

Advantages, Challenges and Measures of International Cooperation for Applied Universities under the Background of Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: The implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative will create huge demands for applied talents. The special localization and cultivation model of applied university makes it easier to design teaching programs and innovates the way of international cooperation, thus meeting the demand for international cooperation in education created by economic cooperation and local economic developments under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative. In the meantime, there are some challenges for such universities to carry out international cooperation in education due to the limitation in policy resources, degree of internationalization and levels of teaching staff. Applied universities should seize the opportunities in international cooperation education under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, to deepen cooperation between university and enterprises, develop internationalized teaching staff and cooperate with similar universities and colleges. Applied universities should improve their own development by serving the Belt and Road Initiative.

Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative is comprehensive initiative which mainly focus on five areas of cooperation with countries along the Belt and Road, namely policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bond. International cooperation of education is an important part of the Initiative as well as an important foundation and assurance for successful implementation of it. Application-oriented universities should take this historical opportunity of the Belt and Road construction, make a careful analysis of its advantages and disadvantages, target the demands of participants of the Belt and Road Initiative for practical talents, conduct various cooperation and communication with governments, enterprises and universities along the Belt and Road.

Application-oriented Universities' Advantage in International Cooperation under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Advantage of Cultivation Mode of Application-oriented universities. Among the 64 countries along the Belt and Road, only 7 belong to developed countries as per the definition by IMF. Other 89.06% countries are developing countries. Vocational education and engineering education of these countries, except for Eastern European countries, are less developed and can't meet the demands for practical talents under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative. Mu zhengli and Luo hongling mentioned that three types of international engineering talents, namely technical, innovative and managerial talents, are main force to guarantee the inter-connectivity of infrastructure of countries along the Belt and Road. Application-oriented universities, whose main objective is dedicated to

foster practical talents with professional quality, vocational skill and practical ability, is able to meet the needs of the Belt and Road Initiative for technical and trade talents. Therefore, international cooperation carried out by application-oriented universities will help to cultivate technical and trade talents and improve the development of application-oriented education of countries along the Belt and Road. In this sense, application-oriented universities have more advantages in international education cooperation under the back ground of the Belt and Road initiative due to its cultivation mode.

Advantage of Flexibility. Application-oriented universities are produced to solve the problems of structural contradiction and homogenization of higher education. Application-oriented universities itself is a product of institution reform and concept innovation of education. It faces less institutional constraints compared with traditional universities. According to Guidelines on Transformation of Several Local Universities into Application-Oriented Universities by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance and National Development and Reform Commission, application-oriented universities should establish a mechanism that allows school, local government industry and community to cooperatively run and manage the university. This means that application-oriented universities have a closer relationship with market, enterprise and industry and become more flexible in decision-making, specialty setup and curriculum planning. In view of the huge difference in economic development level, policy environment and education system between China and countries along the Belt and Road, flexibility is essential for international education cooperation under the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Through flexible running mechanism and concept such as school-enterprise cooperation and ordering-list training, application-oriented universities is able to cultivating talents with professional skill and cross-cultural communication capabilities rapidly, which is in urgent need by various participant of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Advantage of Close Connection between Application-oriented universities and China-Invested Enterprise. It is projected that in the next five years, China's outbound investment will reach US\$500 billion-worth. China-invested enterprises are not only the main force of the Belt and Road construction, but also the main demander for technical talents. They have wide connections with local government and organizations and are familiar with the situation of local labor market and cultural environment. Therefore, China-invested enterprises are very important resources for universities to develop international cooperation under the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Application-oriented universities, due to their running concept and training mode, have a natural connection with enterprises. Several application-oriented universities are even directly founded and invested by enterprises. Application-oriented universities will get ahead in international education cooperation by making use of various resources of China-invested enterprises.

Application-oriented Universities' Disadvantage in International Education Cooperation.

Limited brand and policy resources. There are two types of application-oriented university, namely applied sciences university and teaching-servicing university. Most of the former type is developed from vocational college and the latter, on the other hand, include city colleges, independent colleges and private universities in China. Most of them have a short comparatively short history and less well known by the public. The popularity of the university will directly affect the availability, level and depth of international cooperation. Universities of countries along the Belt and Road hope to import superior education resources through international cooperation. However, in the early stage, with no idea of school conditions such as characteristics, discipline superiority and facilities of our universities, ranking and popularity is an important basis, even the only basis, for them to judge the strength and quality of us. Students from countries along the Belt and Road face a similar condition when select target universities abroad. The Belt and Road construction follows a principle, that is, government sets up a stage, enterprise perform. Research universities especially

Double Tops universities have the priority over applied-oriented universities in getting resources of international education cooperation.

