

Theoretical Construction and Practical Pathways of an Integrated Mechanism for “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” of Ideological and Political Work Teams in Border Region Universities

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Abstract: Strengthening the construction of ideological and political (I&P) work teams in border region universities is not only a crucial measure to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, but also a strategic underpinning for regional stable development and long-term peace and stability. On this basis, this paper takes the team construction of I&P staff in border region universities as the research object, briefly analyzes the connotation and construction principles of the integrated “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” mechanism. In view of practical dilemmas facing border region universities such as difficulties in recruiting high-level I&P talents, insufficient targeted training support, and imperfect talent retention mechanisms, this paper proposes practical pathways from five dimensions: talent recruitment, talent cultivation, talent deployment, talent retention, and overall coordination linkage. It aims to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for border region universities to build a stable, professional and reliable I&P workforce.

Keywords: Border region universities; Ideological and political work teams; Integrated mechanism of “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention”; Practical pathways

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1. Introduction

Border region universities shoulder the special missions of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, cultivating new generations of young people, and safeguarding border stability. The quality of their I&P workforce directly determines the educational outcomes of border region universities ^[1]. However, the traditional talent management model that separates recruitment, development, utilization and retention features fragmented management and poor interlinkage among all links, which fails to meet the

strategic demands of ideological and political work in border areas in the new era. In contrast, the integrated “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” model integrates talent recruitment, training, deployment and retention into a coordinated and connected organic whole. It can effectively resolve the above problems and substantially elevate the quality of I&P team construction in border region universities ^[2].

2. Theoretical construction of the integrated “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” mechanism for I&P teams in border region universities

2.1. Definition of the core connotation of the integrated mechanism

The integrated “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” mechanism organically combines four links — talent recruitment, training and development, scientific deployment and long-term retention — into a systematic project. It aims to form close connections among all links through scientific planning, coordinated operation and closed-loop management ^[3]. Among the four links: “Recruitment” serves as the foundational link, addressing the source of talents; “Development” acts as the core link, improving talent quality and tapping their development potential; “Utilization” stands as the central link, bringing talents’ strengths into full play and realizing their value; “Retention” functions as a long-term mechanism to guarantee sustained talent stability. The four links jointly form a dynamic circulation system covering resource input and achievement output, with continuous optimization of operational efficiency via feedback adjustment.

2.2. Construction principles of the integrated mechanism

The integrated mechanism for I&P teams in border region universities is built upon the following core principles:

- (1) Putting political standards first. Political literacy and political competence shall be regarded as the primary criteria for team development.
- (2) Regional adaptation. Locally tailored talent mechanisms shall be formulated in light of border regional environments, ethnic structures and educational characteristics.
- (3) Systematic coordination. Fragmented management of separate links shall be eliminated to realize mutual promotion and smooth communication across the full chain of recruitment, development, utilization and retention ^[4].
- (4) People-oriented development. Attention shall be paid to talents’ career development and practical demands to enhance their sense of belonging and job stability.

3. Practical dilemmas in each link of the “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” work for I&P teams in border region universities

3.1. Insufficient precision and diversification in talent recruitment

On the one hand, some border region universities lack systematic evaluation systems for I&P team construction. Incomplete consideration of recruitment standards, incentive mechanisms and career development paths for talents at different levels leads to mismatches between recruited talents and the actual demands of universities ^[5]. On the other hand, most border region universities mainly rely on traditional recruitment channels such as job posting and personal referrals, while underutilizing flexible talent introduction and talent-recommended recruitment strategies, resulting in suboptimal recruitment outcomes.

3.2. Inadequate tiered & classified training and target alignment

Current training programs suffer from severe homogeneity: newly hired teachers, senior instructors and staff focusing on teaching and research all receive identical training curricula ^[6]. Moreover, training outcomes are not intrinsically linked to key career milestones including degree promotion, professional title evaluation and academic exchanges. This not only dampens teachers' willingness to participate in training, but also undermines the overall effectiveness of team development.

