

On Talents Training and Research in Apparel Design from the Perspective of University-Enterprise Collaboration

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ABSTRACT. *As our cultural and creative industry develops by leaps and bounds, innovative apparel design talents are increasingly popular in the industry. Accordingly, as for application-oriented universities, university-enterprise collaboration serves as a critical means to improve school-running level and foster training quality of talents. In this paper, the author explored the significance of cultivating apparel design talents from the perspective of university-enterprise collaboration, and further probed into training models of talents majoring Apparel Design of application-oriented universities from a perspective of university-enterprise collaboration.*

KEYWORDS: *University-enterprise collaboration, Apparel design, Talents training, Model research*

1. Introduction

China, known as a big country for global textile & apparel production and export, still lags behind to be a textile & apparel power. Presently, it is urgent to achieve transformation and upgrading by digital, intelligent equipment and talents due to factors, such as rapid surge in domestic labor, land and production costs, consumers' demand for apparel turning to be personalized, diverse and branded, short fashion cycle, and abandonment of traditional apparel manufacturing to labor-intensive production. Inevitably, in order to cater to demands and changes of apparel companies, necessary changes must be made in talents training schemes of apparel-oriented universities, so as to cultivate apparel design talents who are application-oriented, good at interdisciplinary skills and innovative, with "solid knowledge foundation, wide specialty, strong capabilities and high quality".[1]

2. Significance of Apparel Talents Training Via University-Enterprise Collaboration

In China, apparel design education has always been in the position with "emphasis on arts and concepts, slighting in craftsmanship and practice", or in other words, it attaches importance to cultivating students' art expressions and theoretical knowledge of apparel, and makes light of their learning enthusiasm and sensitivity to creation as subjects. Consequently, when a student begins to find a job, his competitiveness will be weaker than others, further weakening employment competitiveness of the industry as a whole. Therefore, this is both a big problem in modern apparel design education, and the reality for our students.

It is known that the apparel specialty is characterized by high artistry, advanced technology and strong applications. For instance, it educates tremendous high-quality talents for apparel companies while taking a lead in the revolution in the apparel manufacturing. Stimulated by urgent demands for professionals, universities should, in terms of professionals training, keep pace with the times, constantly adjust training schemes, optimize the allocation of educational resources, and achieve a profound integration between production and education. Moreover, higher education on apparel should be closely linked with practical production, and be aware of development trend of the apparel industry. With respect to the cultivation of professionals in universities, new requirements are proposed by intelligent apparel manufacturing + personalized customization model, which, inevitably, are also a new topic for students majoring apparel industry in application-oriented universities.[2]

3. Construction Ideas of Training Model for Apparel Design Talents Via University-Enterprise

They should be rooted in professional certification concept of the engineering education, follow school-running standards of "demand-orientation, high-end positioning, specialty characteristics, international perspective", strengthen integration of industry and education. In addition, measures featuring in "three

integrations, three constructions” should be adopted to reform the teaching content and teaching models, and cultivate talents who meet the demands for intelligent manufacturing and personalized customization in the apparel industry. In brief, “University-Enterprise Collaboration” is an essential means at the universities level that cultivates technical talents with theories and practicality for the industry, in order to improve the education quality. It can be described as follows:

First, universities and enterprises serve as a mechanism mutually selected by collaborative (cooperation) subjects. Both, abiding by the principles of industry-university cooperation and two-way engagement, are able to choose their ideal partners out of development needs.

Second, an education model led by classroom theoretical teaching and supplemented by internship & practice in apparel companies. Specifically, students should, at the first time, complete the theoretical study of necessary parts in school, and then follow universities’ arrangements to start internship practice in enterprises, which, different from pure skill training, aims at consolidating theoretical knowledge and enhancing the application of talents.

Third, the combination of labor and teaching. Students engage in more hands-on training during the practice in enterprises, and perfectly digest and integrate theoretical knowledge and practical activities through exchanges and discussion.

4. Construction Scheme of Training Model for Apparel Design Talents Via University-Enterprise Collaboration

4.1 Develop Off-Campus Design Practices in Combination with Theoretical Teaching

The apparel-oriented universities aim to develop talents specialized in research, exploration and design, who perform better in theoretical knowledge and innovation capabilities when compared with technical and management talents under vocational education who are able to guide production technologies and materialize design drawings, and deliver field commands by applying design concepts or management ideas. However, they are vulnerable in production operation skills so that many have to undergo the so-called work transition period or adaptation period to acclimatize to production environment. In terms of implementing off-campus practices in combination with theoretical teaching, universities should, by relying on enterprises’ resources, guide students to complete practical projects under industrially continuous production conditions that cannot be simulated in universities, and help them recognize, understand, and operate the latest production devices and inspection instruments, fully demonstrating advantages of the joint training platform under university-enterprise cooperation.^[3]

4.2 Combination of Curriculum System and Apparel Design Competition

After students master theoretical knowledge to some extent and are capable in practice, the focus of “university-enterprise collaboration and stimulating learning through competition” will be added to the core courses of the major and the *Graduation Project*. Among practices of these courses, some high-class apparel design contests shall be screened for students. It is expected that through practical training, students are able to apply what they have learned in class into design works of the competition. If difficulties are encountered, they are allowed to seek for professional guidance from teachers in charge of relevant courses, and attempt to blend popular elements and design ideas in the design works. This helps consolidate theoretical knowledge learned in school, broaden students’ horizons, and stimulate creative thought from multiple perspectives. In addition, once their works are selected for the competition, it is doomed that they will receive teaching and guidance of famous apparel designers domestically and abroad, dramatically improving design perceptions thereby.

4.3 Perfect Recognition System of Credit Hours and Points for Off-Campus Design Practices

It is still compulsory in many apparel design majors where students are guided by teachers to develop design practices out of school. Anyway, there is no such a relationship between teacher’ workload and students’ credits with labor time and performance, nor a flexible and sound identification system concerning hours and points is provided, which, therefore, frustrates teachers and students in work and study, and also impedes the implementation of off-campus practices.

In view of this, it is necessary to establish and improve a more flexible and elastic recognition system for

credit hours and points. For example, the credits shall be graded based on students' practice performance, those qualified can obtain the prescribed credits, and the students with excellent performance can get extra reward credits on that basis. More importantly, students and teachers shall be commended who had made outstanding achievements or remarkable results in practices.

5. Conclusion

In this era against rapid development of intelligent manufacturing and personalized customization in the apparel industry, it is an inevitable trend for contemporary universities, especially units training apparel design talents to strengthen cooperation with apparel companies - the demander, and accurately be aware of new requirements and trend of economic transformation and upgrading. Furthermore, it is a must to deeply integrate cutting-edge concepts and industry technologies, perfect talent training models, optimize talent training schemes, and allocate teaching resources efficiently. Meanwhile, they should contribute continuous technical, talent and intellectual support to the transformation and upgrading of apparel industry by simultaneously referring teaching content and the reform of teaching models.

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