

Academic Culture and Campus Culture of Universities

Xi Shen

Faculty of Education, Hubei University, Wuhan 430062, China

Xianghong Tian

Hubei University, Wuhan 430062, China

E-mail: shenxi@hubu.edu.cn

Received: February 12, 2012 Accepted: February 28, 2012 Online Published: April 25, 2012

doi:10.5539/hes.v2n2p61

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/hes.v2n2p61>

Abstract

Academic culture of universities mainly consists of academic outlooks, academic spirits, academic ethics and academic environments. Campus culture in a university is characterized by individuality, academic feature, opening, leading, variety and creativity. The academic culture enhances the construction of campus culture. The campus culture conditions and restricts the development of academic culture. The construction strategies of academic culture and campus culture are as follows: university should stick to its mission, enhance cultural confidence and cultural consciousness, integrate culture into the process of talent cultivation, promote cultural development and innovation.

Keywords: Academic culture, Campus culture, University

1. Introduction

Scientific research is one of the fundamental functions of a university and the academic activities, centering on scientific research, are the basic activities of the university. When pursuing their study and doing the research, people on campus usually have their common beliefs in the research and study, shoulder the common academic responsibilities and abide by the common academic norms and regulations, all this will develop a kind of special culture — academic culture on campus. The academic culture enhances the construction of campus culture, while campus culture conditions and restricts the development of academic culture.

2. Components of Academic Culture on Campus

Academic culture on campus is actually the external manifest of the common values, spirits, behavior norms of people on campus who are pursuing and developing their study and research. This kind of culture can be embodied in the rules and regulations, behavior patterns and the material facilities. It mainly consists of academic outlooks, academic spirits, academic ethics and academic environments.

To be exact, academic outlook refers to people's basic viewpoints about academic activities, and it can be subdivided into outlooks on the academic ontology, the academic attitude, the academic purpose, the academic development and the academic evaluation. The outlook on the academic ontology is intended to answer the question "what is academic study". We do think the true significance of academic study should be the ultimate concern for people and society. The outlook on the academic attitude indicates that nowadays two kinds of attitudes should be advocated and emphasized: the matter-of-fact attitude and the attitude of pursuing great ambitions. The outlook on the academic purpose is designated to answer the question "what is academic study for", and at present, the practical purpose of academic study should be stressed and the real prosperous academic study is the study that can solve the practical problems in people's life. The outlook on the academic development deals with how the academic study should be developed, and the academic study should take the social needs and the test of practice as its basic incentive of development. The outlook on academic evaluation deals with how the academic achievements should be assessed and judged, the ideal evaluation mechanism is the combination of both the internal evaluation within the academic groups and the external evaluation of the social, economical needs and also needs of people.

The academic spirits are the thoughts and spiritual power developed and condensed from the long-term academic practice and activities. The academic spirits mainly include the down-to-earth spirits, the explorative spirits, the innovative spirits, the critical spirits, the co-operative spirits, the tolerant spirits, the free-and-open spirits and the spirits of integrating science and humanities.

The academic ethics refers to all the norms and regulations that should be abided by all the people in the academic study and academic activities. It is mainly employed to deal with the relationship between individuals, the relationships between people and society, people and the nature. It mainly includes the norms of academic research, the norms of academic evaluation and the norms of academic criticism. The innovative spirits and scientific spirits should be united in the academic research. The academic evaluation should be based on the facts and also adhere to the principles of objectivity, justice and accuracy. The academic criticism should be scientific, objective, comprehensive and accurate.

The academic environments consist of both the hardware environments and the software environments. The hardware environments mean the material conditions to support the academic research and activities, such as the infrastructure, the ordinary equipment, the special-purpose equipment, the research sites, books and other information data, the opportunities for communication and exchange between individuals, the basic living necessities, the comparative stable places for teaching and research, researching funds and collaborative funds and so on. While the software environments refer to the humanity environments, namely the academic aura and academic atmosphere.

