

A Retrospective Study on the Implementation of University's Social Responsibilities: Taking the Yuntech's Empirical Experience

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Abstract—Universities have been established for thousand years to pursue knowledge, facilitate social development, and cultivate citizens in order for better lives with well-being, harmony, and civilization. After decades of intensive pursuing academic research, world-class ranking, and meritocracy achievement, universities reflectively value their social responsibilities to enrich students without academic talents who have been underdeveloped and even unfairly recognized as social burden. This study addresses an empirical approach undertaken by a university of science and technology to initiate innovative programs for underdeveloped youngsters, with special aptitudes but dropout from schools, to revitalize their learning enthusiasm and reach impressive achievement in various fields. As its social responsibilities equivalently alongside the ones to superlative research and industry services, this university commits these pioneering programs including Prospective Program for aptitude students, Talented Pilotage Program for spillover creativity, Incubation Program for entrepreneur students, Elite Program for accelerated achievement, and that like. Students in these programs received individual educational plan which was designed under the intensive cooperation among student, faculty members, consultant, and even employer to develop each student's utmost potential. The administrative strategies and instructional contents of these programs and the retrospection on these pioneering approaches are in-depth discussed.

Keywords—*university social responsibility, innovative program, high education*

I. BACKGROUND

The current universities generally strive to enhance their academic achievement and world rankings for remarkable reputations while encountering the rapid social changes and global challenges [1]. Educational authorities in charge of university development frequently initiate multifarious supportive projects and competitive approaches to accelerate university reform and quality improvement. Taking the example of higher education movement in Taiwan,

universities undertook active quality improvement movements, such as Internationalization Plan, Excellent Teaching Plan, Exemplary University of Science and Technology, and Deep Plowing Projects, to meet social demands and international competition [2,3]. The incentive mechanism for funding distribution supporting these movements highly values some measurable indexes to select only a minority of universities getting these funds [4]. The subsequent meritocracy induces governments and universities to take the international university ranking and faculty members' academic performance as indexes to evaluate the achievement of universities and faculty members' performance [5]. The measurable items of international university ranking emphasize the number of academic publication, SCI, SSCI and SCIE citation, and that like [3]. Thus, the administrative authority in universities accordingly emphasizes faculty members' evident and countable achievements more than, even unconsciously ignoring, the core values and social contributions of university education [6,7].

Furthermore, the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council in Taiwan actively implemented the university evaluation to ensure university qualities with supervision [5,8]. The evaluation criteria and mechanism effectively ensure university qualities and, however on the other hand, lead universities to develop homogeneity and constriction [9].

These phenomena alert educators to an issue on the displacement of educational goals in parochialism that individuals overly focus on their shallow and short-termed self-benefit, they lack of considering the overall mission fulfillment [10]. University faculty members might collectively deviate from, even forfeit, the value perspectives in their academic professions and just uncritically implement their required work [11].

In view of the campus meritocracy, achievement competition, and goal displacement, it is necessary to reflect on the university's social responsibilities to benefit the communities. In the last two years, several pioneering projects have been initiated and implemented in the Yunlin University of Science and Technology (Yuntech), a public

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applied university, to re-organize the conventional curriculum structures, teaching styles, and even administrative strategies for students' learning, campus vitalization, cooperative relations with communities, and educational values.

This study, taking a meta-analysis as research method, consequently purports to synthetically deliberate the innovative approaches to revitalize the campus culture and teaching activities for academic values and its social responsibilities. Typically, this paper addresses a series of empirical approaches to facilitate underdeveloped youngsters, with special aptitudes but dropout from schools, to revitalize their learning enthusiasm and reach impressive achievement in various fields.

II. THE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FULFILL UNIVERSITY'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In the long journey of human development, universities were established for thousand years to pursue truth, create and deliver knowledge in order to facilitate social development through cultivating citizens for better lives with well-being and harmony. Their original values, such as social responsibilities, should receive sufficient support to cultivate youngster as human products. Typically, the students deprived of academic talents, even possessing multifaceted aptitudes, are inevitably ignored. Those youngsters are subsequently underdeveloped and even unfairly recognized as social burden. It is so important for universities to bring back their social responsibilities on campus.

A. The targeted populations of these empirical projects

Besides pursuing the world-class reputation, the Yuntech adulates the policy of none left in Yuntech as its social responsibility. Accordingly, students enrolled in these programs included: (1) Yuntech current students with special talents, (2) students with talented achievement but dropping out, and (3) recommencement students withdrew from universities.

Each program recruits 15 students with special talents and demands to received individual educational plans which were designed under the intensive cooperation among student, faculty members, consultants, and even employers to develop each student's utmost potential.

B. Innovative programs for non-traditional youngsters

It is more effective to empirically create pioneering programs for the non-traditional students in a conventional university rather than remodel the existent departments. An empirical college was therefore established for nontraditional students undertaking innovative educational revolution and university social responsibilities, including four professional programs: (1) Prospective Program for students with special aptitudes, (2) Talented Pilotage Program for spillover creativity, (3) Incubation Program for entrepreneur students, and (4) Elite Program for accelerated

achievement. Each program was elaborately designed for students with specific talents and demands. For the non-traditional students, program directors employed the Individual Educational Plan for each student fully meeting personal background information, special talents and experiences, aptitude inventory, personal future career goals, learning styles, and other imperative traits and needs.

