

The Situation and Strategy of Graduate Enrollment in Agricultural Universities in Western China

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Abstract: In the new period, the graduate enrollment of western agricultural universities is facing new opportunities and challenges. The construction of "double first-class", the strategy of rural revitalization and the construction of new agricultural science have brought new opportunities to the development of graduate education in western agricultural universities. At the same time, the geographical location, the limitation of funds, the existing enrollment system and the "double first-class" competition mechanism of the western agricultural and forestry colleges and universities also put forward new challenges to their graduate education and enrollment work.

Keywords: Enrollment, Western Agriculture Universities, Postgraduate education, Strategy

1. Introduction

Graduate education is the highest level of education in China, and graduate enrollment is an important part of graduate education. In the new era of higher education with the "double first-class" construction as the main background, China's graduate education will develop rapidly, which will also bring different opportunities and challenges to the graduate enrollment of colleges and universities. Western agricultural colleges and universities in the region, discipline strength, resource allocation and there is a big gap with eastern universities, how to firmly seize the new opportunities in the new period, play their own advantages, efforts to attract quality students to improve the quality of graduate training, enhance the discipline strength become the western agricultural university graduate students facing the new situation and new problems.

2. New Opportunities for the Development of Graduate Education in Agricultural Universities in Western China

2.1 The construction of "double first-class" has brought new opportunities to the development of graduate education in western agricultural universities

On September 21, 2017, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance and the National Development and Reform Commission jointly issued the Notice on announcing the List of World-class Universities and Discipline disciplines. The first batch of 137 universities entered the "double first-class" construction, including 42 world-class universities (36 in Class A and 6 in Class B). Double first-class construction first phase construction from 2016, every five years a construction cycle of the construction, the medium will double first-class construction of universities and disciplines inspection and evaluation, evaluation unqualified universities and disciplines will be required to rectify within a time limit, after the expiration if still substandard will exit the double first-class construction list, is a kind of dynamic adjustment mechanism. Therefore, the "double first-class" construction has broken the traditional "211" project and "985" project universities, which is a more dynamic, efficient and more open benign and dynamic competition mechanism, and can better mobilize the enthusiasm of universities to continuously promote the discipline construction and improve their own strength. The dynamic adjustment mechanism of "double first-class" construction makes western agricultural universities have the same opportunity to compete. Although they are still at a disadvantage, as long as the development goals are clear, the overall promotion and the local government actively support them, western agricultural universities have the opportunity to stand out in the future adjustment and win the

seats.

2.2 The rural revitalization strategy has injected a strong boost into the development of graduate education in western agricultural universities

The implementation of the rural revitalization strategy is a major decision and deployment made by the CPC Central Committee for the work of agriculture, rural areas and farmers in the new era. The rural revitalization strategy cannot be separated from the cultivation of rural talents and the support of agricultural science and technology. On December 5, 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the university rural revitalization of science and technology innovation action plan (2018-2022) notice, the notice requires "to play advantages in universities, through scientific and technological innovation lead, comprehensive service rural industry revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, organization revitalization, the implementation of university service rural revitalization of seven action"^[1]It is proposed to "accelerate the construction of first-class agricultural universities and first-class agricultural disciplines, and strive to form a new situation in which the connotative development of higher education and the promotion of economic and social development are closely combined."^[1]Western agricultural colleges and universities is the cradle of agricultural science and technology personnel training in western China, rural revitalization strategy of put forward to western agricultural university graduate education also brought new requirements and new tasks, western agricultural universities should keep in mind strong agriculture mission and service rural revitalization strategy, vigorously cultivate rural revitalization of agricultural science and technology talents and rural grassroots management talents.

