

Research on the Collaborative Mechanism Between the Team of College Ideological and Political Theory Teachers and the Counselors in Universities in the New Era

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Abstract: In the context of the new era, the quality of ideological and political work in higher education institutions is directly linked to the cultivation of talents who meet the needs of the nation and society. By strengthening such work, we can guide students in establishing a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values, foster their innovative spirit and practical abilities, and provide solid talent support for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. However, there remain several issues in the collaborative education efforts between these two teams, such as unclear responsibilities, inadequate communication, and a lack of resource sharing. Research on the collaborative mechanism between ideological and political theory course teachers and university counselors is of significant importance for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political work in higher education and promoting the well-rounded development of college students. This paper begins with the concepts and positioning of ideological and political theory teachers and counselors, explores the necessity, current status, and existing problems in the collaborative development of the two teams, and proposes optimization suggestions in line with the demands of the times.

Keywords: Ideological and political teachers; Counselors; Collaborative education

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1. Introduction

In 2021, the Central People's Government and the State Council jointly formulated and issued the *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in the New Era*. The document emphasizes the need to build a new pattern of jointly promoting ideological and political work and highlights the importance of constructing a team combining professional and part-time personnel. However, under the new era background, the information accessed by college students is increasingly complex and diverse, which brings new challenges to college talent cultivation. To address this challenge, various colleges and universities

need to promote the collaborative cooperation between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors. These two teams play a crucial role in college education. Although their work contents and role orientations are different, their common goal is to cultivate outstanding talents with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor. At present, as many colleges and universities actively implement the concept of “full-staff, whole-process, and all-round education,” they strive to promote the in-depth cooperation between these two core teams. Although some initial achievements have been made and the advantages of collaborative education have been demonstrated, there are still some problems. How to further strengthen the collaborative cooperation between these two teams, gather the maximum educational strength, and form an educational synergy is an important issue that needs to be solved urgently.

2. Overview of the concept of collaborative education between college ideological and political theory teachers and counselors

2.1. The concept and role of ideological and political theory teachers

As early as the founding of the People's Republic of China, ideological and political work was already carried out in higher education institutions. At that time, however, such work primarily focused on teaching and guiding students in the realm of ideology and had not yet developed into an independent academic discipline. Later, universities introduced courses on ideological and moral education, which were taught by specialized instructors. Students often referred to these instructors as “moral education teachers.” With the gradual refinement of the ideological and political course system in higher education, the importance of ideological and political education continued to grow^[1]. Students began to refer to the teachers of these courses as “two-course teachers,” with the “two courses” referring to Marxist theory and ideological and political education. To meet the demands of the evolving times, in 2005, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China adjusted the ideological and political theory course system and teaching materials. In the same year, the Ministry of Education established “Marxist Theory” as an independent first-level discipline and designated “Ideological and Political Education” as a second-level discipline under it^[2].

2.2. The concept and role of counselors

The university counselor system originated in the 1950s, established by drawing on the experience of the Soviet Union while adapting it to China's actual conditions. At that time, the state placed great emphasis on the ideological and political education of university students, viewing it as a crucial task related to the nation's future development and national destiny. The position of counselor thus emerged as an important force within higher education institutions. With the evolution of the times, the responsibilities of university counselors have continuously expanded and deepened. From initially focusing solely on students' ideological and political education, counselors have now evolved into holistic mentors responsible for fostering the healthy growth of students^[3].

It can be said that the primary duty of counselors is to care for students' development and promote their well-rounded growth. Specifically, the role and responsibilities of counselors encompass the following aspects: First, psychological counseling: paying attention to students' mental health, providing psychological consultation and support, and helping students address psychological issues encountered in their studies and daily lives. Second, life guidance: caring about students' living conditions, offering guidance on daily life, and assisting students in resolving difficulties and problems they face. Third, career planning: guiding students in career planning, providing employment guidance and services, and helping them smoothly integrate into society. Fourth, organization and coordination: organizing various student activities, coordinating resources

from different aspects, and creating a favorable environment and conditions for student growth.

3. The necessity of collaborative education between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors in universities under the new era

As discussed previously, there are distinct differences in the role positioning and responsibilities of university ideological and political theory teachers and counselors. Ideological and political theory teachers focus more on theoretical education and ideological guidance, while counselors emphasize practical operations and life guidance. This relationship of division of labor and cooperation contributes to achieving comprehensiveness and systematicity in university education. Simultaneously, both ideological and political theory teachers and counselors play indispensable roles in higher education.

3.1. Integrating educational resources to thoroughly implement the educational policy of fostering virtue and cultivating talents

Collaboration between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors can promote the integration of educational resources. Ideological and political theory teachers are primarily responsible for theoretical instruction in the classroom, whereas counselors handle the daily management of students. Through the collaboration of both parties, theoretical teaching and practical management resources can be better integrated, providing students with more comprehensive and systematic ideological and political education services ^[4].

