Financing and Restructuring Doctoral Education in the Future

by

Ronald G. Ehrenberg
Cornell Higher Education Research Institute
www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri
Threats to Our Nation’s Doctoral Programs

• Current Economic Problems and Political Forces Facing Privates (and Publics)
• Pressures to Expand Undergraduate Access and Persistence
• Financial Problems of the Publics
• Changing Nature of Faculty Positions
• Implications of Above Forces
Current Economic Problems and Political Forces

• Falling Endowments and Annual Giving
• Increased Undergraduate Financial Need and Tuition Discounting
• Sense that our higher education system is failing
• Political pressure to raise spending on undergraduate financial aid
Unique Problems of Public Research Universities

• Declining Resource Base
• High Spending per student relative to other publics but most enroll relatively few Pell Grant recipients
• States have an incentive to under invest in public higher education, especially doctoral education, because of mobility of graduates
Changes in the Academic Labor Market

• Decline of Full-time Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty Shares

• Increasing Share of Faculty without doctoral degrees

• Leads to Reduced Attractiveness of Doctoral Study
Looking to the Future

• Need for Increased Federal Role
• Shared State/Federal Responsibility For the Publics
• Incentives for both publics and privates to spend more
• Institutional Efforts to Improve Performance of PhD programs building on CGS and Mellon studies
• Restructuring programs and how we measure their success