

New Challenges for Private Colleges and Universities in Construction of Counselor Team in the New Era and Putting into Practice the Spirit of the 19th National Congress*

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Abstract—Counselor is an important part of the ideological and political education work team in colleges and universities and plays an irreplaceable role in the conduction of ideological and political work for college students. In private colleges and universities, due to the particularity of students group different from public colleges and universities, it is a new challenge for constructing a counselor team for private colleges and universities in the new era in order to put into practice the spirit of the 19th National Congress and cultivate new successors with ideal, ability and ready to shoulder responsibility. In detail, there are difference between the actual work performance of such counselors and the Ministry of Education's expectation for their work and also certain difference between the status quo of counselor team construction in private colleges and universities and the requirement in the Order No.43 of the Ministry of Education.

Keywords—the 19th National Congress; new era; counselors in private colleges and universities; new challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

The 19th CPC National Congress solemnly declared to the world that socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era and will face new historical orientations, new major social contradictions, new strategic arrangements and goals in the new era and also put forward new requirement for the talent cultivation quality of higher education and the work quality of ideological and political education in colleges and universities. In the report of the 19th National Congress, it is clearly stated, "It is necessary to fully implement the party's educational policy, put into practice the fundamental tasks of educating talents by setting moral standards, develop quality education, promote education equity and cultivate all-round socialist builders and successors." [1] This statement clearly answers the fundamental question about to cultivate students into what kind of people, how to cultivate and cultivate for who in the

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education of colleges and universities persisting in running school with socialism orientation. Namely, it is to cultivate all-round socialist builders and successors for the Party and China by fully implementing the educational policy of the Party and putting into practice the fundamental task of educating talents by setting moral standards and providing quality education. This statement applies to both public and private colleges and universities. However, there is certain gap between private and public colleges and universities in putting into practice of ideological and political education, especially in the construction of counselor team for providing ideological and political education for college students in detail.

II. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ACTUAL WORK PERFORMANCE OF COUNSELORS IN PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S EXPECTATION FOR THEIR WORK

On Mar.25, 2014, the document "Standard for Vocational Ability of Counselors in Colleges and Universities (Trial)" (JSZ [2014] No.2) was disclosed on the website of the Ministry of Education. The document defined the basic requirement and vocational ability standard for as well as nine major work responsibilities of counselors in colleges and universities and classified such counselors into primary, middle and high levels based on their work years, achievements and performances. Different levels of them have different ability standards for conducting the nine major works, where the work content of a level is richer than that of the lower level. The nine major work responsibilities of counselors are regulated as follows: providing ideological and political education and value guidance for college students, construction of the Party and League organizations in the classes under their leading, providing guidance for students' studies, management on daily affairs of students, providing mental health education and consultation, providing network ideological and political education, give emergency crisis response, providing career planning and employment guidance for students and making researches on theory and practice of work in students union and the communist youth league. The division in three levels has

higher requirement for vocational function in addition to work years and experiences. For instance, "primary-level counselors should have at least 1~3 years of work experience in general, participated in the regulated pre-employment training or induction training and obtained applicable certificate of qualification; middle-level counselors should have 4~8 years of work experience in basic students union and the communist youth league and relevant work experience and have cultivated strong ability to make research and accumulated certain theoretical and practical achievements. For middle-level counselors, there are higher requirements in various vocational functions in addition to the vocational standards for primary-level counselors. High-level counselors should have at least more than 8 years of work experience in basic students union and the communist youth league and rich practical experience related, have higher theoretical level and academic accomplishment and have made deep researches on a field of ideological and political education, achieved influential achievement and become expert of the field in addition to meeting the vocational standard requirement for middle-level counselors." Compared with the basic requirement and vocational ability standard for counselors stated in "the Standard"[2], large gap still exists in the construction of counselor team in private colleges and universities.

