

On the Implementation of the Talent Training Objective of the School of Business of Utah State University and Its Implications*

Lijuan Zhang¹, Chongning Sun², Yanwei Wang¹, Nan Wang³

¹School of Economics and Management, Northeast Dianli University, Jilin, China

²School of Foreign Language, Northeast Dianli University, Jilin, China

³Division of Teaching Affairs, Jilin University, Changchun, China

zlj0209@sohu.com, wangyanwei@mail.nedu.edu.cn, scnnedu@163.com, xwn2000@126.com

Abstract - The talent training objective is the first link of talent nurturing mode and the core factor of institution of higher education. It is also a concrete embodiment of educational value. This essay presents an explicit explanation on the way, the school of business of Utah state university practices its talent training objective, from which implications are derived on the counterparts of business major for higher education of China.

Index Terms - Talent Training Objective, Implement, Implications.

1. Introduction about Utah State University and Jon M Huntsman School of Business

Utah State University (USU) has a long history, enjoys a high reputation in worldwide for its superior quality teaching, research and management work⁽¹⁾. It established in 1888, is located in Logan, Utah, 80 miles away from Salt Lake City, capital of Utah. Originally an agronomic institute, USU has now been nationally and globally acknowledged for its accomplishments in engineering. Jon M. Huntsman School of Business of USU, established in 1889, is one of the many that enjoy a long history and also according to Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), one of the best business schools that excel in both undergraduate and graduate programs nationwide.

2. The implement of Huntsman School's Talent Training Objectives

After years' curricular reforms and practices, Huntsman School has long established its set of talent training objectives that are rooted in promoting students' Analytical Rigor, Entrepreneurial Spirit, and Global Vision, and been enforcing them via the following tactics.

A. *The Student-centered Pedagogical Principle*

The idea of institution of higher education should be student-oriented, meet the students' needs of the diversity of the individual growth⁽²⁾.

1) *Independent Decision Making About One's Study*

The system of credits and elective courses lend students full academic autonomy. Credits are transferrable, which allows students to transfer to a new school with the credits

earned in former schools. In addition, students enjoy the independence of changing majors whenever they feel like doing so, and deciding when to finish school and what courses to take. Students may also apply for more than one major. Each department of Huntsman School offers nine minors.

2) *Application of Multiple Teaching Approaches*

Student-centered, the teaching activities of Huntsman School are characterized by the application of research-based and experiential teaching approaches that advocate learning through discussion, discovery, cases and peer review. As follows is the teaching conducted.

a. *Research-based Teaching*

While teaching, instructors use discovery and discussion teaching methods to direct students' studies, so as to ensure their dominance in the learning process, and thus the instructors play their roles as guide of the learning process, manager of the learning tasks and counsellor of knowledge. The variation of questioning-answering modes, i.e. teachers initiate & students answer, students initiate & teachers answer, and students answer & students answer, guarantees students' active involvement and benefits from the class.

Case-based instructions are conducted as is below. First, instructors present to students the cases and learning materials via the course website before each session. Second, with the instructors' guide, students contextualize the cases, gather the pertinent theories to the cases by themselves, and form their own opinions. Then they share their opinions with group members online. Third, instructors, based on the credit hours and number of students, appoint one student or a group to make a presentation. Last, teachers participate in the discussions, comment on the outcomes, offer explanations on the theories utilized in analyzing the cases.

Review is one of the many effective means in research-oriented teaching mode⁽³⁾. In Huntsman School, all the courses, regardless of the number of registered students, require the setup of semester-long study groups of 5-10 students each at the very beginning, and instructors are responsible for all the group activities. Group review benefits the students in the exchange of ideas and the improvement of

* This work is partially supported by the project of teaching reform of Northeast Dianli University to Lijuan Zhang.

communicative capabilities, and also in promoting fair self-assessment and reflection, thus to reinforce the effects of research-based learning.

b. Experiential learning

Experiential learning involves feeling, watching, thinking, and doing, all of which are exercised in both Huntsman School's classroom teaching activities and practicums. For instance, in Macro-economics, to enhance the students' understanding of the concept, instructors apply games to introduce Opportunity Cost.

