

Analysis of Zhejiang Shuren University's Running Pattern

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Abstract—How to make the most of the mechanism of private colleges and universities, to keep education benefit for the public, to improve educational quality, and to move in the direction of connotative development, will be the major issue in a long run after nationwide university expansion. This paper analyzes the unique ZSU pattern formed by Zhejiang Shuren University, one of the members which were the firstly founded private colleges and universities in China in the initial stage of reform and opening-up, in order to prepare for a school constitution that is able to promote sound and sustainable development of colleges and universities.

Keywords—ZSU; System; Mechanism

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Ci Hai (a well-known Chinese lexicon and character dictionary), a pattern is generally a style that is used as a template or an example. When used as a term, it has varying meanings in different branches of learning. A running pattern for colleges and universities is a typical model or example for colleges and universities, constrained by a system of social education, and dominated by an operational goal. It has a particular structure and follows a set mechanism to operate. From the macro point of view, it includes a pursuit of value, a policy orientation, an educational system, and an educational structure; from the micro point of view, it contains educational philosophy, student development objectives, a management system, an organizational structure, and an operational mechanism [1]. The running pattern of colleges and universities determines the direction in which colleges and universities will develop, and has become a key subject to study in both the field of higher education and corresponding government sectors.

As Chinese higher education is popularized, the running patterns of colleges and universities are diversifying. Increasing variety in patterns is a path that promotes the popularization of Chinese higher education. As Chinese higher education develops, many private colleges and universities accumulate experience in running their institutions, and gradually form their own running patterns.

Zhejiang Shuren University (ZSU) is a product of China's reform and opening-up, established in 1984, and upgraded to a regular private school with undergraduate courses in 2003. After more than 30 years of construction and development, the

school now covers an area of more than 1,300 mu and has a floor area of 600,000 square meters. It is equipped with teaching equipment worth RMB 140 million, and has more than 16,000 teachers and students. It offers more than 50 majors, covering subjects including economics, management science, literary studies, engineering science, and science of law [2]. Throughout its nearly 30-year history, her growth from a school lacking in 3 key areas, namely dormitories, funding, and teaching resources, into a school with undergraduate courses divided into 9 colleges and boasting more than ten thousand students cannot be separated from the caring and support of leaders at all levels and in all circles. Its own running pattern, educational philosophy, and management model formed through exploration are worthy of consideration as the intrinsic factors behind its rapid, sound development.

II. SPIRIT OF THE ZSU PATTERN: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, "CULTIVATING TALENT IS ESSENTIAL"

No running pattern can form without repeated practice, or improve or develop without facing, or considering, and solving problems. Throughout this process, the founder's educational philosophy is adhered to, inherited, accumulated, improved, and developed; this is the core value and spirit of the running pattern, and the source of power encouraging generations of people to persevere in exploring reform [3]. The spirit of the ZSU pattern is embodied by the unique educational philosophy "Cultivating Talent is essential" and has several manifestations:

A. The School motto "Advocating morality and intellect; cultivating talent is essential"

The school motto is the soul of a school, and represents its spirit. Each school motto reflects the school founder's educational philosophy to some extent. As ZSU's founders, a group of longtime leaders, always standing at the forefront of reform, and experts in education, founded ZSU with the intention of nurturing virtuous, talented individuals to the country. They wanted, by innovating in the existing educational system, to break the barriers of establishing colleges and universities, and use the mechanism for civilian-run higher education to create a university that would train the talents needed for national and local economic development. Comrade Li Lanqing, then vice-premier of the state council, wrote the following inscription on the school's tenth anniversary: "Talent training essential of invigorating the country". After entering the 21st century, ZSU's original

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school motto, “Cultivating Talent is essential” evolved into “Advocating for morality and intellect; cultivating talent is essential”. This school motto injects new meaning into the school’s educational philosophy. First, it gives full expression to the school’s commitment to socialism, and shows that it considers training qualified builders and reliable successors for the country and society to promote public welfare as its ultimate goal; second, it requires educational workers to excel in both morality and intellect; third, it requires the school to nurture well-rounded talents and to implement the idea of “student-oriented”; that is, carrying out all school activities around “students”.

B. School spirit: “Entrepreneurial Spirit; Pragmatism and Innovation; Dedication and Commitment”

The history of ZSU’s founding is a story of succeeding in an arduous undertaking through hard work. The school was, like many others, lacking in 3 key areas at the very beginning: dormitories, funds, and teaching resources. At that time, the leaders and teachers taking part in school management worked unselfishly, without receiving any reward. Some of them used their years’ worth of savings for school expenditures. Although the school was reformed several times in past 30 years, the school spirit “Entrepreneurial Spirit; Pragmatism and Innovation; Dedication and Commitment” was always inherited and carried forward, and is a strong ideological driving force behind the school’s sound and sustainable development.

