

## Analysis on the Path of Social Service of Humanities and Social Science: A study of Sun Yat-Sen University

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### Abstract

Humanities and social sciences of colleges and universities will not only reflect the soft power of its own research, but also bear the important function of serving the society, and it is an important criterion to measure the level of colleges and universities. This thesis, based on the case analysis method, analyzes the main path of social services of humanities and social science that Sun Yat-Sen University has done, which is to explore the management method of scientific research of humanities and social science and the innovation mode of cooperating with local service platform. Finally, the author offers policy recommendations for other colleges and universities serving the local economic and social development with enlightenment and reference.

**Key words:** Humanities and social sciences; Social service; Colleges and universities

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### INTRODUCTION

The deepness and breadth of social service of humanities and social science, which is an important symbol of the society level of development and human civilization as well as the important force to promote the development of history and the era, and it is also the core of a nation's cultural soft power, which reflects a country's comprehensive national power (Wang, 2011). Humanities and social science in colleges and universities with the solid disciplinary bases, huge talent teams, strong scientific research strength, have played a tremendous role in talents education, technological innovation, social service and civilization enrichment in China. Currently, great changes have taken place in politics, economy and culture around the world, and competition in overall national strength has become increasingly fierce. Moreover, China is in the critical stage of the comprehensive transition and development (Zhu, 2011). Under the macro environment above, social development and social management will face more extensive and complicated contradictions and problems in future. Therefore, it's necessary for the colleges and universities to improve the quality of social services of humanities and social sciences. It is the inevitable requirement to further broaden the width and depth of social services of humanities and social sciences which can raise the level of social services, strengthen the national soft power and compete internationally. What's more, it is the call of the age which will improve people's livelihood and solidarity and build a comprehensive well-off society in China. At the same time, it is the only choice for colleges and universities to cope with public management and marketization for higher education reform.

Sun Yat-Sen University is one of the elite universities for decades with the rich cultural deposits, and it is the national series of key universities of "211 Project" and the "985 Project" in China. The research of humanities and social sciences has rooted in the fertile soil since

1924 that based on literature, history and philosophy. With the progress of modernization in China, many disciplines have been designed such as industrial and commercial management, public management, regional economics, and the subject system has been further developed and perfected. Depending on the endeavor by several generations of the leading collective and the intelligent & learned masters as well as the scientific research workers, humanities and social science of Sun Yat-Sen University has formed the characteristics with perfect subject system, strong capability in innovation, optimal team structure, complete mechanism on Industry-university-research cooperation, fruitful social services and orderly management operation. Sun Yat-Sen University has obtained the remarkable social benefits from government decision-making consultation, political construction of spiritual civilization, cultural inheritance, talents cultivation, inter-school cooperation, and has accumulated valuable experiences in social service of humanities and social science for colleges and universities, therefore, Sun Yat-Sen University has been fully approved by government departments and appraised by the communities. It is of great realistic significance to analyze the main paths of humanities and social science of Sun Yat-Sen University in social services, which can help other colleges and universities to develop the construction of humanities and social science disciplines, create the distinctive, powerful and influential think-tanks, and promote the ability of social service and so on.

## 1. THE MAIN PATHS OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Sun Yat-Sen University has adhered to its strategic positioning of “international standards, the country needs”, and has taken many measures to improve the scientific research strength and strengthen the foundation for social service, thus constructing the characteristic path of social service.

### 1.1 Play the Leading Roles of Leaders and Inspire Scholars' Consciousness of Social Service

The key to the prosperity of humanistic and social science is to need more attentions paid by the leaders in colleges and universities. The party and administrative leadership of Sun Yat-Sen University has attached great importance to the development for the construction of humanities and social science through the ways of supervision or personal leading, which has greatly encouraged the experts and scholars in scientific research and social service. The first is to actively advocate the concepts of “university is academic community”, “the professors form a university”, “be kind to students” and “everyone wants to learn” (The Development Program of Sun Yat-Sen University During Twelfth-five Period) to build the loose academic