3.3. Imperfect scientific deployment and classified management of talents

For one thing, the current post classification system requires further optimization. Clear job responsibilities, workload assessment criteria and performance evaluation mechanisms for teaching-oriented, research-oriented and dual teaching-research posts remain to be refined and improved ^[7]. For another, functional dislocation exists in some universities. Teachers with strong research capabilities are burdened with heavy administrative work, leaving little time for academic research. Meanwhile, counselors focusing on practical education encounter professional challenges beyond their expertise, directly reducing the efficiency of human resource allocation ^[8].

3.4. Weaknesses in multi-dimensional talent retention support and risk prevention

From the perspective of career development support, most young and middle-aged teachers face prolonged academic promotion cycles due to limited research resources, scarce academic exchange opportunities and difficulties in publishing papers. This easily triggers occupational burnout and creates hidden risks of brain drain ^[9].

4. Practical pathways for the integrated construction of “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” for I&P teams in border region universities

4.1. Precise and diversified recruitment: Expand channels to expand the scale of border I&P Teams

To carry out ideological and political work in border regions, universities must prioritize the quality of talent intake and team scale to adapt to the unique educational demands of border ethnic regions, and fundamentally boost the overall competence of I&P teams from the source ^[10]. Relying on regional characteristics and ethnic structures, universities shall fully advance a dual-track recruitment model combining local talent exploration and external high-level talent introduction, forming a well-structured recruitment system integrating internal and external sources.

For local recruitment, universities shall prioritize candidates with an in-depth understanding of border regions, profound cognition of ethnic unity education, grassroots I&P work experience, strong adaptability to border educational environments, outstanding political literacy, and capacity to undertake ethnic unity education. Prioritizing talents with high political quality and strong adaptability reduces their adaptation costs and improves post matching ^[11].

For external recruitment, universities shall take the initiative to connect with relevant universities and research institutions, attracting outstanding I&P talents, young doctors and backbone teachers with sound political quality, solid professional competence and willingness to take root in border areas through policy appeal. Meanwhile, universities shall establish exclusive talent recruitment policy systems for border regions, increase policy preferences and resource input, and fully implement tangible support including special talent

subsidies, housing allowances, housing security and convenient school enrollment for employees' children, so as to enhance job attractiveness via policy advantages.

4.2. Tiered and classified development: Targeted training to improve specialized educational competence for border work

In light of the special missions and practical demands of I&P work in border region universities, a systematic, tiered, classified and distinctive training system shall be built to transform I&P teams from general practitioners to border-specific professionals. In accordance with teachers' growth patterns and post competency requirements, universities shall establish a three-tier progressive training system covering pre-service training for recruits, competency improvement for serving teachers and elite cultivation for core backbones, forming an all-round, full-coverage and progressive training mechanism^[12].

Systematic pre-service training shall be provided for newly recruited I&P staff, covering political theories, teachers' ethics, ethnic policies, university and border regional profiles and basic work norms to help new staff complete role transition rapidly. Regular special training shall be delivered to ordinary serving teachers, focusing on practical capabilities including innovative classroom teaching, online ideological and political guidance, student psychological counseling and daily administrative management to address work bottlenecks and competency gaps. A high-end excellence training program shall be launched for outstanding backbones and young and middle-aged leaders, supporting overseas visits, advanced studies, research projects and achievement incubation to cultivate leading talents capable of driving regional I&P work development. Training content shall highlight border characteristics, incorporating ethnic unity progress education, risk identification and prevention, communication skills and psychological counseling for ethnic students, and educational application of border cultural resources to strengthen the team's capacity to respond to border-specific scenarios.

4.3. Scientific and efficient talent deployment: Post matching and empowerment to release the core value of ideological and political education

Scientific and efficient talent deployment is the value destination of the integrated "Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention" mechanism for I&P teams in border region universities. Centered on matching people with posts, clear division of powers and responsibilities, workload reduction and efficiency improvement, and performance-oriented assessment, universities shall build a deployment system enabling I&P talents to engage in educational work with peace of mind, concentration and high efficiency^[13].

