

Research on University Specialty Construction Operational Mechanism and the Practices: An Analysis Based on Southwest University Rongchang Campus

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Abstract

In the new era and new normal background China's higher education continues to reform and develop, university specialty construction is the foundation and prerequisite for this development. University specialty construction operational mechanism refers to the generic term of the systems and operational mechanisms involved in a variety of optimal allocation of resources around the center of specialty construction. Based on the "multidimensional synergic" operational mechanism of Southwest University Rongchang Campus specialty construction, the practices including teaching organization, teaching personnel, discipline and teaching management have been implemented.

Key words: Colleges and universities; Specialty construction; Operational mechanism; Practice

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INTRODUCTION

Under the great background of comprehensively deepening reform and China's economic new normality,

the construction level of a specialty determines its posture and position in a university. University specialty construction operational mechanism plays an important role. Based on many years of specialty construction in Southwest University Rongchang Campus, exploring specialty construction operational mechanism and practices in order to better carry out the specialty construction is an important topic faced by universities inevitably.

1. DEFINITION OF UNIVERSITY SPECIALTY CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONAL MECHANISM

1.1 Meaning of Operational Mechanism

Every life form and nonliving thing in the real world has its inherent operational mechanism, differentiating only in that some have been known by people, some haven't still been fully or simply can not be figured out, but the concept of mechanism has been widely applied to various aspects of socio-economic activities, e.g. economic mechanism and management mechanism, etc. Mechanism refers to the structure, working method and interrelationship of subsystems in a complex work system, and also refers to a generic term of a running organization and system (Shen & Zhang, 2013).

1.2 University Specialty Construction Operational Mechanism

Specialty comes early from the saying that a specialist only masters in his own field. *Ci Hai* defines specialty as "academic categories divided by colleges or secondary specialized schools according to social division of labors", and states that "each specialty has a separate teaching program to reflect the professional training objectives and specifications" (Liu & Zeng, 2007). It's usually considered that a specialty is formed in

accordance with a variety of professional courses and different combinations. University specialty construction refers to the specialty setting, layout, structure optimization and key specialty construction and support; specifically, a specialty in a university also involves its market demand, personnel training target, personnel training program, practical training, educational and teaching reform, etc.. Obviously, university specialty construction operational mechanism refers to the generic term of the systems and operational mechanisms involved in a variety of optimal allocation of resources around the center of specialty construction, namely, how a university allocates various resources including human, material, financial and information to improve the teaching quality around the center of specialty construction operational mechanism.

2. SPECIALTY CONSTRUCTION OPERATIONAL MECHANISM BASED ON SOUTHWEST UNIVERSITY RONGCHANG CAMPUS

2.1 A Brief History of Southwest University Rongchang Campus

Southwest University Rongchang Campus is the former Sichuan Institute of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine. With China's higher education reform, it has merged with the former Southwest Agricultural University and former Southwest Normal University successively. After 78 years of educational heritage, especially 10 years of rapid development of Southwest University after merger, the characteristics of a high-level multi-disciplinary campus has taken shape. In 2015 it ended many years of regular undergraduate schooling history, set a milestone of key undergraduate schooling, and began the first batch of key undergraduate student enrollment. Hence Southwest University Rongchang Campus was orientated at a high level multi-disciplinary campus. The campus is mainly characterized by animal science, veterinary medicine, aquiculture science and other traditional disciplines, and disciplines around the ultimate market of agricultural and livestock products, including marketing, public utility management, computer science and technology, information management and information system, etc..

2.2 University Specialty Construction Operational Mechanism Based on Southwest University Rongchang Campus

Domestic and foreign universities all attach great importance to specialty development. The operational mechanism formed during many years of adaption to a specialty construction ensures the level and quality of the specialty and lays its position in a university. Southwest University Rongchang Campus has long focused on specialty development, and formed a "multi-dimensional

collaborative" operational mechanism of specialty construction (see Figure 1).

It can be seen from Figure 1 that, under the unified leadership and deployment of Southwest University, the campus has collected a variety of resources and forces, around the scientific orientation of "high-level multi-disciplinary characteristic campus", based on the "multi-dimensional collaborative" operational mechanism of campus specialty construction, conducted specialty layout, key specialty support to ensure a variety of hardware and software conditions for the successful leapfrog development from a regular undergraduate campus to key undergraduate campus. The university, campus, major offices and teaching faculties (departments) have collaborated multi-dimensionally, striving to unite thinking, build consensus, meet opportunities, make leapfrog development, comprehensively deepen and implement specialty construction to develop from a regular undergraduate campus to a key undergraduate campus.

3. PRACTICES OF SPECIALTY CONSTRUCTION "MULTI-DIMENSIONAL SYNERGIC" OPERATIONAL MECHANISM IN SOUTHWEST UNIVERSITY RONGCHANG CAMPUS

3.1 Teaching Organization Construction Under University Specialty Construction "Multi-Dimensional Collaborative" Operational Mechanism

Under the leadership of the university and campus, each faculty (department) is in charge of its own specialty construction work. Within each faculty, according to the basic principle of system theory, principle of combining rights, responsibilities and benefits, and responsibility system of dean, we have built and improved teaching organizations, clarified responsibilities, rights and jobs, carried out hierarchical management, responsibilities, planning and management.