atmosphere and harmonious interpersonal relationship, and through the guidance of public opinion and organizational learning to enhance the consciousness of student-oriented and social service of liberal arts teachers. The second is to set an example in leading. The party secretary and principal of the school have initiated and chaired the working conference of humanities and social science, in order to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the experts and scholars, and have made explicit requirements on how to boom the humanities and social science. The third is to participate in the development planning of humanities and social science and take various measures to support it, and encourage scholars to grasp the quality of education, and at the same time actively focus on the major issues from the academic frontiers and the economic and social development, so as to offer advice for the government. The fourth is to attach great importance to overall layout of the academic prosperity planning, determine the strategic focus, promote the characteristic construction of the first level disciplines and subject clots and build the core competence so as to improve the domestic and international influence of humanities and social science. So far many disciplines have been crowned with national key disciplines, such as anthropology, modern Chinese history, Chinese ancient history and logic, and a batch of disciplines have been qualified with granting Master's and Doctor's degrees, such as history and philosophy. Sun Yat-Sen University has further improved the ability of social service of humanities and social science through constructing the key disciplines, and promote the enthusiasm of teaching and scientific research of liberal arts teachers.

### 1.2 Establish Key Research Bases and Form Powerful Scientific Research Teams

Without the support of the key research bases and innovative research teams, the ability of social service of humanities and social science in colleges and universities will be discounted. Sun Yat-Sen University has attached great importance to establishing the scientific research institutions of humanities and social science, and has taken a variety of measures to establish and develop the talent teams of scientific research. The first is to improve the management system of scientific research institutions for liberal arts, strengthen the functions of management service, optimize the allocation of resources. Therefore, in 2004, Sun Yat-Sen University enacted “*Measures for the Administration of Humanities and Social Science Research Institutions of Sun Yat-Sen University*”, which fostered and established the scientific research institutions that have “a clear direction and characteristics for research”, and can “promote the development of disciplines or meet the needs of national and local socioeconomic development in some aspects in basic research and applied research” (Measures for the Administration of Humanities and Social Science Research Institutions of Sun Yat-Sen

University). Therefore, in order to further standardize and strengthen the management of university research funding and improve efficiency in the use of funds to ensure the healthy development of university research, in 2005, Sun Yat-Sen University enacted the other regulation of “*Measures for the Administration of Scientific Research Funds of Sun Yat-Sen University*”. The second is to centralize the superior resources, build the key research bases, and strengthen its academic status. Depending on the national support and school resources, Sun Yat-Sen University has established 6 key research institutes of humanities and social science in China, including The Marxist Philosophy and Modern Research Institute of China, The Institute of Logic and Cognition, The Center for Studies of Hong Kong, Macao and Pearl River Delta, The Center for Chinese Public Administration Research, The Center for Historical Anthropology, The Center for Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Research. Otherwise, another 8 key research institutes of humanities & social science have been awarded by Guangdong province. As a result, the liberal arts of Sun Yat-Sen University has been provided a stronger foundation and its strength of scientific research increased substantially. The third is to insist on taking the key disciplines and research bases as a support, and introducing external talents and cultivating internal talents, so as to set up the innovative scientific research teams of those who are well-versed in both Chinese and Western cultures and have a good grasp of professional knowledge. For example, college of business management pays special attention to the introduction of advanced talents, in recent years, the introduction of teachers who graduated from overseas having reached 23, which accounted for 85% of the total number of newly introduced teachers.

### **1.3 Strengthen Scientific and Objective Evaluation System and Mobilize the Enthusiasm of Teachers**

A sound and objective system of scientific research evaluation can not only improve the quality of research of humanities and social science, but also mobilize the enthusiasm of scientific research workers; at the same time it will play an important role in political guidance for their research priorities and research directions. Humanities and social science of colleges and universities in China hasn't have a reasonable and unified criterion for evaluation for a long time, in view of this phenomenon, the academic committee of liberal arts of Sun Yat-Sen University has adopted “*Catalogue of Core Periodicals of Humanities and Social Science, Sun Yat-Sen University (The Revised Edition, 2011)*” after soliciting opinions widely from various units. Meanwhile, in the light of the different types of countermeasure research and fundamental theoretical research, the catalogue has added an article 12 about the “degree of recognition” of “application of countermeasure for research report”. These

principles have further improved the evaluating criterion of research results in humanities and social science, and fully mobilize the enthusiasm of teachers, and encourage them to study the major issues deeply related to economic and social development and provide better services for local economy. In addition, Sun Yat-Sen University has reversed the tendency of the past of valuing basic study and latitudinal study rather than application study and longitudinal study, enhanced the degree of recognition for latitudinal projects, and encouraged scientific research workers with local enterprises to expand exchanges and cooperation in various fields and improved the ability of services for local economic and social development and achievement transformation. Furthermore, consulting reports and policy recommendations have been equally treated like treatises and papers in achievement evaluation, especially the weights of indexes of research results have been raised for resolving the important realistic problems.