Relatively low level of internationalization. International education cooperation is a systematic project which will be affected by many factors such as institution, teacher, teaching and management. It needs all-round resource integration and long term systemic construction and experience accumulation. Without such basis, international cooperation will confine to such low level and superficial activities as exchange of scholars and students or short term visits to each other, which is of less help and benefits to internationalization of application-oriented universities. There are quite a number of application-oriented universities that are newly built, with a relatively short history of development and even shorter history of international cooperation, which makes them lack of experience of international cooperation, mature cooperation mode and efficient running mechanism. For most application-oriented universities, international cooperation still Economic development level is different among countries along the Belt and road. Most of those countries are developing countries whose education infrastructures and development level are behind China. Therefore, although education cooperation include contents of attracting more qualified educational resource such as foreign experts and high quality teachers and admitting international students, to go abroad to carry out cooperative education such as set and manage overseas university abroad to cultivate skilled talents much needed by local societies, or train employees for China-invested enterprises, is much more significant and urgent task for the Belt and Road construction. This is a challenge to application-oriented universities because of their relatively lower internationalization level.

Teaching staff quality needs to improve. Internationalized teaching staff is the premise of international education cooperation. No matter the exchange programs of the primary level, or cooperative education of the higher level, workable cooperation schemes, good infrastructures and stable teaching stuffs are indispensable. Among them, teaching stuffs are foundation and core. It is because that teaching stuff is not only the important maker of cooperation scheme, but also the user of educational infrastructures and facilities. Thus, internationalized teaching staff is the basic premise and fundamental guarantee for successful international education cooperation. Under the context of the Belt and Road, application-oriented universities should not only cultivate practical talents for infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, but also promote mutual understanding of different civilizations and serve for the realization of community with the shared future for mankind. However, the overall quality of teaching stuff of application-oriented university to satisfy the requirements raised by internationalization under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative. In the past, application-oriented universities always focused on the construction of double qualified teachers with both solid theoretical knowledge and practical teaching abilities, but have little emphasis on internationalization. Especially teachers from university of applied sciences that are affected by academic backgrounds , are not good at foreign languages in general , not to mention their cross-cultural communication competences.

Solutions for Application-oriented Universities to Develop International Cooperation in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Deepen university-enterprise cooperation in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Enterprises, the main force of the Belt and Road Initiative construction, have the most direct and acute feeling on the talent needs of the Belt and Road Initiative construction, the cultural features, the customs and religion beliefs of the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative construction, and also have extensive contact with the local government and society. University-enterprise cooperation is endowed more important and realistic meanings in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Application-oriented universities should be strongly linked with enterprises, develop their applied advantages to actively cooperate with the enterprises which undertake the Belt and Road Initiative construction. According to the talents demand of enterprises, through combining with discipline

advantages of universities, application-oriented universities also optimize the cultivating mode continuously, innovate professional settings, develop course systems and strengthen capabilities of universities on serving the Belt and Road Initiative construction and cultivating international applied talents on the basis of sufficient investigation and detailed demonstration. Based on the talents demand of the Belt and Road Initiative, universities and enterprises should deepen their cooperation; knowledge and production should combine with each other. With the support of the sources, channels and funds of enterprises involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, it is supposed to expand the international communication channels and create international cooperation opportunities. The significance and function of university-enterprise cooperation for application-oriented universities to develop international cooperation, specifically, are as the following: firstly, making use of the contact with the local government, colleges and social organizations, enterprises build education cooperation platform for the application-oriented universities; secondly, set up overseas training establishments through making use of enterprises resources to train staffs and recruit at the local gradually. Through carrying out order-cultivation and on the basis of accumulating school-running experience and expanding recruitment, realize the leap from the small-size training to the overseas large-size school running; thirdly, set up scholarship through enterprise investment or enterprise-university joint investment, expand fund sources, and increase the recruitment attraction; fourthly, sign employment agreement with enterprises and establish stable employment channels, so as to improve the social influence of application-oriented universities with employment rate and return rate of employment.

