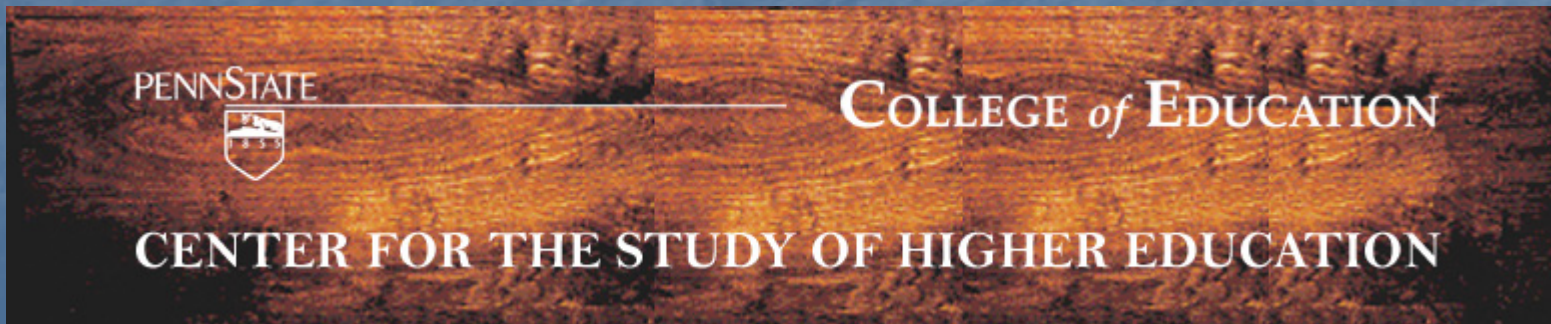


Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation  
Known Knowns, Known Unknowns, and Unknown Unknowns: A  
Workshop to Take Stock of the State of Research on Access to  
Post-Secondary Education and Map Future Directions  
December 13, 2005

Making the Most of a Research Opportunity:  
Improving the Availability of Data on  
Students from Low-Income Families

Donald E. Heller



## NPSAS overview

- Sponsored by U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
- Study of how students finance their postsecondary education
- Nationally-representative sample of undergraduate and graduate students
- Stratified sample of U.S. postsecondary institutions, and students within institutions
- Two versions: public use and restricted use
- <http://nces.ed.gov/dasol/>

# NPSAS components

- Main NPSAS survey (separate undergraduate & graduate samples)
  - 1986-1987
  - 1989-1990
  - 1992-1993
  - 1995-1996
  - 1999-2000
  - 2003-2004
- Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS)
  - 1989-1990 (surveyed in 1992 & 1994)
  - 1995-1996 (surveyed in 1998 & 2001)
  - 2003-2004 (to be surveyed in 2006 & 2009)
- Baccalaureate & Beyond (B&B)
  - 1992-1993 (surveyed in 1994, 1997, & 2003)
  - 1999-2000 (surveyed in 2001)

# NPSAS:04 variables and sample

- 624 variables (undergraduate)
  - Student & family demographics
  - Student & family finances
  - Student academics (pre-college and college)
  - Student college financing
  - Student college experiences
  - Institutional characteristics
- Sample (undergraduate & graduate)
  - 1,360 PSE institutions
  - 101,000 students

# Data sources

- Student records from PSE institutions
- Student interviews (web-based or CATI)
- U.S. Department of Education
  - Central Processing System: financial aid records
  - National Student Loan Data System: federal loan and Pell Grant data
  - Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System: institutional characteristic data

