

The “Foshan University Model” of Empowering Rural Revitalization with United Front Resources in Universities and Colleges under the “Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project”

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Abstract: Taking Foshan University’s collaboration with Jieyang City’s Provincial Rural Science and Technology Commissioners as a case study, this paper explores the “Foshan University Model” of empowering rural revitalization through university-united front resources under the “Hundred-Thousand-Ten Thousand Project.” The model focuses on five key aspects: Party-building leadership, targeted collaboration, technological empowerment, talent cultivation, and institutional innovation. By establishing a comprehensive united front framework, it leverages universities’ strengths in talent development, technological expertise, and cultural resources to provide robust scientific support and talent pipelines for Jieyang’s rural revitalization. The research demonstrates that the “Foshan University Model” serves as an effective practice of university-united front resources in rural development, carrying significant theoretical value and practical implications.

Keywords: United Front resources; Rural science and technology commissioners; Foshan University; Jieyang City

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1. Introduction

Guangdong Province’s “High-Quality Development Project for Hundreds of Counties, Thousands of Towns, and Tens of Thousands of Villages” serves as a pivotal strategic initiative to drive coordinated urban-rural development, addressing challenges such as underdeveloped county economies and lagging township-village growth. As rural revitalization emerges as a critical pathway to achieving common prosperity, it demands collaborative efforts from multiple stakeholders. The *2025 Rural Comprehensive Revitalization Plan (2024–2027)* specifically targets economic stagnation in counties and insufficient development capacity at the township level. This project not only responds to national strategies with localized adaptations but also creates urgent demands for resource integration, intellectual support, and institutional innovation. The 2024

Guidelines for High-Quality Development of University United Front Work particularly emphasize “guiding united front members to leverage their professional expertise in rural revitalization,” providing policy foundations for Foshan University to integrate united front resources and empower rural development.

The establishment of a comprehensive united front framework in higher education institutions stems from the inherent requirements of upholding the Party’s overall leadership, addresses practical needs for enhancing governance efficiency in united front work, and aligns with universities’ fundamental mission of moral cultivation and talent development. This constitutes an essential component of effective united front work in universities during the new era ^[1]. Universities serve as pivotal platforms for national strategic planning and hubs for cultivating high-end think tank talents, making them crucial domains for united front initiatives ^[2]. As gathering places for non-Party intellectuals, universities form the source of talent selection for non-Party representatives in united front efforts ^[3]. As a regional applied university, Foshan University has actively responded to Guangdong Province’s “Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project” initiative. By leveraging its strengths in talent development, technological innovation, and cultural resources through the United Front system, the university has pioneered a distinctive “Foshan Model” for empowering rural revitalization via its “University United Front Resources Empowerment Model.” Through its United Front Department, the institution has established a “University-Local Collaboration Platform” that integrates multidisciplinary resources across various fields. The “sectoral advantages” of democratic political parties further enable precise alignment with rural needs. Over recent years, Foshan University has partnered with Jieyang City, utilizing the professional expertise, social networks, and intellectual resources of its United Front members to explore practical solutions in industrial upgrading, cultural revitalization, and talent cultivation. This collaboration has initially formed an innovative model for university United Front resources to drive rural development. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the operational mechanisms, implementation outcomes, and promotion potential of this model, offering theoretical support and practical insights for the “Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project” to leverage university United Front resources in regional development.

2. Theoretical basis of rural revitalization empowered by united front resources in colleges and universities

The Triple Helix Theory, proposed by American scholars Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff, explains the interaction among governments, universities, and industries in innovation systems. This theory posits that during the knowledge economy era, these three entities—government, academia, and industry—interact to form a tripartite helix structure for continuous innovation. Each entity demonstrates the capabilities of the other two while maintaining its original identity. Within this model, governments provide policy support and institutional safeguards; universities cultivate talent and drive scientific research; industries apply innovations and meet market demands. The synergy among these three components creates a virtuous cycle of an innovation ecosystem, propelling knowledge creation, dissemination, and application while fostering socioeconomic development.

The Triple Helix Theory provides crucial theoretical guidance for empowering rural revitalization through university united front resources. In implementing the rural revitalization strategy, collaborative cooperation among governments, universities, and rural industries is essential. University united fronts can serve as a bridge and link to facilitate communication and collaboration among these stakeholders, forming

an integrated rural revitalization model that combines government support, academic research, industry development, and practical application.

