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Construction of Social Service Ability of University Humanities and Social Sciences

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Abstract

Improving social service ability of university humanities and social sciences is not only the new demand responding to the major theoretical and practical problems, but also the mission of promoting the national soft power. The paper puts forward some suggestions for improving social service ability of university humanities and social sciences by describing current situation and analyzing problems, which helps improve the path so as to enhance the level of social service ability of university humanities and social sciences to a new height.

Key words: University; Humanities and social sciences; Social service; Ability construction

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INTRODUCTION

Mankind is experiencing a knowledge economy era, the fierce competition in today's world mainly appears as the

competition of knowledge, knowledge replaces material capital and becomes the most important production factor in economic development. University is not only a treasure-house of talent, but also a base of knowledge innovation, higher education should be the important force in social service and national prosperity. "Higher education is part of the society more than any time in the past, as a result, less out of society, this is likely to be more and more corrective in the future." (Kerr & Wang, 2002, p.273).

As we all know, the meaning of social service of university has broad sense and narrow sense, the broad sense of which refers to the process where university starts from the purposes and goals of the foundation of the schools established by the country, based on the function, ability and resources of the schools themselves, to satisfy various kinds of demands of higher education expected by the society in the practice of running a school initiatively (Xu, 2004), the narrow sense of which refers to university as an academic organization which provides services for the specific requirements of the society directly. Mr.Hu Jintao made it clear in his speech on the 100-year Anniversary of Tsinghua University that improving the quality of service is constantly the lifeline of higher education. To improve the quality of higher education comprehensively, university must enhance the level of talent training, strengthen scientific research ability, serve economic and social development, promote the innovation in cultural heritage vigorously (The Secretary of the headmaster to implement the spirit of General Secretary Hu Jintao important speech, 2011). The important speech has left a far-reaching historical and realistic significance, which has cleared the social service function of university and pointed out the direction for value realization of university. Meanwhile, serving the society is not only one of the important missions of modern university, but also the important foundation for humanities and social sciences to realize discipline innovation, maintain vitality and transform into actual productivity.

The 6th plenary Session of 17th CPC central committee pointed out that the world today is in the period of great development, of great transformation and of great adjustment, while China has entered the critical period of comprehensive construction of well-off society, deepening reform, opening up and accelerating the transition of economic development mode, it's also in the important period of strategic opportunities for China to develop to its full, science and technology develop rapidly, all kinds of social and cultural ideological hyperactive, ideological dominance battle actively.

As the important force to promote social development, the connection between university and social economic development has become closer and closer, while university goes from the edge to the center of society gradually. It has become a common view that education can promote economic development, and university has an irreplaceable role in social and economic development. For this, the scientific research workers of higher education in China should be with huge political courage, theoretic courage, practical courage and fine style of work, to give full play for their think-tank role, and based on new heights, they should broaden new vision, grasp the world development trend and the basic national conditions of the primary stage of socialism accurately, by fully using the Marxist stand, viewpoint and methodology, research stage characteristics of the development of our country more consciously and actively, and summarize experience and lessons, predict questions, solve problems, and explore the law of development, so as to provide theoretical guidance, spiritual motivation and development direction with pertinence, strategic and foresight, using new theoretical achievements to promote the political, economic, cultural, social, ecological civilization construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, to grasp the international struggle initiative in thought and theory field firmly, and bring about social progress.

1. PRESENT SITUATION AND RESULTS OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Since the reform and opening up, along with the establishment and perfection of the socialist market economic system, profound changes have taken place in China's universities, the scale, structure, quality and efficiency of the higher education have optimized constantly. For a long time, the general higher education workers have been persisting in emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts and advancing with times, with full enthusiasm and scientific spirit in innovation and dedication so the education level and scientific research strength have grown noticeably, the ability of solving important theoretical and practical problem has been improved obviously, and the ability and range to participate in the international dialogue have

been expanded greatly, giving out a large number of outstanding achievements with widespread impact, a batch of academic leaders and young and middle-aged backbone for teaching and scientific research were emerged, which provided ideological source, talent team, theory support and innovation power for the more than 30 years' rapid development of economy and society in China, and made important contribution to boosting Marxism localization, modernization and popularization and to further boom and develop China's higher education quality and the ability of university social service.

Southwest University as a national "211 project" construction key university in China, growing along with the reform and opening up, has yielded fruitful results. For instance, the merged Southwest university has established complete disciplines system containing every field of philosophy social science, and the overall layout formed gradually; Nature and humanities social science have been developing hand in hand constantly, and formed many the national-and-the world leading advantage disciplines, such as silkworm gene, pedagogy, psychology, and so on, especially after a long period of accumulation, the university has owned a group of advantage disciplines and influential scholars across the country, which laid a good foundation for further development and upgrading for the school, with a batch of high-quality talents to society; The team engaged in teaching and scientific research is vast, discipline, age, professional title structure become more reasonable, a group of passionate and strong young scholars are moving toward the frontier of discipline development. The construction of subject base platform has made a very good start, the number of scientific research project increases year by year, research capabilities increase constantly, and the school is at the forefront of the western colleges and universities. The management team is minded with strong sense of responsibility and consciousness of service, and has created a nice environment for scientific research. Social service network improved constantly, the rate of achievement conversion rise year by year, the school has submitted a lot of advice and policy documents to the governments at all levels for promoting the local economic and social development, and providing a number of technical support for the economic entities.

