

Analysis on the Evaluation System of Humanities Teachers' Scientific Research Performance in American Public Colleges and Universities

Taking Iowa State University as an Example*

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Abstract—It is of great significance to explore the content and characteristics of the scientific research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in American universities for the construction and improvement of the scientific research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in Chinese universities. On the basis of defining the core concepts of university teachers' scientific research performance evaluation, university humanities teachers and university humanities teachers' scientific research performance evaluation system, this paper interprets the current situation of the scientific research performance evaluation system of American Iowa State University humanities teachers from six aspects: evaluation subject, evaluation object, evaluation purpose, evaluation criteria, evaluation system and evaluation method. This paper explores the main characteristics of the research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in Iowa State University, expecting to provide some reference for the construction of the research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in Chinese universities.

Keywords—America; Iowa State University; humanities; evaluation system of teachers' scientific research performance; analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

Establishing and improving the scientific research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in colleges and universities is an important part of deepening the reform of personnel system in colleges and universities in China. To construct a scientific research performance evaluation system for university humanities teachers and build a high-level team of teachers with excellent quality, reasonable structure and full of vigor is a new challenging task. There are many drawbacks in the evaluation system of scientific research performance of university humanities teachers in China. There is no scientific and reasonable evaluation system in the aspects, such as evaluation subject, evaluation object, evaluation purpose, evaluation criteria,

evaluation system and evaluation methods, which need to be improved. On the basis of a special investigation of the scientific research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in Iowa State University, this paper makes a comprehensive analysis of its contents, and seeks useful enlightenment for perfecting the scientific research performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in colleges and universities in China.

II. DEFINITION OF CORE CONCEPTS

A. Evaluation of Scientific Research Performance of College Teachers

Scientific research performance evaluation of university teachers refers to the objective and fair value judgment of scientific research input, scientific research output and scientific research benefit index carried out by university teachers according to specific evaluation standards and scientific evaluation methods. The ultimate goal of university teachers' scientific research performance evaluation is to improve the quality of scientific research. Therefore, through the evaluation, teachers' scientific research performance can be distinguished, and their enthusiasm for scientific research can be mobilized.

B. Humanities Teachers in Colleges and Universities

Humanities are the study of human values and spiritual expression. Its representative disciplines include ancient and modern linguistics, literature, philosophy, geography, history, religion, art and musicology. Humanities teachers in colleges and universities refer to the professional workers whose duty is to educate and train students' humanities knowledge.

C. Evaluation System of Scientific Research Performance of Humanities Teachers in Colleges and Universities

The evaluation system of scientific research performance of university humanities teachers consists of six basic elements: evaluation subject, evaluation object, evaluation purpose, evaluation criterion, and evaluation system and

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evaluation method. 1) The evaluation subject refers to the initiator of evaluation, and it usually refers to the individual or organization that expresses evaluation opinions on the evaluation object. 2) The evaluation object refers to the object of evaluation. According to different criteria, it can be divided into two categories. One is humanities teachers, and the other is scientific research achievements, scientific research funds, awards and service work. 3) The purpose of evaluation refers to the pre-set goals and results to be achieved. It is the "leader" of the whole evaluation system and plays a vital role in the establishment of evaluation criteria. 4) Evaluation criterion refers to the standard to measure the object of evaluation in the process of evaluation, which is the key of the whole evaluation system. 5) The evaluation system refers to the administrative rules or action guidelines formulated by the relevant departments to ensure the smooth progress of evaluation activities and to require the relevant personnel to abide jointly, including democratic evaluation system, academic norms system, peer expert selection system, third-party independent evaluation system, supervision system, evaluation results publicity system, evaluation object appeal system, feedback system and so on. It is an important guarantee to realize the overall goal of the evaluation system. 6) Evaluation method refers to the means or behavioral patterns used to achieve a certain purpose in the evaluation process, mainly including peer evaluation method, citation measurement method, policy effect evaluation method, public opinion poll method and social experiment method, etc. [2]. The above methods can also be summarized as a comprehensive evaluation method combining quantitative evaluation method, qualitative evaluation method and qualitative and quantitative evaluation method.

III. INTERPRETATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE EVALUATION SYSTEM OF THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PERFORMANCE OF THE HUMANITIES TEACHERS AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Iowa State University, formerly a college of science and engineering, has been known for its world-renowned scientific research level for many years. Its teacher performance evaluation system is perfect and meticulous. The related institutions of humanities in the university are divided into two categories: one is the college of arts and design, the college of arts and sciences; the other is the department of history, music and drama, and the department of philosophy and religion. The college of arts and design started relatively late in the field of human science research. For example, the specialty of landscape architecture was established in the late 1970s and ranked the eighth among the achievements in the United States in just 40 years. The performance evaluation system of humanities teachers in this university is basically the same as that in other academic fields. However, there are special rules in the evaluation criteria and evaluation methods of arts, music and dramatic performance. For the teachers of the above-mentioned specialties, they also need to have the function of artistic creation, such as creating stage works of art, and planning exhibitions and exhibition projects, etc. These creative achievements should be treated equally with the scientific

