

Exploration of the Reform of Cultivating Rural Governance Talents in Universities in the Context of Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: The rural revitalization strategy is a major strategic decision for national development, aimed at promoting the comprehensive development of rural areas and improving the living standards of farmers. The success of rural revitalization requires full leverage of the role of rural governance, where all individuals from grassroots governments to community residents should take on their responsibilities. The exploration of the reform of cultivating rural governance talents in universities plays a crucial role in cultivating professional talents with knowledge and skills in rural governance. These talents will be able to assist rural grassroots governments in allocating resources, providing social services, and addressing issues, thereby strengthening the implementation of rural revitalization strategies. This article explored the necessity and urgency of the reform of rural governance talent cultivation in universities in the context of rural revitalization, analyzed the opportunities and challenges, and provided useful ideas and inspiration for this reform strategy.

Keywords: Rural revitalization; Universities; Rural governance; Talent cultivation; Measure

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1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized the task of comprehensively building a socialist modernized country, highlighting that the most arduous tasks in this process remain concentrated in rural areas. Technology and talent play a crucial role in achieving this goal. In 2023, the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Doing a Good Job in the Key Work of Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization proposed the importance of strengthening the development of rural talent teams. As an important driving force behind rural revitalization, universities must actively seize opportunities and comprehensively strengthen the process of rural revitalization, to facilitate the smooth progress of talent cultivation reform.

2. The necessity of cultivating rural governance talents in universities in the context of rural revitalization

In the context of rural revitalization, the necessity of cultivating rural governance talents in universities is increasingly prominent. The Ministry of Education released the Action Plan for Science and Technology Innovation in Rural Revitalization of Higher Education Institutions (2018–2022) in December 2018. This action plan proposed the task of cultivating talents in the field of rural revitalization in universities to strengthen the talent cultivation strategies of rural revitalization ^[1]. In September 2022, in response to the need to comprehensively promote rural revitalization, the Ministry of Education established a new major in rural governance, aiming to cultivate cross-disciplinary senior specialized talents. They provided solutions for rural governance and facilitated the development of rural revitalization. This series of measures demonstrates the urgent need for universities to cultivate talents in the field of rural governance. The rural social changes brought about by the rural revitalization strategy have established a close connection between rural governance and public policies. In the past, public policies were usually limited to the scope of cities or institutions, such as the minimum living guarantee system, the urban-rural integrated medical insurance system, and subsidy policies to increase the transfer income of farmers. However, these policies are also beginning to play an important role in rural areas. Therefore, rural governance talents need to adapt to this new background. It is crucial to effectively apply these policies to rural areas, with the implementation of informatization and standardization to ensure smooth implementation of these policies. In addition, the implementation of public policies in rural areas requires more specialized and refined support, including qualification review, preparation of documents and materials, information organization, and interpretation of governance policies ^[2]. Rural governance talents must possess knowledge and skills in these new fields to ensure their effective implementation. As the scope of rural governance continues to broaden, the improvement of governance standards, and the continuous updating of public policies, rural governance talents inevitably require higher levels of professional literacy to meet the new requirements of rural governance. In this context, the reform of cultivating rural governance talents in universities has become particularly urgent. Universities should focus on cultivating the students' ability to interpret and execute policies, strengthen research on rural social issues, and promote the application of information technology, to better meet the needs for rural revitalization. Not only does this help to achieve the goal of rejuvenating the Chinese nation but also helps promote the development level of rural areas, enhance the well-being of farmers, and enhance the comprehensive process of developing a socialist modernized country.

3. The problems faced by rural talent revitalization

Since 1949, the rural population in China has been continuously declining. This has led to a decrease in rural talent as more farmers are leaving their homes to seek better livelihoods in cities. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, from 2010–2020, the employed population in rural areas decreased from 442 million to 332 million, indicating a decreasing trend in rural talent ^[3]. This poses a serious challenge to rural revitalization as rural areas require talents from various fields to support all-round development. Secondly, there are also discrepancies in the age structure of rural talents. According to the National Agricultural Census data, as of 2020, 80.9% of the personnel engaged in agricultural production and operation mainly belonged to the middle-aged and elderly population. This poses enormous challenges for rural communities in terms of technological updates and development, as the shortage of young personnel may result in the stagnation of rural industries and the inability to fully realize their development potential ^[4]. Currently, the rural industry is in an important stage of transformation and upgrade, which requires not only the improvement of agricultural skills of rural workers, but also a wider range of knowledge and skills, including professional knowledge in multiple

fields such as modern agricultural technology, rural social management, and rural tourism. However, talent resources in rural areas are relatively scarce, making it difficult to discover talents with diverse skills to support the diverse needs of rural revitalization ^[5].

4. Reform measures for cultivating rural governance talents in universities under the background of rural revitalization

4.1. Curriculum oriented training model

In the context of rural revitalization, the reform of rural governance talent cultivation in universities has adopted a curriculum-oriented training model. This model focuses on integrating practical teaching into the talent training system, deepening the student's social activities, and improving their practical ability ^[6]. Universities should actively organize volunteer service programs for college students and carry out rural practical activities, such as the "Three Visits to the Countryside" campaign. Universities should also encourage students to receive temporary training at the grassroots level, and dispatch capable college students to undergo internships in grassroots governments, enterprises, and institutions. With this, the talents and academic resources of the school can be continuously utilized and targeted to carry out rural governance work. This strategy has established a solid connection between schools and society, promoted the smooth flow of rural governance talents from schools to the countryside, and to a certain extent, ensured the sustainability of rural governance. Furthermore, it also provided a platform for students who aspire to participate in rural governance and development ^[7]. With the increasing emphasis on agriculture, rural areas, and farmers, more college majors are attempting to reassemble their courses into agricultural-related disciplines. These universities have introduced agricultural-related courses, gradually forming a relatively complete curriculum system, such as rural sociology, rural economics, agricultural policy, introduction to rural development, rural governance, and rural construction ^[8]. This curriculum-oriented training model provides a more comprehensive education system for the cultivation of rural governance talents in universities. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical operations, universities can cultivate students with enhanced practical abilities. This curriculum-oriented training model encourages universities to respond better to national policies and social needs, better contributing to the sustainable development and prosperity of rural areas in China ^[9].