Although the social service has achieved fruitful results, yet there are also some problems, that is, the consciousness of linking theory with practice should be strengthened; social service quality needs to be promoted; the ability of client administration and education remains to be improved; management operation mechanism should be innovated; the construction of the interdisciplinary talent team needs to be sped up; the building of applied and consulting institutions especially the think-tank needs to be accelerated; the international voice needs to be improved.

2. COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS

Although the social service of university humanities & social sciences has made great achievements, there still exists big gap compared with the expectation of the people, mainly manifested in the following: Attaching more importance to theory than practice, which resulted in the low rate of achievements transformation; Attaching more importance to quantity than quality, and made some researchers being keen to “short, flat, fast” project; Attaching more importance to duplication than innovation, which made China’s higher education development not match the status of cultural superpower. All of these affect the social service level and efficiency of university in different degrees, therefore, intending to rectify the situation, improve the ability and level so that Southwest University can serve China’s economy and society better, and full play its positive role in political civilization, economic civilization, social civilization, spiritual civilization and ecological civilization, the massive education workers must be with huge political courage, theoretic courage, practical courage and fine style of work, and find out the focus of social service, joining into the torrent of university, serving the economic society, and creating great achievements worthy of the great era. So countermeasures must be taken in the following:

2.1 Building Socialism Core Value System Should Be the Fundamental Task

The university social science workers must surround the theme of scientific development and the mainline of accelerating the transformation of economic development mode closely, with scientific workers going grassroots, turning style, changing the style of writing, paying high attention to influential social and cultural thoughts, grasping the thought pulse of the masses, enhancing the understanding of the situation of the world, of the state and the party, experiencing the reality of grass-roots work, tasting the joy and sorrow of the people life, deriving flash thought and extract innovative elements from the simple words of the masses, finding the proper breakthrough point and combining site for the theoretical research from the vivid practice of grassroots, and search for the key to innovation (Liu, 2011), responding the public opinions and social demands actively, focusing on answering the profound thought and theoretical problem, guiding people to discern the right and wrong of theory and distinguish the major limit, implement the key duty for the government with thorough theoretical research, good top-level design and enough propaganda, provide theory basis, intellectual and decision support for the governing, add the understanding and agreement of the whole society to the major policies of the government, improve the social service ability and level of higher education, make

greater contribution to booming and developing China’s higher education quality further, to deepen the reform of economic system, to promote the socialist economic prosperous, to improve the international influence, and to build economic power.

2.2 Implementing the Primary Mission of Teaching of the Higher Education

At present, the Chinese proportion is very low among the personnel entrancing in international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, which doesn’t match the status of China as an economic superpower. Therefore, we should speed up to cultivate high-end talents with good foreign language, rich knowledge, technical ability of managing all kinds of international affairs, and the nice international vision, to make China play a greater role in the construction and development of the international economic order. The university should unify the leadership, complete system design and overall arrangement of teaching, promote educational reform in important fields and crucial links (Zou, 2010). Paying special attention to the “two courses” teaching, does well in normal “Policy Forum” and “Magic Zone”, setting up the “Distinguished Teaching Post” and so on, letting the socialist core value system fit into the national education, push the philosophy and social science theory system into teaching materials, classrooms and brains, implementing teachers’ collective responsibility for young students, helping them firm ideal faith, temper the character will, set up the correct outlook on life and values, strengthen social responsibility, self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of pride, improve the innovative spirit and practical ability of solving problems (Li & Hu, 2011), to deliver talents with high quality, high level, diversification and innovation for our country’s economic and social development.

2.3 Exalting Advanced Culture Banner and Cultivating the University’s Cultural Soil

Strong and prosperous culture gives impetus to the economic prosperity and decides the China’s international status and future, there will no great revival of Chinese nation without great development and boom of culture. The higher education front of China should become the important producer and creator of culture products and the important disseminator of Chinese culture, promoting socialist advanced culture more deeply rooted in the heart of the people, promoting the construction of socialist spiritual civilization and material civilization, promoting the innovation and reform of cultural system, provide theoretical support for the construction of socialist culture power. Initiating a new situation of the creativity for the whole national culture burst out constantly, with the social and cultural life more rich and colorful, people’s basic cultural rights and interests get better security, and people’s moral quality and cultural quality improve totally.

