

32nd National Conference on Law & Higher Education

Improving the quality of student learning and the level of degree attainment through common degree requirements and assessment – background, drivers, methodologies and current steps.

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This Session

At the end of the session you will have an understanding of:

- **Challenges facing U.S. Higher education**
- **Some data indicators of the challenges**
- **How change can occur given the legal framework for higher education**
- **How similar challenges are being tackled in the European Higher Education Area and how this work is being scrutinised around the globe**
- **What ‘Tuning USA’ is and is doing**
- **How issues of quality might be approached**
- **Some conclusions reached by the presenters & debate**



Thesis: Think Globally; Act Locally

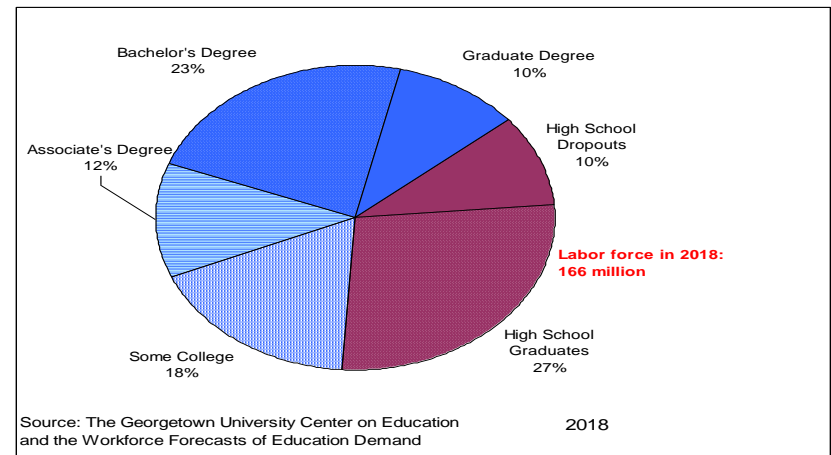
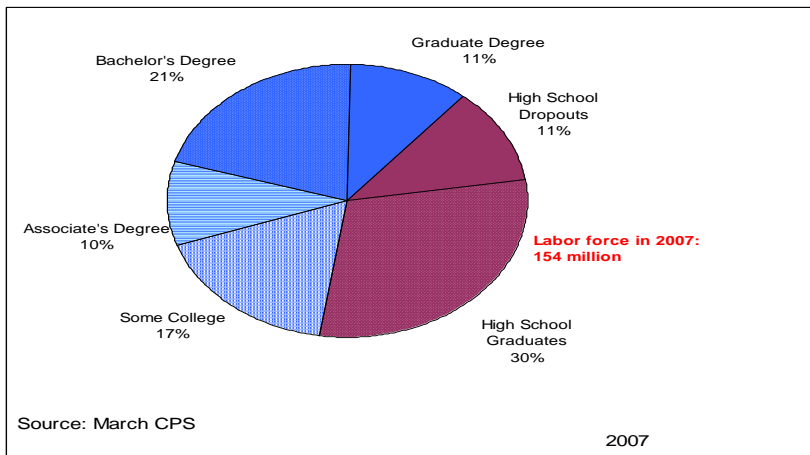
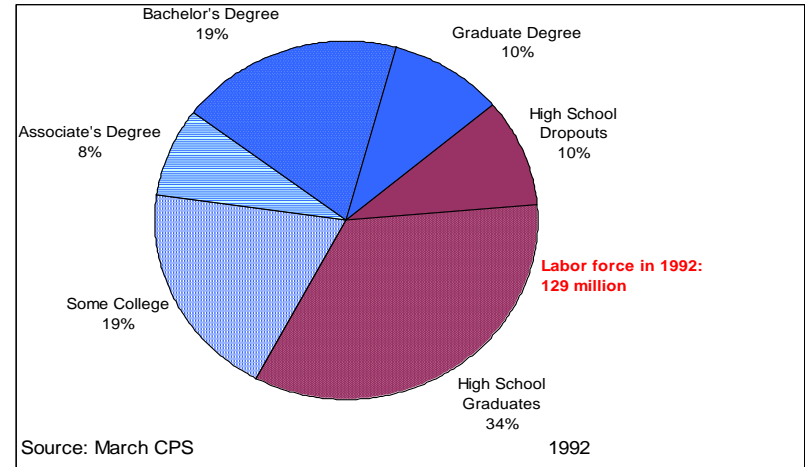
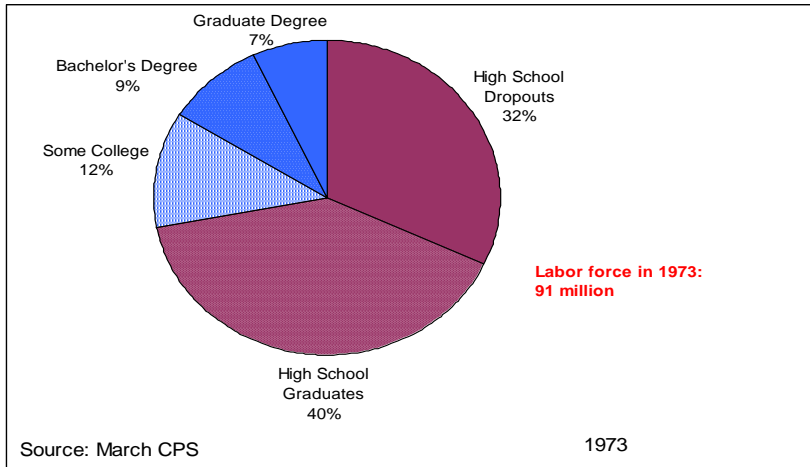
- **Similar Problems (Around the Globe)**
- **US should scrutinize, evaluate and learn from International Developments**
- **Students Matter – 21st Century Students Are Different than Their Forebears – Learning is Vital**
- **US higher education will benefit from change**
- **National/Transnational Approach**