3) Learning facilities

USU and Huntsman School offer a range of study-facilitating services. First, the school and faculties offer info-service, including internet inquiries and print copies of useful contacts, FAQs on campus and academic life, campus map, public and school transportation route information, etc. Second, more than 80% of the courses offered by Huntsman have course websites such as Blackboard and Canvas. Students are able to download course syllabi and study materials from those websites and also conduct discussions there. Besides, the school also provides students with notable library services. The Library has around up to 1,326,000 books, 13,979 types of periodicals, and around 150 online databases. The Library is sectioned for public and private use. The former is shared for study and rest; the latter are usually rooms booked for exercising group (or sometimes individual) learning activities. The Library also provides free scanners and staplers. Furthermore, USU and Huntsman School have Learning Center established to offer counseling services and help to those in need. Also, advisors are assigned to students to help with their academic struggles.

4) On-campus Job Options

There are many job openings for students, administrative and service, which grants students opportunities of running the school. Students may be hired as TA or GA to a professor. These job opportunities help foster students' practical abilities and save quite an amount of administrative appropriations. Besides, the school encourages students' initiatives in school development, and grants material rewards and moral encouragement to those who take on the initiatives.

5) Faculty members

USU hires faculties on contracts. The faculties are ranked as professors and lecturers. The former are further ranked as Full Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Adjunct Professor; the latter as Senior Lecturer and Lecturer. Doctoral degree is required for professor candidates, whereas master degree and rich practical and/or theoretical experience are for lecturers.

Evaluation to teacher involves the assessment on an instructor's teaching, research work, community service and students' feedback, which conveys Huntsman's *student-oriented* principle. Such designed evaluation system can help check teachers' teaching, and therefore improve the

effectiveness of teaching and in return serve the purpose of keeping *student-oriented* in the process of teaching.

B. The Cultivation of Leadership

First, Huntsman School offers leadership courses to students, and in every single syllabus for every course is mentioned the requirement for students' academic integrity. Students' dishonesty will definitely be penalized. Next, great support is lent to students associations. Symposiums and seminars concentrated in Leadership are held and they have been normalized and institutionalized. Next, students are encouraged to practice internships. For instance, students can earn credits by travelling to African countries and operating and running the small businesses there via Small Enterprise Education and Development (SEED). According to a recent survey, the multi-methods adopted by Huntsman School to promote students' potentials to be leaders have significantly strengthened students' awareness of being leaders. According to the same survey, 43% of the informants claimed that they will start their own business in ten years right after graduation from school.

C. The Internationalized and Globalized Development Tactics

The realization of Huntsman School's training objective is reliant on its international and global development strategy; the running of Huntsman School insists on the principle of matriculating international students and starting cooperative programs with international schools. Currently, Huntsman School has developed partnerships with Northeast Dianli University, Beijing Institute of Technology, Northwest University for Nationalities, and Institute of Advanced Learning (HK); Huntsman has also started oversea programs in 20 countries and internship projects in 15 countries, both of which annually grant study and intern opportunities to students from Brazil, Peru, Chile, China, South Africa, Vietnam, UK, Belgium, Switzerland, and France. Furthermore, the proportion of international students and faculty members is also increasing. Of all, many faculty members in Huntsman are from China, South Korea, France, and some other countries; the students are from about 50 countries, and the number of international students accounts for 10% of the total.

3. The Enlightenment to the Talent Training Objectives Set by Chinese Commercial Schools

The implement of the above mentioned measures guarantees the realization of Huntsman School's talent training objectives, which has set an example to the business schools in China in the aspects of talent training, school-running concept, and development tactics.

A. The Driving Power of Improving the Talent Training Quality

With the spread and progress of global economic integration, many famous foreign business schools have long adopted globalization as one of the important development tactics, and hence have reached grand accomplishments in talent training^[4]. Thus, the Chinese business schools should

also take efforts to establish the concept of developing cooperative programs with foreign schools, so as to ensure the quality of talent training. The schools should not only get to know the latest business education concepts, but learn about other schools' experiences of running the school. Also, the Chinese business schools should extend the cooperative programs with foreign schools and strengthen the partnership with famous domestic and oversea enterprises in the aspects of students, curriculum, teaching faculty and teaching methodologies. The goals mentioned afore can be realized through a series of measures, such as to plan curriculum, offer varied language courses, employ international teaching faculties, and ensure students' internship.

Besides the internationalization of the school-running concept, its localization is also essential.

A global approach may better serve business schools' purposes of strategic planning, but the localized theory of business is the key to success. Thus, teaching emphasis should be placed on cultivating students' understanding of the country, and promoting students' cognition of national history and domestic market, so as to realize the combination of the internationalized and localized school-running concepts.

B. The Effective Measures to Realize the Objectives

The essence of education is a process of cultivating high-quality professionals which should take the student as the center, train students' learning ability, cultivating students' innovation consciousness^[2]. So we should do the following two points well.