The General Secretary emphasized that the effect of fostering virtue through education is an important criterion for testing school work. Therefore, higher education must take fostering virtue through education as its fundamental task and attach great importance to its status. To better complete this task, college ideological and political theory teachers and counselors need to work together and carry out collaborative education to more efficiently solve the problems of “what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them.” Only by focusing on collaborative education and making joint efforts can the effectiveness of fostering virtue through education be doubled ^[5].

3.2. Guiding students’ ideological development to enhance the depth and precision of education

In the context of the new era, China faces the impact of diverse cultures, varied schools of thought, and competing values, as well as profound cultural erosion and value export from Western forces. University students are at a critical stage of forming their worldview, outlook on life, and values, yet their ability to discern is still maturing. Therefore, university counselors and ideological and political theory teachers must collaborate closely, fully leveraging their respective educational strengths to cultivate students’ judgment and guide them in establishing correct principles. However, since some university counselors do not have a professional background in ideological and political education, their expertise in this field may be relatively limited, potentially affecting the effectiveness of ideological and political education for students. Furthermore, due to heavy daily workloads, they may focus more on routine management. On the other hand, while ideological and political theory teachers possess strong professional knowledge, their lack of understanding of individual student differences may lead to suboptimal teaching outcomes ^[6].

3.3. The essential path for the development of ideological and political theory teachers and counselors

Collaborative education between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors represents an essential

path for the development of both groups. In current ideological and political theory courses in higher education, large-class teaching models often involve students from diverse academic backgrounds. Ideological and political theory teachers are tasked with imparting Marxist knowledge, aiming to strengthen students' ambition, integrity, and confidence. However, this also results in significant teaching and research pressures for these teachers, limiting their understanding of individual students and contributing to the "three lows" phenomenon in classroom instruction: low attendance, low engagement, and low impact. In contrast, counselors, as a group closely connected with students, can gain in-depth insights into their psychological dynamics and ideological states, obtaining firsthand information. If counselors can share these resources with ideological and political theory teachers, the latter will be better equipped to understand students' actual ideological conditions and fundamental needs, thereby enhancing the relevance, appeal, engagement, and effectiveness of classroom teaching.

4. Current situation of the construction of a collaborative education mechanism between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors

4.1. Dual-teacher classroom

The key to achieving collaborative education between the two teams lies in establishing an effective collaborative working mechanism and promoting the integration of various educational forces. For instance, the "Dual-Teacher Classroom" project at Chongqing Normal University has successfully combined online and offline educational resources, facilitated in-depth cooperation between Ideological and Political Theory course teachers and counselors, and thereby enhanced the overall educational effectiveness. Under this model, Ideological and Political Theory course teachers and counselors jointly participate in ideological and political education. Through regular seminars and similar formats, the two teams exchange insights and experiences in a timely manner and collaboratively explore how to better foster the well-rounded development of students. These successful practices demonstrate that a robust working mechanism can effectively advance the collaboration between the two teams and improve the overall outcomes of ideological and political education. Simultaneously, it helps address issues such as "operating in isolation with insufficient collaboration" existing in some universities, thereby promoting the connotative development of higher education.

4.2. Cross-appointment

Beyond establishing mechanisms for position exchanges, encouraging cross-appointments between Ideological and Political Theory course teachers and counselors also serves as a vital measure to strengthen the collaborative education mechanism between the two teams. This model of cross-appointment not only alleviates the teaching pressure on Ideological and Political Theory course teachers and addresses the shortage of teaching staff but also enhances communication and cooperation between the two teams, thereby improving educational quality. For example, the "Part-Time Ideological and Political Theory Course Teacher Management Measures" implemented by Harbin Normal University is an excellent case in point. The university recruits part-time Ideological and Political Theory course teachers from counselors and ensures teaching quality through a "one-on-one pairing assistance" system. This model not only alleviates the shortage of teaching staff but also enhances the effectiveness of ideological and political education. Moreover, it improves the professional competence and teaching capabilities of counselors while strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of ideological and political education. Similarly, South China Agricultural University has established a mechanism for Ideological and Political Theory course teachers to serve concurrently as counselors. This model not only

enhances the synergy in education but also elevates the overall caliber of the ideological and political work faculty.

5. Problems and optimization of the construction of a collaborative education mechanism between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors

5.1. Analysis of problems in the construction of a collaborative education mechanism

5.1.1. Lack of overall coordination and leadership

Ideological and political theory teachers and counselors are important forces in college education and belong to different organizational systems, respectively. Ideological and political theory teachers belong to scientific research and teaching institutions such as the School of Marxism, while counselors are managed by the Student Affairs Department and various colleges. This division of labor has its advantages: it allows both parties to focus more on their own work areas and improve their professionalization level. However, this mechanism also has obvious shortcomings. The two parties belong to different departments and lack a unified leadership and coordination mechanism, leading to the situation of working independently when carrying out work, making it difficult to form effective cooperation. This not only restricts the exertion of synergy between the two parties in talent cultivation but also is not conducive to colleges and universities' comprehensive promotion of ideological and political education work. Therefore, it is necessary to further strengthen the communication and collaboration between the two parties and establish a sound leadership and coordination mechanism to better give play to their important roles in college ideological and political education work.