# Limitations

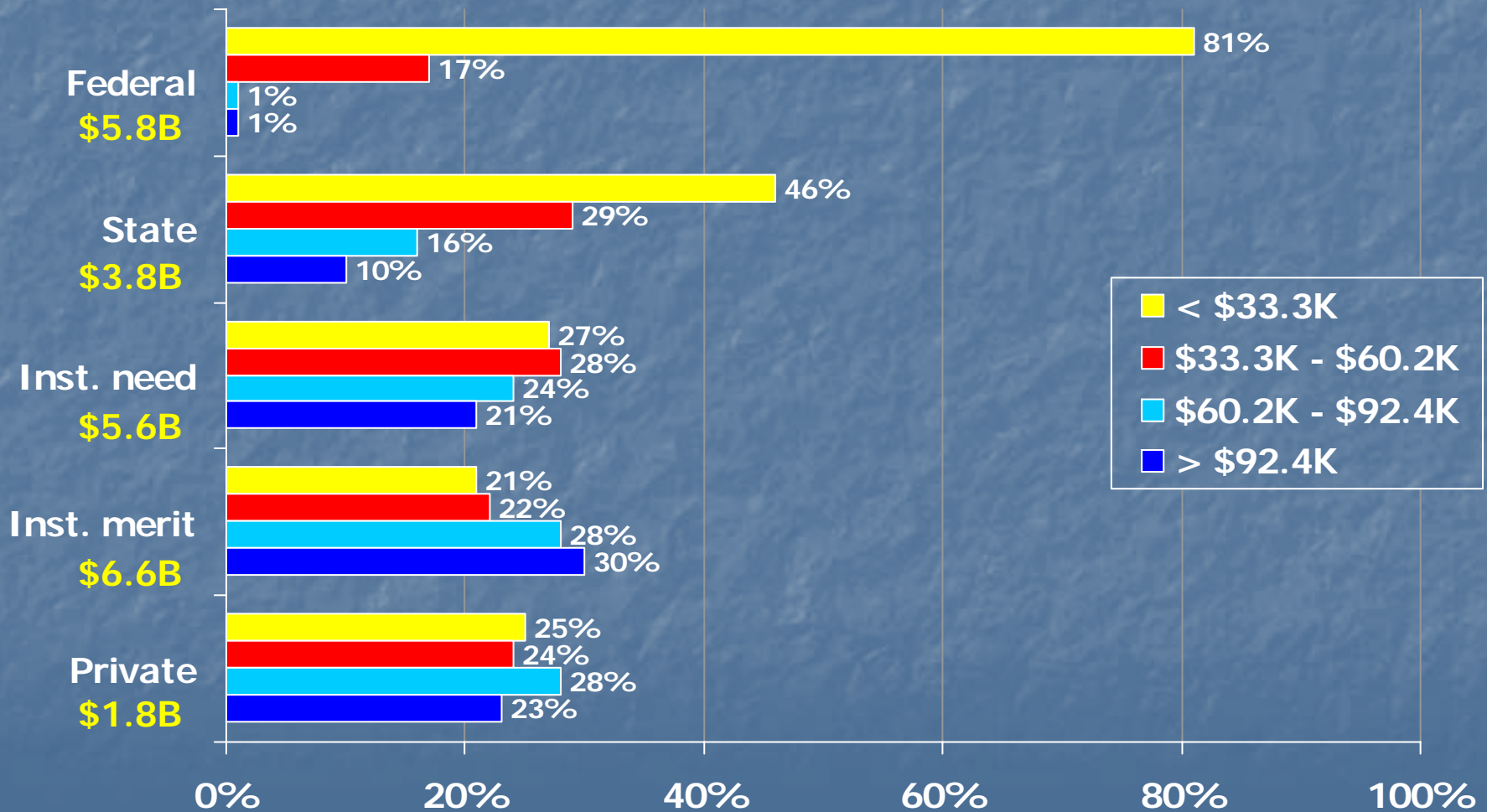
- Data are not institutionally-representative
- Data are not state-representative (with exception of 12 over-sampled states)
  - small cell sizes even for over-sampled states
- Some variables are not consistent across survey years

# Typical questions

- NPSAS
  - What types of institutions do students attend?
  - What prices – sticker and net – do students pay to attend college?
  - How much and what kind of financial aid do students receive?
- BPS
  - What are students' college enrollment patterns?
  - How does financial aid affect persistence?
- B&B
  - What are students' post-baccalaureate labor market experiences?
  - How does student loan debt relate to wages?

