

Strategies to Improve Professional Qualities of College and University Counselors

Lan Wen *

Institute of Psychological and Education
South China Business College
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Guangzhou, China

Shibang Long

School of Economics and Trade
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Guangzhou, China

Shaogang Yang

School of English and Education
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Guangzhou, China

Abstract—As the backbone of ideological and political education, college counselors play an indispensable role in personnel training. On the basis of the literature analysis and previous studies, the paper puts forward strategies for improving the professional quality of college counselors. The author proposes that the professional quality improvement of college counselors is not only the responsibility of the school, and the personal needs of counselors, but also the obligations of society. This paper pointed out 3 present insufficiencies of counselors' qualities, and then enumerated 8 strategies to improve counselors' qualities from 3 aspects society, school and counselors themselves. The improvement of college counselor's professional quality is not only a goal, but also a process. The task is long-term and arduous. It needs multi-linkage to build a virtuous circle of management system. This study is beneficial for correctly positioning the professional role of counselors, improving the overall quality of counselors, and implementing the scientific quantifying of administration management in Chinese universities and colleges.

Keywords—Counselors; Professional Qualities; Improve; Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

In China, college counselors are important key members for ideological and political work. The study of counselors' professional quality will be one of the most important topics in universities. In theory, college counselors should play an important role in colleges and universities. In fact, at present, Chinese counselors are similar to the student affairs administrators in Western universities. Their daily work is to deal with the trivial affairs of students, not to mention specialization or professionalization at all. The improvement of college counselor's professional quality is not only a goal, but also a process. The task is long-term and arduous. It needs multi-linkage to build a virtuous circle of the management system. The author holds that professional qualities of counselors should be improved from the aspects of the society, the school and the counselors themselves. This research is beneficial for correctly positioning the professional role of

counselors, improving the overall quality of counselors and implementing the scientific quantifying of administration management in Chinese universities and colleges[1].

II. CURRENT INADEQUACY OF COLLEGE COUNSELORS' PROFESSIONAL QUALITY

A. Lack of role orientation

Many people even counselors themselves do not have a clear understanding of their position, and think that counselors are just managing student. Moreover, the complicated daily management work leaves counselors little time and energy to understanding students' psychological characteristics and ideological trends, which makes the work of counselors deviate from the center of ideological and political education for college students, and even affects the influence and prestige of counselors in students' minds. Therefore, the effectiveness of the work has been weakened.

B. Lack of professional knowledge

At present, many college counselors did not major in ideological and political education. Although most of them were excellent students, they have a poor foundation in social sciences such as ideological and political education, psychology, sociology, philosophy and educational management science. At the same time, due to the fact that counselors have more business work and lack of opportunities to study and train, it is difficult to effectively improve the quality of counselors, especially in the current rapid development of ideology. Therefore, counselors are unable to carry out ideological and political education work as their would wish, affecting the effectiveness of the play[2].

C. Instability of the management team

Many colleges and universities do not attach importance to the work of counselors, causing the psychological imbalance of counselors who feel the professional prestige is too low. Some counselors began to waver in their work. They were not at ease with their work and tried their best to leave the counselors' team. In addition, there are obstacles in the evaluation of

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counselors' professional titles and incentive mechanisms in some universities which blindly require counselors to play a dedicated spirit, and despise the relationship between input and income. Many counselors change their posts once they have the right opportunity to leave the student management team, which leads to the high mobility and poor stability of the counselors team, seriously affecting the construction of the team.

III. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING COLLEGE COUNSELORS' PROFESSIONAL QUALITY

A. *Creating an atmosphere for improving professional qualities of counselors*

The social environment is an important factor and external force which can influence the professional qualities of college and university counselors. The continuous improvement of social environment will surely promote professional qualities of college and university counselors. The job responsibilities and developmental requirements of college and university counselors are realistic demands for the development and growth of college students. Because ideological and political education is extensive, ordinary and life-oriented, duties of main educational bodies have far gone beyond the scope of full-time and moral education workers. People working in colleges and universities who need to keep in touch with students will influence students through their own behaviors and work attitudes. Therefore, in order to implement educational and political education for college students, we must give priority to develop the main education subjects and build up educational awareness of all workers so as to create a good atmosphere for the development of counselors' professional qualities.

B. *The college should make strict counselor selection criteria*

Administrators of colleges and universities should establish and make perfect the appointment and selection mechanism of counselors by considering professional evaluation criteria and practical work demands of students. They should also assess the working ability, physical and psychological quality, work attitudes and ideological quality of counselors in accordance with the selection processes.