3. Definition and Characteristics of Campus Culture

University is an existing form of culture, which results in the necessary attention paid to the campus culture. Campus culture is the combination of various cultures on campus created jointly by all university person and accumulated in the long-term practice of school-running. It consists of three aspects, namely, material culture, institutional culture and spiritual culture. Campus material culture, commonly taken on in the form of environment and facility, is the general name of external form of materialization in the development of university. Institutional culture includes the system shared in common and the distinctive system, which mainly refers to rule and regulation system, management and operation rule and restriction mechanism. Spiritual culture refers to how campus person take part in cultural activities and what results are achieved, thus reflecting the ideology, values, psychological quality and aesthetic consciousness, etc. It includes written culture, behavior culture and mental culture. Material culture is the external symbol of campus culture. Institutional culture guarantees the orderly development of campus culture. Spiritual culture is the core and spirit of campus culture.

Campus culture in a university is characterized by individuality, academic feature, opening, leading, variety and creativity.

Individuality. Campus culture has its specific subject, environment and manner of culture creation as well as the way to record the cultural achievements. It forms its own system in the process of communicating with social culture, and has its unique form, the law of evolution and inheritance, existing form and historical origin.

Academic feature. Activities on campus focus on teaching and scientific research on the basis of specialized knowledge, which is main feature distinctive from other subcultures in society. The academic feature of campus culture is mainly reflected on serving the society and promoting the development of society and economy. In the age of information, university becomes the axial institution of society, and campus culture is characterized by academic feature in the aspect of value orientation.

Opening. As a part of social cultures, campus culture plays an important role in propagating knowledge, creating new cultures and spreading new ideas. By means of various cultural forms and academic activities, the subject of campus culture continuously communicates with other subculture systems concerning information, energy and material. It is enhanced and glorified in the opening environment.

Leading. The subject of campus culture is not only the creator and the undertaker of social culture, but also the unique strength of creating culture and cultivating culture-creators. Campus culture is able to update itself and achieve sustainable development. It originates from social culture, but different from other subcultures. What's more, it creates culture value and leads the progress of social culture during the collision and integration with negative and opposite sides of other subculture systems.

Variety. The rapid development of hi-tech makes countries and nations closer, enhances the communication and integration of different cultures in the global village, generates the variety of campus culture and enriches the carriers of campus culture. Moreover, with different culture value and different forms of activity as well as different forms of culture converging on campus, campus culture becomes diverse.

Creativity. It is an eternal trend of culture that we should exhale the old and inhale the new. University is an antenna and passageway to approach to heterogeneous culture, and it is the basis of creating a new culture. As a part of campus culture subject, undergraduates are able to fully develop their wisdom, imagination and creativity and make campus culture colorful, since they have a sharp mind, active thinking, enthusiasm to seek their ideal and creative

spirit of designing an ideal culture.

4. The Relationship between Academic Culture and Campus Culture

4.1 Academic Culture Enhances the Construction of Campus Culture

Talent cultivation, scientific research, intellectual innovation and cultural exchange in the university are closely related to academic activities. Academic culture, formed in the process of academic activities, has been an essential part of campus culture, the backbone of campus culture construction, as well as the distinctive feature of campus culture distinguished from other subculture systems.

Academic culture of university is a high-level culture, which mainly focuses on the cognition of unknown world, the exploration of objective truth, and the supply of scientific world outlook and methodology, as well as new knowledge and technique, for human to understand and reform the objective world, thus greatly improving their ability to reform the world and mould themselves, and greatly enriching cultural achievements.

