

Common Research on Transformation and Development of Newly Built Undergraduate Colleges in Sichuan

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Abstract: In 2015, the newly built undergraduate colleges have accounted for half of the ordinary undergraduate colleges. Through the investigation, it is concluded that the newly built undergraduate colleges in Sichuan have the following commonalities in the transformation: the school positioning of "application-oriented"; The embodiment of the new university spirit of "serving local construction"; The talent training goal of "innovative and composite applied talents"; Flexible personnel training curriculum system.

Keywords: Newly Built Undergraduate Colleges; Talent Training; School Positioning; Practical Teaching

Introduction

The term "newly established undergraduate institutions" refers to those approved by the Ministry of Education to be established after 2000. In a short period of 16 years from 2000 to 2015, there were 678 newly built undergraduate colleges (including independent colleges) in China, accounting for 55.6% of the country's general undergraduate colleges and universities, accounting for "half of the country's undergraduate colleges and universities".^[1]

In June 2014, the Ministry of Education and other six departments issued the Plan for the Construction of Modern Vocational Education System (2014-2020), which clearly proposed to "encourage the establishment of applied technology colleges and universities, and build them into a new type of university that directly serves regional economic and social development, focuses on the organization of undergraduate vocational education, and integrates vocational education, higher education and continuing education". This has opened^[2] a new stage of transformation for newly built undergraduate colleges and universities. "The goal orientation and development trend of the transformation of newly built undergraduate colleges are to build a new college form, that is, a new type of university. Compared with traditional research universities, a new type of university is a new type of university with newly built undergraduate colleges as the main body, application-oriented as the core feature and educational philosophy, closely related to local economic and social development, and fundamentally oriented to the cultivation of high-quality application-oriented undergraduate talents. "From the establishment, development to transformation and development of newly built undergraduate^[3] colleges, it takes less than 20 years. It can be said that in the stage of "crossing the river by feeling the stones", in such a critical period, it is very necessary to clarify the commonalities of the newly built undergraduate colleges in the development process, and provide a broader connotation for the "new" of the newly built undergraduate colleges. Through sorting out the characteristics of the transformation and development of the 27 newly built undergraduate colleges in Sichuan, it is found that there are commonalities in the following aspects.

1. School positioning-- application-oriented

Newly built colleges are often located in non-provincial cities. Their positioning, development mode and talent training goals will directly affect regional economic development and strategically influence the development pattern and trend of China's higher education popularization. In the Index System of Evaluation of undergraduate teaching level in Colleges and Universities published by the Ministry of Education, the connotation of school positioning is divided into: type positioning, target positioning, level positioning, subject specialty positioning and service orientation positioning.

At present, the classification of higher education in countries around the world is based on the International Classification of Education Standards (2011) issued by UNESCO. ISCED (2011 edition) points out that "higher education is based on secondary education and provides learning activities in specialized educational disciplines. It aims at highly complex and specialized learning. Higher education includes ISCED levels 5, 6, 7 and 8, which are labeled as short-term higher, Bachelor's or equivalent, Master's or equivalent, and Doctor's or equivalent respectively. Level 5 is "short-term higher" education, usually designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and abilities, and lasts at least two years. Usually, these courses are based on practical and specific occupations, preparing students for the Labour market. Level 6 courses, or "bachelor's or equivalent", are usually designed to provide participants with an intermediate level of academic/or professional knowledge, skills and abilities leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Level 6 courses are generally theory-based, but may include a practical component, teaching the latest state of the art in research and/or best professional practice. The duration of the course is 4 years. This is consistent with the type orientation and training goals of the 27 undergraduate colleges in Sichuan province, that is, to cultivate application-oriented talents with intermediate academic or professional knowledge and skills.

The "applied" orientation of the 27 newly built undergraduate colleges in Sichuan Province not only accords with the International Standard Classification of Education (2011 edition), but also accords with the current situation of higher education in China and the social demand for education.

2. The "New University Spirit" -- "Service"

The traditional university spirit includes two aspects: On the one hand, it mainly focuses on the eternal values of freedom, democracy, science, humanities and criticism, emphasizing that the university maintains a transcendent attitude toward the secular world, and criticizes the society calmly and leads the direction of the society as the conscience and elite of the society. On the other hand, there is also a tendency to "spiritualize" the understanding of the university spirit to a certain extent, simplifying the university spirit as a noble and spiritual thing, denying the material, utilitarian and vulgar things. The mission of a university is the embodiment of the spirit of a university. The 27 newly built undergraduate colleges in Sichuan reflect the spirit of different traditional university education in the expression of their mission, that is, the "new university spirit". "New university spirit" is in the same vein as the traditional university spirit, but it also has a broader connotation, which is the spirit of "service" or "participation", that is, "serving the local" and "participating in the local construction". Based on the mission and pursuit of the 27 newly built undergraduate colleges, the newly built undergraduate colleges attach great importance to the function of "serving society and local areas".

3. Types of talent training orientation -- innovative, composite applied talents

The talents cultivated by higher education can be generally divided into academic type and applied type. According to the data, at present, the ratio of academic talents and applied talents is roughly 1:4. That is to say, social development and economic construction need a large number of applied talents. In addition to "applied talents", "innovation" and "compound" are high-frequency words in the talent training orientation of newly built undergraduate colleges in Sichuan.

3.1 Innovation

Application-oriented undergraduate talents are not equivalent to traditional subject-oriented talents, nor to skilled talents in the general sense, but a new type of talents with both technology and professional theories, and talents with harmonious development of knowledge, ability and quality.^[4] In the orientation of talent training, many newly built undergraduate colleges in Sichuan have put forward the goals of "innovative spirit" and "innovative thinking".

3.2 Interdisciplinary talents

Compound talents refer to talents who have the basic knowledge and basic ability of two (or more, but generally two) majors (or disciplines). The knowledge structure and ability structure of compound talents have the characteristics of multiple integration. This integration is not a simple addition of a variety of knowledge and ability, but an organic combination and mutual penetration between knowledge and ability, so as to achieve a state of integration, forming a variety of knowledge, ability and quality integration and play a comprehensive role. In order to meet the needs of local development, compound talents have become an urgent demand of the society. The new undergraduate colleges in Sichuan all put forward the characteristics of "compound" in the orientation of talent training.

4. Talents training curriculum system -- flexible

Application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities do not require a comprehensive system of knowledge, but the best combination of theoretical knowledge and practical ability. In the Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Teaching and Training quality talents to meet the needs of the 21st Century, the Ministry of Education put forward the concept of "weakening professional consciousness, broadening the foundation, strengthening quality education and ability training". The curriculum of newly built undergraduate colleges can neither copy the curriculum system of "emphasizing subject knowledge and theoretical innovation" of research universities, nor copy the "skill-based" curriculum system of higher vocational colleges, but explore a "new" curriculum system, that is, under the premise of ensuring basic knowledge, increase the space for the choice of professional courses. So as to provide more "flexibility" for students to "specialize in their professional trades".

Newly built undergraduate colleges, as a fresh force for cultivating high-quality applied talents, are still in the stage of transformation and development, and many aspects are still being explored, especially in the construction of dual-professional and dual-ability teachers, connotation construction and the mining of school characteristics.

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