US needs to increase degree attainment

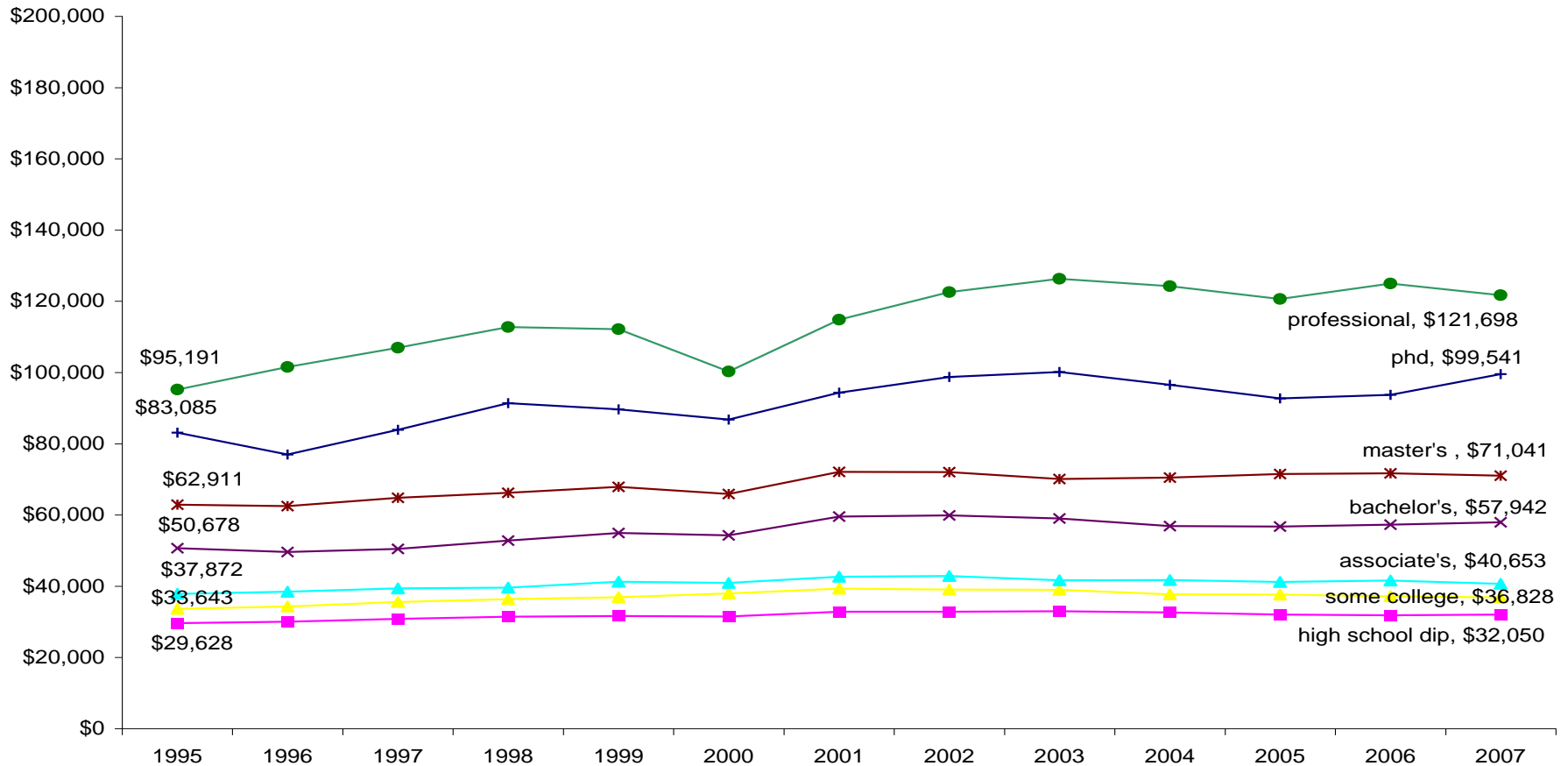
- **Labor market will require it**
- **The knowledge based economy is the future**
- **Global Competitiveness**
- **Significant higher education reform**

By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require some post secondary education and training