First, in terms of basic requirements for counselors, it specifies the basic knowledge, professional knowledge and legal and regulatory knowledge to be mastered by counselors. For current counselors in private colleges and universities, the breadth and depth of such three aspects of knowledge contents of the three aspects are not mastered in place and their basic knowledge are barely enough for use; are in a state of being barely enough in terms of basic knowledge; in aspects of professional knowledge and legal and regulatory knowledge, especially in the basic theory, knowledge and method in ideological and political education major, the basic principles of Marxism and relevant knowledge on practical ideological and political education work on college students, counselors not graduated from universities are basically unable to master such knowledge. Moreover in the counselor team in private colleges and universities, few and even none of the counselors are graduated from universities and majored in ideological and political education or related majors. Taking Lushan College of Guangxi University of Science and Technology as an example, there are 61 working persons in total in students union and the communist youth league of the college from the deputy secretary of the college party committee in charge of student affairs to staffs in apartment management division in charge of student apartment management. None of them are graduated from universities and majored in ideological and political education and related majors. By visiting some private colleges and universities in Guangxi, it is known that they are basically similar and counselors are introduced on the basis of the professional needs of teaching units. Therefore, there is basically no requirement in terms of their professional knowledge and most of their knowledge of laws and regulations is mainly accumulated from experience in life and work. There is a gap between actual construction of counselor team in private colleges and universities and the

requirement in "the Standard", so that there is difference between the actual work performance of counselors in private colleges and universities and the Ministry of Education's expectation for their work.

Second, in terms of the professional ability requirement for Counselors, there is also a large gap between the construction of counselor team in private colleges and universities and the level division and vocational ability requirement for counselors. First of all, the loss rate of private college counselors is very high. Taking Lushan College of Guangxi University of Science and Technology as an example, from September 2017 to the present, there are 3 counselors leaving the college and one counselor transferred to other post. The number of transferred and left persons accounts for 13.3% of the total number of counselors in the college. By a field visit, it is known that the loss rate of counselors in this college is lower than that in similar colleges in Guangxi, so that the counselor team structure in private colleges and universities becomes unstable and it is hard for them to make improvement in vocational ability. Second, according to the level division of counselors in "the Standards" from perspective of work years, the proportions of counselors in primary, middle and high levels are all basically 1/3 of total number of counselors in some private colleges and universities and are in normal distribution; but from perspectives of practical experience, theoretical level, academic accomplishment and work efficiency, counselors in private colleges and universities are in primary level, very few of them can be classified as middle-level counselors and nearly none of them can reach the standard for high-level counselors. Third, in contrast to the nine major work responsibilities stated in "the Standard" and by visiting and investigating the current situation of counselors in private colleges and universities in the region, it is known that very few of them can carry out the nine major work responsibilities in the practical work. Most counselors pay about 70% attention to management of daily affairs (taking 60% of their attention) and dealing with emergency crisis (taking 10% of their attention) and only pay about 30% attention to the remained seven major work responsibilities; in this way, there is little time for carrying out ideological and political education and network ideological and political education for college students and the lack of ideological education for college students will directly affect the quality of cultivated talents. Due to the above three reasons, it is difficult for counselors in private colleges and universities to make improvement in their vocational ability and level. The lack of improvement in vocational ability will inevitably affect the implementation of counselors' work, and it will inevitably enter a vicious cycle. As a result, there will be a gap between the actual work performance of counselors in private colleges and universities and the Ministry of Education's expectation for their work.

III. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE STATUS QUO OF COUNSELOR TEAM CONSTRUCTION IN PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND THE REQUIREMENT IN THE "REGULATIONS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF COUNSELOR TEAM IN ORDINARY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES"

On Sep.21, 2017, the Ministry of Education revised and disclosed the "Regulations on the Construction of Counselor team in Ordinary Colleges and Universities" (hereinafter referred to as the Regulation). The main revision basis is to put into practice the spirit of the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work and the "CPC Central Committee and State Council's Opinion on Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation". This revised version referenced and perfected the major work responsibilities of counselors stated in "the Standard". The objective in the Regulation is clearer so that counselors' identities are more definite, their responsibilities are richer and their professional and vocational development is clearer. However, there is a big gap between the current situation of the construction of counselors in private colleges and universities and the requirements of the Regulation.