4.2. Deepening the discipline construction of serving rural revitalization

The discipline setting and development of universities should be guided by the practical challenges in rural revitalization, with the optimization and adjustment of the discipline positioning of relevant majors. Currently, Chinese universities have 12 first-level disciplines and 92 major categories, most of which have the potential to be applied in the process of rural revitalization. Disciplines such as agriculture, economics, history, law, and management are closely related to rural revitalization and should become the focus of attention for universities ^[10]. Disciplines play a crucial role in teaching and research which addresses the problems of cultivating a specific type of talent and the purpose of this training. Universities should cultivate applied talents with the knowledge and skills necessary to solve the core problems in rural revitalization ^[11]. In the process of rural revitalization, issues such as grassroots social governance, rural industrial investment and financing, and industrial integration need to be urgently addressed. Therefore, the optimization and development of disciplines should be committed to cultivating a team of rural revitalization talents with governance, technology, and operational capabilities. Disciplines should also actively promote cross-integration, break down disciplinary barriers, and upgrade the existing disciplinary and professional systems. This helps to cultivate outstanding talents with comprehensive qualities, which can effectively promote the realization of the overall requirements

of the rural revitalization strategy. In addition, universities should consider optimizing discipline positioning as a strategic measure to provide intellectual support for solving comprehensive and systematic problems in rural revitalization ^[12].

4.3. Integrating labor education into the entire process of talent cultivation

The implementation of labor education in universities is of strategic importance. It cultivates practical work abilities and innovative entrepreneurial spirit, which provides a solid foundation for the students to better contribute to rural revitalization ^[13]. It is important to establish a strategic fulcrum and coordinated development pattern. In establishing a positive interactive relationship, universities should promote cooperation between the cultivation of rural revitalization industries and the development of university disciplines. This helps connect the “last mile” of the national strategy of university discipline service so that the research and innovation achievements of universities can better provide support for rural revitalization, address practical problems, and promote the development of rural industries. Furthermore, universities need to strengthen the construction of professional teams to cultivate stable and growing personnel ^[14]. This requires improving the entire chain of training, organizing the implementation of a continuous training plan, and accelerating the cultivation of talents with a strong interest in agriculture. It is crucial to integrate labor education into the entire process of talent cultivation. The role of labor education in higher education is to guide contemporary college students to actively participate in the national rural revitalization strategy, and to cultivate socialist builders and successors with comprehensive development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor ^[15]. To achieve this, universities should organically integrate education and teaching, innovation and entrepreneurship, and social services with the implementation process of rural revitalization. One key measure is to incorporate relevant courses such as “Rural Revitalization Classroom” into basic compulsory courses. This includes theoretical courses for a certain period and two-week labor education practical courses to create specialized courses catered to regional rural characteristics. This series of comprehensive measures will help cultivate new farmers who meet the needs of rural revitalization, accelerate the construction of university talent teams, and provide support for rural revitalization. At the same time, labor education will cultivate students’ practical work abilities and innovative entrepreneurial spirit, increasing their contribution to rural revitalization and ensuring the successful implementation of rural revitalization strategies ^[16].

4.4. Building a diversified collaborative talent cultivation model to enhance students’ practical abilities

The cultivation of rural governance talents requires the cooperation and assistance of multiple organizations, among which universities, agricultural enterprises, governments, and social organizations are key participants. Building a talent cultivation system with a four-element interaction of the aforementioned organizations will help to innovate and integrate industry, academia, and research mechanisms. Universities play an important role in integrating teaching resources into this system by creating a diverse collaborative field of subjects and centralizing the utilization of resources ^[17]. Not only does this enrich the student’s knowledge and skills, allowing them to be exposed to more practical situations beyond their majors but it also improves their practical abilities. The government can provide opportunities, strengthen communication between grassroots temporary cadres and seniors, and ensure that college students can actively participate in rural governance programs ^[18]. At the same time, agricultural enterprises should maintain a dominant position in the market and provide financial support to promote the development of the rural economy. Social organizations can play an important role in this system, promoting and educating governance policies, and providing practical venues for rural governance talents to provide social services. They can also provide supervision and consultation services to ensure the

standardization of the training process, and provide necessary information for rural governance talents^[19]. Through a multi-subject interactive talent cultivation system, the excessive reliance on books and teachers for theoretical learning can be eliminated, the practical needs of rural areas can be met, and governance talents required for rural revitalization can be cultivated^[20].

5. Conclusion

The reform of cultivating rural governance talents in the context of rural revitalization in universities has become an important measure to promote the sustainable development of rural areas. Through measures such as deepening disciplinary construction, promoting the integration of industry, academia, and research, optimizing disciplinary positioning, establishing a diversified collaborative talent training model, and a curriculum-oriented training model, universities can actively respond to national strategies and cultivate more talents, thus providing solid intellectual and talent support for rural revitalization. Nonetheless, rural revitalization still requires the unremitting efforts of universities, as well as the active participation and support of society.

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