2.3 The construction of the new agricultural science has brought a broad world to the development of higher agricultural education

In August 2018, the central government proposed that higher education should develop new engineering, new medicine, new agricultural science and new liberal arts, and comprehensively enhance the ability of universities to serve the economic and social development through the "four new" construction. In June 2019, principals and agricultural education experts from 53 agriculture-related universities discussed and issued the "Anji Consensus — China New Agricultural Science Construction Declaration" in Anji County, Zhejiang Province, which opened the prelude to the construction of new agricultural science. For agricultural higher education, not only powerful comprehensive universities, including Peking University, Sun Yat-sen University and Chinese Academy of Sciences, have also increased the support of agricultural colleges. For example, Shanxi Province merged Shanxi Agricultural University and Shanxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences to "build about 20 provincial first-class agricultural and forestry majors; build a batch of emerging agricultural majors"^[2]; "The Department of Education of Guizhou Province has also issued a document focusing on the construction of 10 undergraduate majors directly related to 12 key agricultural industries, and providing financial support for the distribution of each specialty. And encourage other universities to actively apply for agriculture-related majors according to the needs of economic and social development and the actual conditions of the university."^[2] The construction and development of the new agricultural science marks that the development of higher agricultural education in China has entered a new era. Western agricultural colleges and universities should seize this opportunity, promote innovative development, and improve their ability to serve the economic and social development.

3. Challenges in western agricultural universities in the new era

3.1 Limited geographical location, the overall level lags behind the eastern universities, and it is difficult to attract high-quality students

In western China, 12 provinces, autonomous regions, including Shaanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Gansu, Qinghai and municipalities directly under the Central Government, Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet and Chongqing, basically have agricultural universities. As well know, the central and eastern regions are better in the economic development, living conditions and transportation than the western regions, while the overall education foundation of the western provinces is weak and lags behind the central and eastern provinces. Candidates tend to give priority to the universities in the eastern region both in the college entrance examination and in the postgraduate entrance examination. Even if they study in the western universities, they may try to adjust to the

eastern universities in the graduate stage. Therefore, western universities are faced with the shortage of students in graduate enrollment all the year round. It is not only difficult to attract excellent students from the central and eastern regions, but also outflow many excellent students trained by the university. And agriculture in the eyes of many people belong to the "hard" and "unpopular" industry, many city candidates don't know about agricultural professional, also don't want to enter oneself for an examination agricultural professional, even now rural students are less willing to enter oneself for an examination of agricultural professional, and willing to choose finance, IT, medicine, western agricultural universities to attract high quality students is more difficult.

3.2 The existing graduate enrollment system is not conducive to the retention of high-quality students from western agricultural universities

Existing graduate admissions examination system, in terms of admission, cancel to enter oneself for an examination of agricultural college examinee bonus policy, adjust the original A \ B \ C three division policy, Chongqing, shaanxi, Sichuan three western provinces from area B to area A, with the same retest fractional line, the reform is not conducive to the three western provinces of graduate admissions and adjust work. In July 2014, the Ministry of Education issued "about further improve the recommended outstanding undergraduate graduates exemption for graduate work method notice" put forward " all push free students enjoy according to the enrollment policy independently choose enter oneself for an examination the enrollment unit and professional rights, all push free quota (except with special policy requirements of special plan), can be recommended to other admissions units. Recommended colleges and universities should fully respect and safeguard the right of candidates to choose their own choice, and should not apply for the school as a condition for the selection of free students, nor should they restrict the exemption of students in any other form."^[3]This means that candidates who are eligible can choose to accept schools across the country, regardless of their schools. This policy is favorable for the examinee, is conducive to excellent students flow to strong comprehensive strength, high research level of universities and disciplines, avoid students close relatives, single, for the development of students and talent cultivation is of great significance, but on the other hand, the deficiency of western universities, if the previous limit policy still can retain part of the school quality students, so the implementation of the new policy undoubtedly accelerate the loss of high quality students. In recent years, with the increasing number of students in universities, the loss of quality students in western universities has become more and more serious, and the quality of students has decreased.