First of all, we have established and improved teaching organizations. According to the sameness or similarity of subjects and actual situation of undertaken teachings, we have set teaching and research sections, laboratories, centers, student affairs offices and other teaching management organizations; established faculty offices, teaching guidance teams, teaching inspection teams and other guidance, supervision and inspection organizations. Various departments have cooperated to ensure that the existing and new disciplines to make progress. Secondly, we have strengthened faculty (department) office building, thoroughly implemented the lines, decisions and policies of CPC, instructions of the higher authorities and decisions of the faculties; assisted

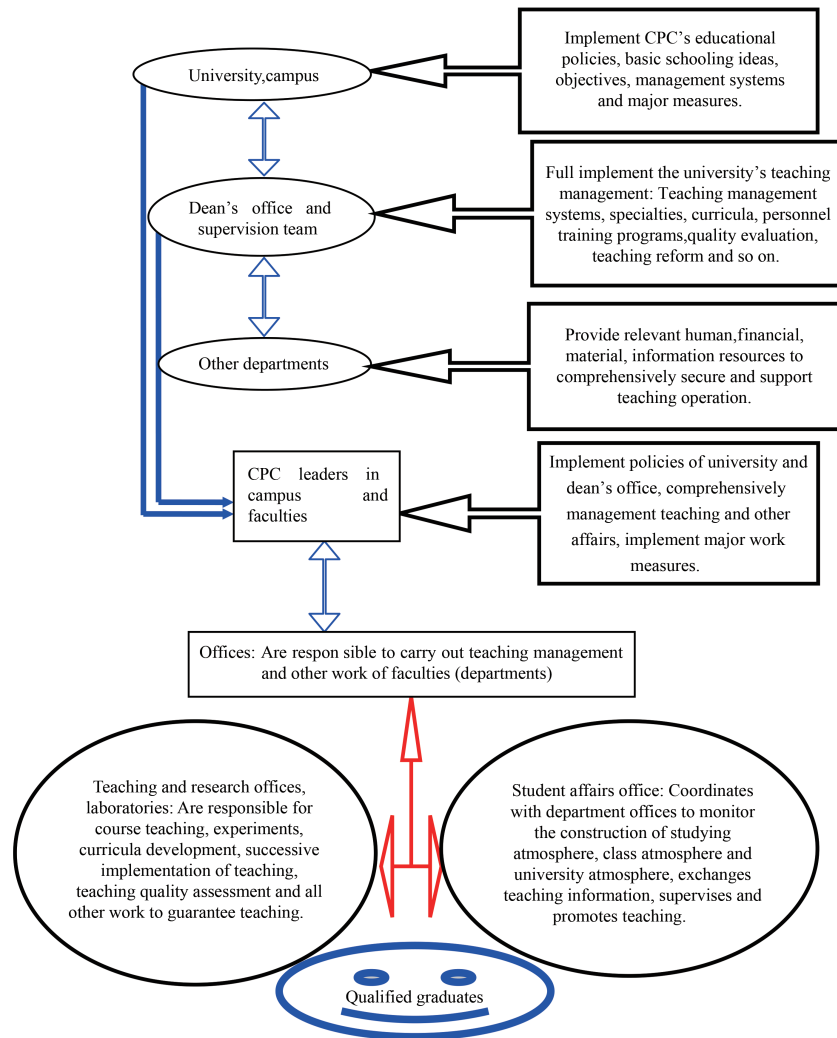


Figure 1
Schematic Diagram of University Specialty Construction “Multi-Dimensional” Operational Mechanism Based on Southwest University Rongchang Campus

deans to understand and check the implementation of teaching authorities' instructions to the university and campus, and faculties' (departments') decisions and arrangements, summed up experience, identified problems and put forward opinions; Organized and coordinated relevant teaching management within faculties, worked together to complete teaching tasks and coordinated the relationships between a department and other work units. Thirdly, strengthened the construction of teaching and research offices, laboratories, centers and specialty reference rooms. Focusing on teaching, carried out researches, seminars, teaching observation, lectures, experience exchanges regularly and irregularly, with members from teaching and research offices; Improved the building of teaching staff, constantly improved the level of teaching and research, and actively put forward ideas for specialty development. Fourthly, strengthened the construction of the student affairs office in each

faculty (department), set counselors, head teachers and other positions. Student affairs office has been responsible for investigating students' ideological trend, continued to strengthen and improve students' ideological management; Improved students' ideological and political work; used ideological and political educational classes, workshops, seminars and other forms to carry out education of situation, mission, life, values, democracy, rule of law, discipline and hard work, improved their capabilities of self-education, self-management, self-service and so on. Fifthly, strengthened the construction of teaching guidance and inspection team. Teaching guidance and inspection team is engaged in educational theory, teaching method, science and technology and related new educational contents, academic development, specialty development, teaching management method and teaching staff, etc., conducts guidance to teaching management in each faculty (department), and is

responsible for introduction and research of relevant theories and teaching assessment.

