

## Problems Caused by the Management of Multi-Campus University in China

MENG Fei<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>School of Economics and Management, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, Zhenjiang, China.

\*Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

In China, Multi-campus university has become a universal phenomenon in the process of development of higher education. The development of multi-campus university has achieved the transformation from elite education to popular education, expanded educational living space, and developed the competitive advantages of universities. Therefore, researching the management of multi-campus university is very meaningful to improve the overall benefit of running universities. This paper starts from the implication of multi-campus university, and analyzes the types of management and the existing problems of multi-campus university in China. Furthermore, the paper proposes some corresponding recommendations.

**Key words:** University; Multi-campus; Management

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### INTRODUCTION

In China, since the early 1990s, with the rapid expansion of the scale of higher education, many universities have begun to form a pattern of one university with multi campus. With the deepening of reform of higher education, for the multi-campus university in China, there are some issues that need to be addressed urgently, including analyzing the management of multi-campus university, researching the existing difficulties under

the multi-campus teaching management pattern, and establishing science teaching management system and efficient teaching operation system.

## 1. MEANING AND ORIGIN OF MULTI-CAMPUS UNIVERSITY IN CHINA

### 1.1 Meaning of Multi-Campus University

Multi-campus university means that there is a separate legal status and at least two geographically disjoint campuses. This kind of university is called multi-campus university (Xie & Zhang, 2009) Multi-campus pattern meets not only the external needs of the times, the state and society but also the internal needs of various universities competition. At present, the development of multi-campus university has become a common phenomenon throughout China.

### 1.2 Origin of Multi-Campus University in China

#### 1.2.1 Universities Merged

By the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education of China announced the advanced higher education reform policy that is joint development, adjustment, cooperation and consolidation. In this situation, the process of Chinese higher education reform started. College merger has become a useful attempt in the 1990s through this century. This is a major way to form the multi-campus university. From 1990 to February 2005, total 1,056 colleges and universities are merged into 418 universities, accounting for over 50% of the total number of universities in China (Huang, 2008). The merged universities expand school space, improve the universities strength, and optimize the regional higher education resources. For example, Zhenjiang Normal College, Zhenjiang medical college and Jiangsu Polytechnic University were merged and reorganized in 2001, and it is called Jiangsu University now.

### 1.2.2 Universities Expansion

In the late 1990s, another reform and development of higher education in China are a major policy named expanding enrollment and limitation, especially the expanding enrollment profoundly changing the process of higher education in China and expanding the scale of university students. Expanding enrollment is brewed in 1998, officially launched in 1999. To the year of 2006, college students in China are up to 25 million. The higher education gross enrollment rate is 22%. These figures indicate that China has entered the popular stage of higher education and become a great nation of the world in education. Facing the growing intensity higher education resources and huge market and considering the development trend of China's higher education, colleges and universities expropriate land to establish a new campus to meet people's growing requirements of high-quality higher education. For example, in 2000, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology established a new campus named west campus near the west extension of Zhenjiang Nanxu Road.

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## 2. MANAGEMENT PATTERN OF MULTI-CAMPUS UNIVERSITY IN CHINA

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### 2.1 Decentralized Management

Decentralized management refers to the lateral leadership of the campus. Usually, it is under the core campus unified management, and branch campuses exist at one or more college relative independence. This pattern is suitable for the comprehensive university which has many disciplines and is difficult to manage, commonly known as combination university (Chen & Zhu, 2007). For example, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology Nanxu College exists as a separate and independent college, which has its own management system that is different from the core campus, including from the administrative institution to the laboratory that is relatively independent. The core campus gives guidance only in major policies, such as college development planning. Because the management span is small, it can give full play initiative of the campuses, and is useful for the development of teaching and researching.

### 2.2 Centralized Management

Centralized management refers to the longitudinal leadership of the campus. Usually, it is under the core campus unified management, and branch campuses exist as its subordinate school. The core campus formulates development planning, co-ordination of teaching resources, teaching organization and teaching management. As the middle management, the schools are responsible for the basic operation of teaching and researching and administrative organizations. This management pattern often appears in the restructuring

and merger between mighty university and puny university, and it is commonly known as the small interests ruined by the big interests. For example, After the Zhenjiang metal school merging into Jiangsu University, it became its School of Materials Science and Engineering. The advantages are that it has clear management responsibilities, coordinating the centralized and decentralized management, and contributing to the knowledge creation and multi-disciplinary research.