research achievements of other professional teachers. The policy of evaluating the performance of humanities teachers in Iowa State University is provided by the Iowa State University Faculty Handbook, which emphasizes that humanities teachers must carry out "high-impact scientific research in an all-round way" [3] and "strive to improve the quality of life of the whole people through humanities". It put forward high standards and strict requirements for humanities teachers. This paper will explain the evaluation system of humanities teachers' scientific research performance in Iowa State University from six aspects: evaluation subject, evaluation object, evaluation purpose, evaluation criterion, and evaluation system and evaluation method.

A. Evaluation Subject

The evaluation system of humanities teachers' scientific research performance at Iowa State University adopts the "all-win" model to obtain evaluation information. The evaluation subjects include Senior Vice President and Provost, Faculty Senate, Dean & Department Chair, Peer Reviewer, Colleague and Teachers. For the humanities, the peer experts play the leading role.

The Senior Vice President and Provost is the chief academic officers of the university. He is mainly responsible for academic matters, such as recruiting teachers and formulating academic policies. Specifically, it includes the evaluation, certification and continuous quality improvement (CQI) of scientific research projects in two colleges and three departments related to humanities, and the appointment, promotion and lifelong appointment of teachers in related disciplines, and the formulation of teachers' professional development plans.

The Teacher Council of Iowa State University has branches in the two colleges and three departments mentioned above. In terms of membership structure, it is mainly composed of professors, and also includes representatives selected by teachers of various colleges, both of which jointly manage the scientific research affairs of teachers in the whole university. The Teachers Council guarantees the academic rights of all humanities teachers, and jointly participates in the management of colleges and universities with the university board and the state government. The teacher council has three main functions: legislative function, consulting function, and communication function. 1) Legislative function is responsible for the formulation of policies and regulations on teacher performance evaluation; 2) Consulting function provides information exchange services for teachers and evaluation departments. 3) Communication function puts forward opinions and suggestions on financial budget and other policy issues for the evaluation department, and works with it to resolve possible disputes and contradictions in the evaluation process. The Teacher Council consists of five councils, among which the Academic Affairs Council is responsible for curriculum setting, academic standards and honorary degree awarding. The Academic Affairs Council has three committees, of which the Academic Standards and

Admission Committee is responsible for the evaluation of scientific research performance.

College and department leaders are the "first checkpoint" of the whole evaluation subject and the important source of teachers' scientific research performance evaluation information. The department chair receives the evaluation materials of the teachers. The Dean submits the evaluation letter to the peer experts, waits for the peer experts to give feedback, and then objectively evaluates the merits and demerits of the teachers' scientific research performance combined with their views. College and department leaders play a bridge role in the evaluation process, which is the key link in the whole evaluation system.

Peer experts include peers outside the school and colleagues inside the school. Peers outside the school play a leading role in the evaluation process, and they are appointed by authoritative experts in various academic fields. Colleagues inside the school are composed of professors and associate professors in the same speciality. Peer evaluation focuses on the achievements of humanities teachers in the field of scientific research. Usually, it is conducted every three years, and the requirements for evaluation teachers are very strict.

Iowa State University encourages teachers to participate in the whole evaluation process. Teachers need to fill in a concise self-evaluation form, which focuses on academic objectives, research achievements and future work planning. As the people who know best about their own scientific research results and academic achievements, teachers have the right of choice and voice [4].

B. Evaluation Object

The evaluation objects of the scientific research performance of humanities teachers in Iowa State University are all teachers, including lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and professors. It is worth mentioning that part-time teachers in arts, music and dramatic performances occupy a large proportion. Teachers' social background and scientific research experience are relatively complex, and the scientific research characteristics of teachers in the same specialty have their own merits. The evaluation criterion is difficult to be uniform, and need to be considered according to specific circumstances. In terms of scientific research, most of the teachers in fine arts, music and dramatic performances do not engage in literary research like history, philosophy, linguistics, etc., but in artistic creation. To sum up, the evaluation criteria of scientific research performance of such teachers need to emphasize the "creativity" of scientific research results [5].

C. Evaluation Purpose

The evaluation purpose of the scientific research performance of humanities teachers in Iowa State University is mainly realized from three aspects: universities, management departments and teachers. From the university level, it is to set up advanced humanities concepts, and improve the scientific research level of humanities teachers in an all-round way, so as to promote the development of

humanities cause. From the management level, it is to affirm the scientific research achievements of teachers, find out the shortcomings of teachers, and provide the basis for the continuation, promotion and salary increase of teachers and other personnel work. From the teacher level, it is to improve teachers' scientific research ability, encourage teachers to maintain a higher academic level, and clear the goal for teachers' professional development.

