Problems and Countermeasures to Students’ Educational Management in the New Branch Campus of the University

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Abstract. The educational management of college students in new campuses is faced with numerous difficulties and challenges which constrain and influence the qualities of talent cultivation. By taking Lanzhou University of Technology as the research object, the author investigates the major problems in students’ educational management in the new campus, and their causes and influences on qualities of talent cultivation. The result suggests that the university should develop new thought and countermeasures by establishing excellent and high-quality teams for student affairs, building favorable atmosphere for teachers, enriching the university’s cultural activities and strengthening the university’s network construction.

Introduction

With the gradual completion of merging and adjusting of colleges and universities, the school-running pattern of multi-campus university is basically formed to solve numerous contradictions. However, this school-running pattern also brings various innegligible problems objectively, especially problems about the educational management of students (main bodies of a university)\textsuperscript{[1-2]} Following problems generally exist in students’ educational management in new campuses of a multi-campus university: For example, there exist various contradictions in balancing the scattered distribution of campuses and actual effect of management, combining the functional orientation with student levels and combination of liberal arts and sciences, and balancing the campus differences and resource sharing principle. The problems are closely related to the students’ educational management and need to be solved urgently. By taking Lanzhou University of Technology as the research object, the authors investigated the major problems in students’ educational management in the new campus, and their causes and the influences on qualities of talent cultivation. Moreover, they put forward corresponding ideas and countermeasures.

Problems Caused by Student Management in the New Branch Campus and the Influence on Qualities of Talent Cultivation

Complying with the development requirements of higher education in China and the strategy demands of developing Gansu to a powerful industrial province, Lanzhou University of Technology constructed a new branch campus in merely two years (2002~2004). The new campus covering more than 1,300 mu (about 866,666.7 m\textsuperscript{2}) is located in Gongjiawan of Lanzhou, a suburban area which is more than 4 km to the main campus and the students are all in junior grade managed with the complete credit system in terms of education. Students’ educational management in the new campus is faced with new difficulties and challenges which limit and influence the qualities of talent cultivation.

Difficulty increase in students’ educational management and safety owing to junior students far away from the main campus. At present, students in the new branch campus have reached to more
than 15,000. Compared with previous school-running with a single campus, the university and colleges need to put more human resources and energies in student management of the new campus and the management is rather difficult. For example, almost all colleges lack of the instructors in charge of students’ ideology and politic education and therefore the new campus is understaffed in student management at the very beginning. Additionally, there are a few stationed-staff every night in the new campus. However, the junior students have weak self-discipline and self-defensive abilities and they are greatly free with a low constraint under the credit system. The loose process management easily causes various problems: students lack of senses of group honor and social responsibility and do not keep the discipline. These situations make it hard to manage students and ensure students’ safety.

New buildings, short history and light cultural atmosphere of the new campus influencing the cultivation of students’ humanistic spirit and healthy growth[3]. The new branch campus of Lanzhou University of Technology is built in the recent five years, with comfortable environments and advanced hardware equipments, which creates new opportunities and builds new platforms for the long-run development of the university. On the whole, although the hardware equipments of the new campus are advanced and even better than those of the main campus, it is hard to effectively utilize the resources because it takes time to get familiar with whether software or hardware. Moreover, having a certain distance to the main campus, the new campus is built for a short time with an insignificant humanistic atmosphere, so the cultural environment and atmosphere of the new campus are inferior to those of the main campus. The new branch campus lacks of rich academic atmosphere of scientific research and historical and cultural connotations in the universities such that students are short of impact, interaction and permeation between urban and campus cultures. In the early stage of entering into the new branch campus, students with less social experience are unfamiliar with surroundings and lack of senior students’ assistance and guidance. In the new branch campus, except for hasty course teachers and administrators, there are fewer faculties in each discipline and the permanent teachers are on duty in turns. There are fewer symposiums, expert forums, employment information, social practice, scientific and technological activities, and sports competitions. It causes that students in the new branch campus acquire less information in the campus life, which is unfavorable for students’ healthy growth[4].