A. *Allocation and Selection of Counselors: There Is a Lack of Counselors to Large Extent and Existing Counselors' Level Varies*

The Regulation requires that the counselor-student ratio in colleges and universities should not be less than 1:200 in general and counselors should be sufficiently allocated in place in the principle of a combination of full-time and part-time counselors and full-time counselors predominant. In terms of allocation of counselors, after visiting the private colleges and universities in Guangxi, it is found that nearly none of them can practically put into practice the 1:200 allocation ratio. The reason for successful passing the evaluation on this indicator of them in annual inspection is that most of them get all workers in students union and the communist youth league counted in the number of counselors. Taking Lushan College of Guangxi University of Science and Technology as an example, in 2017, there were 12,000 students, 31 full-time counselors and 2 deputy secretaries of the general Party branch (as required in the Regulation, deputy secretaries of the general Party branch should be included in the full-time counselor team) and the counselor-student ratio was 1:353; if all workers of students union and the communist youth league (including 13 persons in student affairs division and Youth League Committee and 8 secretaries of general Party branch of each department) are counted in the number of counselors, the counselor-student ratio was 1:222. The difference between the two data is 130 persons. In reporting such data, most private colleges and universities counted the data in the latter statistical method. Even if so, they also failed to meet the ratio requirement. Over an investigation on public colleges and universities in the region, it is known that few of them realize the counselor-student ratio of 1:200. But the advantage of such public colleges and universities lies in that they have graduate schools so that many graduate students can serve as

part-time counselors. This advantage is out of reach for private colleges and universities.

There are also many problems in the process of selection of counselors. First, with the development of higher education, the entry requirements for counselors are further raised. As regulated in paragraph 2, clause 7 of the Regulation, "having education background superior to bachelor and loving ideological and political education for college students". However in practice, it is difficult for private colleges and universities to recruit counselors having background superior to bachelor, especially those who love in providing ideological and political education on college students. With respect to the resumes of postgraduates collected in student affairs division, most of the postgraduates think that being counselor is the secondary choice if they fail to be recruited as full-time teacher and may look for chance to transfer to teacher post after entering the school and serving as counselor. Their minds are fundamentally not put on ideological and political education of college students. Such persons neither have much experience in dealing with student affairs nor put their minds on student affairs, resulting in the uneven levels among them so that it is difficult to carry out ideological and political education work on students. This phenomenon is mainly caused by the following three reasons: first, with the increase in development level and speed of private colleges and universities, most talents introduced in such school are postgraduates. For the current actual situation of such schools, rare of them is available to introduce doctoral students in school. Excellent postgraduate may take the position of full-time teacher rather than counselors without hesitation. Most of them finally taking the position of counselors are those being eliminated in the first round of screening, hence their ability and level are ordinary; second, teachers in private colleges and universities are not regular teachers and the work of counselor is basically in a state of "busy from waking up to lights-out time of the school" and is the most basic work in colleges and universities in tradition. It may be a large obstacle in professional development of those engaging in this work for long term. Thereby, the position of counselor in private colleges and universities is not attractive for postgraduate; third, the salary in private college is low, especially for counselors. Taking Lushan College of Guangxi University of Science and Technology as an example, the difference in annual incomes between counselor and full-time teacher of the same education background, title and work years is about 30%~50%. The pay is not proportional to the return so that the position of counselor in private colleges and universities is less attractive. In addition, the Regulation clarifies that "colleges and universities can select a certain number of part-time counselors from outstanding full-time teachers, managers and graduate students." As mentioned above, there is almost no education for graduate students in private colleges and universities, so it is impossible for private colleges and universities to select graduate students to work as part-time counselors; with respect to full-time teachers in private colleges and universities, the number of non-Party members is far greater than that of Party members. Therefore, it is difficult to select part-time counselors from outstanding full-

time teachers, as there are very few teachers with political status up to standard and having the intention to serve as counselor in addition to the heavy workload of teaching. At the same time, in view of the limited operation fund of and insufficient staffing of management persons in private colleges and universities, it is just enough to do daily work affairs and it is both unbeneficial to the management persons and students if management persons' workload is increased due to also serving as counselor.