The achievements of academic culture such as worldview, methodology, science theories, behavior norm, the most advanced technology, as well as academic outlook, academic spirits, academic ethics, academic aura and academic atmosphere etc. can be pervaded to all the aspects of the construction of campus culture. For example, in the course of college moral education, the outlooks of the world, the methodology, the academic norms and academic spirits infused to the students can also be considered as the intrinsic components of the academic culture. The teaching in colleges is always closely related to the latest achievements of the academic research: new theories, new methods, new ideas and new techniques. The subjects of the academic culture — those people who base their academic research on knowledge all take a direct part in the construction of campus culture, in this sense, they can be considered as the prime mover of the campus culture construction. In other words, if there is no first-grade academic culture, it is very unlikely for us to cultivate first-grade campus culture. Academic culture enhances the construction of campus culture.

4.2 Campus Culture Conditions and Restricts the Development of Academic Culture

Academic culture of university, whose development is included in the motion of campus culture system, is an integral part of campus culture. Therefore, its development is inevitably restricted by campus culture. The restrictions are mainly embodied in the following three aspects: restrictions from people, restrictions from the humanity environments of campus and restrictions from the material conditions.

College people are the construction subject for campus culture. They are both the creators and the creatures of campus culture, who are remolded in the process of campus culture construction. People on campus participate in all aspects of campus culture construction, including the construction of academic culture undoubtedly. The scale and the level of academic research, as well as the quantity and the quality of academic achievement, depend on the academic ability of academic person, namely, the external characters of academic person's internal qualities. The academic ability is the combination of physical power, intelligence, morality, aesthetic sense and practical ability, of which creative thinking is the core ability. Academic ability determines what academic persons can do in academic activities, and it is a critical factor deciding whether academic activities can go smoothly and achieve progress or not. In modern times, it is impossible to obtain important findings or breaking achievements by individual work, instead, it is necessary for academic teams to tackle key problems together and communicate with each other. As a whole, whether the academic culture can prosper or not is determined by the academic levels of the teaching staff in the university.

The humanity environments of the campus refer to the campus spirits and the cultural aura. They include some dominant factors in campus culture such as value system, policy orientation, university ideas, administration philosophy, interpersonal relationships and various regulations. College value decides the value orientation of campus culture, and has direct impact on the formation of academic outlook and academic spirits. Cultural aura on campus is determined by university policy orientations, college-running ideas, administration philosophy, interpersonal relationships, and so on. They have great impacts on the formation of academic outlooks, academic spirits, academic ethics and the cultivation of academic environments.

Academic research demands certain material conditions. Such material conditions to academic research are as root to tree and water to fish. Without these conditions, no academic achievements can be possible. The construction of academic culture will be totally impossible unless these necessary conditions are ensured. The necessary conditions, specifically speaking, are books, information data, experimental instruments, network system, research sites and so on. Financial supports are indispensable in order to satisfy these conditions. Therefore, material assurance is the first step to the cultivation of high quality academic culture. With adequate funds for research, advanced instruments and equipments, abundant data resources and suitable research sites, academic research can develop as fully and freely

as birds flying with strong wings. As a result, the construction of academic culture can be carried out in practice.

5. Construction of Academic Culture and Campus Culture

University sticks to its mission. Historically, the important functions of university include inheriting culture, practising culture and innovating culture. In this sense, university is the right place to realize these functions. University should stick to its mission, consciously resist the fickleness of seeking quick success and instant benefits and various temptations, strive for the truth, pursue science, advocate academy, raise spirit, and act as an honest guardian of its own spiritual homeland. As the center of building advanced culture and the origin of creating new science and technology and ideology and culture, university should influence the whole society with advanced ideas, refined culture and lofty character, and lead social development.

University constantly increases cultural confidence and improves cultural consciousness. University has a very great history and keeps its long standing by means of cultivating generations of talents to practise, inherit and innovate culture, thus satisfying the eternal need of nation, society and people. College education is not just the transmission of knowledge and information, but also its potential and lasting cultural influence, which is an inner and irreplaceable strength. It is necessary to strengthen the construction of socialist core value system, unite university staff and students by means of the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics and guide teachers and students through socialist ethics. University should bring its advantage in talent-training into full play and cultivate talents being able to flourish culture. Besides, it is important to further theories and practice researches, such as university spirit, education philosophy, school motto and spirit, anthem, style of study, development strategy, objectives of talent-training and concepts of management, and develop the spiritual culture with university characteristics .