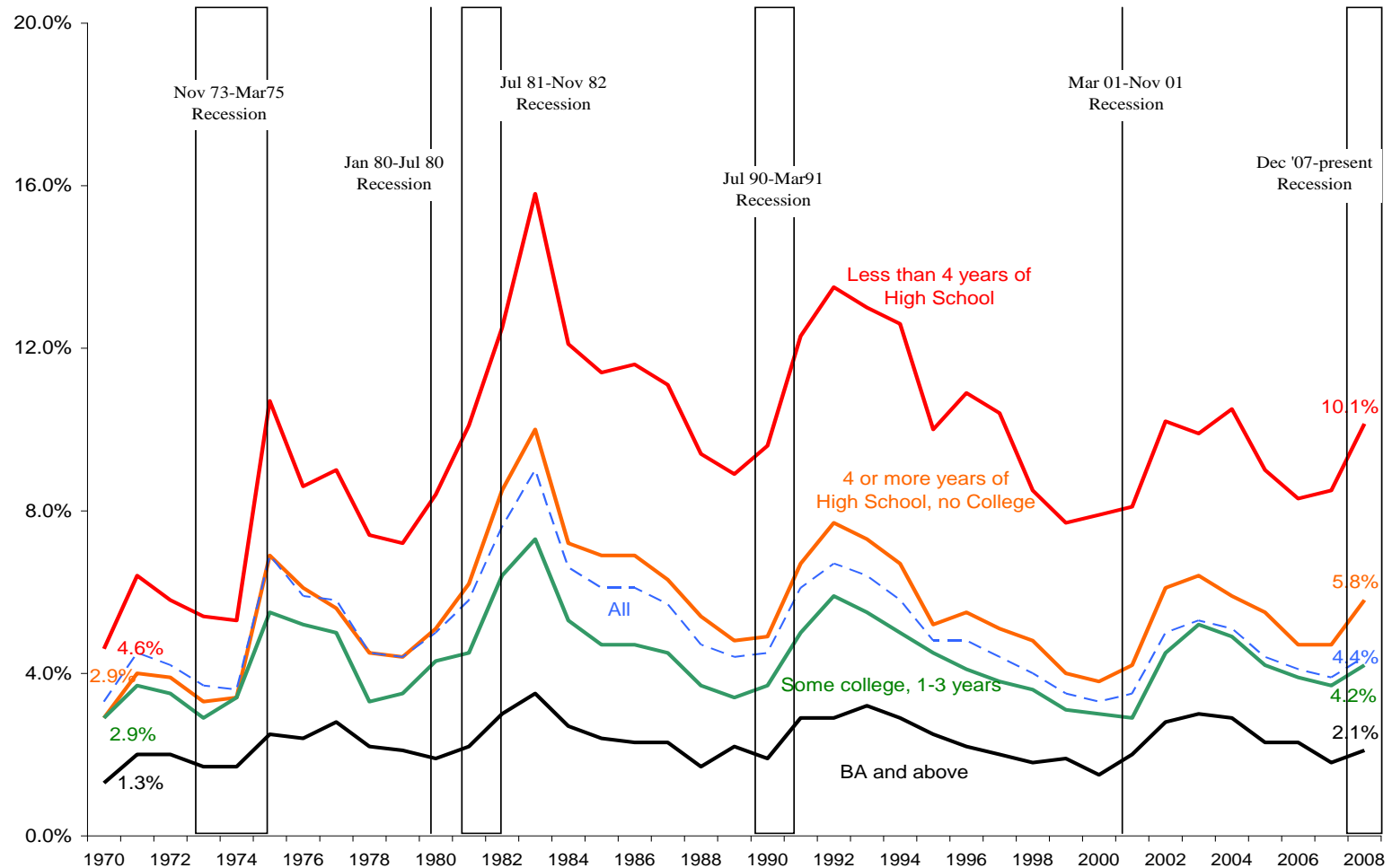
Real wages of Americans increase by education level