Strengthen the internationalized construction of teaching staff. Value the internationalized construction of teaching staff and create a batch of high standard teaching staff which should be familiar with the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, fit for the development requirement of communication, transportation and circulation, and equipped with international vision, strong foreign language and trans-cultural communication capabilities. The internationalization of universities, firstly, is the internationalization of teaching staff. The internationalization level of teaching staff directly relates to the depth, breadth, level and quality of application-oriented universities to develop international cooperation. Application-oriented universities need to build talents bank to serve international education cooperation in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, and reserve professional and high quality talents for communication, overseas recruitment, talents introduction and foreign students and teachers administration. The talents are the key of guaranteeing recruitment effect, talents quality, management level and efficiency. Apart from that, application-oriented universities also need to ensure the availability of stable assigned teachers in the process of developing Sino-foreign cooperative education and overseas education. Besides strong professional knowledge and business abilities, these managers and teachers also need foreign language and trans-cultural communication abilities, so as to adjust ego psychology and overcome the cultural conflict and shock during working abroad. Therefore, application-oriented universities should confirm the direction of teaching staff recruitment and the construction in accordance with the cooperation priorities, bringing in international compound high quality teaching staffs which should be fit for the development requirement of communication, transportation and circulation, establish international faculty training system and develop language and trans-cultural training courses so as to promote double type teaching staff to be international. It is supposed to recruit advanced enterprise management and technical talents of the Belt and Road Initiative who own overseas working experience to give lessons, pass on international management experience and technical knowledge. Besides, application-oriented universities also should provide opportunities to the advanced teachers for communication and academic visit in the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative, exchange teachers with overseas cooperative universities, and assist young teachers to apply “National CSC Backbone Teachers” and government-sponsored oversea education project for the excellent teachers, so as to make teachers expand their vision, strengthen language capability and accumulate international experiences in the process of communication and academic visit.

Strengthen the inter-university cooperation in international cooperation. International cooperation, especially cooperative school running, oversea school running and other high level of international cooperation are the systematic projects which need amount of fund, equipment and the investment of human resource. Besides, it also needs certain academic basis, mature school running mode, stable teaching staff and strong course development capability. The construction of the Belt and Road Initiative involves many industrial categories. The economic development levels and structures of countries along the Belt and Road Initiative show great differences, so the talents demand for the Belt and Road Initiative is both complex and diverse. However, among the application-oriented universities, specialized ones are in the majority, focusing on specialties with their own characteristics. But the limited fund and ability make most of them do not have the ability to run schools abroad independently, which requires the application-oriented universities with similar international development targets, academic backgrounds or adjacent regions to develop inter-university cooperation, form international education cooperative alliance of the Belt and Road Initiative , and share international cooperation opportunities and resource to give full play to the advantage of their respective major and talents, cooperate to carry out international enrollment, teachers and students' exchange, run schools abroad, exchange what is needed, adjust surplus and shortage, so as to reduce the cost of international cooperation and reduce resource waste. In this regard, the experience of Punjabi Tianjin University of Technology, an overseas school-running project undertaken by several universities in Pakistan, an important node country of the Belt and Road Initiative, is of great reference value. Punjab-Tianjin University of technology is organized by Tianjin University of Technology and Education, Tianjin Polytechnic University and Tianjin Urban Construction University (Tianjin University of Technology and Education and Tianjin Urban Construction University are both application-oriented pilot universities). The three universities are respectively responsible for the construction of seven majors in the school of engineering, textile engineering and architectural engineering, give full play to their respective strengths in engineering, textiles and architecture, which cultivates talents urgently needed for the construction of the China-Pakistan economic corridor. While jointly seizing the opportunities of international cooperation and serving the construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, the three universities have also improved their levels of international cooperation and international school-running.

Conclusion

In a word, the Belt and Road Initiative strategy provides new opportunities for application-oriented universities to carry out international cooperation. Application-oriented universities should properly analyze their advantages and disadvantages, improve the level of the cooperation between colleges and enterprises, build international teaching staff, exchange and work closely with other colleges, expand international cooperation and communication space reasonably, and also actively participate in the international education cooperation of the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as raise the internationalized education level while serving “the Belt and Road Initiative” strategy.

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