

# Highlighting Regional Characteristics and Serving Regional Construction

## Study on the Teaching System of Environmental Design in Wuhan University of Science and Technology\*

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**Abstract**—How to avoid pell-mell development and homogenization in the development process is the direction that the environmental design major has been working towards. Only through exploring the construction of teaching systems featuring “highlighting regional characteristics and servicing the construction of regions”, insisting on serving local economic and social development as the main direction, and focusing on developing local colleges’ own asymmetric advantages in competition, can we form the talent training mode of the environmental design major that is more suitable for regional economic development and more competitive and viable.

**Keywords**—environmental design major; social service; teaching system

### I. INTRODUCTION

Starting from 2016, based on the Hubei higher education provincial teaching research project “Research on the Teaching Systems of the Environmental Design Major in Local Colleges from the Perspective of Social Service” (Project No.: 2016225), according to the needs of serving the social regional construction, the environmental design major in Wuhan University of Science and Technology has combined curriculum reform with major construction, and carried out innovative construction of its teaching system.

### II. BACKGROUND OF REFORM AND THE STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MAJOR

Environmental design is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary major. Compared with other majors in design,

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environmental design with less than 30 years of history is still an emerging discipline. Its professional contents involve art, architecture, landscape architecture, urban and rural planning, botany, furniture design, interior design, folklore and many other disciplines. The characteristics of the major determine that it is a very practical and technical major, and it has a wide range of employment, diverse career choices, and good employment prospects, and thus has been recognized by the majority of students.

In 1988, the State Education Commission began to set up the “Environmental Art Design” major. And in 2012, the Ministry of Education promulgated a new undergraduate major catalogue of higher education institutions, in which the “Environmental Art Design” was renamed as “Environmental Design”, and the major has gradually become an independent discipline. In the past three decades, due to the development of modern society and the improvement of people's quality of life, the demand for environmental design talents in the job market is enormous and sustained. Environmental design has not only become a popular art design major in colleges, but also been liked by art candidates. The interaction of the talent market, schools and candidates has prompted the environmental design major to develop rapidly and expand in scales. There is presenting a state of blowout.

At present, there are more than 1,000 colleges and universities offering the environmental design major in China. However, the discipline history of environmental design in China is too short, and the major is still in its infancy and exploration stage. From the perspective of the education related structure of teachers and the training mode, in the context of the rapid expansion of majors’ scales and the expansion of enrollment, whether the school is a professional art college or a comprehensive university, it usually directly

uses or references the teaching systems of professional art colleges, especially the Eight Great Academies of Fine Arts. Therefore, there are inevitably some problems. For example, the talent training goal is not clear; the professional curriculum settings, teaching modes, and teaching contents of colleges and universities at different levels are similar, and the teaching theory system lacks professional features. These have caused students to have single thinking mode, weak professional confidence, and no regional characteristics.

Compared with the environmental design major in professional art colleges and universities directly affiliated to China's ministries and commissions, the environmental design major in local universities represented by Wuhan University of Science and Technology is obviously in a disadvantaged position in striving for various national resources such as school funding, teacher team construction, high-level technology innovative platforms and talent training bases, and its professional personality is difficult to highlight. Therefore, the problem of major characteristics of the environmental design major in local colleges which account for a large proportion in all universities is an important issue in the development of the environmental design major. This issue is an inevitable requirement for major development and is the key to avoid pell-mell development and homogenization in the development process of the environmental design major.

### III. THE CONSTRUCTION IDEA OF "HIGHLIGHTING REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SERVING REGIONAL CONSTRUCTION"

Teaching, scientific research, social services and cultural heritage innovation are the four main functions of universities that are generally recognized. Regarding the social service function of universities, Van Hesse, the president of the University of Wisconsin put forward "The Wisconsin Idea" in the early 20th century, that is, universities should fully play their social service functions to actively promote economic and social development through disseminating knowledge and providing expert services. This clearly defined social services as one of the main functions of universities.

In China, the clear positioning of the social service function of colleges and universities began in the late 1980s. The Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China promulgated in 1998 stipulates that higher education institutions should focus on cultivating talents, carry out teaching activities, scientific researches and social services, and ensure that the quality of education and teaching reaches the standards set by the state, and the social service functions of colleges and universities in China have been guaranteed by policies and laws. In 2010, the State Council promulgated the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020), stating that "colleges and universities should firmly establish the awareness to serve the society and provide services in all aspects." This is the strategic requirement raised by the Party Central Committee in the new era, new stage for higher education institutions. This has also pointed out the direction and construction idea of "serving the society" for the characteristic development of the environmental design major.