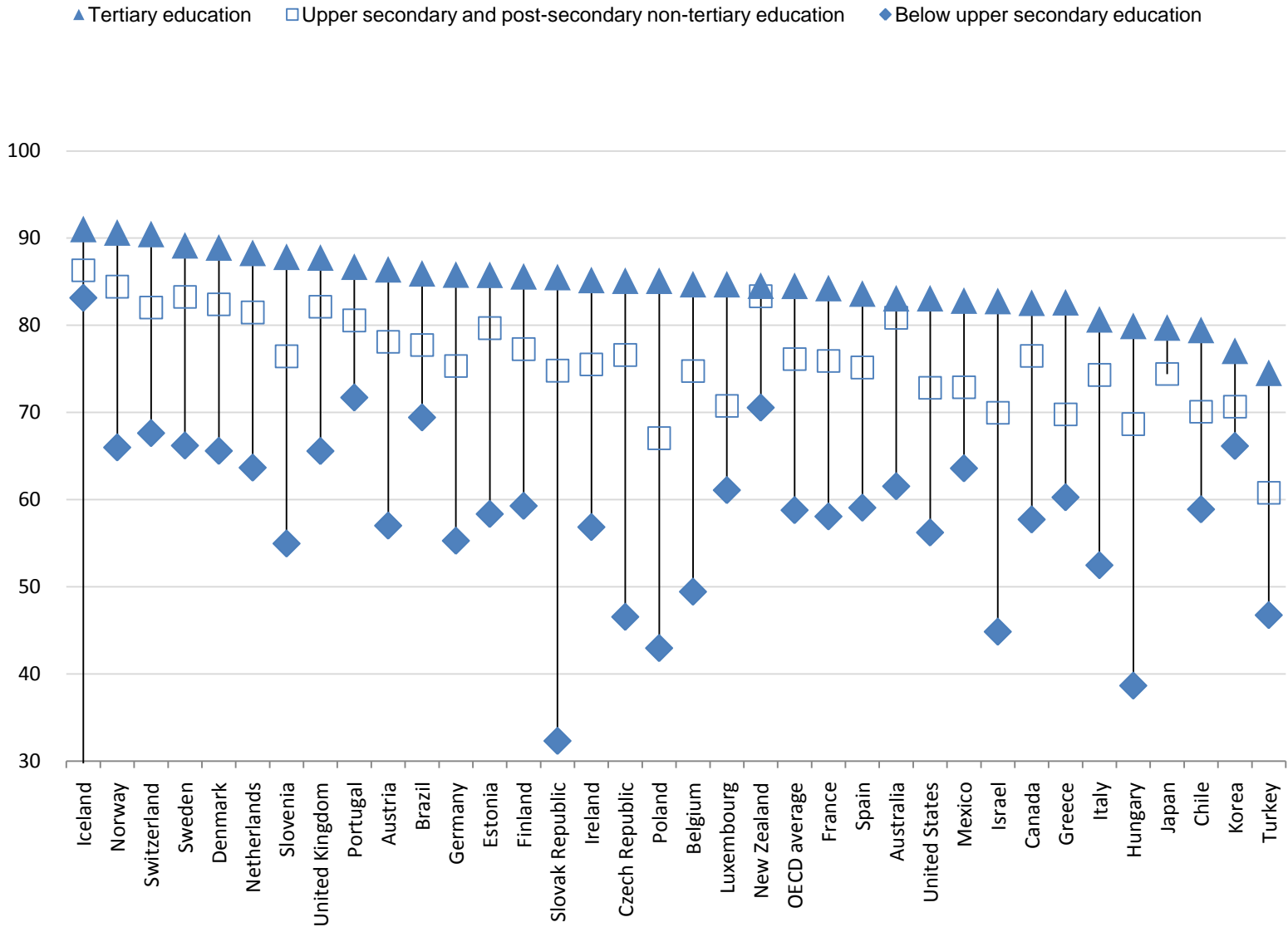
Real Wages of Americans increase by education level (ages 23-64)