### **1.4 Intensify Policy Support and Promote Interdisciplinary Integration**

“Entering into 21<sup>st</sup> century, the study of humanities and social science in China has changed obviously, which has presented some new trends and characteristics. One is that the study of traditional single disciplines turns to interdisciplinary study and the tendency has been the mainstream” (Liang, 2009). Because of the complexity and comprehensiveness of humanities and social science in research, more and more scholars collaborate across domains and disciplines nowadays. The purpose of “*Cultivation for Major Projects and Emerging Discipline, Inter-discipline Funding Projects, Sun Yat-Sen University (Arts)*” is to focus on “the major issues of interdisciplinary convergence, innovative research methods, new growth points of disciplines”, and “the research initiative of arts development strategy should combine with the current situation of the development of the school of arts so as to put forward a constructive and innovative development strategy and the top-level design.” Moreover, Sun Yat-Sen University has developed a series of research funding systems to ensure there are plenty of funds and a sound system to support the projects of humanities and social science. For instance, the aim of “*Research Foundation of Arts for Young teachers, Sun Yat-Sen University*” is to encourage young teachers or researchers to participate in the projects that are conducive to the development of local society. Furthermore, the policies have played an important role in the cultivation for interdisciplinary teams and the stimulation for scholars of humanities and social sciences, such as “*Development of Humanities and Social Sciences Fund Project, Sun Yat-Sen University*”, “*Training Program of Interdisciplinary Research of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sun Yat-Sen University*”. Therefore, Sun Yat-Sen University has enhanced its competitiveness and influence in the field of humanities and social sciences through the support of those policies above.



## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Humanities and social science of Sun Yat-Sen University has achieved good economic and social benefits and provided a model for other colleges and universities in social service. We can get several important implications for humanities and social science of colleges and universities from the aspects in consciousness of social service, construction of platforms, research management and development planning for humanities and social science.

### 2.1 Strengthen the Consciousness of Social Service

The degree of attentiveness of leading group influence deeply the construction of disciplines and the promotion of social service. First of all, university leaders should attach great importance to the development of humanities and social science in top-level design, scientific idea updating, cultivation of ministrant consciousness. In combination with the advantages and conditions of universities, they can also take the measures through holding academic forum and academic conferences or assigning scholars to attend various academic exchange activities, which intensify the propaganda of public opinions, so as to improve the enthusiasm of social services of researchers. Secondly, creating a good social service environment and providing favorable conditions and platforms, such as policy support, resource allocation, organizational reform, institutional improvement and other supports to the workers of humanities and social science. Finally, for a long time, the research of humanities and social science has focused mainly on the traditional academic exploration that lack of practice research, and many social workers have been limited in small range of areas, thus they may be difficult to adapt to the needs of the fast-changing world. Therefore, leaders should pay more attention to the management activities to guide academic teams, so that they can gradually realize that they should focus on the strategic, forward-looking, global issues, and take the important theoretical and practical problems as their main directions and combine the basic study with application study. Only by raising consciousness of social service from leaders to scientific research personnel, do they make full use of the function of think tanks and brain tanks with local government and enterprises in scientific research cooperation.

