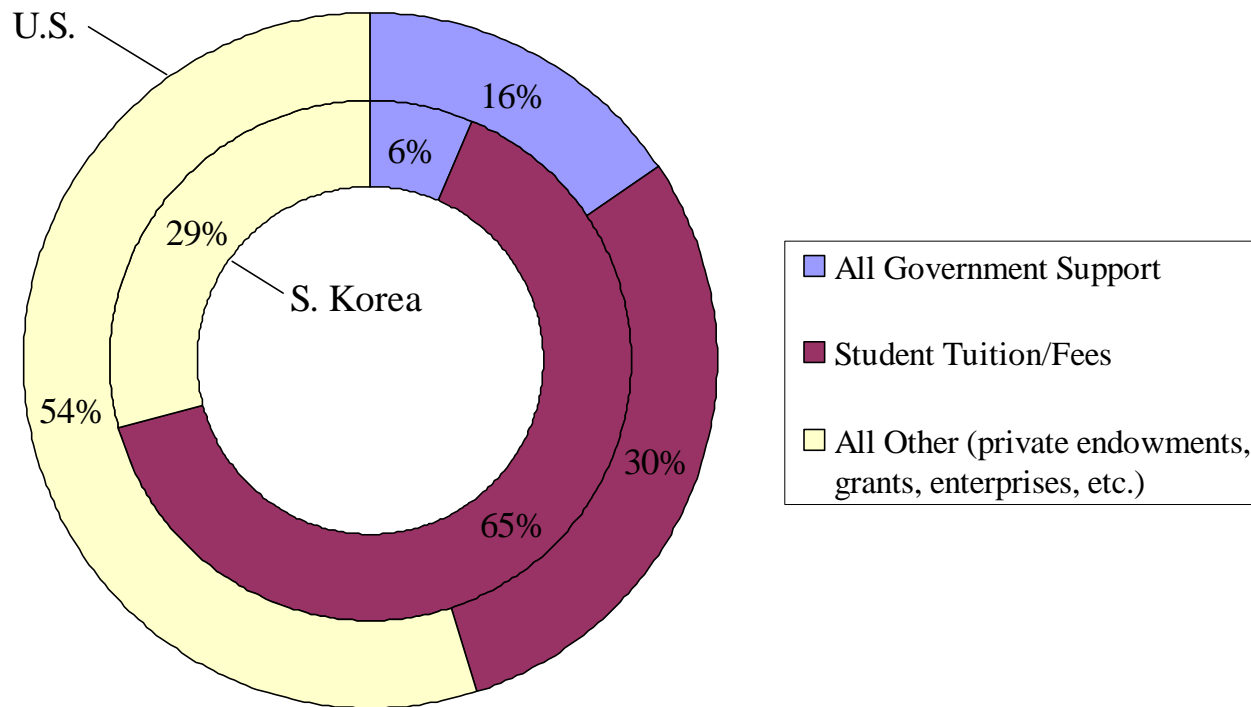
- Reliance on student tuition/fees: 65% in private institutions
- Less-diversified financial structure