The selection and recruitment sources of counselors, if divided according to professional development criteria, mainly include the following ways. First, those talents with strong sense of responsibility, ambition and professional quality shall be selected from graduate cadres. At present, China has not set up the major of student affairs management, so colleges and universities can only choose excellent graduates from related majors, such as education and management. These students have served as student cadres in the past and they have rich experience in handling student affairs. Therefore, they can get into the working status as counselors quickly. However, to some extent, graduates of these majors only have some theoretical knowledge, but lack specific practical abilities. Therefore, the schools should also create conditions for them to continue their studies and encourage them to improve their professional quality. Second, it is also necessary to hire counselors outside school. Not all schools can choose counselors from graduates of relevant majors, such as ideology and politics, psychology, pedagogy and arts. When doing

student work, counselors of the above majors have obvious professional expertise and working advantages. Therefore, many counselors in colleges and universities are still recruited from society. This can also facilitate the exchange of management ideas. Different schools have different management concepts. If graduates stay at universities serving as counselors, student management work will be based on solidified experience. People recruiting from the society can bring in some new management methods and ideas, which will improve, promote management systems of the school. Third, the schools should choose some outstanding persons from young teachers as part-time counselors. However, schools should also pay attention to counselor selection conditions stipulated in Regulations on Building the Team of Counselors at Regular Higher Schools: Young professional teachers who are newly selected and hired must have the ability and spirit to work as counselors and have some practical experience [3].

C. *College and university should build a scientific training and assessment system for counselors*

When carrying out educational training to college and university counselors, schools should take both theoretical knowledge and practical abilities into consideration. This is a systematic and coherent job. Therefore, colleges and universities must think about how to build counselor teams for themselves in the long run according to the actual construction situations so as to ensure the permanent vitality of their counselors. First, they need to establish a pre-service training system. Before working, all counselors must receive related training on political and ideological theories, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, management theory, laws and regulations and knowledge on responsibilities of counselors and management systems. At the same time, the schools should introduce the current situation of ideological and educational work of students so that counselors can have a preliminary understanding of their own work and do their work in a more targeted way [4].

Secondly, the schools should establish on-the-job training system to increase counselors training opportunities. They can organize trainings of different stages, levels, categories and key points according to characteristics of students from different colleges and universities in different regions, the working time, job responsibilities and quality of college and university counselors as well as career development demands of college and university counselors so as to make the training and assessment programs scientific, institutional and routine. Besides, scientific training and assessment systems should be built to meet the growth and development needs of college and university counselors. Colleges and universities, if conditions permit, should establish communication and incentive mechanisms to link social communication channels. They should also encourage college and university counselors to participate in talent exchange and field practice organized by local governments to broaden their horizons and enrich their experience. Besides, on the basis of cultivation and development, colleges and universities should also give counselors more opportunities for training and learning should strengthen their cultivation and training and develop programs to cultivate outstanding counselors.

D. College and university should establish a supervision mechanism for ethics construction of counselors

Colleges and universities can regulate the moral behaviors of counselors by building multi-supervision program, so that counselors can perform their moral obligations in a disciplined way. The multi-supervision mechanism should include teachers' ethics supervision subjects, relevant departments of the school, secondary colleges and related students. Besides, schools should supervise the counselors through digital and informational channels in accordance with relevant laws and regulations and should strengthen responsibilities and obligations of counselors in terms of their professional ethics, moral accomplishment, characters and attitudes and make the supervision program for teacher's ethics construction more scientific, institutionalized and normalized [5].

E. College and university should improve the assessment and incentive mechanism for professional qualities of counselors

College and university should establish related evaluation mechanisms for college and university counselors to quantify their work, and should improve their assessment mechanisms to scientifically manage and objectively evaluate counselors' work according to the principle of openness, fairness and justice. Colleges should carry out concrete analysis of specialness of the work of counselors, focus on examining their ideological and political qualities, theoretical and policy learning ability, practical level of theoretical and policy learning, daily workability, the achievement of practical goals, work effectiveness, self-improvement and incentive mechanisms. Moreover, schools should improve the working environment of counselors.

As counselors will have different needs or motivations in their work, the schools should use targeted motivational tools so as to fully motivate their working enthusiasm and their potential abilities and improve their professional quality. For example, the schools can convert some of the workloads into teaching workloads and give subsidies according to a certain proportion, and recommend outstanding counselors regularly to go out for further study.