From the height of overall development, the 18th CPC National Congress has determined the "Five in One" overall layout of socialism with Chinese characteristics, takes cultural construction as one of the "Five in One" overall layout, and takes the construction of a cultural power as an important content of the comprehensive construction of a well-off society. This strategic task of promoting the great development and prosperity of socialist culture provides a powerful opportunity for the further improvement of the ability to serve the society of the environmental design major.

First of all, the local government attaches great importance to cultural construction, providing unprecedented opportunities for the development of the environmental design major itself and the cultural construction of serving the localities;

Secondly, the vigorous rise of local cultural construction has expanded the social service space for the environmental design major.

The environmental design major in our school is an applied undergraduate major in a local university. If the major wants to develop its own characteristics, it must make full use of the culture, economy, natural resources and regional characteristics of the area where the school is located to make them be important resources for the construction of the discipline. The distinctive discipline constructed with regional cultural characteristics, regional natural resources and regional economic characteristics is irreplaceable and can play an active role in professional talent training, scientific research and serving area construction. It is the important foundation for our school's environmental design major to form core competitiveness, and is also an inevitable choice for adapting to social and economic development.

Under the guidance of this idea, our school's environmental design major should face the local regional economic development with an active attitude, and take serving local cultural construction as its responsibility and mission, keenly discover the needs of local culture construction and actively take the local cultural construction needs as the guide, work hard to strengthen the construction of its own characteristics, respond to the needs with its own cultural advantages; provide decision-making consultation and corresponding talent support for the development of regional cultural industries, and deliver innovative talents with rich professional knowledge, strong practical abilities and social responsibilities for local economic and social development, contributing to the sustainable development of the local economy.

### IV. THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM OF THE CHARACTERISTIC TEACHING SYSTEM OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MAJOR

To effectively construct a teaching system with "regional characteristics", we must adhere to the research direction of serving regional construction, combine teaching practices, take cultivating applied talents as the foundation, take cultural heritage and innovation as the mission, take scientific research and innovation as the support, and use scientific research to promote the cultivation of talents, enhance the ability to serve the society, and construct the teaching system for the environmental design major in local universities with clear

objectives. In practice, we will conduct research and practice from the following aspects:

#### A. Identifying Talent Training Goals

Serving local culture construction is conducive to clarifying the talent training objectives of the environmental design major. Only when the training objectives are clear can the quality of trained professional talents be improved and the teaching reform and innovation be promoted. Facing the opportunities and problems of balancing urban and rural development in Hubei province, based on the establishment of the environmental design specialty with Chinese characteristics, explore a new cultural way of sustainable development that returns to local culture, especially Hubei regional culture, taking serving the sustainable social and economic development as the foothold.

- Focus on the design of the living environment inside and outside the buildings, study Chinese local architecture ideas, combine the needs of contemporary human life, explore the sustainable development path of human settlements with Chinese characteristics, and form the teaching content with "the urban and rural human settlement that advocates a comprehensive return to nature" as its features and advantages;
- Take experimental teaching as the special teaching method and serving the society as the purpose, form a series of experimental courses with research directions and scientific research methods, and further intersect with artistic design.

#### B. Optimizing the Curriculum System

1) *Constructing the curriculum system with the "course group" model:* At present, the curriculum design of the environmental design major has problems such as disordered curriculum arrangement and inconsistent knowledge structure. These problems directly affect the improvement of teaching quality and adversely affect the education of high-level practical and inter-disciplinary talents. In order to cultivate high-quality innovative talents in a targeted manner, all courses are scientifically summarized according to their professional characteristics, and reasonable course groups are formed. In each semester, there is a theme of courses, and for each theme, there are theoretical courses, professional courses and elective courses. Directly taking the actual topics of social services as the themes, we try to expose students to the most authentic first-hand information, and configure corresponding practical teaching bases according to different course groups, set up courses according to social needs, and cultivate professional talents who have strong practical abilities and are favored by the society.