3. The practical background of Foshan University's cooperation with rural science and technology commissioners in Jieyang City

Since 2023, the Communist Youth League Committee of Guangdong Province has closely followed the provincial Party committee's "Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project" deployment requirements. By fully leveraging the role of young talents in higher education institutions, it has upgraded the "Three Rural Outreach" social practice activities for college and vocational students in Guangdong. The innovative implementation of the "Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project" task force action for young college students has empowered university youth to promote high-quality development across counties, towns, and villages throughout the province. Against this backdrop, Foshan University actively responded to Guangdong's "Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project" initiative. By harnessing the talent, technological, and cultural strengths of its united front system, the university has precisely aligned with Jieyang City's rural revitalization needs through dispatching rural science and technology commissioners. This effort has pioneered the "Foshan University Model" for empowering rural revitalization through university united front resources.

3.1. Current situation and demand of rural development in Jieyang City

Located in southeastern Guangdong Province, Jieyang City is a quintessential agricultural hub. In recent years, as the anti-poverty campaign intensified, the city has actively leveraged technological resources to boost farmers' incomes and prosperity. However, rural development in Jieyang still faces multiple challenges, including a monotonous agricultural structure, low scientific literacy among farmers, low value-added of agricultural products, and underdeveloped rural infrastructure.

Jieyang City's agriculture is primarily based on crop cultivation and animal husbandry, with specialty industries like partridge farming and lion-headed goose breeding playing significant roles in the local economy. However, these sectors face technological bottlenecks and market competition pressures. For instance, issues such as disease prevention, feed formulation, and breeding environment in partridge farming have hindered further industry development. Lion-headed goose breeding also encounters challenges in disease control, breed improvement, and farming techniques. To promote high-quality development of rural industries in Jieyang City, the municipal government actively seeks collaboration with universities, aiming to leverage their talent and technological advantages to address technical challenges in rural development and facilitate agricultural industrial transformation. Since 2024, the Jieyang Municipal Party Committee and Government have prioritized the work of rural science and technology commissioners, actively promoting university-community partnerships to provide technological support and talent resources for rural revitalization.

3.2. Service orientation and foundation of united front work in Foshan University

As a vital component of China's talent pool, non-Party intellectuals in higher education institutions serve as the primary focus of university-level united front work. They act as crucial bearers and evaluators of the effectiveness of such initiatives, while also constituting vital resources for their development^[4]. The digital-intelligent transformation of united front work among these scholars will inevitably evolve alongside

practical advancements. Given their unique demographic characteristics and operational challenges, the deep integration of digital technologies has opened new pathways to enhance the efficiency of united front efforts^[5].

As a regional applied university, Foshan University adheres to the educational philosophy of “rooted in local communities, serving local needs, and leading regional development.” It consistently prioritizes supporting local socioeconomic progress as its core mission. Embracing the principle of “meeting regional demands with institutional capabilities,” the university emphasizes localized services and actively strengthens regular collaboration mechanisms between academia, local governments, and enterprises. In recent years, it has mobilized United Front members to participate in rural revitalization initiatives through various channels, including rural science and technology commissioners, expert service teams, and technical training programs, providing technological support and intellectual resources for rural development. The university’s United Front work practices focus on building a distinctive brand matrix characterized by “ideological guidance + professional expertise + practical implementation.” This approach deeply integrates United Front initiatives into talent cultivation, scientific research, and social services across all operational chains. By leveraging modern technologies like digital management systems, it has established a dual-track operation model combining “online community co-construction + offline facility coordination,” highlighting how brand-building drives innovation in operational mechanisms and promotes connotative development^[1].

4. The core content and implementation path of “Foshan University model”

4.1. Party building leadership: Strengthening organizational guarantee and political guidance

Foshan University has established a working mechanism featuring unified Party committee leadership, coordinated coordination by the United Front Work Department, and implementation by relevant colleges, forming a collaborative framework with vertical alignment and horizontal coordination. The College of Animal Science and Technology adheres to Party building principles, integrating Party work with scientific services. The college’s Party committee emphasizes ideological education for rural science and technology commissioners, while faculty Party branches focus on leveraging the vanguard role of Party member commissioners. Through leading by example, these members inspire broader scientific personnel to actively engage in rural revitalization initiatives. By having Party member experts take the lead in practicing the university’s educational philosophy of “rooting in industries, serving industries, and guiding industries,” they fully demonstrate the exemplary role of Party members, providing strong political support for rural revitalization.

4.2. Precision docking: Targeted service and demand orientation

In response to the provincial Department of Science and Technology’s call for implementing the “Hundred, Thousand, Ten Thousand Project” through new rounds of key rural science and technology commissioner assignments (2024–2026), our college’s Party Committee conducted field visits to Qianzhan, Chigang, Xinen, and Longtan Towns in Jieyang City. During these inspections, they surveyed livestock farming operations including stone sheep, water buffalo, pigs, and partridges. The team held discussions with local support teams, farm managers, business leaders, and animal health inspectors to explore technological collaboration opportunities. They also engaged with local livestock enterprises regarding graduate recruitment needs, conducting market research to identify quality employment prospects. Leveraging Jieyang’s industrial development demands and Foshan University’s academic strengths, the college has dispatched politically

conscious, professionally competent commissioners with strong service orientation. These specialists have formed specialized teams to support distinctive agricultural industries across different townships in Jieyang.