3.3 The "double first-class" competition mechanism brings another pressure for western agricultural universities to attract high-quality students

In the past, among the "985" and "211" projects in western agricultural universities, only Northwest Agricultural Science and Technology University and Sichuan Agricultural University have received special support from the state, Other western agricultural universities are rarely supported by national special funds, At the same time, universities in economically developed eastern provinces are better than western universities in terms of local financial support, The gap between the two can be seen from the "double first-class" construction investment in the project: for example, " Shanghai first invested 3.6 billion yuan in the construction of key disciplines on the peak plateau; Guangdong invested 30 billion yuan to build a double first-class construction; Hubei province invested 15 billion yuan to support the discipline construction of universities; Shandong invested 5 billion yuan to build a double first-class construction; Fujian invests 1.5 billion yuan to build double first-class" Among the western provinces, " Ningxia invests 200 million yuan every year to support the double first-class construction; Guizhou has invested 500 million yuan in 5 years to sprint to "double first-class;"^[4]Even in Sichuan province, which leads the number of double first-class construction universities and disciplines in western China, it is far behind that in eastern provinces. "In September 2017, Sichuan province allocated 200 million yuan for the" double first-class " university construction funds in 2017, an increase of 100 million yuan or 50% over 2016."^[5]Without sufficient financial support, the western agricultural universities want to grow rapidly, and it is probably also "hard to make bricks without rice". On the one hand, it is difficult to attract high-end talents from home and abroad in terms of treatment, and even the original talents are constantly lost in the "double first-class" competition with talent competition as the core, and the pressure on the construction of the mentor team is unprecedented. On the other hand, due to the limited financial funds, it is difficult to provide students with scholarships and grants comparable to those in eastern universities. Due to the lack of funds, it is difficult for western agricultural universities to provide the amount and coverage comparable to those of eastern

universities, which are related to the vital interests of students and are particularly concerned by students when choosing universities to apply for them. The backwardness in these aspects is enough to enable high-quality students to abandon western universities and choose eastern universities.

4. Suggestions and countermeasures

4.1 Attach importance to discipline construction and give preferential resources to superior disciplines

It is well known that the world's top schools are almost all high quality, has its own distinctive educational characteristics of schools, such as the Massachusetts institute of technology features science and engineering, Cornell university, wahheeningen university, even Harvard University, Cambridge university, Yale university such world-class comprehensive university, also cannot all disciplines are advantages. It can be seen that the complete disciplines have no direct relationship with the characteristics of running schools. The development of colleges and universities should not covet "big and complete", but should pursue "excellent and fine", especially for the western agricultural colleges and universities with relatively tight resources, they should explore their own school-running characteristics and cultivate their own advantageous disciplines. Advantage discipline is not cultivated overnight, need long-term comprehensive investment and support, including advanced scientific management system and evaluation system, first-class teachers, suitable and has their own characteristics of student training program and curriculum system, sufficient funds and excellent students, etc., and these are the western agricultural colleges and universities. Western agricultural colleges and universities should implement a fair and scientific discipline competition mechanism, which can adopt a series of flexible and sustainable development management mechanisms, such as dynamic management of tutor positions, dynamic adjustment of enrollment indicators, and dynamic setting of professional and technical positions, to reasonably tilt the limited educational resources to the superior disciplines and promote the development of advantageous and characteristic disciplines.