# Revenue Sources - Public Degree-Granting Institutions, 2005



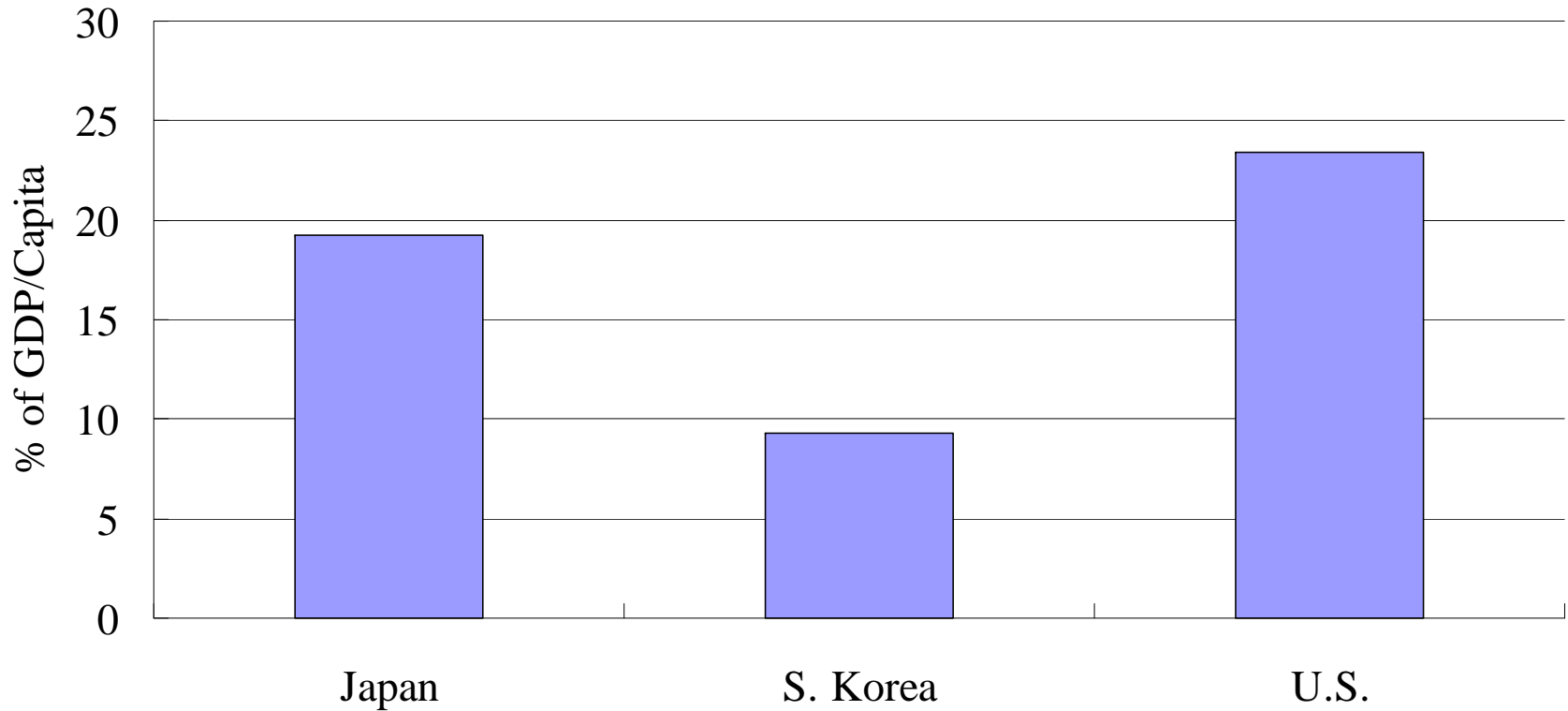
Source: KCUE, U.S. Dept. of Education

## Revenue Sources - Private, Non-Profit Degree-Granting Institutions, 2005



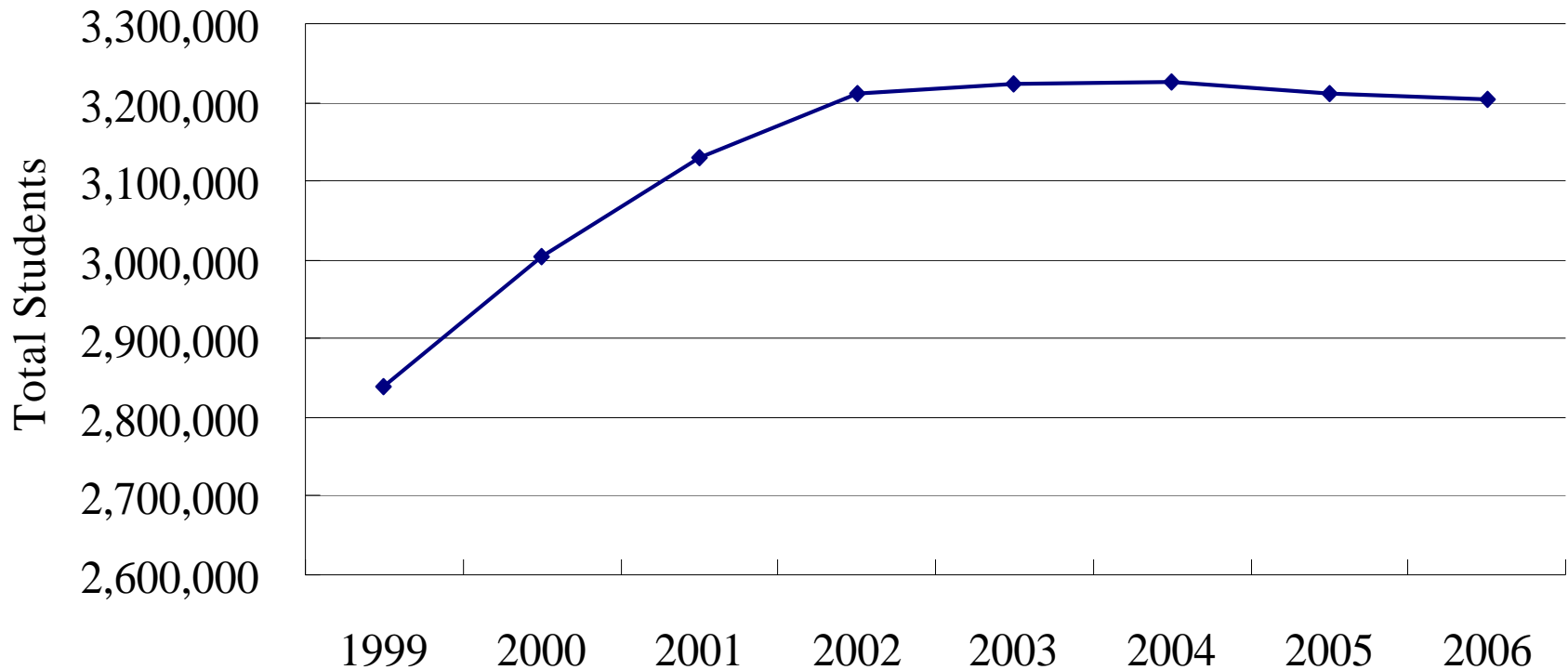
Source: KCUE, U.S. Dept. of Education

## Public Tertiary Expenditure Per Pupil, 2005



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

## 8. Falling Enrollment in Higher Ed.



(Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics)

# *Key Trends*

# Trend 1: Encouraging Institutional Specialization

- Relaxing of government regulations
- Promotion of professional graduate school system
- Merging of institutions

# Trend 2: Quality Promotion

- BK (Brain Korea) 21 project: targeted government funding to increase research capacity & quality
  - 1999-2005: 1.4 trillion KRW ( $\approx$ 1.1 billion USD)
  - 2006-2012: 2.0 trillion KRW ( $\approx$ 1.6 billion USD)
  - Increase in SCI-level research papers from 1,815-4,290 from 1999-2005
- Establishing links between businesses & academia
  - KCUE-coordinated evaluations of institutions by enterprises

## ■ Quality assurance system

- 1982-1992: KCUE institutional & programmatic evaluations
- 1994-2008: KCUE institutional & programmatic accreditations
- Present: New system based on gov. recognition of accreditation agencies

# Trend 3: Support of Provincial HE

- NURI (New University for Regional Innovation) Project
  - Targeted government funding program to strengthen provincial institutions
    - 2004-2008: 1.4 trillion KRW ( $\approx$ 1.1 billion USD)

# Trend 4: Government Delegation

- KCUE management of admissions system
  - Facilitate consultation & coordination between universities
  - Build systematic connections for cooperation between high schools & universities
  - Develop various admissions models
    - Reduce reliance on quantitative student indicators
    - Admissions officer-based system
  - Increase public dissemination of admissions-related info.
  - Goal of complete autonomy by 2012
  
- Incorporation of national universities

# In Summary:

## □ The good:

- High enrollment rates
- Wide access to higher education
- Highly educated society

## □ The challenging:

- Systemic inflexibility
- Finances reliant on single source of funds
- Relatively low quality

**Thank you!!**