### 2.3 Combining of Decentralization and Centralization Management

The combining of the decentralization and centralization management is the pattern that the branch campuses exist with part of university students, and it sets up a dedicated management agency. Its management system is in accordance with the core campus. Although in China, the restructuring and merger multi-campus is the main pattern, there is little self-extended campuses existing, which the branch campuses exist with part of university students. Such as the west campus of Jiangsu University of Science and Technology is under the direct leadership of the core campus, and it sets up a dedicated management agency, named Management Committee in West Campus that manages the daily affairs, including the student affairs, logistics support, etc.. All other works including teaching, scheduling and resource utilization is in accordance with the core campus system. The advantage of this pattern is that it can maximize the use of limited human resources and make the management easily. While the disadvantage is that the constituting of the students in branch campuses are onefold, resulting in less contact between different grades and different majors. To a certain extent, it lacks the cultural atmosphere of core campus.

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## 3. PROBLEMS IN MULTI-CAMPUS MANAGEMENT IN CHINA

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### 3.1 Various Management Patterns With Different Advantages and Disadvantages, Which Is Difficult to Choose

The three kinds of management patterns have their own advantages and disadvantages. The inadequacies of decentralized management are that it strengthens the management functions of school, resulting in a certain degree of decentralization of the management power. Also, it may weaken the management of core campus. Especially after the merger and reorganization of the universities, it involves the redistribution of interests and power, and the educational resources integration will be more difficult for the university with preponderant disciplines. Whereas the shortcomings of centralized management include the distance between campuses, the transmission of information, difficulties in the management, etc.. Those may cause inharmonious

coordination and inefficient cooperation. To the pattern of the combining of the decentralization and centralization management, the negative aspects include that the students constitution is onefold, resulting in less contact between different grades and different majors. To a certain extent, it lacks the cultural atmosphere of the core campus. Also, it may have difficulties in choosing curriculums and various communications. In short, different universities should choose their appropriate management pattern according to their own characteristics.

### **3.2 Increasing the Operating Cost and Wasting the Education Resource**

Firstly, the construction cost is huge. This mainly refers to the construction cost of the new campus of the university, including the pre-land acquisition, planning, design, construction and equipment investment, ranging from hundreds of millions, more than a billion, even several billions (Zheng & Ma, 2008). The main reason is that the new campus is generally away from the downtown, and it needs huge investment, including the water, electricity, heating, and other infrastructure. At the same time, Chinese macroeconomic tightening, price inflation, interest rates surge in external factors can lead to the over budget. As a consequence, the funds are lacking to complete the planning. In some extent, it influences to achieve the goal of fast development of the university.

Secondly, logistical and other support costs are increased. The costs include the transportation and communication costs caused by distance between campuses, repeat purchase costs of experimental equipment, books, and other materials, duplication costs of hospitals, canteens, logistical and other institutions, and corresponding human costs, etc. Take Jiangsu University of Science and Technology as an example. There are shuttles between the core campus and Zhangjiagang branch campus. Usually, it is six times a week, and each round trip will need half a day. Only the transportation cost in each year is huge. In addition, the pattern with multi-campus brings the burden to the teachers and students. The teachers need to shuttle between the different campuses. In order to catch the bus, they have to get up early and go home late. This may cause teachers with nervous anxiety. If the weather condition is bad, the slow speed of the shuttle may affect the normal order of teaching.

### **3.3 Lacking and Fragmenting the Campus Culture**

Firstly, the new campus lacks of cultural deposits and cultural atmosphere. In general, the new campus is far from downtown, and the surrounding economic and social development is comparatively lagging behind. Therefore, there are small numbers of people. This may result in empty campus, classroom, and library. Meanwhile, the new campus is a short time so that there is no historical

accumulation and precipitation, resulting in the lack of campus culture. The above factors can lead to the lack of the strong learning atmosphere, rich campus culture and community style in the new campus.

Secondly, campus culture is fragmented. Due to the positioning and layout of the different campuses, the new campus may have only low-grade students or part of schools, which resulted in the lack of necessary communication opportunities between different grade students and different schools. Simultaneously, the campus culture has its own characteristics objectively due to geographical and cultural environment. After the combination of different universities or colleges, their original campus cultures are broken in the new campus and the new campus culture is not formed, which makes many teachers and students lack of belonging and identity in their psychological sense.