Large scale and imperfect equipments of the new branch campus influencing students’ senses of identity and belonging to the university. Compared with the main campus, the new branch campus covers a larger area and there are larger amounts of students in the new branch campus. However, the new branch campus is in service at the same time of construction which leaves obvious construction traces and imperfect supporting facilities. This makes students especially concentrate on the environments of the new branch campus. Once the status of the new campus does not conform to students’ expectation, students’ (especially the freshmen) longing and yearning for the university are reduced, so various problems occur including emotional instability, psychological gap and unhealthy psychology. Therefore, students’ senses of identity and belonging to the university reduce.

Complex surrounding environment and many potential safety hazard in the new branch campus influencing the socialization process of students. The new branch campus of Lanzhou University of Technology is far away from the busy towns and lacks of urban atmosphere, recreational facilities, and commercial networks. In contrast, students often keep in touch with the urban residents who used to be farmers. The concepts and technologies of modern cities are absent in the surrounding environment. As a result, students of the new branch campus cannot be interacted with metropolis all the time and fully influenced by the concept of modern market economy, so they have no chance to fully understand modern society. In order to survive, the surrounding residents who just get rid of farming take many actions including setting up non-standard Internet bars and irregular markets and even constructing plenty of hourly rooms by virtue of dense population of the university. It greatly influences the students with poor self-control ability and easily causes psychological emptiness. Moreover, the new branch campus is located in complex surrounding environment where the country roads show poor conditions and some crossroads even lack of traffic lights which resulting
in a disordered traffic. In addition, as it is hard to renovate the surrounding environment, numerous potential safety hazards exist. Due to complex social external environment with many safety hazards, students do not have enough opportunity to take part in social practices, which influences their socialization process.

Long distance between the two campuses and inconvenient transportation influencing the communication between teachers and students and delaying students’ growth process. The new branch campus of the university is located in suburban area which is several kilometers away from the main campus. Although the transportation of the new campus greatly improves with the development of city transportation, the traffic between the two campuses is still inconvenient. There is no residential area for teaching staff and the course teachers attend classes by regular buses and after classes, they leave the campus at once by buses. Teachers basically take the school bus with a finite numbers in fixed time, so they often hastily come and go lest they miss the school bus. Thus, teachers do not have time to answer students’ questions and communicate with students. Except for finite daily administrators and staff for student affairs, students hardly see course teachers in the new branch campus. Therefore, student only can acquire finite knowledge and cannot feel the mien and personality charm of teachers. Moreover, it is hard for students to be edified by qualities of outstanding teachers and to conduct multi-dimensional ideal and information communications with teachers. Students cannot improve their cognitive levels and methods of interaction with others through communication, so they tend to be blind and have mental blocks while facing diversified choices. Each of the new-generation staff for student affairs who just takes the job or works for a short time needs to take charge of more than 300 students. Under such condition, they hardly communicate with students thoroughly. In addition, due to lacks of education experience and professional ethics or having underlying problems in other aspects, they cannot accurately master students’ ideas and come up with corresponding countermeasures. Additionally, students show low self-management and self-control abilities and lack of self-discipline ability, so there is no doubt that the growth process of students is delayed in the new branch campus.

Main Countermeasures for Solving the Problems of Student Management in the New Branch Campus

The above difficulties and problems faced in the new branch campus greatly influence the development of the university and the qualities of talent cultivation. Thus, it is inevitable to follow scientific outlook on development. Moreover, the university should stick to the teacher- and student-oriented ideas, explore new management modes of the new branch campus, take feasible, effective measures and finally solve the main existing problems during the implementation of the scientific outlook on development. This can ensure the stability of students in the new campus and the sound and fast development of the university. The main countermeasures are displayed as follows:

Optimally allocating the staff for student affairs in the new branch campus and establishing excellent, high-quality student affair staff team. The student affairs in the new branch campus are not a work can be done by anyone. The work requires that the educators are multi-talents who not only have high awareness and political sensitivity, profound computational knowledge and necessary psychological and management knowledge but also are persons of exemplary virtue and make devotion to work. While allocating the instructors in the new branch campus, new and veteran employees who can endure the loneliness and have work experience, high awareness and strong abilities should be selected. Especially, it is important to check whether the instructors are responsibility for works, love students and are patient to deal with trivial things. Among these requirements, responsibility is the most important. One with the sense of responsibility can be responsible for his or her and others’ behaviors and therefore will make efforts to deal with student affairs in the new branch campus. Educators meeting these requirements can make reports to the upper level and deliver information to the lower level, which provides a favorable basis for students’ educational management in various colleges.

Stabilizing and gradually expanding the permanent teacher teams in the new branch campus to
build favorable atmosphere of teacher culture. The permanent staff in the new branch campus mainly include some student supervisors who take turns on duty, watchers and security guards for apartment buildings. Some course teachers tend to come and go in a hurry and some excellent professors, experts and scholars of the university hardly show up. Thus, it is necessary to make efforts to build faculty housing, so that teachers can fit in students in daily life. By doing so, students can not only learn finite knowledge but also closely experience the teaching mien and personality charm of teachers so that students have more opportunities to be edified by qualities of excellent teachers. On this basis, students can strengthen the multi-dimensional ideological communication and information exchange with teachers to build favorable atmosphere of teacher culture.

Further enriching the campus activities and strengthening students’ sense of identity for the university. The construction of cultural environment and humanistic atmosphere of the new branch campus is relatively lagging. Due to relatively inaccessible information, students hardly know major decision-makings or activities happening at present or in the future involving various fields of the university including teaching, scientific research and industrial development. As a result, students lack of the sense of identity for the university. Therefore, it is necessary to enrich academic atmosphere of scientific research and historical cultural connotation in the new campus. At the same time, the university should overcome difficulties to hold major conferences or activities involving teaching, scientific research, degree declaration, student management and industrial development in the new branch campus, as well as expert forum, symposium and international exchange. This can promote the combination and collision between students and various cultures. In addition, it enables student to fully take part in colorful activities to broaden horizons and enrich knowledge during the study. Besides, it sustains the happy longing and yearning of students (especially junior students) for the university and strengthens students’ senses of identity for the university.

Strengthening network construction of the university and promote the information transfer and interaction communication between the two campuses. It is necessary to further strengthen the network construction of the university to form a networking university where the new branch campus is closely associated with the main campus. Moreover, it is inevitable to further update the websites for the ideological and political education and those of various colleges and timely supplement and update educational contents to strengthen the readability and pertinence. Also, it is indispensable to add new channels for students to propose opinions and suggestions to the university, strengthen the students’ interactions between the new branch campus and the main campus and timely solve the problems put forward by students. The campus network requires being able to provide students with dynamic information of the university, so that students’ can track the teaching, scientific research, management and service information and also receive assistances and educations. Additionally, the university can establish on-line classes and an on-line answer system, and the colleges can encourage students to make the class websites and build up on-line classes. By doing so, the interaction and communication between teachers and students as well as between students of the new branch campus and the main campus can be further strengthened so as to make up for the shortcoming of the university in students’ educational management.

Conclusion

To sum up, students’ educational management of the new branch campus is faced with severe situation. Therefore, the university should regard the construction and development of the new branch campus as the first priority, fully implement the policy of consolidation, deepening, improvement and development and transfer the focus to improve teaching quality and qualities of talent cultivation. Moreover, the university needs to persist in consolidating existing achievements, continuously deepening reform, and constantly improving the vitality and energy of educational mechanism. Additionally, the university should adhere to strict teaching requirements and strengthen management to guarantee the healthy development of various causes in the new branch campus including teaching and daily student management.
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References