Defining the glorious mission and historical responsibility of the higher education in the construction of socialist culture power further, through shaping civilization and carrying out the contract system research, so as to lead the forward direction of society, condense the national consensus, pool power of struggle, and promote cultural developing and booming greatly.

2.4 Improve the Reaction Force, the Research Capacity of the University Social Service

The advantage discipline innovation platform of China's universities and the key subject project of the "211 project" should place the social service in the equally important position with the optimization of discipline system, the construction of teaching material and the expansion of talent team (Huang et al., 2010). Setting up "Knowledgeable leaders plan", "young talents project" and "special fund account" together with the local governments and other social organizations, gathering excellent scientific research team in and around school, with the establishment of the "project oriented + intelligence support" school administration in public policy research and decision-making consultation mechanism, keep a close watch on national and local major research projects, launch realistic and forward-looking joint research, condense the Chinese consciousness, contribution measure to solve problems, change passive service and precatory service to active embedded service, advanced service and tracking service, setting up the bridge between theory and public, policy and the people, improving the pertinence, timeliness and effectiveness of social services totally.

2.5 Practicing the Historical Responsibility of Offering Advice and Suggestions to the Party and the State

The intellectuals should transform the mode of scientific research, achieve the docking of discipline construction, scientific research to major theoretical and practical problems, and strengthen academic leadership. By means of editing the continuity internal publications and policy brief, convening the high-end academic conference, hosting senior lectures about "resolving" Chinese problem and seminars about world situation, replacing drafting the documents et al, submitting point-to-point policy recommendations and social dynamic analysis to the government at all levels, expanding achievements conversion rate and utility rate, giving full play to interpretation and construction of national and local governments' important strategic, to promote the healthy and efficient development of social economy.

2.6 Enhancing National Soft Power of the Academic Public Diplomacy

National soft power stands for the wisdom of a nation. Therefore, the university should implement the internationalization strategy for academic research

and social service selectively, well-arrangedly and multi-layeredly, further promote general exchange and cooperation to deep research-based type cooperation, and create conditions actively to found China Studies Centre in overseas and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions. The middle-aged and young elites should be encouraged and supported to go to the famous universities and think tanks around the world to undertake cooperative research, to convey Chinese voice to the international mainstream, to output Chinese wisdom and spread China's development experience to developing countries, so as to promote the understanding of international community on China's basic national conditions, values, development road and domestic and foreign policies. Establishing the system of abroad academic visits, academic exchange, sabbatical leave with purpose and arrangement, hosting or undertaking important international academic conferences, to improve the influence of academic public diplomacy and international voice of the university in our country.

2.7 Strengthening the Think-Tank Quality of the University Social Service

The first is to make full use of "collaborative innovation plan 2011" to construct platforms to recruit academic elites at home and abroad and widen the channel of the "revolving door", so as to raise the internationalization proportion of the team members and condense the academic creativity, facing the emphases and hotspot at home and abroad in the form of theory and improving major theoretical research in practice to achieve lots of fruits of world influence (Sun, 2011). The second is to strengthen cooperation with international famous think-tank, push forward "China project" research steadily, to create chinization international discourse system with agenda setting, discussion leading and policy designing. Setting up special fund, launching jointly publishing with foreign well-known publishers, establishing authoritative foreign language website, outputting influential classic books, DVD, CD, etc. The third is to promote the published proportion and reference frequency of academic papers in overseas authoritative journals, to improve the influence, the core competitiveness and leading force of our think-tank's quality and service in the world.

2.8 Doing Well the Popularization and Universalness Work of the University Social Economic Scientific Knowledge

The university should carry out concrete measures for encouraging and supporting related colleges and teaching and scientific research departments to form "professor advice group", "grassroots services journey", set up "expert online", organize experts to write and publish series of brand theory pulps. Encourage leading academics to be on TV and radio frequently, issue readable articles on the party newspaper and authoritative

network platform, and response the education, housing, employment, medical and other key issues which are concerned by the whole society. Analyseing “what do you think” dialectically and roundly, interpreting “how to do” truly and scientifically, showing the glamour of theory. What’s more, the universities need to be good at using new carriers and new ways such as microblog and blog, to popularize the new knowledge and improve the scientific literacy and scientific spirit of all the nation.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening the construction of social service ability of university is a titanic systematic project, it not only needs university to attach great importance on thoughts, getting further exploration from two aspects of theory and practice, innovating ideas and management style, gearing to the needs of national major concerns and the future, doing well the “top-level design”, clearly guiding ideology, formulating the short-term, medium-term and long-term construction goal adapted to the social development, setting up system guarantee mechanism, but also needs more and more educators and students to participate in, and create a good social environment, starting from ourselves, to fulfill the responsibilities that the university endows to us. We have reason to believe that as long as we work together, the social service ability of China’s social science will certainly leap to a new level.

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