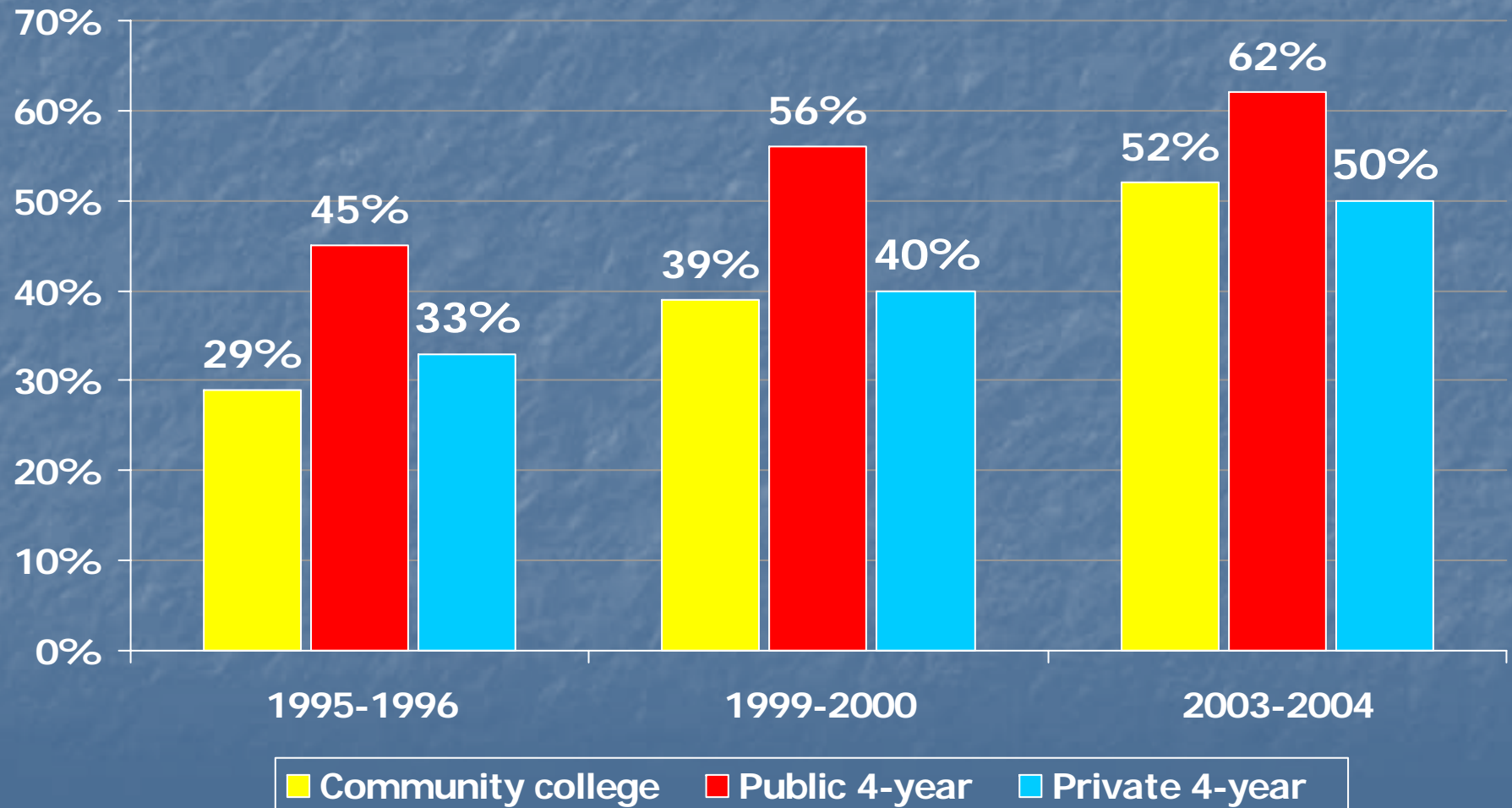
# Who gets grants?

