The Exploration of the Major Director in Universities from the “Streamlining of Administration” Perspective–Based on Research on Major Director in Universities Among Tianjin

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Abstract. The major director is a vital role of major construction in university. The author conducts the research and analyzes the status quo on the major director in Tianjin from the perspective of “streamlining of administration”, trying to give feasible suggestions. After the survey and interviews among 12 universities and 56 subjects in Tianjin, the results show that most universities don’t set specific position for the major director and its responsibility is blurred. Therefore, this paper lists some viable suggestions on the name, the scope of work and other 5 aspects of the major director. The author hopes that the suggestions can be helpful for the construction of the major director system and they can also be useful for the major construction in the aspect of aspect of streamlining the administration.

Introduction

The major director is a vital position in university. The cultivation of it plays an important role in the development of relevant majors. An excellent major director can both facilitate the talent cultivation and promote the research progress of the major. However, at present the definition of the major director varies university to university. In some universities, the responsibility of office directors and major directors are confused, which reduces the work efficiency; in other universities, the construction of the major is not that rational, lacking professional qualities and clear divisions of function.

As the state continues to attach importance to the development of core competitiveness of universities and colleges, de-administration of major construction has gradually become developing direction for universities and colleges. With the construction cycle of the 13th five year plan around the corner, the planning and construction model of “project + capital” among universities and colleges has begun to take shape. It is obvious that the funding input will link up with the construction project in future. Additionally, although less attention is paid to the previous program evaluation, the curriculum judgment and the reformation of double first-rate and application-oriented university have pushed the major construction to a high level. Who is capable for the task and how to finish it? It is both an academic and administrative problem.

Based on the above situations, a growing calling for the de-administration as there is, it doesn’t mean that administration is not required completely. In this way, “the streamlining of administration” is put forward.

Not conflicting with de-administration, “the streamlining of administration” looks for the perfect joint between academic power and executive power. In this way, academic activities like completing the project, and administrative activities like organizing the necessary major construction can both be accomplished. In this aspect, the person who is principally responsible for the major construction—the major director becomes a vital part.
Up to now, there are not so many researches on major director in the aspect of university. Still some of universities see the importance of major director. Early in 2007, someone had come up with the research on major director and suggested distinguishing the relationship among deans, directors of research office and major directors. [1] In 2014, Changzhou University clearly put forward the major director system and hired 53 major directors of undergraduate major among its students, giving them certain administrative power. This is an attempt to promote administrative power to service for the academic power.[2]

The author conducts the research on professional managers in Tianjin. Subjects are professional managers (or persons in charge of relative work) in universities and colleges in Tianjin. Considering the difference in major, the author chooses one dominant major (dominant subject in university), one non-mainstream major(not the same subject as the dominant subject), and a new major(enroll students less than 3 years) from each university. Each university offers more than 3 majors (including 3).

The research covers 12 universities in Tianjin and 56 subjects.

According to the result of survey and interview, the research concludes that major director of universities is the first person who is responsible and liable for the major construction of undergraduate course. He plays a significant role in the major construction. Suggestions to the major director system are as follows:

Set the Specialized Job for “Major Director” and Name it Officially, which should be Distinguished from “Major Leader” and “Academic Leader”

As the research shows, there exists concrete personnel in charge of major construction among universities in Tianjin, but their jobs, actually, are fake and powerless. Comparatively speaking, the dominant subjects all have certain specific subject leaders, who are the famous persons in their university. However, as the basis of subject construction, major construction exists as a fake job, nominally admitted but without recognition from teachers who is taking charge of it. As a result, major directors have a higher degree of emotional exhaustion when they are working, which affects the construction effect indirectly.

By setting the specialized job, the nature of the job can be solidified, and the position and the scope of work can be defined. On one hand, major directors can be justifiable to conduct their job; on the other hand, a specific person reliable for the information transmission of the job can be found. The most important improvement is that a foundation is provided for the establishment of the check-up system of major directors.

Definite the Scope of Work for the Major Director

Suggestions are as follows:

1. On the basis of social research, consult related stipulation issued by country, society and schools, and formulate, maintain and revise the personnel cultivating program of the major.
2. According to national requirement, formulate and put into practice the practical teaching system. Especially for the accomplishment of the task such as the cooperation between schools and enterprises, practical teaching base construction outside campus and experimental center construction on campus. The system mainly undertakes the graduation field work, graduation project and thesis work.
3. Set up and take charge of the application and evaluation of the major.
4. Organize the construction of teaching quality project and apply for the major construction task of each grade and major.
5. Pay attention to the plan and the use of construction expenditure of each major.
6. Organize and instruct the research project activity for students of each grade and major.
7. Pay attention to the first person responsible for the undergraduate professional accreditation.
8. Cooperate with subject leaders or deans to finish the subject construction project.
9. Cooperate with directors of research office to fulfill the curricula construction.
The major director should be independent of deans and directors of research office. They are suggested not to be in adjunct and they should be of certain administrative level and administrative power.