Universities shall comprehensively sort out and clarify post duty lists for I&P staff, fixing core responsibilities including ideological and political education, ethnic unity education and mental health guidance. Non-teaching, non-I&P and non-stability-related trivial tasks shall be reduced, freeing I&P teams from cumbersome administrative chores to focus their primary time and energy on the core task of fostering virtue through education^[14].

Universities may implement classified management and tiered post assignment based on I&P teachers' academic backgrounds, research directions, personality traits, competency strengths and work experience. Teachers adept at theoretical teaching shall be assigned to curriculum ideological and political education and classroom teaching posts; those skilled in communication and counseling shall be deployed to frontline student affairs, mental health services and ethnic student education; talents with research and management strengths shall focus on online ideological and political work and Party building, realizing full utilization of

every talent's strengths.

4.4. Multi-dimensional warm retention: Improved support to build a stable team ecosystem

Talent retention is the core guarantee for long-term stable development of I&P teams in border region universities ^[15]. Universities shall improve exclusive incentive and security systems for border regions, offering preferential treatment to I&P posts in salary, performance distribution and allowances. Full payment of border talent subsidies, grassroots service subsidies and special allowances for ethnic regions shall be guaranteed to raise I&P talents' income and living security. Meanwhile, preferential support shall be granted in professional title evaluation, post appointment, research project establishment and research application for I&P teachers who have taken root in border regions for a long time and delivered outstanding performance, removing restrictions such as seniority and working years to provide development paths and platforms for dedicated practitioners.

Universities shall prioritize building growth platforms for young I&P teachers, launching youth backbone training programs with assigned mentors, study opportunities and teaching reform support to unblock career advancement pathways from recruits to backbones and leading talents, enabling talents to see clear growth prospects. In addition, universities shall pay close attention to I&P staff's work pressure, mental conditions and living difficulties, proactively resolving their worries to lower brain drain rates and deliver sustained and stable talent support for I&P work in border region universities.

4.5. Overall coordination mechanism: Full-domain linkage to build a four-in-one closed-loop management system

Establishing an overall coordinated and highly efficient closed-loop management system serves as an important institutional guarantee for the implementation of the integrated "Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention" mechanism for I&P teams in border region universities. Universities shall set up a leading group for I&P team construction under the unified leadership of the university Party Committee and chaired by a school-level leader in charge, integrating functions including talent recruitment, training, post deployment, performance incentives and service security to ensure consistent goals and coordinated progress across all links of recruitment, development, utilization and retention.

On the basis of overall university coordination, universities shall further clarify the division of responsibilities and collaborative procedures of all departments, transforming separate fragmented management by functional departments into coordinated governance. A linkage pattern shall be formed: human resources departments oversee talent recruitment, training departments manage talent development, employing units conduct talent deployment, and security departments deliver talent retention support. Meanwhile, digital management tools shall be adopted to build a full-life-cycle information management system for I&P talents. All information, including personal profiles, recruitment records, training archives, post performance, assessment results, career demands, and security implementation, shall be entered and dynamically updated, enabling real-time information exchange and full traceability of recruitment data, training progress, deployment efficiency, and retention status. This fundamentally resolves information asymmetry, poor interlinkage and fragmented management across all links.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the integrated “Recruitment, Development, Utilization, and Retention” mechanism for I&P teams in border region universities is an effective solution to talent development challenges rooted in the special missions of border regions. It integrates scattered recruitment, development, utilization and retention links into a closed-loop coordinated organic whole. It not only elevates the political literacy and professional competence of the workforce, but also accommodates regional border characteristics and talent development demands, shifting I&P team construction from passive supplementary staffing to proactive capacity building, and from fragmented management to systematic cultivation.

Therefore, the establishment and implementation of this mechanism can stabilize the structural composition of I&P teams in border region universities, enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of ideological and political education, and provide robust support for fostering virtue through education, ethnic unity and border stability.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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