2) *Fully tapping local cultural art and optimizing the curriculum system:* The combination of local cultural characteristics and environmental design education is an inevitable trend in the development of the environmental design major in local universities. Providing decision-making consultation and corresponding talent support for the development of the regional cultural industry through the

research and creative design of regional characteristic cultural resources is the important way for the environmental design major to provide services for social and economic development. To improve the level of discipline construction, the environmental design major must make full use of the culture, economy, natural resources and characteristics of the region where the school is located, making them become important resources for discipline construction. The curriculum system built with the regional cultural characteristics, regional natural characteristics and regional economic characteristics is irreplaceable and is the important foundation of professional core competitiveness.

#### C. Innovating Teaching Methods

Establish the "workshop" teaching method, and strengthen school-enterprise cooperation and collaborative innovation. Strengthening school-enterprise cooperation or social services is not a requirement for universities to find social service projects and expand social service channels beyond the scientific research and teaching. And it is not to replace the original teaching and scientific research with social service projects. It refers to permeating the concept of social services into the teaching and scientific research, and giving play to the social service functions of teaching and scientific research in universities. "We should pay attention to the social service function of higher education, but shouldn't ignore the teaching and scientific research responsibilities that higher education should undertake due to the attention on the social service functions."

Introducing the "workshop" teaching method can not only break the boundary between theoretical teaching and practical teaching, but also train students' practical ability, which is conducive to students entering the society in the future. Through establishing partnerships with companies, the school introduces specific market projects to the classes and guides students in practical training, so that students can broaden their horizons and understand and master the new development trends of the major more quickly and comprehensively. The ultimate goal of the "workshop" teaching method is still to serve the teaching and improve the quality of the design curriculum.

#### D. Strengthening the Practical Teaching Link

The environmental design major is an applied major, requiring students to have higher practical ability. In the training plan, attention should be paid to strengthening the practical teaching link. The practical teaching link of the environmental design major in our school has always had a good tradition. The course of investigation and mapping of residential settlements set up in 2006 is based on large-scale local survey and measurement, and comprehensively sorts out the artisan system of folk settlements and residential buildings in Hubei. A large amount of first-hand data and information has been obtained in the past ten years, and has been submitted to the local government cultural department for free, which is playing an active role in the protection of local traditional culture.

### *E. Continuing to Build Professional Laboratories*

With the goal of exploring and returning to local culture, the laboratory construction of the environmental design major returns to local art and crafts, emphasizing the training of students' practical ability and the improvement of contemporary technologies. Build laboratories and sort out the folk artisan systems, and form the laboratory curriculum system with local characteristics through the upgrading of contemporary technologies.

With the teaching method with the experimental course as the core, form a series of experimental courses with research directions and scientific research methods, and further deepen the intersection with art design, achieving truly providing services for the society.

### V. "HIGHLIGHTING REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SERVING AREA CONSTRUCTION" IS AN INHERENT REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MAJOR

Today, the cultural industry is increasingly prosperous, how to build the teaching system with local characteristics of the environmental design major with social services as the guide, so that the major and local economy can interact with each other and develop together, and give full play to the interaction effect between local university culture and local economy, is a fundamental issue that environmental design education must face and study in depth, and has much theoretical and practical significance for the construction of characteristic teaching system of the environmental design major. It is conducive to promoting the formation of practical and innovative talent training mode and teaching system for the environmental design major in local colleges; it is conducive to promoting the deep integration of industry, education and research, and has unique advantages in the speculation and innovation of university traditional training methods; While the environmental design major in local colleges are carrying out social services with their regional characteristics, the characteristic disciplines built are especially unique and irreplaceable; local colleges and universities can explore local excellent culture and spread local characteristic culture by serving regional economic development, and can provide new growth points and cultural elements of sustainable development for local economic development. The social service-oriented can effectively guide the construction and development of the environmental design major of the school, which is the inherent requirement of the development of the environmental design major.

### VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, the environmental design majors of local colleges and universities should construct the characteristic teaching systems through serving the local economies, adhere to the main direction of serving local economic and social development, focus on cultivating students' comprehensive quality, use limited resources in the aspects that can mostly reflect their own characteristics, avoid blindly comparing with professional art colleges and 211 project universities, and focus on developing their own asymmetric advantages in competition. Only in this way can the schools form the talent

training mode of environmental design majors which is more adaptable to regional economic development and is more competitive and viable in the cultivation of talents.

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