## Distribution of grant \$ by income quartile



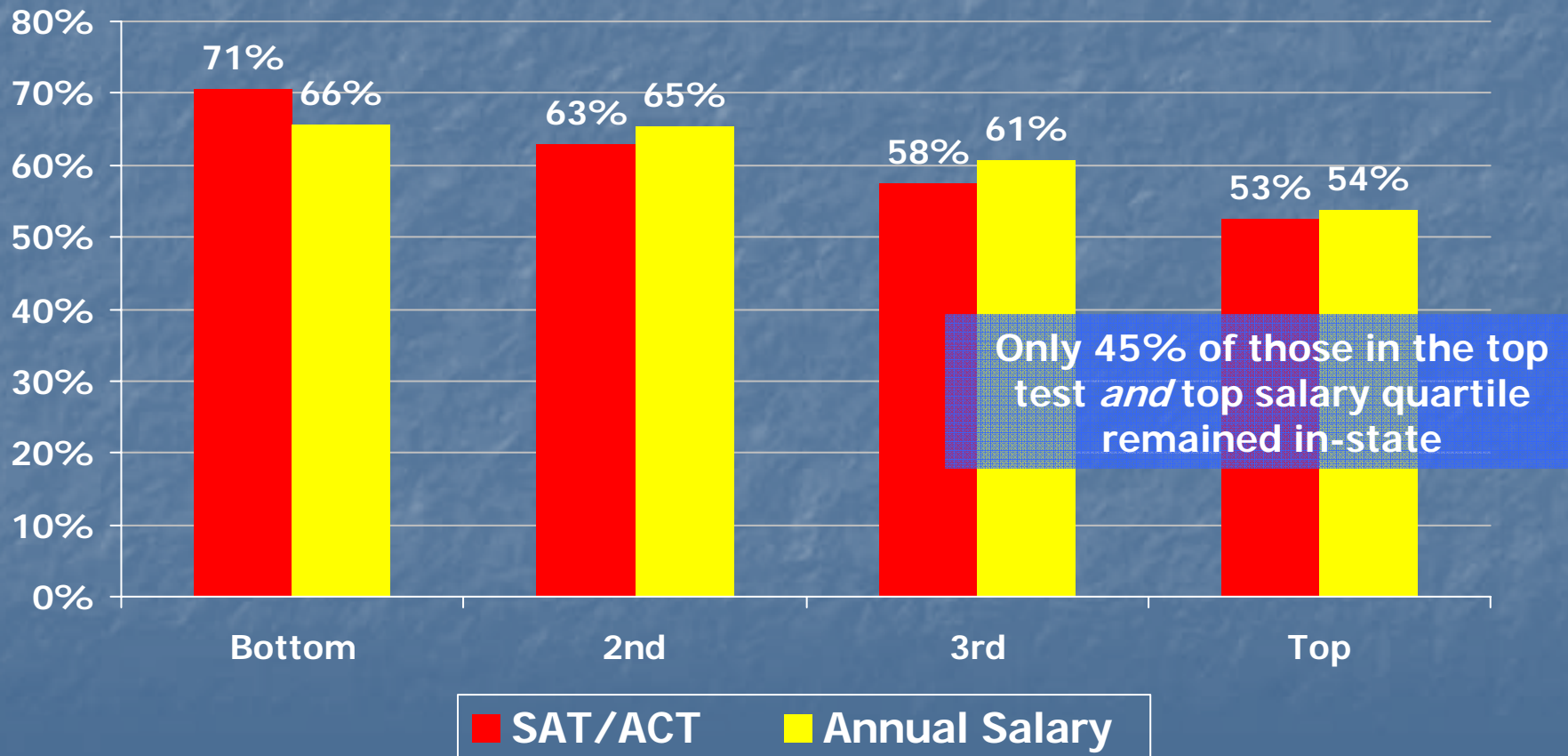
# Trends in institutional aid

% of dollars that are merit aid



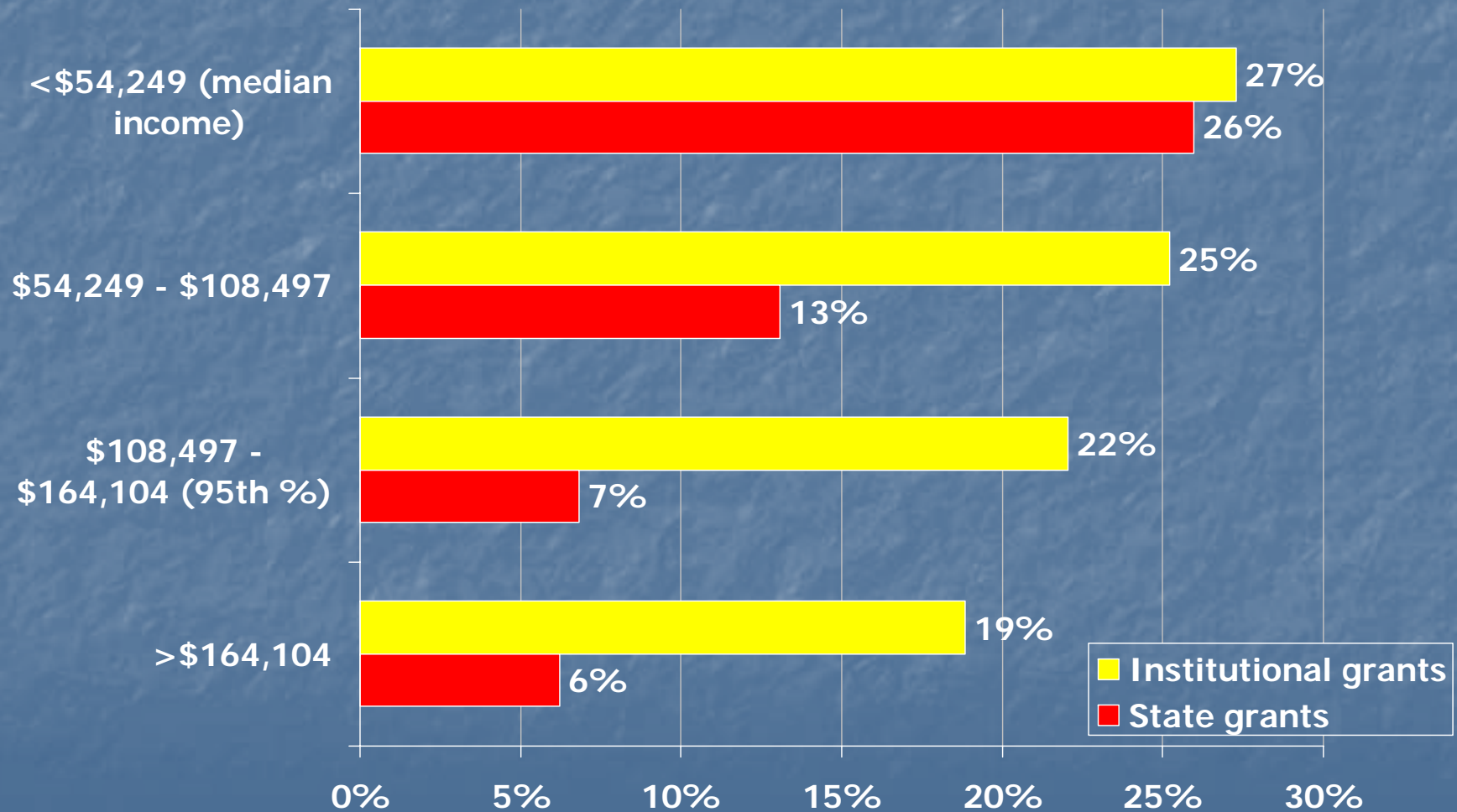
# Labor market mobility of the "best and brightest"

Baccalaureate class of 1993 (dependent students)  
Proportion of full-time workers remaining in-state in 1997 by quartile



# Interesting tidbits

% of students receiving grants, by income



# Interesting tidbits

% of students receiving grants, by income – full-time students in private inst.