## **4. RECONSIDERATION OF MULTI-CAMPUS MANAGEMENT PATTERN IN CHINA**

Really the pattern of the multi-campus university is an alarmist hidden. With the development of the universities, it will be their unbearable burden. We believe that before the pattern of the multi-campus university affecting its development, some efforts may be done as follows.

### **4.1 After Long Period of Division, the University Owned by One**

To solve the difficult situation caused by the multi campuses isolation and finish the situation of long-term multi campuses, the most direct and effective way is to find a way to unify the location of the multi campuses. It is easy to implement for the university that has not many campuses and the area gap between campuses is large. Based on the campus transfer, lease, or other methods, the university is centralized into one campus with a manner of long pain rather than short pain. In the short term, the manner seems to influence the development of the university order, destroy the continuity of the university history, and even hinder environmental adaptation of teachers and students. However, in the long term, the manner does not only save space and other educational resources, but also unify the campus culture. It's also contributive to the healthy development of the university and the teachers and students. In 2005, Guangzhou University that is merged by four universities and with five campuses moved into one campus. In 2003, some universities of Shenyang achieved the overall relocation by asset replacement or other ways, which not only solved the current problem of universities and gained money and space for the universities, but also won the long-term integrity and unity for the future development of the universities (Dong & Li, 2009).

## 4.2 Scientifically Orienting the Functions of Different Campuses

Under maintaining the unified situation of multi campuses, scientifically orientation of every campus is very important. The university with multi campuses must consider that the regional economic development needs the multi campuses university and the campuses themselves must be considered to meet the social needs (Xu, 2007). The university with multi campuses is in the corresponding geographic areas, serving the corresponding industry, training the corresponding specifications and talents, and solving the problem that region of the university located faces in the process of social development. This is not only a basic requirement for the university with multi campuses by the society, but also the social responsibility that the university must take. Therefore, multi-campus university orientation should considerate comprehensively between the need and possibility. Different universities should considerate their own strengths, including their scale, disciplines, scientific research level, service level, to determine the functions of different branch campus according to the characteristics of the subject, following the combined principle between different relevant disciplines, between the sciences and humanities, and between science and technology. Campus functions should be divided according to their functions, such as teaching, scientific researching, and social servicing. Also, it may be divided according to the actual situation, such as the senior student campus and junior student campus, the undergraduate student campus and graduate student campus. In short, the campus orientation must be based on the actual situation of different campuses. Furthermore, it may be constantly adjusted according to the situation of economic and social development.

## 4.3 Variant of the Same Name, Act of Their Own Free Will

In order to consider the joint development, resource sharing, and complementary advantages, a lot of universities chose to merge. It is undeniable that, after the merging, some universities realize their advance effectiveness. However, some universities cause big difficulties. For those who have no scientific planning but only following the suit, boldly separating in the same way is not the historical retrogression. Many experts and scholars in the field of higher education strongly oppose blind university expansion (including the universities merging), criticize the blind pursuit of the high-level, large-scale, subjects all. They encourage universities, especially small scale universities, and exploit their own characteristics and advantages. This shows the scientific university development is not only big and all subjects. For part multi-campus universities formed by the new

campus, if it is unable to end situation of two or even more campuses, even it cannot unified consider coordinate teaching, construction management, culture and other aspects, the university can completely achieve autonomy according to the need to implement, namely act of their own free will in the same university name. Currently, some universities have implemented this model because of the historical reasons or long distance, such as China University of Geosciences (Beijing) and China University of Geosciences (Wuhan). They are essentially two equal educational entities, without difference between core and branch campus. The two sides only share resources on part of the subjects. China University of Mining in Xuzhou and in Beijing basically is this case. Furthermore, Shanghai Jiaotong University and Xi'an Jiaotong University are the one university originally. Now, they are completely separated, merely continue to share the intangibles of original relationship and reputation before separated<sup>[6]</sup>.

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## CONCLUSION

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The teaching management process of the multi-campus university in China is exploring. Therefore, it may have variety of problems and contradictions. After the development with more than ten years, the problems and contradictions of multi-campus university have changed from early exploratory stage to now prominent period. We only have to face problems, analyze contradictions in order to solve the problems, resolve the contradictions. After that, the teaching management of multi-campus university in China will have a new breaking through and great development.

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