Source: March CPS

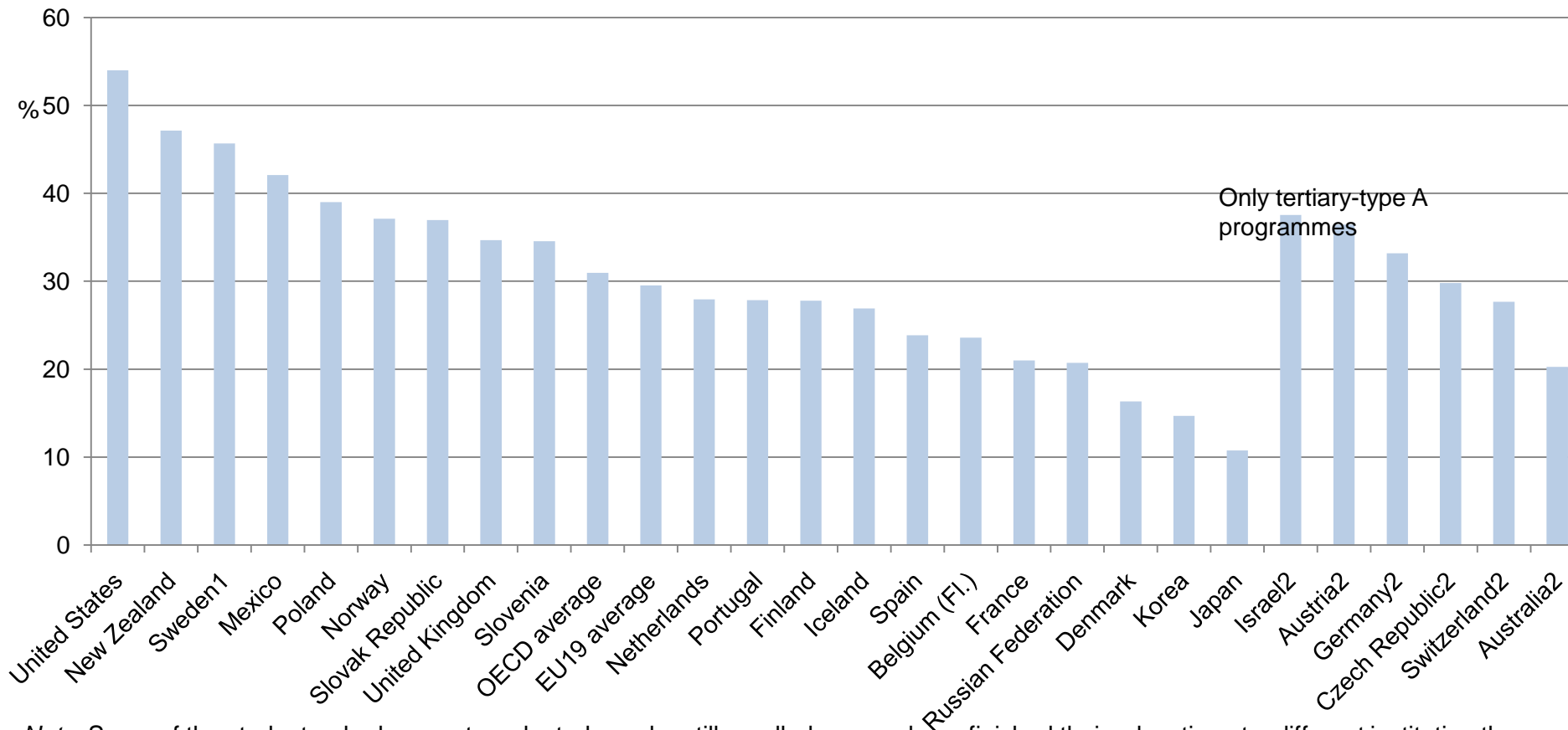
Least educated are most vulnerable in economic downturns (employment rates by education)





Countries are ranked in descending order of the employment rate of 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education.
 Source: OECD. Table A6.3a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010).

Chart A4.1. Proportion of students who enter tertiary education without graduating from at least a first degree at this level (2008)



Note: Some of the students who have not graduated may be still enrolled, or may have finished their education at a different institution than the one they started at, like in the United States.