4.2 Establish various scholarships and grants, and improve the graduate scholarships and grants system

The fundraising ability of universities is an important assessment indicator in the assessment of world-class universities. Many world-class universities have special "university foundations" to receive donations from alumni and businesses."As of 2015, Harvard University had \$37.6 billion in university funds, with a return of more than 13% in a decade, and an annual investment return of about 5.8 billion. In general, the financial structure of top American universities that rely on tuition fees and government funding is a history. There are three main parts of the funding channel of top American universities: social donation contributions, fund preservation and appreciation, and corporate fundraising campaigns."^[6]"University foundations" are already in relatively mature operations abroad, but they are still in their infancy in China. At present, the opportunities for domestic universities to accept donations from alumni and enterprises are often concentrated on the school anniversary, and there is a lack of long-term fixed specialized working institutions. The fiscal revenue of governments in the western region is not as good as that of the eastern region. Compared with universities in the central and eastern regions, agricultural universities in the western China have a more urgent need to set up "university foundations" to actively attract donations from enterprises and alumni, and change from "passive waiting" to "active seeking". Only with sufficient funds, the school is possible to improve graduate scholarships and grants, attract high-quality students, and attract excellent talents to join us, and improve the overall strength of the school.

4.3 Build an alliance mechanism for agricultural universities in western China, and strengthen cooperation and exchanges with universities at home and abroad

The establishment of university alliance in the same field is a good way of cooperation and exchange, which can strengthen university resource sharing, shared benefits, and carry out multi-field and all-round cooperation. In the United States, the development of success, the most famous is the "ivy league", by harvard, university of Pennsylvania, Yale, Princeton, Columbia university, Dartmouth college, Brown university and Cornell university, are the leading universities, after the "new ivy", "ivy", "ivy" public ivy "university alliance, is actually in learning and learn from the success of the" ivy league " successful experience and development path. Western agricultural universities are close to the

region and are facing the same development difficulties and pressure. It is more necessary to strengthen cooperation and exchanges, establish a normal cooperation mechanism of western agricultural universities, share resources, exchange experience, and especially strengthen scientific research cooperation and student training. At the same time, western agricultural universities should strengthen international exchanges and cooperation, including exchange student learning, joint graduate training, short-term learning exchange for teachers, holding or participating in international academic conferences, absorb foreign advanced educational and cultural concepts and resources, and enhance the international brand and influence of the university.

4.4 Pay attention to enrollment publicity, and cultivate students' Alma mater emotion

With the development of network technology, the publicity means of graduate enrollment have been much richer than in the past, including both offline routine publicity and online publicity, such as using websites, online meetings, public accounts, wechat groups, qq groups and other ways of online communication with candidates. Under the premise of limited enrollment funds, western agricultural colleges and universities should carefully analyze the situation of students and explore the enrollment publicity methods suitable for our university. In addition to making efforts to improve their own strength, we should also mobilize mentors, teachers, counselors and even the management and service department staff to comprehensively and continuously care for students, cultivate students' feelings for the Alma mater, and strive to achieve emotional retention. Western agricultural universities can explore flexible policies to attract the students, such as learning graduate courses and credits in their senior year, set up various special scholarships to reward the students, and set up joint training programs for the students, and try to attract the students in accordance with the national policy.

5. Conclusions

China has a vast territory, and the area of western China accounts for about 70% of the national land area. Western agricultural universities should make full use of this advantage, actively integrate into regional economic and social development, develop characteristic agricultural industry combined with local resources, cultivate emerging interdisciplinary disciplines, create their own gold majors, promote the integration of industry, university and research, and improve their scientific research strength and service level. Applied disciplines need enough off-campus practice base to complete the necessary practice in the process of student training, universities and local government departments and enterprise cooperation construction graduate graduate research practice base, this move can play the advantages of university service local economic and social development, also conducive to cultivate graduate innovative entrepreneurial spirit, and can promote the graduate employment. At the same time, the government should also increase the assistance to agricultural colleges in western China to ensure the construction and development of western agricultural universities. The Ministry of Education has many policies in western universities, such as special western national scientific research projects, western talent projects, promote provinces to build 14 colleges and universities in the Midwest, these projects and measures effectively promote the development of the western universities, but considering the importance of western rural revitalization of comprehensive construction well-off society strategy and the western agricultural universities widespread regional disadvantage, weak foundation, lack of funds, the government should develop more targeted western agricultural universities support policy, help western agricultural universities play backwardness advantage, attract high quality students, improve the level of education.

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