5.1.2. Poor collaborative education evaluation mechanism

The primary mission of higher education institutions is to enhance talent cultivation capabilities, which represents the shared core responsibility of both ideological and political theory teachers and counselors. Therefore, when evaluating students, ideological and political theory teachers should not focus solely on students' mastery of theoretical knowledge, nor should counselors rely exclusively on students' daily behavioral performance for assessment. Evaluation criteria need to be coordinated and aligned to ensure accuracy and fairness. Currently, ideological and political theory teachers primarily assess students through regular assignments and final examination results, while counselors evaluate students for awards and honors based on their daily conduct. The inconsistency in evaluation standards between these two teams necessitates further refinement of the assessment mechanism to better serve the core objective of talent cultivation.

5.1.3. Lack of incentive mechanism

To ensure the smooth progress of collaborative work between the two teams, a comprehensive support system must be established. However, some universities still face challenges in this regard. For example, limited funding fails to meet the needs of teaching, research, and daily operations arising from collaboration between the two teams; conditions such as office space, hardware equipment, and library resources require improvement; and a lack of incentive mechanisms fails to stimulate the enthusiasm of both teams for collaborative education. Moreover, many higher education institutions have not yet formulated or implemented relevant systems addressing career development, promotion, or position allowances specifically for the collaborative education process involving both teams. This results in insufficient motivation for collaborative education, making it difficult to advance such efforts in depth.

5.2. Optimization suggestions for the collaborative education mechanism

5.2.1. Strengthening organizational leadership and stabilizing the direction of collaboration

It is necessary to optimize the organizational structure to ensure collaborative development. Under the unified leadership of the Party and the country, all forces should cooperate closely to form synergy. The development of higher education cannot be separated from the leadership of the Party. College Party committees should strengthen the guidance on ideological and political work to ensure the smooth progress of the construction of the main channel and main position. To solve the dichotomous mechanism contradiction between ideological and political theory teachers and counselors, colleges and universities should start from top-level design, break the information barriers between departments, and realize resource sharing. A university-level leader can be designated to be specifically responsible for the collaborative education work of the two teams, or the strategy of mutual concurrent leadership between the Student Affairs Department and the School of Marxism can be implemented to improve management efficiency.

5.2.2. Implementing multi-dimensional assessment and refining the evaluation mechanism

The assessment and evaluation mechanism for students needs to be improved. This mechanism should not only focus on the mastery of theoretical knowledge but also pay attention to students' practical performance. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the quantitative classroom assessments conducted by ideological and political theory course teachers with the qualitative daily evaluations performed by counselors, thereby gaining a comprehensive understanding of students' performance in both theory and practice. Furthermore, the assessment and evaluation mechanism for both ideological and political theory course teachers and counselors requires refinement. To enhance the effectiveness of their collaborative education efforts, a scientific assessment and evaluation system should be developed. This system should include quantifiable indicators for collaborative education work to enable regular evaluation. At the same time, the daily ideological and political education work of teachers—such as their participation in campus cultural activities, social practices, and volunteer services—should be incorporated into the assessment scope. Clear incentives should also be established for counselors who participate in activities such as classroom discussions in ideological and political theory courses and applications for research projects, to encourage their more active involvement in collaborative education.

5.2.3. Increasing support efforts and establishing an effective incentive mechanism

To strengthen the synergy between ideological and political theory course teachers and counselors, policy support and incentive mechanisms are indispensable. By implementing a series of support and incentive measures, the enthusiasm of both groups for collaborative education can be stimulated, ensuring long-term and effective cooperation. First, a comprehensive support mechanism must be established to provide the necessary backing for the collaborative education efforts of the two groups. This includes offering ample resources and platforms to ideological and political theory course teachers and counselors, ensuring they can carry out their work smoothly. Simultaneously, communication between the two groups should be seamless to avoid information gaps or misunderstandings. Second, implementing incentives and guidance is equally important. Through reasonable reward mechanisms, the enthusiasm and creativity of ideological and political theory course teachers and counselors can be stimulated. For example, individuals or teams who excel in collaborative education work could be recognized and rewarded, setting a model to encourage others to learn from them. Additionally, providing promotion opportunities and improving compensation can enhance their motivation and drive. Furthermore, optimizing development pathways is a crucial measure to strengthen the synergy between the two groups.

6. Conclusion

Under the context of the new era, collaborative education between the team of ideological and political theory course teachers and the team of counselors in universities holds significant practical importance. To address the current challenges, it is essential to further strengthen organizational leadership and maintain the direction of collaboration, implement diversified assessment mechanisms to improve the evaluation system, and enhance support efforts to establish effective incentive mechanisms. By doing so, an efficient collaborative framework can be constructed. This will help improve the effectiveness of ideological and political work in higher education institutions, promote the well-rounded development of university students, and provide robust assurance for cultivating outstanding talents who develop comprehensively in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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