4.3. Technology empowerment: Industry-university-research collaboration and achievement transformation

The team of rural science and technology commissioners from Foshan University has conducted a series of technical breakthroughs and innovative research to address technological challenges in the development of characteristic industries in Jieyang City. For instance, regarding disease prevention and control in partridge farming, the team proposed a comprehensive closed-loop ecological breeding solution encompassing “source reduction, process control, and end-of-pipe utilization.” This not only effectively resolved frequent respiratory and intestinal diseases but also established a green partridge breeding brand, enhancing the overall competitiveness of enterprises. The Foshan University team actively promotes the transformation and application of research achievements in Jieyang City through technology transfer and technical services. A notable example is their unveiling ceremony for the “Foshan University Graduate Training Demonstration Base” at Jixian Jizhan Breeding Company in Jieyang County, facilitating the practical application of scientific research outcomes in enterprises.

4.4. Talent training: Talent cultivation and school-local cooperation

The university has established long-term stable partnerships with the Jieyang Municipal Government and enterprises through joint research institutions, collaborative talent development programs, and scientific collaborations, effectively promoting resource sharing and complementary advantages between academia and local communities. For instance, the university’s College of Agriculture and Animal Science has partnered with Jinhe Town Government in Jieyang County and related enterprises, leveraging the professional expertise from the “Guangdong Provincial Key Laboratory of Animal Molecular Design and Precision Breeding” to address urgent technical challenges faced by businesses. Meanwhile, science and technology commissioners are guiding outstanding students in connecting with enterprises, cultivating practical professionals who meet societal needs while encouraging local students to participate in hometown development. The College of Animal Science held an unveiling ceremony for the “Foshan University Graduate Training Demonstration Base” at Jizhan Breeding Company in Jieyang County, providing a practical platform for graduate students while nurturing high-quality technical talents for enterprises. This collaborative talent cultivation model not only enhances graduate students’ practical skills but also offers enterprises technical support and talent reserves.

4.5. Mechanism innovation: Multi-stakeholder collaboration and long-term development

In advancing rural revitalization in Jieyang City, the team of science and technology commissioners has established an integrated “government-industry-academia-research-application” collaboration mechanism. This framework fosters a collaborative innovation ecosystem led by government guidance, supported by universities, driven by enterprises, and engaged by farmers. For instance, six municipal-level local standards for the livestock industry jointly developed by Jieyang Animal Health Supervision Institute, Foshan University, Jieyang University, Guangdong Academy of Agricultural Sciences Animal Health Research Institute, and Huilai County Animal Health Supervision Institute successfully passed the 2025 municipal agricultural standard evaluation meeting. These standards provide robust technical support for

the high-quality development of Jieyang's animal husbandry sector and the agricultural industries in eastern Guangdong, while offering strategic direction for rural revitalization and technology-assisted farming initiatives—a testament to the success of this integrated mechanism. Through regular follow-ups, technical guidance, and updates, the commissioners ensure sustained and effective technological services, establishing a long-term service system. For example, commissioners stationed in Jinhe Town, Jieyang's western district, regularly coordinate with local officials, resident assistance teams, and the Jieyang Animal Health Supervision Institute to promptly resolve technical challenges in industrial development.

5. Conclusion

Foshan University emphasizes its distinctive role in serving local development through deepening regular collaboration mechanisms with regional partners. Leveraging its national first-class program (Animal Medicine) and provincial first-class program (Animal Science), the university dispatches technology commissioners to provide robust technical support for Jieyang City's specialty livestock industry. By strengthening partnerships with local governments and enterprises through joint research institutions, collaborative talent development, and coordinated scientific initiatives, the university facilitates resource sharing and complementary advantages between academia and industry. This sustained technological support and talent pipeline ensures continuous innovation for rural revitalization.

Through initiatives such as Party-building leadership, targeted collaboration, technological empowerment, talent cultivation, and institutional innovation, the university has developed its distinctive “Foshan University Model.” Empowering rural revitalization with united front resources from higher education institutions serves as a vital pathway for academic institutions to support local socioeconomic development in the new era. The successful implementation of the “Foshan University Model” offers innovative approaches and methodologies for leveraging university resources in rural revitalization, providing valuable references and exemplary guidance that merit promotion and adoption by other universities.

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