C. School goal: “Go larger and higher; create identity; strive for first class”

Scientific and reasonable orientation (i.e., establishing a practical development goal and making a scientific development plan) is the precondition for a college or university’s rapid development. ZSU grew from a school lacking in the three key areas, into Zhejiang Shuren University, incorporating four nearby schools, becoming a full undergraduate university. Now, it includes 11 colleges and total enrollment of more than 15,000 students. Such progress is a result of implementing the school’s development goal.

The conclusion reached from 30 years’ experience running the school is that a high-level private university must have a clear educational philosophy to fight for, and its own unique identity formed over time.

III. CORE OF THE ZSU PATTERN: BOARD OF TRUSTEES LEADERSHIP SYSTEM “RECRUITMENT BASED ON INTELLIGENCE INSTEAD OF FINANCIAL CONDITION AND ABILITY”

The leadership system is the core element in the value system of a running pattern. Whether a private college or university can keep running in the right direction and promote the public good is determined by the leadership system. Currently, most private colleges and universities in China use a system of principal responsibility under the leadership of a board of trustees. They have incomparable superiority over public colleges and universities in definition of power and responsibility and in mechanism flexibility, but they have an

obvious difficulty: that is, how to deal with the conflict between seeking reasonable return and promoting public welfare. Unlike other private colleges and universities, ZSU has a unique board of trustees leadership system.

ZSU was founded in 1984 when the initiative raised by four standing members of the Zhejiang Provincial Committee of Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference received support from then-chairman Wang Jiayang. She has established a special relationship with the CPPCC provincial committee since her birth. She has grown with support from the CPPCC provincial committee, which has always been happy to deal with her matters. During ZSU’s development, the double leadership by the CPPCC provincial committee and the provincial department of education was formed.

Such a government-centered leadership system is not common among private colleges and universities around the country. The leadership of the CPPCC provincial committee is not nominal in the normal sense (like taking the post of honorary chairman), but actively participates in major decisions to realize the school’s educational direction, goal, and philosophy. The chairmen of previous boards of trustees have always been comrades retired or to be retired as leaders from the CPPCC provincial committee. Wang Jiayang, former chairman of the CPPCC provincial committee, Chen Fawen, Chen Wenshao, and Liang Pingbo, all former vice-chairmen, successively took the post of school chairman. ZSU has its own features in terms of board of trustees constitution, principal appointment, and specific operation. ZSU board of trustees is composed of higher education management experts, famous entrepreneurs, Zhejiang department heads, and patriotic personages from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. They are decision-makers in the school not because of investment, but because of their rich experience in school-running, academic achievements, and strong social influence.

Such a leadership system has an advantage: The university, administered by experts, recruits based on intellectual, not financial, ability. To be specific, no member of the board of trustees owns school property or receives bonuses from school revenue. For this reason, when making decisions, ZSU considers first how to thoroughly implement the Party’s educational policy, how to act according to the rules of education, how to maintain focus on nurturing talent, and how to promote public welfare in running the school; all school funds are used for construction and development, and school leaders have full power to make decisions regarding resources, solving the conflict between chairman and principal which is common in many private colleges and universities; old management is always smoothly replaced by the new.

Besides, ZSU also forms a distinguished advisory group of famous educational experts to give advice on school construction and development. Group members include professor Que Duanlin, academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Yang Shilin, former principal of Zhejiang University, and Xue Yanzhuang, former Party secretary of Hangzhou university.

IV. CORNERSTONE OF THE ZSU PATTERN: CIVILIAN-OPERATION, PUBLIC-SUBSIDIZED INVESTMENT MECHANISM

The investment mechanism is not only the lifeblood that ensures a college or university runs normally, but a base on which the running pattern survives and develops. Over more than 30 years, ZSU has amassed assets of RMB 1.5 billion, achieved an annual revenue of RMB 450 million, and formed an investment mechanism consisting of stable tuition income and a certain amount of financial subsidy.

At the beginning, school funds mainly consisted of donations from various circles of society, with a small amount from tuition. Since the 3rd meeting on education, the school has leaped ahead, and the primary source of its funds is now tuition, which forms around 85% of school revenue. The school puts tuition entirely into such activities as teaching, realizing tuition-dependent progression. At the same time, to support the development of private colleges and universities, Zhejiang Municipal Government has incorporated some public schools into ZSU, but maintains the original operating expenses of education for the schools, and increases them the same as those for other colleges and universities. This constitutes around 15% of school revenue.