3.2 Teaching Staff Construction Under University Specialty Construction “Multi-Dimensional Collaborative” Operational Mechanism

University personnel department, campus general office and all faculties have coordinated to strengthen teaching staff construction and improve teachers’ qualities comprehensively. Teaching personnel construction is a basic and eternal topic of university basic construction and the subordinate faculties (departments), is the key to deepen educational reform and improve educational quality, and is also the lifeline to successively operate specialties. Based on the original foundation, teaching staff construction has made great achievements by introducing and training high-level teachers at an annual growth rate of over 25%. We have improved the political quality of teachers, focused on job training, domestic and foreign off-campus training, improved teachers’ professional qualities on the whole, opened up teachers’ knowledge, and improved teachers’ knowledge structures; Established normal flow of teachers, actively introduced doctors and discipline leaders for teaching posts, further improved teaching personnel structure to better meet and adapt to needs; focused on the combination of teaching and research, promoted teachers’ scientific research capacity to promote teachers’ growth. A teaching group with an appropriate scale who can better cultivate key undergraduate professionals has been basically established.

3.3 Discipline Construction Under University Specialty Construction “Multi-Dimensional Collaborative” Operational Mechanism

Under the leadership of the university and campus, five key disciplines including animal nutrition and aquaculture, etc. and two fostered disciplines including enterprise management, etc. led by the campus science and technology office have made remarkable achievements, and laid a good foundation for specialty construction. The scientific and standardized teaching guide of each discipline is the guidance for course teaching, and is the important part of discipline construction. For the existing disciplines and new disciplines, we have conducted researches on the discipline structure, identified the major task, the role in achieving the professional training objectives and required knowledge for each discipline; studied the relations and differences between various disciplines, avoided overlapping and redundant teaching contents, and made a good syllabus for each course. In the developmental process of syllabus, we have taken the teaching and research department as the basic unit, implemented the task of developing syllabus to individual teachers or teams, fully mobilized the enthusiasm of

teachers with high titles and high education, carefully developed curriculum for each discipline, appointed faculty (department) teaching guidance teams to instruct the development of curricula, examined the developed curricula, submitted the qualified curricula to superior departments for approval, and applied to teaching after approval.

3.4 Teaching Management Under University Specialty Construction “Multi-Dimensional Collaborative” Operational Mechanism

We have strengthened teaching management around the center of specialty construction. Firstly, strengthened classroom teaching management. Made every teacher know well about the teaching task, made good ideological work, fully mobilized the enthusiasm of teachers, explored the existing potentials, arranged the teaching task in next semester for each teacher within two weeks before the end of each semester, so every teacher knew early about the teaching task. Secondly, strengthened teachers’ lesson preparation management. The leadership of each faculty (department), director of each teaching and research office have strengthened the management of the purposes, meanings, tasks and methods of lesson preparation, and enhanced teachers’ consciousness for lesson preparation; strengthened teachers’ classroom management. For example: According to the teaching content, teaching object, teaching condition and own strengths, we have chosen the best teaching methods to achieve the best teaching results; When a teacher organized a classroom discussion, he would choose the right topic, content, make the best guide to students for discussion, activate students’ thinking, cultivate students’ abilities to analyze and solve problems. Thirdly, strengthened practical teaching management. Practical teaching is a teaching form to conduct basic skill training and cultivate practical abilities, including productive labor, experiment, practice, course thesis (design), graduation project (design), social survey and other social practices. We did a good job in base construction inside and outside the university, not only realizing 100% opening rate of experimental courses for various specialties, but also making the qualities of experimental courses at or close to the quality requirements of similar specialties in national key universities. Practical teaching must attach importance to teach practice, production practice, graduation practice and so on. Fourthly, strengthened the management of student achievement assessment. Student achievement assessment is an important part of teaching process, which is not only an important means of checking the situation that students have acquired knowledge, but also an important indicator to measure teaching effectiveness, and is the source to continuously improve teaching quality and sum up experience. During assessment, we have continued to improve the examination system, selected appropriate methods to assess students’ achievements in accordance

with the specified time and characteristics of the training programs, and carried out comprehensive teaching inspection.

CONCLUSION

In the great background of comprehensively deepening reform and China's economic new normality, China's higher education is also undergoing reform and development. The construction level of a specialty determines its posture and position in a university, and specialty construction operational mechanism plays an important role. University specialty construction operational mechanism refers to the generic term of the systems and operational mechanisms involved in a variety of optimal allocation of resources around the center of specialty construction, namely, how a university allocates various resources including human, material, financial and information to improve the teaching quality around the center of specialty construction operational

mechanism. Based on the "multidimensional synergic" operational mechanism of Southwest University Rongchang Campus specialty construction, the practices including teaching organization, teaching personnel, discipline and teaching management have been implemented, comprehensively deepening and enhancing the specialty construction of Southwest University Rongchang Campus and forming corresponding characteristics.

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