B. Development and Training: Narrow Promotion Space and Uncertain Professionalization Chance

As regulated in clause 10, chapter 4 of the Regulation, colleges and universities shall formulate special measures and incentive guarantee mechanisms for full-time counselors to carry out "two-line" promotion requirements for their title and level and promote the professionalization of the counselor team. Public colleges and universities have a complete set of administrative levels and corresponding titles from department level to section level. Even in some public colleges and universities, the school leaders are deputy ministerial leaders. Therefore for public colleges and universities, the promotion of level and title is a matter of course and can be easily realized on the basis of work years and work performance. However for private colleges and universities, teachers in private colleges and universities are not part of the civil servants or institutional staffs and have no administrative level; second, they are limited by operation costs and the limited number of employees. It is practically difficult to advance from the title and level. It is difficult to compete with full-time teachers in professional disciplines due to restriction in daily work. Therefore, the so-called "two-line" promotions are actually different so that counselors in private colleges and universities have no "sense of security" in their work, forming an obstacle to the professionalization of counselor team in private colleges and universities. This case is mainly caused by the following two reasons: first, the Regulation clearly states that "the construction of counselor team shall be regarded as the key contents of teacher team and management team construction", clarifying the dual identity of the counselor. But as aforesaid, being management personnel, counselors have narrow or basically no space for promotion in administrative title and level, while being teachers, counselors bear complicated daily affairs so that they cannot be compared with full-time teachers in development of professional field. This practitioners' working enthusiasm may be gradually reduced and their positivity in work may also be reduced if they face bottleneck in career development and cannot see the career prospects. As a result, the workers engaging in ideological and political education for college students will get stuck into a vicious cycle where they only do work related to daily affairs, the construction of counselor team will be in a low spirit and cannot meet the new requirement of the new era for higher education. Second, due to the limitation of the first reason and there is no chance to be regular teacher in private colleges and universities, it is difficult for such schools to maintain talents. Counselors always face college students all day long. Although they are in the society, they are enclosed in the campus wall so that

they have actually "disengaged" from the society. Once they leave the school and want to seek for a suitable job in the society, their employment rate is far less than that of social people even new graduates. The positions in private colleges and universities are not iron-clad bowls like that in public colleges and universities so that there is no doubt that counselors in private colleges and universities may have such concerns. This case further restricts the professionalization development of the construction of counselors in private colleges and universities.

IV. CONCLUSION

As pointed out in the report of the 19th CPC National Congress, "It is necessary to give priority to development of education. Making China powerful by construction of education is the basic project for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is necessary to put education in the first place, speed up the modernization of education and provide people satisfied education." In China, public and private educations are both run in socialism orientation and for cultivating all-round socialist builders and successors for the Party and China and thus should not be treated in different way especially for the educator team engaging in providing ideological and political education for college students. It is necessary to enhance and professional vocational construction of counselor team in private colleges and universities at the moment that socialism with Chinese characteristics is entering a new era in order to put into practice the spirit of the 19th National Congress.

REFERENCES

- [1] Report of the CPC National Congress "Realizing all-round construction of affluent society and gaining great socialism victory of Chinese characteristics in the new era". (in Chinese)
- [2] "Standard for Vocational Ability of Counsellors in Colleges and Universities (Trial)" (JSZ [2014]No.2). (in Chinese)