Judging from the development of ZSU's investment mechanism, the three supporting factors driving her progress have been donations and support from all sectors of society, charges for educational costs, and financial subsidy. We can say that without the support from various circles of society during the startup period ZSU would have no foothold, would be unable to develop without charges for education cost in the running process, and would have no way to maintain its vitality without great support from the government.

V. OPERATION OF THE ZSU PATTERN: SIMPLE ARCHITECTURE, FEW HIGHLY INTELLIGENT WORKERS, SCIENTIFIC AND DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT MECHANISM

ZSU has a simple architecture in which one person takes multiple posts. In its first 10 years, the school had only administrative offices (school (party affairs) office, political office, educational administration office, general services office, etc.), and did not have specialized institutions or personnel in the school's party committee system. Jobs were taken by related personnel at different departments. With the school's expansion, the school administrative organ still insists on merging the work of school and party affairs in one office. The school has only 15 functional offices, whose workers are few in number but highly trained. For example, the school office, as a department, integrates the duties of a school office, party affairs office, publicity, unified front, archives, board of trustees secretary, and other functions, but has only eleven officers. For management of secondary colleges, ZSU uses the mode of market operation, using funds to link colleges with the school, and defining clearly the relationship between duty, right, and interest, which allows colleges and the school to make progress together.

In addition, ZSU has a well-established system of teachers' and workers' congresses to arouse enthusiasm for school management in teachers and workers; makes school affairs

open to strengthen democratic supervision; and establishes a system that ties school leadership to the masses.

VI. GUARANTEE OF THE ZSU PATTERN: A TEAM OF PART-TIME (BE IN THE MINORITY) AND FULL-TIME TEACHERS (BE IN THE MAJORITY)

Faculty development is absolutely the most important guarantee for private colleges and universities that want to maintain the existing running pattern and cultivate quality talents. Thus, finding a method of faculty development suitable for private colleges and universities becomes the key to whether they can improve educational quality and promote social welfare fully in school running.

For more than 30 years, ZSU has treated faculty development as its foremost project, implementing a policy of "Train; Engage; Introduce; Adjust", and forming a philosophy of "Full-time and part-time combined: no stability without full-time teachers, no vigor without part-time teachers", and maintaining a ratio of 6:4 full-time to part-time teachers. On one hand, through training and introduction, the school employs more than 800 full-time teachers, of which 44% have senior titles. In both size and level, this is a rare team among nationwide private colleges and universities, and ensures the school's normal teaching order and education quality. On the other hand, the school takes advantage of its location in Hangzhou to engage a group of teachers with high practical ability and theoretical level from research institutes, enterprises, and public institutions for an extended period of time, based on the principles of "Use without ownership" and "Seeking for greater perfection". Now, a stable team of more than 300 part-time teachers has formed. The school attaches great importance to motivating part-time teachers. Many part-time teachers actively take on part in subject and professional construction in addition to undertaking teaching tasks. With great support from the municipal government and the CPPCC provincial committee, both original, formal teachers and workers, and newly-employed teachers with doctor degrees or above have been registered at the provincial department of personnel, and are treated the same as teachers in public colleges and universities, laying a significant foundation for the school's sound development.

VII. PURSUIT OF THE ZSU PATTERN: CULTIVATING PRACTICAL TALENTS

Essentially, what indicates the success or failure of a school's running pattern is whether the level of talented graduates meets market demand, and whether the graduates meet society's requirements. However, the amount of talented graduates is dynamic, varying during different historical periods or in different countries, schools, or even subjects.

ZSU stays at the forefront of the market, based on its own advantages and the subjects and professions in which it specializes. It concentrates its efforts on cultivating high quality talents with solid foundations, broad knowledge, and, especially, strong abilities, with a firm foundation combined with adaptability. It also insists on coordinating between imparting knowledge, ability training, and quality improvement mainly to improve students' learning ability, practical ability,

and innovative ability so as to promote education for all-round development from. It cultivates students' spirit to strive unceasingly, be honest and credible, and dare to explore so as to nurture high level, talented students with practical ability.

The standards for high-level practical training of students as determined by ZSU have been affirmed by MOE leadership and industry experts. In recent years, ZSU graduates had an employment rate of more than 90%, and gained popularity among employers. Practice proves that ZSU's talent training pattern conforms to the needs of social developments.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Stones from other hills may serve to polish the jade of this one. With more than 30 years' practice and development, Shuren mode is proved to be feasible and referential.

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