1. Includes students entering single courses who may never intend to study all courses needed for a degree.

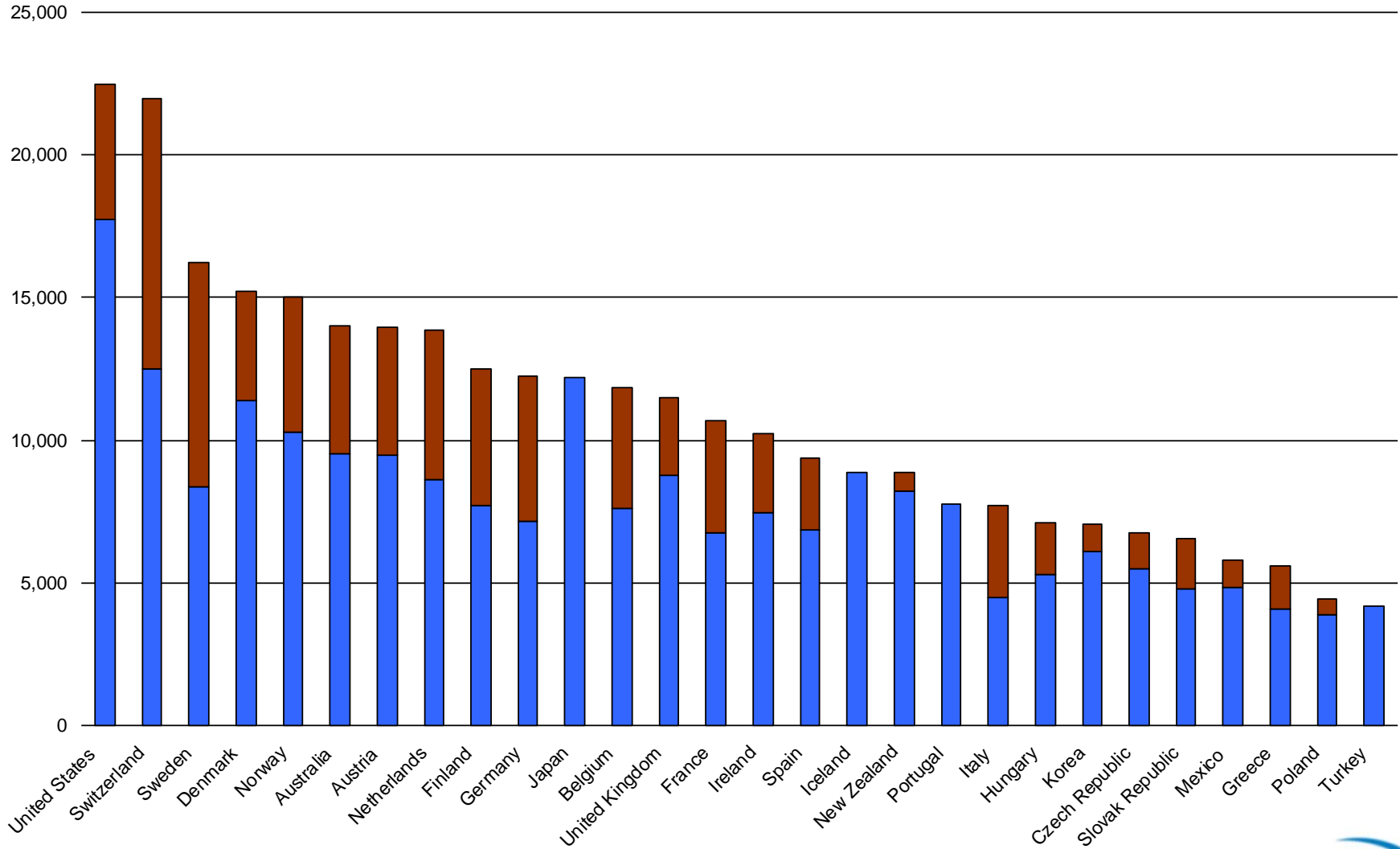
2. Tertiary-type A only.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the proportion of students who enter tertiary education without graduating from at least a first degree at this level.

Source: OECD. Table A4.1. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010).

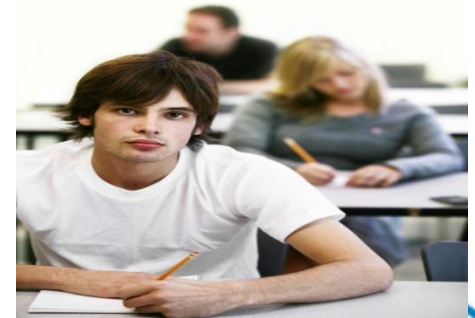
Expenditure Rates on Students

OECD Countries 2007



What Europe Faced

- **Started 1999 as “Bologna” or the European Higher Education Area (March 2010)**
- **Various action lines, including:**
 - **3 cycles (BA/MA/PhD)**
 - **Credits (ECTS – output/learning outcomes driven + workload)**
 - **Mobility (trans-national and vertical as well as horizontal, linked to the Lisbon Agenda)**
 - **Quality assurance (ENQA)**
 - **Lifelong Learning (LLL + RPL)**
 - **Students at the centre (all types)**
 - **QFs (Degree Profile)**



Parallels: US & Bologna



Why the comparison?