### 2.2 Focus on Social Hot Spots and Respond Quickly to Them

Humanities and social sciences is a group of disciplines which are based on human and their modes of social existence (Fang et al., 2005). Because of the particularity of humanities and social science, scholars in universities should pay close attention to social real problems and solve the problems in the process of economic and social development that various new and complicated contradictions arise. Because social hot issues are related

to the livelihood of people, therefore, it is conducive to built the harmonious society if we response to wide public concern in time. Thus, there requires that social workers should pay attention to field survey and understanding in-depth the status of local economy, at the same time they need to strengthen the connection and cooperation with universities, governments, enterprises, institutions and the general labor groups. only in this way can we take advantage of subjective initiative to response to social hot issues rapidly. First, Universities can get their scientific research organization form innovated by co-building research institutions, cultivating urgently needed talents and carrying out the interscholastic high-end academic exchanges in order to make their respective advantages contributing well. Second, one of the functions of humanities and social science of colleges and universities is to provide advice and services for government departments in decision-making and help the government to make decision-making more scientifically. Therefore, it will be conducive to the function of social service with helping the government formulate a long-term planning and regulations for sustainable local development, and can help managers formulate enterprise strategies, developing the organizational culture and establish organizational structure. Third, colleges and universities can organize a various of welfare activities such as legal aid, mobile library for community residents who are useful to enhance regional humanistic quality and quality of life. Humanities and social science is rooted in society, however, caring for the society and its development are the ways for humanity and social science's survival and development.

### 2.3 Innovate Management Mode of Scientific Research and Create an Environment for Social Service

A flexible management system of scientific research is the prerequisites to carry out academic research and social service effectively. Combining with the experience of Sun Yat-sen University, we can see that the ability of social service of humanities and social science depends on the communication and coordination between different departments and the innovations in the construction of research bases and disciplines, the management system and the achievement evaluation system. First, because the advantages of disciplines are based on different regions, cultures, customs and the level of economic development, therefore, the construction of disciplines should be subject to the characteristics of the university itself and the actual situations. Moreover, the university should look for its accurate position and use its profound accumulation of advantages of humanities and social science in communication, psychology, ethics, culturology, or economics, management, law and so on, and then meet the needs of the society in different aspects and levels. Second, the construction of scientific research bases should take the social needs as its guide, at the same

time, strengthen the consciousness of social service and improve the ability of social service. Third, colleges and universities should provide guarantee institutions and policy supports for the development of humanities and social science. Besides, they can play an important role of the think tanks in the construction of political civilization and spiritual civilization through their study bases, advantages of disciplines, study teams. Finally, as perfect scientific research evaluation and achievement conversion mechanism are helpful for mobilizing the enthusiasm of humanities and social science workers, therefore, it needs to formulate the scientific evaluation system that can carry out the assessment of scientific efforts to ensure fairness, reasonableness and efficiency for researchers.

#### **2.4 Build the Study Platforms and Open the Channels of Social Service**

Colleges and universities possess the human resources advantages, but they lack the capability of transition into production, so it's necessary to build up platforms with social institutions and it can make the theory of colleges and universities and scientific research achievements into real social economic benefits (Chen, 2011). We can get some experience of how to build up platforms of humanities and social science effectively and raise the transformation rate of scientific research results from Sun Yat-Sen University. First of all, humanities and social science should take the initiative to solve problems encountered in production management for enterprises and institutions, help enterprises make strategic planning, organizational structure design, improve the efficiency of organization and management communication, and continually improve the accumulation of experience in scientific research in colleges and universities during the interaction with enterprises. Second, strengthen the training for professional personnels. Nowadays the development of society depends on human resources, the talents who have a solid professional knowledge and rich experience are the core of organizational development, and the driving force for the platforms. Therefore, it has great promotion effects on the introduction and training of relevant personnels for the promotion and sustainable development of organizational competitiveness. The last is to improve the transformation rate of scientific achievements. The construction of the platforms, in the final analysis, is for the transformation rate of scientific achievements and the social economic benefits. Thus, it needs to create a harmonious atmosphere among universities, governments, enterprises and institutions, optimize the platform environment and increase policy support to promote the development of integration of production-study-research cooperation and play the maximum benefits of humanities

and social science. through the carrier of social platforms, humanities and social science can get more benefits for society and people.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Social service is not only one of the four functions of colleges and universities, but also a kind of responsibility and glorious mission for colleges and universities. Prosperity of humanities and social science is in favour of the improvement of the ability of social service, and it plays an important role in China's socialist modernization drive and the progress of the socialist harmonious society. Colleges and universities need to change their concepts, strengthen the construction and management of humanities and social science, promote the interdisciplinary fusion and the integration of producing, studying and researching, further expand the depth and breadth of social service, so as to set up a good social service bridge between university and society and then improve the ability of social service for local social economy and culture.

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