

The Construction Model and Experience Inspiration of World-Class University Academy System

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Abstract: The construction model of the academy system is a student-centered management model that emphasizes personalized education and holistic education and has been widely applied in building world-class universities. This article outlines the concept, current situation, and management mode of the world-class university academy system construction model. It analyzes the problems and challenges of applying the academy system in the Chinese context. Finally, it provides experience and inspiration for constructing the academy system.

Keywords: Academy system; Pattern; Experience and inspiration; First-class universities; Application

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1. Introduction

World-class universities cultivate high-quality talents and promote technological progress ^[1]. The academy model is student-centered, emphasizing individuality and holistic education, aiming to cultivate innovative talents with excellent moral character and extensive knowledge ^[2]. Currently, China's higher education is in a critical period, and cultivating top-notch talents is a key issue in building a strong, talented country. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Medium and Long-Term Youth Development Plan (2016–2025)," which requires improving the quality of education in schools. Adhere to cultivating morality and talents, deepen education reform and focus on enhancing students' sense of social responsibility, innovative spirit, and practical ability throughout the education process. However, with the advancement of world-class university construction, people gradually realize that the traditional university management model can no longer meet the needs of modern higher education. It is necessary to refer to the college system construction model, meet students' needs, improve education quality, and enhance their comprehensive quality and innovation ability.

In October 2015, the State Council issued the "Overall Plan for Coordinated Promotion of the Construction of World-class Universities and Disciplines," proposing the grand goal of building world-class universities

and disciplines and pointing out the need to promote the reform of talent cultivation models in universities. Therefore, the construction model of the academy system plays an important role in promoting higher education reform and improving the quality of education. To cultivate top-notch talents, it is necessary to follow the laws of higher education and systematically reform the talent cultivation philosophy of universities ^[3]. Not only do educators need to pay attention to “how to do it,” but they also need to pay attention to how the “double first-class” college system is coupled with the law of cultivating top-notch talents from a theoretical perspective. This article will introduce the construction model and experience of the world-class university academy system, explore its significance for higher education and its application and development in Chinese educational institutions.

2. Overview of the construction model of world-class university academy system

2.1. The basic concept and management model of the academy system

Due to the lack of absolute consensus on the connotation of “academy system” among world-class universities, academies are developing towards diversification. Therefore, this section defines the basic concept of the academy system. The academy system is an educational management system that combines general education (quality education) and specialized education, aiming to achieve a balanced educational goal ^[4]. As a student-centered management model, it focuses on personalized and holistic education, aiming to cultivate high-quality talents with excellent moral character, extensive knowledge and innovative abilities. The academy system can integrate education, teaching and daily life in schools, transcend professional limitations and create diverse platforms. The core concept of the academy system is “education-oriented, student-centered and holistic education,” which mainly includes student-centered, all-round development, teacher-student interaction, community building and other models ^[5].

2.2. The practical experience of the construction model of world-class university academy system

2.2.1. Practical experience in the construction of world-class university academies

The academic system of world-class universities divides students into small colleges or communities. This can provide personalized education while also cultivating students’ comprehensive qualities. In practice, some world-class universities have successfully implemented the academy system. For example, the college system construction of Oxford University began in the 13th century and has now become the core education model of the school ^[6]. Each college has its own teaching and accommodation facilities. This educational model can help students better adapt to society and unleash their potential. Therefore, the construction of the academy system has become the core education model. In view of this, this section will start with the construction process of the “academy system” in well-known world-class universities such as the UK and summarize the practical experience of the “academy system.” The introduction of the academy system in the United States was mainly due to the emphasis on academic research in American universities in the late 19th century, but the neglect of teacher-student relationships ^[7].

2.2.2. Inspiration and reference for the construction of world-class university academy system

(1) Emphasize teacher-student interaction in operation mode

In terms of the daily operation mode of the academy system, the academy system is based on becoming a hub for connecting classroom education and the second curriculum, taking on the cradle for teachers and students to pursue excellence. It aims to emphasize implicit education, eliminate direct education that damages

initiative and enable students to realize the true value of education through intimate interaction, leading by example, self-management, supervision and motivation^[8]. Therefore, the academy system generally implements a mentor system, allowing for communication and exchange with teachers in academic and daily life^[9].

