

# Insight into the Current Situation of University Academic Affairs Management and Mechanism Innovation

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of deepening higher education reform, although university academic affairs management has achieved remarkable results, it still faces many practical dilemmas. Therefore, the innovation of university academic affairs management has become an inevitable trend. To cater to the mainstream trend of “Double First-Class” university construction, this paper first briefly analyzes the current situation of university academic affairs management, focusing on the existing problems; then, based on the problems, summarizes and puts forward specific measures for mechanism innovation, hoping to promote the in-depth transformation from traditional academic affairs to modern academic affairs, greatly improve the efficiency of university academic affairs management, and inject sustained momentum into the high-quality development of higher education.

**Keywords:** Universities; Academic affairs management; Current situation; Mechanism innovation

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## 1. Introduction

University academic affairs management specifically refers to a core management activity that takes talent training goals as the orientation, organizes and coordinates various resources such as human, material, and financial resources within the university, arranges time reasonably, smooths information communication channels, ensures the orderly operation of teaching order, promotes the efficient advancement of the teaching process, completes teaching tasks with high quality, and cultivates comprehensive talents. The effectiveness of university academic affairs management is directly related to teaching management efficiency and is also closely linked to the effect of professional construction. However, with the increasing expansion of the university enrollment scale, academic affairs management is facing a series of practical dilemmas, such as outdated management concepts and obsolete management systems. Therefore, it is necessary for this paper to formulate targeted solutions around the problems, to effectively improve the level of university academic affairs management, and provide solid support for the growth and development of college students.

## **2. Current situation and main problems of university academic affairs management**

In the wave of modernization reform, the scale of running universities in China continues to expand, and correspondingly, higher requirements are put forward for the quality of running schools. In recent years, most universities have faced various academic affairs management challenges in the process of development, and a series of new problems have emerged one after another. These universities have generally taken targeted responses: on the one hand, they have set out to build a more perfect and systematic academic affairs management system; on the other hand, they have accelerated the in-depth integration of modern information technology and academic affairs management, and at the same time, increased efforts to introduce advanced management concepts and methods, hoping to help improve the efficiency of the university's academic affairs management<sup>[1]</sup>. Although the series of efforts made by universities have achieved remarkable results, especially effectively alleviating the pressure of academic affairs management and improving the level of academic affairs management, from an overall perspective, due to the numerous contents and complex affairs of academic affairs management, the systematic reform process of the academic affairs management model in some universities is still backward, and at the same time, some new problems are constantly emerging. Research shows that the current problems in university academic affairs management are mainly concentrated in the following aspects:

### **2.1. Outdated academic affairs management concepts**

At present, the academic affairs management of some universities lacks human nature, and overpursues standardization and timeliness. Rigid management dominates, while flexible management is ignored. For this reason, the limitations of academic affairs management have become increasingly apparent, such as difficulty in obtaining the full support of teachers and students, and low participation of teachers and students. Most importantly, some universities focus on "management" and ignore the dominant position of students, which may be difficult to meet their personalized needs, directly affect the effect of academic affairs management, and is not conducive to the sustainable development of this work<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.2. Obsolete academic affairs management systems**

University academic affairs management involves many links, such as curriculum management, teaching operation, and examination management, with complex contents and numerous affairs. The current academic affairs management systems of some universities may have a series of problems, such as unclear division of responsibilities and unscientific assessment standards. On the one hand, regarding the organizational structure setting, some schools have been using the traditional hierarchical management model, which may be difficult to adapt to the needs of education and teaching reform in the new era. Among them, the most influential factor on management efficiency may be the overlapping functions or responsibilities between departments. On the other hand, regarding the teaching management system, the digital construction process of some universities is slow, and some teaching management matters are still mainly manual, making it difficult to achieve effective coordination between online and offline. These problems may invisibly affect the efficiency of academic affairs management, and targeted optimization schemes need to be formulated urgently<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **2.3. Weak capabilities of management personnel**

Firstly, the professional backgrounds of the current university academic affairs management team show certain differences, and the ability levels are uneven. Some management personnel have not fully mastered the laws of higher education and teaching, nor do they have a deep understanding of relevant policies. In addition, their

information technology application capabilities are weak, which may not provide a solid backing and support for academic affairs management. Secondly, the training system for academic affairs management personnel lacks systematicness, the training content is divorced from the actual job requirements, the training methods are single and traditional, and there is a problem of “emphasizing theory over practice”, which may directly affect the continuous improvement of the comprehensive capabilities of management personnel <sup>[4]</sup>. Finally, some universities have not established a systematic and perfect assessment and incentive system. Not only are the evaluation indicators unscientific, but the incentive measures are also not targeted, and sometimes they do not match the actual contribution.