In addition, comprehensive incentive mechanisms should be established to improve the reward structure and promotion mechanism of counselors and maximize their "reasonable benefits". Those counselors who have made significant achievements and have strong leadership skills shall be rewarded and promoted according to their practical skills and those with weak working abilities and small work achievement should be adjusted in time or be transferred from their current post so as to maintain the high efficiency of their work. Schools should optimize the distribution mechanism and take multiple approaches to solve the job problem of counselors according to the actual work needs and conditions and aspirations of the counselors themselves. Besides, they should also formulate detailed goals for the evaluation of their work from both short-term and long-term aspects so as to clarify their work direction and carry out work in a better way.

F. College and university should set up a scientific and efficient student work management system

An important trend of the development of modern organizations is that they will evolve from the pyramid model to the flat model. Functions of the middle management personnel of the organization are gradually weakened and the management efficiency can be improved by expanding the management scope and reducing the management level. Besides, it is also important to separate the routine work of students from the work of colleges and departments and to establish the first-level management working mechanism dominated by functional departments. This is also an important step to realize flat management of organizations. With a scientific and efficient student management system, counselors can extricate themselves from the complicated and routine work, can further clarify goals and tasks of the secondary and political education work and improve their professional quality in working practice.

G. Professional skills of counselors should be cultivated by doing practice activities

Although great progress has been made to training of counselors in recent years and all kinds of institutions and bases for counselor training have been established in China, there is still a problem, i.e. the training of counselors often focuses on theories rather than practice, which will lead to the result that counselors do not have a significant improvement in their work level after the training and the training can't play a significant role in promoting their work. Therefore, this paper holds that it is important to strengthen the cultivation of professional qualities of counselors by holding some group practice activities and situational simulation and role exchange ways.

H. The counselors should play their subjective initiative and form active awareness and do related actions actively

Counselors themselves should also have the awareness to cultivate professional quality and they should especially focus on improving their non-institutional professional qualities. Before doing related work, college and university counselors should first have a comprehensive understanding of their job characteristics and job requirements. After that, they should improve the existing conditions on the basis of that so as to promote the performance of their own responsibilities and make the whole work go towards the direction of standardization, standardization and specialization. While realizing their work goals, they can also realize their personal goals.

No one is born with good professional qualities. They should be cultivated through learning and practice. Non-institutional professional quality is featured by strong affinity, encouragement and cohesion and counselors should focus on improving their qualities[6]. College and university counselors are main bodies to improve their professional qualities and they play an endogenous role. In terms of improving the professional competence and professional knowledge level of college and university counselors, they should make full use of their subjective initiative and develop a sense and habit for consciously improving their professional qualities.

Firstly, they should strengthen their coordination and communication abilities. Counselors need to have the overall concept and collaborative awareness, master the art of communication and coordination and use all kinds of communication skills effectively. They should build up their language skills and be able to use accurate and clear expressions with prominent key points. They should also respect others, establish and use work contact network and actively create a relaxed and harmonious working atmosphere.

Secondly, they should improve their organization and execution abilities which are of importance to enhance their professional quality and are also important factors to measure professional quality level of counselors. Besides, they should innovate work models for student work, drive the construction of teams of political parties and other organizations, perfect work systems of students and standardize the management and operation mechanism of students.

Thirdly, they should cultivate their judgment and decision-making abilities. Right decisions come from right judgment. College and university counselors, as the organizer, implementer and director of daily educational and political education and management of college students, should often make predictions and decisions about various activities so as to solve problems of students well.

Fourthly, they should learn more things and pay attention to cultivating their innovation strength. At present, college and university counselors meet fierce competition because in today's information society, college students have more ways to gain knowledge and their knowledge updates quickly, which requires counselors to learn more, to strengthen their learning and make constant innovations in their work so that they can keep up with changes of students, gain advantages in the competition and play a better leadership role in their work.

IV. SUMMARY

The evaluation of the quality of counselors by teachers and students in contemporary domestic colleges and universities reflects the change of professional role requirements based on the development of The Times[7]. Based on the previous studies and the author's interviews, the current inadequacy of college counselors' professional quality is summarized. In addition, the author holds that professional qualities of college and university counselors should be improved from such

aspects as the society, the school and the counselors themselves. Specifically speaking, the society should create an atmosphere for improving professional qualities of counselors; the school should make strict selection criteria, build a scientific training and assessment system for college and university counselors, establish the supervision mechanism for ethics construction of counselors, improve the assessment and incentive mechanism for their professional qualities and set up a scientific and efficient student work management system; cultivate counselors' professional skills by doing practice activities.

The professional quality of counselors is an important premise to ensure that all the work in colleges and universities is carried out in accordance with laws and regulations. Therefore, the society, the government, schools, students, teachers and other aspects need to work together to build a virtuous cycle of management system. Counselors can work better, learn about themselves, improve their skills, and learn for lives[8].

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