First, emphasis should be placed upon learning so as to ensure students' dominant status in the course of learning. Classroom learning and teaching should not only maintain the tradition of stressing on the basics and fundamentals of subjects, but follow the teaching mode adopted by American schools, in which students' creativity is prior to any other qualities in teaching and learning, and classroom teaching and learning should be student-oriented, with teachers being merely guides in the teaching and learning activities. Students' learning autonomy should also be advocated to promote their independent thinking, and thus the improvement of their overall qualities will be expectedly reached. Second, the learning capacity should also be stressed on to lay a solid foundation for life-long study. Teachers should encourage students' initiative in learning, and aide students in shaping their own concept of learning autonomy and boosting their potentials of self-education by any effective means, so as to improve the students' adaptability to society and their competent of self-development. Third, besides the emphasis on cultivating students' basic qualities, schools should also cultivate students' leadership and promote their awareness of leadership, in order to realize their talent training objectives.

C. The Ultimate Purpose of the Objectives

In the course of establishing and implementing their talent training objectives, business schools should put stress on the reforms of practicums, which involves the following: 1.

Strengthen the cooperation with school-owned enterprises, making full use of the cutting edge in product developing and manufacturing, and teaching-research resources. Chinese higher education should identify its interests with enterprises. For instance, colleges and enterprises can jointly set up laboratories to create opportunities for students to exercise their practical abilities. 2. Expand the partnerships with more enterprises to take more interns. Schools should strengthen their communications with those enterprises; on the other, local government should take measures to encourage more enterprises to get involved and grant internship to students, hence to ensure the effects of practicums. 3. In the course of designing and developing course syllabi and teaching plans, the cultivation and assessment of students' practical abilities should be taken into consideration. Especially in commercial courses, doing surveys, taking part-time jobs, making curriculum designs, and doing reports all can be taken into the teaching process; aided by corresponding assessing criteria, the objective to train students' practical abilities can be guaranteed in each course.

D. The Ensuring Means of the Objectives

To establish an efficient, student-oriented learning and living environment cannot do without the development of information technology and support^[5]. The realization of USU's talent training objectives benefits from its powerful information technology. Currently, the construction of "information campuses" of Chinese colleges is relatively backward in its construction, technical teams, services, and investment, which have to a great extent constrained the realization of talent training. Therefore, Chinese higher education should push harder on the construction of information campuses. To do so, Chinese school should learn from domestic and foreign schools about their experience in constructing information campuses, and also collect more financial aid from different channels to ensure the information construction.

In addition, from the progressing trend of higher education, applied talents cultivating is inevitable for colleges that chiefly hinge on undergraduate programs^[6]. The quality of applied talent cultivating is, to a great extent, dependent on the qualities of teaching faculties. To realize the talent training objective and enhance the quality of the talents-to-be, schools should take efforts to train an advanced faculty of instructors highly adaptive to the development of higher education and international competitions.

4. Conclusion

Through examining Utah State University, typical of American colleges, it can be concluded that American colleges take a quantity of effective measures in reaching their talent training objectives, which has set a model for Chinese higher education. We should accept and tailor their school-running concepts to fit our own needs, that is, to get them localized, so that the quality of talent training will thus be improved and the ultimate purpose of higher education realized.

References

- [1] Y. W. Wang and J. L. Li, "Inspiration from the teaching style of economic curricula in Utah State University U.S.," *Journal of Northeast Dianli University*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp.62-64, Oct. 2012.
- [2] J. H. Li and F. Z. Li, "Constructing the talent cultivation system with student centered, flexible, diversified and utility features—inspiration from the talent cultivation model of university of York in the UK," *Studies in Foreign Education*, vol. 37, no. 245, pp. 92-96, 2010.
- [3] L. J. Zhang and C. N. Sun, "On the application and its implication of the case teaching model utilized in USU business law course," *Journal of Northeast Dianli University*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp.65-67, Oct. 2012.
- [4] S. M. Wu, "International comparison and inspiration of the talent training objective of business major in the USA," *Education Exploration*, no. 5, pp. 158-159, 2010.
- [5] J. H. Wang, W. M. Liu, and Y. Z. Tan, "Characteristics and inspiration of teaching management of Tennessee University U.S.," *China Agricultural Education*, no. 5, pp. 19-23, May 2011.
- [6] Z. H. Guan, "Thinking on training pattern of applied talents," *China University Teaching*, no. 6, pp. 7-11, 2010.