## **2.4. Traditional academic affairs management methods**

The most direct manifestation of this problem is that the informatization level of the academic affairs management system in some universities is insufficient, and a new data-driven and intelligently collaborative academic affairs management ecosystem has not been built. Some schools still rely on manual work to arrange exams, schedule courses, or manage grades, which not only consumes a lot of manpower and time but also easily causes a series of problems, such as schedule conflicts and incorrect grade entry. For example, when arranging public basic courses, the academic affairs system of University X cannot automatically match student information, requiring academic affairs personnel to manually import data of students from each class, which may lead to conflicts in student list matching <sup>[5]</sup>. Academic affairs personnel have to repeatedly adjust the class schedule, which additionally increases the workload of academic affairs personnel and may also affect the efficient implementation of the school’s teaching plan.

## **3. Effective measures for mechanism innovation of university academic affairs management**

### **3.1. Innovate academic affairs management concepts**

Restricted by traditional experience, the academic affairs management concepts of some universities are relatively backward, which are difficult to adapt to the management environment of the new era and may not be conducive to the high-quality and sustainable development of universities. Academic affairs management in the new era requires management personnel to quickly and actively transform from traditional management concepts to modern management concepts on the basis of inheriting experience and doing a good job in coordination and cooperation. More importantly, they should continuously learn relevant theories and actively study new academic affairs management models, which is of great benefit to both the management personnel themselves and the development of the school <sup>[6]</sup>.

Academic affairs management personnel should actively change their roles. In addition to playing the role of “administrative management”, they should also give full play to the key role of control and supervision. Academic affairs management personnel should deeply recognize that the essence of management lies not in “controlling” but in “organizing”. Only by clarifying the internal relationship between the two and fully mobilizing the enthusiasm and initiative of teachers and students to participate can we ensure the orderly progress of education and teaching work.

Implement the core concept of “people-oriented”. Universities need to formulate clear academic affairs management rules and norms, refine work responsibilities to individuals, and at the same time, establish a sound supervision and evaluation system, and take multiple measures to improve the scientificity and effectiveness

of management. In addition, universities should change the previous “command-style” and “authoritative” management models to “service-oriented” and “guidance-oriented” ones, which is conducive to fully stimulating students’ internal motivation to participate in management, enhancing their sense of ownership, and laying a solid foundation for students to quickly integrate into the social environment in the future <sup>[7,8]</sup>.

Cultivate the scientific research concepts and literacy of academic affairs management personnel, which can be carried out from the following aspects: firstly, summarize experience on time to ensure the orderly development of subsequent academic affairs management work, focusing on accurately locating and solving problems. Academic affairs management personnel should focus on core issues, find the laws and characteristics behind them, and formulate personalized management plans in line with the school’s own conditions and students’ learning conditions by learning from the advanced management concepts and practical experience of other universities at home and abroad <sup>[9]</sup>. Secondly, scientifically standardize management processes, grasp work rhythms, attach importance to the whole-process monitoring of academic affairs management, and improve the accuracy and scientificity of management.

### **3.2. Improve the academic affairs system**

- (1) Teaching plan management: Academic affairs management departments should keep up with the current trend of education and teaching reform, systematically revise and improve the school’s existing teaching plan management norms, and maintain their dynamic and planned update and adjustment. Especially for new teaching models such as blended teaching, project-based teaching, and interdisciplinary integration, universities should establish an adaptive dynamic adjustment mechanism for teaching plans to make management more flexible, adapt to modern talent training goals, and enhance the adaptability and forward-looking of teaching plans.
- (2) Curriculum management: Universities should actively promote the whole-process closed-loop management and control, integrate this concept into various links such as curriculum setting, teaching implementation, and quality evaluation, and at the same time, build a diversified curriculum construction incentive mechanism. More specifically, in order to fully mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of teachers to participate in the construction of high-quality curriculum resources, in addition to providing sufficient resource support, universities should also increase the honorary recognition of excellent teachers, give full play to the demonstration and leading role of “famous teachers” and “famous courses”, and continuously improve the curriculum quality <sup>[10-11]</sup>.
- (3) Teaching operation management: For work such as teaching organization, inspection and supervision, and process evaluation, universities should establish detailed work norms, and especially clarify the main responsible persons of each link. Universities should also build a comprehensive teaching process monitoring system, dynamically monitor teaching quality, track teaching progress in real time, and use information technology to timely collect feedback data from teachers and students, to accurately locate problems in the teaching process, ensure the scientific and orderly development of teaching work, and significantly improve teaching quality.
- (4) Examination management: Universities should always adhere to the principles of fairness, impartiality, scientificity, and effectiveness, standardize the quality standards of exam proposition, sort out and further refine the operation process of exam organization and the rules of grade assessment; replace the original midterm or final exams with process + summative evaluation, put theoretical assessment and practical assessment on an equal footing, and attach importance to the comprehensive assessment of students’

