

# “Institutional research in South African Higher Education” – a response

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# Themes

1. IR grows up
2. Intersecting contexts
3. Lived experiences

# 1. IR grows up

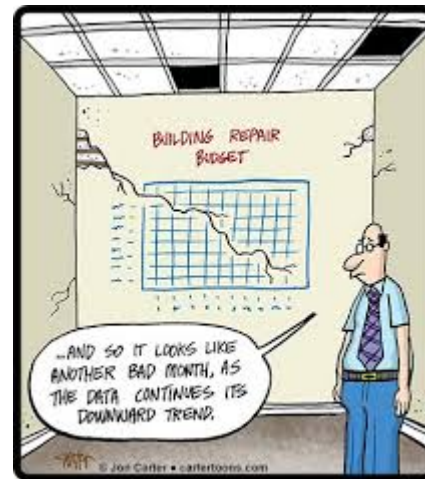
- Mirrors development trajectory in academic development:
  - Craft (tips)... find some numbers
  - Mainstreaming... data analysis for everybody to use
  - Coherence, integration...systemic approaches, joining the dots, no more adhocery

- Theory-based (like SOTL) - Terenzini and Volkwein: three levels of organisational intelligence

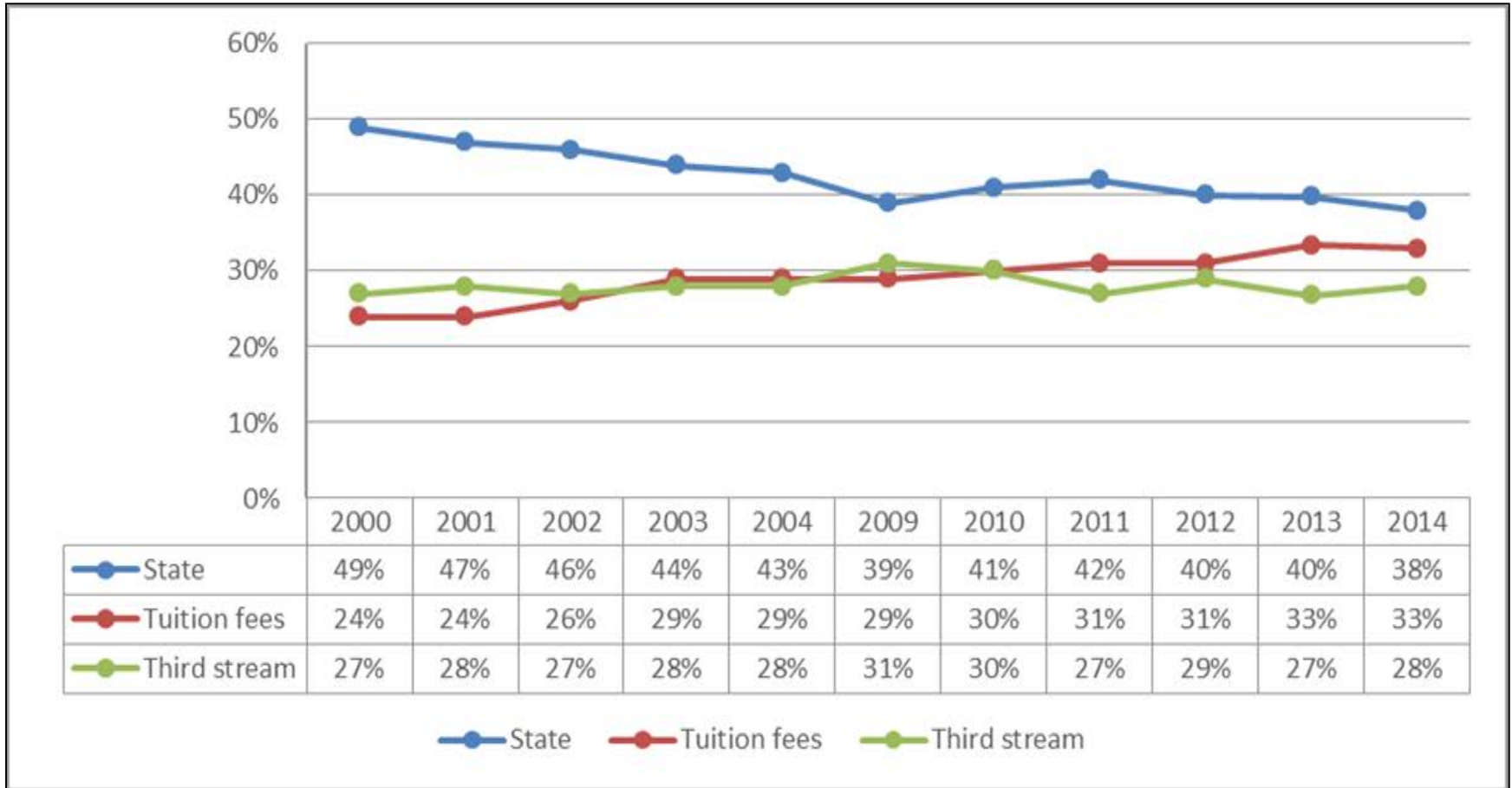


## 2. Intersecting contexts

- Context (international and national)
- What does it mean? Understanding complex forces
  - Transformation
  - Governance
  - Decolonisation