- **Bologna 47 states/USA 50 states**
- **Bologna no legal competence for higher education/USA little federal legal competence**
- **Bologna states saw the need for change/USA has a growing groundswell of a view that there is a need for change:**
 - Transparency (quality, accreditation, learning, reference points, costs, benefits)
 - Students (21st Century – cognitive skills – mode of study – aims – profile – “skills” [not “jobs”] – mobility [credits] - RPL)
- **Effect of recognizing a changed paradigm**
- **Can “soft law” achieve large scale change?**

Diverse and Complex Landscape of US higher ed.

- **Federal/National/Regional/State**
- **Categories of university - public (2 year, 4 year, doctoral), private (for profit, not for profit), religious affiliation, ODL, etc.**
- **Traditions:- tenure track, academic freedom, fee structures, sport, research, role of the law, etc.**

Changing the Landscape #1

U.S. Law:

- **Constitutional law**
- **Department of Education (....supplement and complement state and local government ...)**
- **Federal “scene changers”, for example:**
 - **GI Bill 1944**
 - **Higher Education Act 1965 (....restrictions on the use of federal funds....):**
 - **What is an “institute of higher education”?**
 - **What is the role of educational accrediting agencies?**
 - **What authority does the federal government have over the accrediting agencies?**
- **The power of funding.**

Changing the Landscape #2

U.S. Law continued:

- **What are the criteria for accrediting agency recognition?**
 - **Voluntary membership of HEIs**
 - **apply and enforce standards that “respect the stated mission of the HEI”**
 - **Assess whether the courses offered are of “sufficient quality” to achieve the mission**
 - **Institutional factors to be considered**
 - **Periodic review – of what?**

Why?



Tuning USA

What is Tuning and where did it come from:

- **It is and always has been a faculty led project across many disciplines that turned into a process**
- **It is not universally used or accepted in Europe, but**
- **It is now adopted as a key part of Bologna (learning outcomes, workload, assessment, learning, students etc), active learning outcomes, and**
- **It is now used or in pilot process in Latin America, Mexico, Australia, parts of the USA**
- **It is different from other learning outcome projects**
- **It is a living process and so changes, adapts, melds**
~~~"know, understand and be able to do"~~~

Tuning USA Pilot & beyond

The Pilot Project (March 2009 - August 2010):

- **3 States – Utah, Minnesota, Indiana**
- **6 disciplines & 20+ institutions across the whole sector (2 Year, 4 Year, Flagship)**

Tuning methodology in use –

- **4 way survey – general competencies & subject competencies**

Tuning 2 (November 2010 – November 2011):

- **Original states + some contiguous states e.g. Kentucky**
- **History “wider and deeper”**

Qualifications Framework

- **What is a Qualification Framework?**
 - **Value**
 - **Accountability**
 - **Transparency**
 - **Student Outcomes**
 - **Multiple pathway**
 - **Globalization**
 - **Quality**



Degree Profile to be piloted in the U.S.

- **What is the DP?**
- **How was it developed?**
- **What stage is it now at? [see: also copies available today]**
- **What has the reaction been to date?**
- **What happens next?**
- **What happens after that**

Conclusions

- (1) Change is inevitable**
- (2) Faculty can lead change through Tuning**
- (3) Global influences cannot be ignored**
- (4) US higher education still leads the world in some aspects e.g. research but also lags in others e.g. making the implicit, explicit**
- (5) The US is not alone in any of these matters**