(2) Emphasis on diversified development in curriculum design

British and American universities emphasize general education to expand students' knowledge and cultivate their interdisciplinary abilities. At the same time, the school academy emphasizes the cultivation of cultural literacy and the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities. For example, it invites relevant teachers for presentations and discussions through high-table meetings and tea parties. Through the above measures, educators can truly cultivate high-quality, innovative talents with interdisciplinary communication and learning abilities, as well as both humanities and sciences.

(3) Emphasize the formation of social networks in community construction

Academy education emphasizes community building. Colleges and universities that set up academies generally adopt a mixed living model, which promotes mutual interaction among students through daily communication and interaction, enhancing their cross-disciplinary general education level and interpersonal communication skills. At the same time, it is widely advocated to cultivate students' independent personalities. Students can manage themselves through the "community" of the academy and continuously develop their abilities through unique extracurricular activities.

3. The application of the world-class university academy system construction model in China

The academy system has entered the field of education research in China with its educational model. In recent years, it has become a positive exploration of the reform and practice of higher education in China^[10]. The application of the world-class university academy system construction model in China can provide some reference for solving this problem.

3.1. The adoption and achievements of the academy system in domestic universities

With the continuous development of higher education in China, some universities have begun to try to introduce the academy system.

- (1) Some universities, such as Peking University, have started building independent academies. In addition, some universities have introduced elements of the academy system into their existing colleges, such as Nanjing University and Sun Yat-sen University.
- (2) Domestic universities' attempts to adopt the academy system have achieved positive results. For example, Peking University Yuanpei College has successfully cultivated talents with international perspectives and innovative abilities through small class sizes and full English teaching.

3.1.1. Elite academy model

The academies implementing the elite education model are mainly concentrated in the original "985" and "211" universities, such as Xinya Academy of Tsinghua University and Qian Xuesen Academy of Xi'an Jiaotong University. Among them, one is developed by various universities based on the original talent training special zones. Another type is a college specifically established to cultivate special talents. The notable features of this model are elite talent cultivation goals and plans, selective student enrollment methods, smaller college scale, close teacher-student interaction, high-quality general education and close connection between the first and second classrooms. The elite education model college has a high-level talent training positioning^[11].

First is the goal of cultivating elite talents in academies. China Ocean University Xingyuan Academy aims to cultivate liberal arts talents who can meet the social needs of the next 30–50 years through a unique general education system. Next is the selective admission to the academy. Students who can enter academies for learning are generally screened, either based on their scores in the college entrance examination or selected after admission. In short, they are outstanding students with the potential for cultivation and special expertise. Such as the top-notch innovative talent training program of Youren Academy of Northwest A&F University and the customized talent training program of Qian Xuesen Academy of Xi'an Jiaotong University.

3.1.2. General education style academy model

Although elite education is strict, it is niche. The general education model of academies is based on the concept of “General education for everyone,” with the characteristic of universities and academies complementing each other. The characteristic of this type of model is that university general education and academy general education complement each other and modular general education courses or plans are configured. Currently, the academies of Fudan University, Xi'an Jiaotong University (excluding Qian Xuesen Academy), and Shantou University generally belong to this model. The college is committed to creating an educational model that combines university and general education. University general education provides subject education through core general education courses^[12]. The college system of Fudan University is a typical model of general education. In 2005, Fudan University was officially established, taking the lead in promoting general education reform in China. In 2012, the entire university implemented the reform of the academy system. All new students moved to the four major academies of Fudan University, forming a general education training system with the university's core general education courses as the main axis and the academy's general education plan and mentor system as the auxiliary wings.