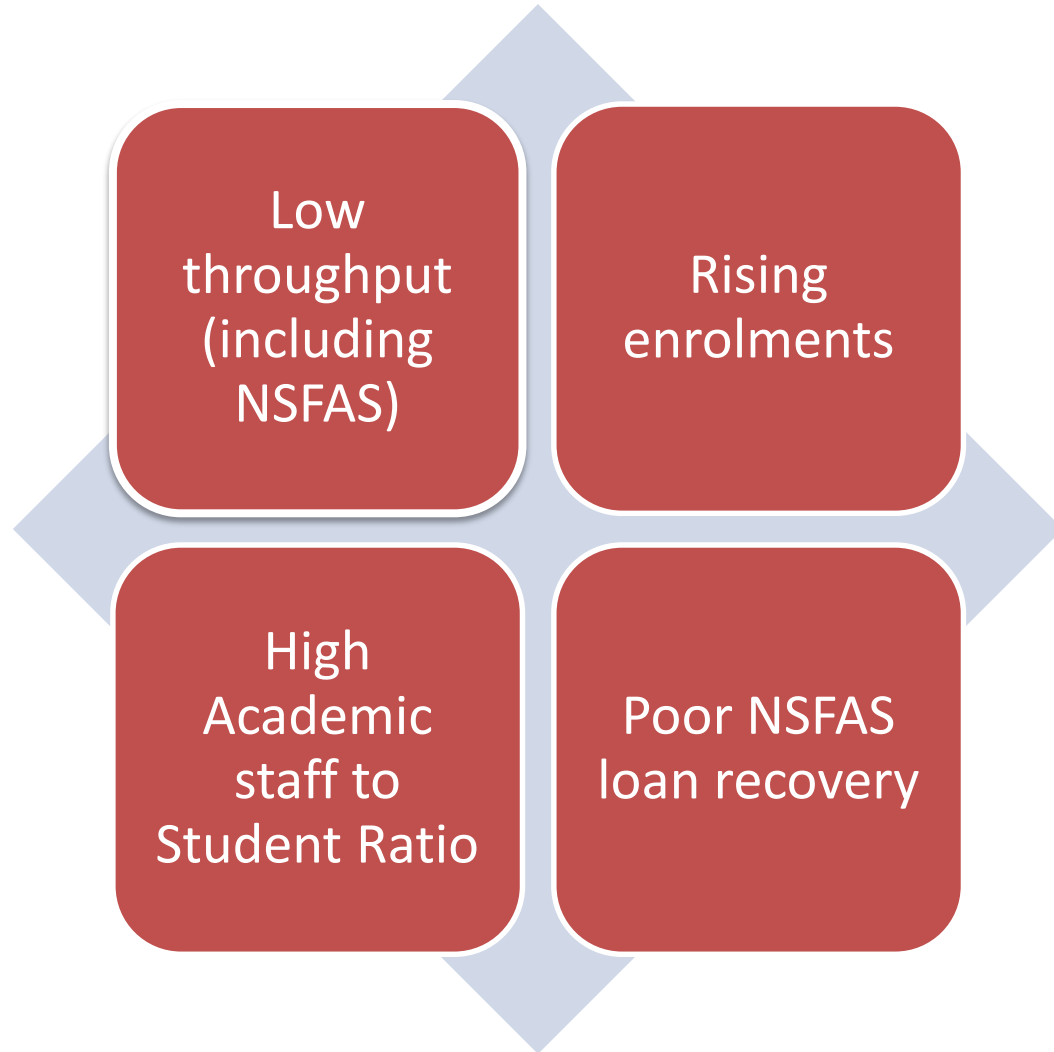


## Proportional disaggregation of institutional funding per source from 2000 to 2014



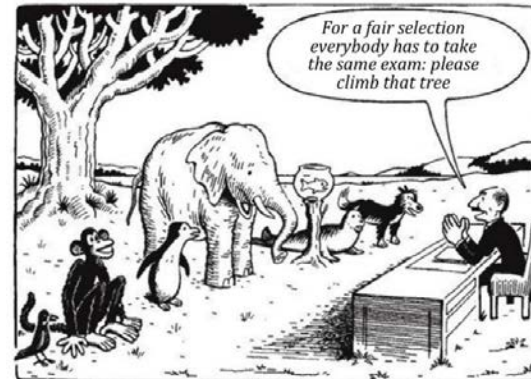
Source: Audited financial statements of the universities for the period 2000/01 to 2014/15. Pretoria: DHET

# Systemic inefficiencies in HE



# 3. Lived experiences

- Context, culture and environment – getting under the skin of the data
  - Academic staffing – numbers, expectations
  - Students in accommodation
  - Student political formations
  - Student funding - hunger



## Our Education System

*"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."*

*- Albert Einstein*



....

All of their time and space are foggy slum.  
So blot their maps with slums as big as doom.

Unless, governor, teacher, inspector, **institutional researcher**,  
This **dashboard** becomes their window and these windows  
That shut upon their lives like catacombs,  
Break O break open 'till they break the town  
And show the **students** green fields and make their world  
Run azure on gold sands, and let their tongues  
Run naked into books, the white and green leaves open  
History is theirs whose language is the sun

With apologies to Stephen Spender: *An elemental school classroom  
in a slum*

# Overall

- Welcome and timely
- Solid foundation for future learning about institutions, teaching and learning and research etc., what goes on in the “black box” (Malherbe-Fourie), and what forces will impact on it?
- IR – intelligence – understanding – predicting
- Current crisis – how will we use data to analyse the effects on students’ lives, staff lives, VCs lives, teaching and learning, postgraduates, next generations, relationship of universities to state

# Conclusion

- Remarkable achievements – reflect on where come from in HE and in the IR community
- Change in status of IR practitioners – join with QA colleagues, planning, funding, executive management
- 3 generations of development in IR
- New phase... inform systemic interventions in a nuanced and fully “intelligent” way that understands what’s under the skin, what’s brewing, what will assist positive change.