According to the research, major directors will confront situations such as lacking actual authority and carry out the work voluntarily, which may ultimately contributes to the decline of working quality or a self-devoted mode of working. In the long term, no one is willing to do the job, and thus the importance of the job itself cannot be embodied.

So it is advised that certain administrative level and administrative power be delegated to the major director and the power scope between deans and directors of research office ought to be clearly divided. For tasks within the realm of major construction, larger administrative power should be delegated to major directors for carrying out related works. A special notice: the subject leader or the director of research office is not suggested to be in adjunct of the major director, for fear of the confusion of job duties and management scope.

The delegation of administrative power to major directors is not against the de-administration. On the contrary, it embodies the essence of both the streamlining of administration and the delegation, convenient for improving working efficiency and alleviating the problems of managing universities administratively.

A more Flexible Check-up System and Evaluation System should be Set for Major Directors, especially in the Aspect of Personal Examination

According to the research, many tasks of the majority of major directors are similar with administrative tasks, requiring a lot of time and energy. However, such vital system as the examination and promotion of major directors can just be done according to the standard of common teachers. Although some universities give preferential treatment by means of providing extra lessons or deducting the lessons, little improvement is made in terms of the examination and evaluation of the core system, depreciating the work and make it unattractive.

It is suggested that more flexible system be applied in the personnel examination and job assessment of major directors. For example, decrease the number of the basic work, lower the number of the research, enlarge the proportion of the major construction work in the process of examination and promotion and define the specific task of major directors so as to motivate their working enthusiasm.

Strengthen the Cultivation of Major Directors

In the research, major directors all hope that continuing education concerning major construction should be employed. Among all the necessary qualities, except for professional ability, others such as education and strategic insight demand further specialized training. The communication between relative majors is particularly crucial.

It is recommended that a plan aimed at continuous cultivation of major directors should be made after the employment. Importance is bound to be attached to major construction of various abilities, especially for the ability of education and teaching management and its relative research, strategic planning and communication and organization. The cultivation is supposed to be differentiated from common teachers.

The Specialized Mechanism of Employment, Evaluation and Reward for Major Directors should be Applied

Under the premise of above suggestions, related mechanization construction for specialized major directors is supposed to be established.

Conditions of being employed as a major director:

Firstly, ultimate major should be one of the major subjects once occupied in.
Secondly, the title should be higher than deputy level (the standard of the title can be restricted to medium-grade regarding the character of each university)
Primary factors to consider: being familiar with the major; the title above deputy level is to release the higher promotion pressure of major directors.

Employment term

The employment term is recommended to be twice as the time of study duration of the major. Primary factors to consider: avoiding the instability of major construction and taking into consideration its integrating degree with subject construction and campus construction.

Indicators for performance appraisal

“Foundation + performance” is welcomed. The foundation refers to the regular major construction tasks. Performance refers to the teaching quality project, teaching achievement award, major construction project, etc.

Praise mechanism

In terms of the significant effect a major director has in the major construction, related praise mechanism is advised to be built up to reward the excellent performance and make up for the loss of achievement of performance.

Pay Attention to the Mental Health of Major Directors and Forming good Personality

The author finds from the interview that some subjects are quite introvert and passive. In the view of excellent major directors, whether the quality is suitable for the job requires further research.

The major director is a long-term and lasting job. It can be seen as a consumptive life event. If a major director is tend to be introvert, passive, forced, and keen on perfection even illiberal, he/she may have mental health problem, so that it will affect his/her job and even affect his/her personal development.

So the author suggests that in the training of major directors, it is necessary to pay attention to their psychological quality and psychological health, especially to the measurement of personality trait. It should be adopted when major directors are recruited. Regularly pay attention to their psychological health so that they won’t have poor performance in their later work.

Summary

With the in-depth implement of high education construction, the effect of major construction draws more and more attention of university administrators. Major directors in charge of the major construction tasks need a more specific and specialized system to finish their works. Setting up a specialized position for major directors and specifying the major director system are not in contradiction with de-administration. On the contrary, it is an attempt to streamline the administration. In terms of the research, it can be inferred that the demand for position and system of major directors are rather urgent. The author hopes that the suggestions above can be helpful for the construction of major director system and they can also be useful for the major construction in the aspect of streamlining the administration.

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