University integrates cultural construction into the whole process of talent-training. In university, cultural construction is closely related to talent-training. After years of system reform, especially, the reform of administrative system, the improvements of university can be embodied in the following aspects: courses are enriched, subjects are comprehended, humanities and social sciences are enhanced, and liberal education is combined with scientific education. These changes improve the environment of talent-training, widen students' range of knowledge. Last but not least, university combines culture practice, culture inheritance, culture innovation and high-quality-talent cultivating organically. Besides, college releases itself from the old past, when sciences were more valued than arts; professionals were the only objective of talent-training, and teachers passed on one-side knowledge. Take Northwest University (China) for example, it divides its teaching content of traditional culture into several parts, including the history of Chinese civilization presented by intangible cultural heritage, spirit of national culture embodied by Chinese thoughts, and Chinese civilization in globalization. Moreover, referring to ideological factors of Chinese civilization, Northwest University offers various related courses, such as Overview of Chinese Traditional Culture, Spirit of Chinese Philosophy, Spirit of Chinese History, Chinese Thoughts and Culture, Chinese Religious Culture, etc., and publishes many textbooks, for example, *Chinese Humanistic Spirit*, *History of Chinese Ideology* and *History of Chinese Ideology and Culture*. All these support the instruction of traditional culture in Northwest University effectively.

Promote development and innovation of culture actively. The construction and development of university includes development of disciplines and reform of teaching and scientific research which are both closely related to development and innovation of culture. University should combine its specific task and short-term task with historical mission and long-term objective. In other words, it should integrate its tasks and missions into culture practice, culture inheritance and culture innovation, and act as a promoter of culture. For example, the subjectivity of students is respected and exerted fully in activities of campus culture in Northwest University, thus bringing the cultural influence. In such activities, students express their feelings for nature, life and society by experiencing the beauty of story, music, emotion and dancing. To sum up, these kinds of activities cultivate students' temperament, improve their aesthetic style and lifestyle, and have a positive influence on students' humanity and personality.

References

- Chen, Hefang. (2005). University Academic Culture and University Academic Productivity. *Journal of Higher Education*, 26(12), 1-7
- Fang, Guanghua. (2012). Cultural Consciousness, Cultural Quality, Cultural Experience. *China Higher Education Research*, 1, 10-12
- Ji, Aiming. (2010). Characteristics and Construction of Campus Culture in Universities. *China Higher Education*, 23, 57-58
- Jian, Hua. (1999). Academic Activities and Campus Culture in Higher Education Institutions. *Journal of Guizhou*

Normal University (Social Science), 4, 93-97

Li, Yongbo. (2011). Analysis of the Main Problems and Causes of Collegiate Academic Culture of Modern Times in China. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University*, 10(6), 61-64

Liu, Guorong. (2001). Academic Aura and Academic Innovation. *Journal of Yan'an University (Social Science)*, 23(1), 5-7

Mao, Lifan. (2008). Literature Review on Campus Culture in Universities. *Modern Educational Forum*, 1, 31-32

Tan, Tiejun. (2011). On Deep Layer Perception and Construction of the Campus Culture of the Universities. *Journal of Guangxi Teachers Education University (Social Science Edition)*, 32(3), 96-98

Wang, Fang., & Wang, Dawei. (2001). University Culture Spirits in the New Economy Era. *Higher Educational Research in Area of Communication*, 4, 4-6

Wang, Kezhen. (2003). On College Campus Cultural Construction in the Condition of Market Economy. *Vocational Education and Economic Research*, 1(1), 26-29

Zhang, Jiyu. (2001). On the Academic Norm and Regulation System. *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy*, 1, 80-85