3.1.3. Life education academy model

Harvard University President Lowell once said, “The first classroom should not be the only education that a young person receives.” Therefore, another important educational function of university academies is life and development education. Among the three educational elements of general education, mentor system, and life and development education, the life education model of academies focuses more on this type of life and development education.^[13] For example, Zhaoqing University has clearly proposed management methods such as “the academy is responsible for things beyond teaching,” “the academy manages to learn, the academy manages life,” and “the discipline and professional college system, and the living community college system.” At present, most local college academies belong to this type of model.

3.2. Challenges faced in the construction of Chinese academy system

In recent years, Chinese universities have explored the education system of academies and some have established independent academies or introduced elements of academies. However, the transition from the college model to the academy system involves not only a change in management but also a shift in educational philosophy and a comprehensive transformation. However, there are still problems with its application in China.

3.2.1. Barrier to the coordination mechanism between the two institutions

The existence of academies will inevitably conflict with the original colleges centered around disciplines and majors. Talent education management under the traditional college model mainly relies on the “School college department class” management model, where the school endows the college with certain powers and responsibilities for self-control and independent activities. With the reform of the academy system, the

traditional management level has shifted from colleges to the two parts of colleges and academies, which will inevitably lead to the problem of division of labor and cooperation between the two academies. After the establishment of the academy, administrative authority and resources need to be obtained from the institutional level to maintain its operation. At present, the reform of the academy system in many universities has not completely separated the function of student education management from the college, and the college and academy have not made an appropriate division in power and function positioning, resulting in a conflict of responsibility positioning between the two. On the other hand, in the process of operation, the two may not be completely consistent in terms of educational goals and actions, which can easily lead to the dilemma of “separation of forces” and “barriers” that are inefficient and repetitive ^[14].

3.2.2. Insufficient resource allocation

The implementation of the academy system requires funding and resource investment. For example, building a college requires a significant investment of funds and manpower, and introducing diversified courses and teacher-student interaction also requires certain resource support. This may be a challenge for some universities. In universities implementing the academy system, in addition to administrative leadership, the academy is mainly managed by permanent mentors (counselors) to complete the corresponding educational management work. The work of counselors mainly focuses on ideological and political education, daily management and other aspects, while their competence in general education, innovation ability and other aspects is limited. Professional mentors tend to focus on scientific research and teaching but the implementation of the mentorship system has not been effective due to the lack of corresponding assessment and incentive measures and the investment of college mentors in providing classified guidance to students entering the academy is insufficient.

4. Experience and inspiration from the construction of the academy system

4.1. Coordinate the functional relationship between the two institutions

With the enhancement and expansion of the educational function of academies, there is inevitably tension between academy education and college education, including conflicts in student learning time arrangements, conflicts in dual educational requirements, and conflicts in educational resources ^[15]. To better leverage the effectiveness of collaborative education, it is necessary to coordinate the relationship between academy and college education. Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the common goals of promoting student learning and development. Secondly, the coordination of the design of talent training programs is very important as well. Universities should coordinate the design of college education and professional education programs so that the two are organically connected and functionally complementary. Finally, explore effective mentoring mechanisms, establish a scientific incentive and evaluation system, stimulate mentor enthusiasm, and leverage college mentors' guidance and leadership role in student learning and life.

4.2. Explore new models of Trinity education

The construction of the academy system is not only a system issue but also the educational philosophy and value orientation behind it are more crucial. Universities have doubts about the reform of the academy system and establishing a correct understanding and gathering consensus on the reform is the key to promoting the reform. Consolidate basic consensus and elevate the concept of “holistic education” to a common direction for reforming the academy system. Exploring the academy system requires returning to the starting point of the academy system reform, comprehensively examining educational concepts and grasping the overall purpose of educational models. At the same time, schools should fully leverage their overall planning and coordination

advantages, strengthen resource integration, break the situation where academies and colleges go their separate ways and build a guarantee mechanism for the academy system. By promoting collaborative education mechanisms, constructing mutual trust and equal consultation relationships between academies and colleges, and ensuring effective dialogue and collective negotiation between the two systems, colleges can effectively implement and integrate holistic education.

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