D. Evaluation Criterion

The evaluation criterion of the scientific research performance of humanities teachers in Iowa State University is subject to the formulation of the school's mission and the principle of academic freedom. The evaluation criteria can be divided into professional title criteria, college and department criteria and university criteria. The university criterion is closely related to scientific research performance. It stipulates that humanities teachers should write a certain number of high-level journal papers or publish monographs on scientific research achievements. In academic research, they should put forward their own independent opinions on the basis of being in line with international frontiers. Under the above evaluation criteria, specific evaluation indicators can also be refined, which are closely related to one or some attributes of the evaluation object. The evaluation indicators of scientific research performance of humanities teachers in Iowa State University can be divided into two levels. The first indicators refer to scientific research and creative activities. The secondary indicators are divided into four parts. The first part is scientific research achievements, including journal papers, conference papers, academic works, etc.; the second part is scientific research funds, including disposable projects, fund amount, fund source, etc.; the third part is awards, including awards, honors, patents, exhibitions and so on; the fourth part is service work, including Dean, the head of departments, colleges and school committees, members of university committee and leaders of professional academic organizations, periodicals, foundations and other organizations outside the school [6].

E. Evaluation System

From the level, the evaluation system can be divided into overall system, general system and specific system [7]. The overall system is the core of the evaluation system and the basic rules that all relevant personnel must abide, such as democratic evaluation system, academic norms system, etc. The general system is the basis of the evaluation system, such as expert selection system, supervision system, and evaluation results appeal system, etc. For example, Iowa State University stipulates that a complaint can be filed within 30 days of the publication of the evaluation results. If there is insufficient evidence during the investigation, the complaint will be deferred for up to 30 days. Within a week after the expiration of the appeal period, a written reply must be given to the petitioner and the respondent. Specific system is the extension of evaluation system. It refers to several sub-systems, such as evaluation methods of excellent exhibitions and evaluation procedures of high-level monographs, which are subdivided according to specific evaluation conditions under the premise of overall system and general system. The

high quality of humanities education in Iowa State University benefits from the high-quality teachers. And the construction of the teaching staff is closely related to the scientific and reasonable evaluation system of scientific research performance.

F. Evaluation Method

Iowa State University mainly adopts peer-based and citation-based methods to evaluate the research performance of humanities teachers. First, department leaders are responsible for sending evaluation letters to six out-of-school peers who are not closely related to the teachers participating in the evaluation, such as co-authors of papers or works, partners in scientific research projects, graduate tutors, etc. However, for some minority disciplines, such as dramatic performance arts, the number of peer experts has some limitations, and it is very likely that they are closely related to the evaluated teachers. If they are not allowed to be appraisal experts, it will lead to the phenomenon of "layman appraisal expert", which needs special rules. At least one of the six out-of-school experts can be chosen by the teachers themselves, and the teachers can also submit a "blacklist" to reject three out-of-school experts to participate in the evaluation. There are inevitably interest disputes among experts, and peer evaluation method still lacks objectivity and fairness. In order to remedy the shortcomings of this evaluation method, Iowa State University also introduced the methods of bibliometrics, mathematics and economics into the evaluation, and used the three major citation index databases of the American Institute of Scientific Information (ISI), namely Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&H CI), and Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings (ISSTP). The academic quality of researchers' research results is evaluated by calculating the citation of research results [8].

IV. CONCLUSION

The evaluation results of scientific research performance of humanities teachers organized by Iowa State University have been used by the state government as the basis for implementing performance allocation. Its advanced experience has also had a profound impact on other universities in the United States. It has played a positive role in strengthening the sense of scientific research mission of humanities teachers in public universities and promoting the professional development of humanities teachers in public universities. For this reason, the evaluation system is worth learning.

First of all, Iowa State University emphasizes that the evaluation subject should be selected from various channels to ensure the fairness and objectivity of the evaluation results and give teachers autonomy in the evaluation process. For example, teachers can choose their favorite reviewers. Also, they can avoid those who don't like them, and they have the right to complain about unsatisfactory results after the evaluation. Secondly, Iowa State University establishes evaluation criteria from multiple perspectives, and considers the uniqueness of the research achievements of art teachers. The research achievements of art teachers are different from

that of other majors in expression. As long as their research achievements can fully reflect the "creativity" of art teachers, they should be regarded as the same as those of other majors. Finally, Iowa State University adopts a comprehensive evaluation method which combines qualitative and quantitative methods. It attaches importance to peer experts' evaluation, establishes special expert groups in interdisciplinary evaluation, avoids the chaos of "layman evaluating expert", and uses citation analysis as a supplement to ensure the scientificity and effectiveness of evaluation methods. Such an evaluation system can not only ensure that colleges and universities have enough enthusiasm to participate in the evaluation, but also promote humanities teachers to achieve the expected goals in the evaluation process, which is worth learning for Chinese colleges and universities.

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