C. The major concerns of curriculum development and teaching strategies for these non-traditional programs

The curriculum structure and major contents were developed on the bases of their individual concerns, such as further understanding on developing trends of society, and deep learning on professional courses and implementing to industrial world. These programs creatively undertook course recruitment for students themselves to receive self-identified multifaceted courses, and supportive resources with practicum internship and authentic training in realistic workplaces. They received refashioned courses included (1) self-recruited new course, (2) refined courses, (3) issue-oriented cross-field courses, (4) microcredit courses, (5) interdisciplinary courses, and (6) interdisciplinary projects (Fig. 1). All courses were individually developed for specific purposes integrating personal intelligence and realistic mastery.

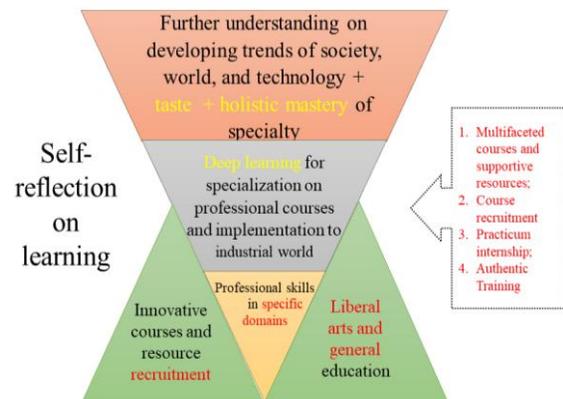


Fig. 1. Their curriculum structure

Accordingly, teaching strategies for these students were also well designed with cooperation among faculty member, on-site couches, and career consultants. Students were required to frequently self-reflect on their learning and application to the real scenarios for deep-learning and mastery. The teaching approaches took the CDIO model for the whole processes: (1) Conceive: recognizing and exploring problems, (2) Design: initiating ideas and designing approaches, (3) Implement: making it comes true, and (4) Operate: running and managing it in contextual environment.

D. Industry-university cooperation and integrative services for facilitating effective learning and career successes

These pioneering programs highly utilize the

cooperation between university and industry to integrate cross-function resources for reciprocally effect multiplication (Fig. 3). Industries currently possess (1) realistic experiences and challenges, (2) employable human resources, and (3) upgrading technology (or manufacturing processes). Industries, that is, provide realistic problems and \ propositions to academic institutes for scientific research and \ or theoretical verification. On the other hand, academic institutes primarily own their educational mission, thoughtful intellectuals, academic theories, and empirical research proficiencies (Fig. 2).

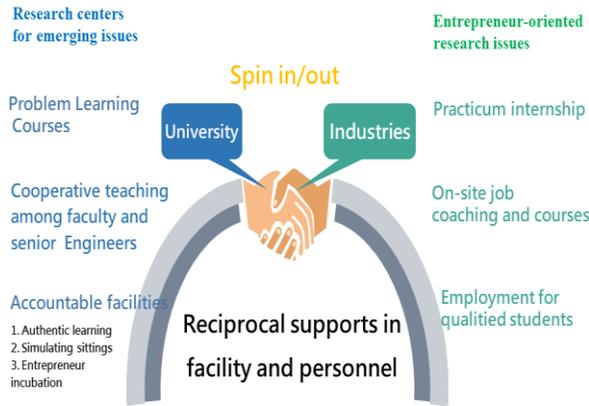


Fig. 2. Integrative service for educational successes

That is, in the cross-field cooperation, industries propose specific issues to academic institutes; the faculty members worked with students in these programs to solve the problems with practical and innovative approaches verifying the theories with practical skills. Innovative approaches included (1) student internship, (2) faculty member internship, (3) senior industry practitioner invited, and (4) interdisciplinary research. Their practicum internships were intensively implemented for authentic and functional achievement for professional future.

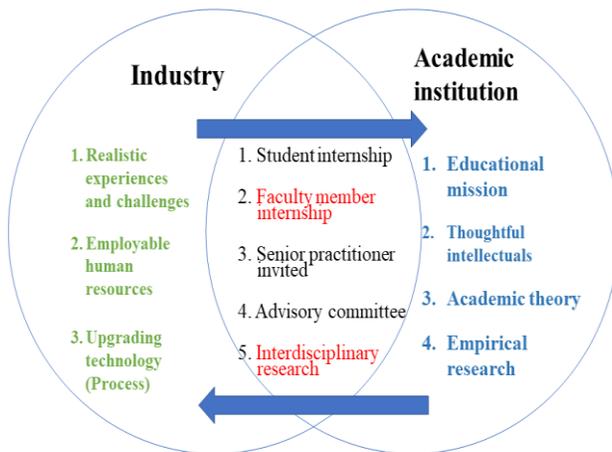


Fig. 3. Industry-university cooperation: facilitating effective learning

III. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Just like most of current universities in the world, the Yuntech intensively pursues the world-class ranking reputation under the secular competition, and simultaneously the social responsibilities to its community as well students. The pioneering programs finally reached the following achievement:

- 1) building broad consensus on university's social responsibilities;
- 2) conducting 9 interdisciplinary projects integrating university, 32 industries, and 4 government departments;
- 3) creating 20 pro-industry courses and 20 internship opportunities.

This pioneer project synthetically reached the imperative achievements for university's social responsibilities through faculty members' interdisciplinary research and internship in industrial scenario, social and industrial contribution to university, and 25 dropout students coming back and staying in this university. Behind these phenomena, faculty members further understood their values of academic knowledge to the societies and students and remodeled their teaching for practical values; industries recognize their contributions to universities and societies; and students identify their learning and responsibilities to themselves and community. This is the coral value of higher education.

At the end of conducting and reflecting the innovative programs, the retrospection on the factors of gratifying results regarding university social responsibility fulfillment might lead to:

- 1) The insight vision to universal coral values;
- 2) Academic research for advanced research;
- 3) Reciprocal Contributions between university and Industry;
- 4) Students' motivation and visibility to future;
- 5) Supportive policies from government.

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