knowledge mastery and practical operation ability; require teachers to design differentiated assessment schemes to adapt to the specific characteristics of different courses, to achieve the purpose of promoting teaching and learning through assessment<sup>[12]</sup>.

- (5) Organization management: Fully mobilize the enthusiasm of secondary colleges to participate in management, clarify their specific responsibilities and powers in many management links such as teaching operation management and curriculum construction, and especially implement the college-level independent management model. Universities should play multiple roles, such as “supervisors” and “service providers”, so as to build a multi-party collaborative, hierarchical and clear management system with clear powers and responsibilities.

### **3.3. Forge an academic affairs management team**

- (1) Personnel training: Universities should scientifically plan training content, covering various aspects such as education and teaching theories, interpretation of higher education policies, and application of information technology. In particular, they should guide academic affairs personnel to scientifically and effectively use the academic affairs management system, and lead them to deeply recognize the importance and necessity of applying artificial intelligence and big data in academic affairs management, laying a solid foundation for the intelligent transformation of academic affairs management in the future. Moreover, universities should establish a multi-level training mechanism, not only regularly organize special training, but also actively organize seminars and exchanges, arrange practical drills or conduct cross-school learning, aiming to broaden the horizons of academic affairs personnel, let them absorb advanced management experience from other schools, activate their innovative thinking, and inject sustained momentum into the innovation of their own school’s academic affairs management<sup>[13]</sup>.
- (2) Career development: Open up the promotion channel for academic affairs management personnel to fully stimulate their work enthusiasm. On the one hand, universities should further improve the evaluation and appointment system for professional and technical positions, establish a clear rank system for academic affairs management positions, so that management personnel at different levels can find their own development direction and provide more possibilities for their career development; on the other hand, establish and improve the assessment and incentive mechanism, expand the assessment scope. In addition to the previous conventional work performance, the corresponding innovative achievements and service efficiency of staff should also be included in the assessment indicators. At the same time, closely link the assessment results with salary and benefits, job promotion, professional title evaluation, etc., to fully ignite the work enthusiasm of academic affairs management personnel with substantive rewards<sup>[14]</sup>.

### **3.4. Deepen the construction of academic affairs informatization**

Firstly, the construction of the academic affairs management information platform should focus on the reasonable design of functions, which should be as close as possible to actual needs and cover the whole process of academic affairs management. Taking the design of the teaching plan management module as an example, academic affairs management personnel should strengthen the intelligence of course scheduling and selection, and preferably automatically recommend suitable course selection plans according to students’ professional directions, interests and specialties, and completed courses. By intelligently configuring curriculum resources, the efficiency of course selection can be improved. Secondly, universities should unify data collection standards, clarify the entry requirements for student information, curriculum information, etc., to ensure data consistency; standardize

the entire process of data storage and processing, organically integrate data in the database, and ensure data accuracy and completeness. It is worth mentioning that academic affairs management personnel should deeply mine various data generated in the teaching process and establish teaching quality monitoring standards, and at the same time, develop an “early warning function”, that is, when students have abnormal passing rates in a certain course or frequent absences, the system will automatically remind management personnel, to realize early detection of problems and early intervention <sup>[15]</sup>. Finally, promote the interconnection of the academic affairs system, financial system, and student work system to ensure information sharing, facilitate cross-departmental collaboration, and improve the quality of academic affairs management.

## 4. Conclusion

In order to promote the innovation of university academic affairs management mechanisms and create a new situation in academic affairs management, universities should deeply analyze the main problems existing in current academic affairs management and explore the reasons. On this basis, they should actively explore diversified optimization countermeasures in line with the actual situation of the school, so as to significantly improve the efficiency of academic affairs management and steadily promote the modernization construction and high-quality development of higher education.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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