

Designing the Brand Identity of Gannan Normal University: Analysis the University Identity System (UIS) Detail Design of Universities in American

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ABSTRACT. *University Identity System (UIS) is an important part of the development of school brand identity, and it has been paid more and more attention to universities in China. Gannan Normal University built in 1958. It is a developing university with a distinct feature and a bright future. In 2016, the university passed the assessment of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, and the quality of teaching and the level of scientific research have reached a new level. Therefore, the UIS design of Gannan Normal University is also imminent.*

KEYWORDS: *UIS, Brand, Hakka culture*

1. Introduction

The University Identity System (UIS), is a part of the visual identity system. In China, a more popular concept 'Visual Identity System' is mainly focused on universities. Because it is a specialized form that people often don't understand, they ignore the differences between UIS and VIS, overlooking its importance. However, in some developed countries, the UIS of each university has grown to be very mature; they even often in some places, a completely independent design system, usually with more universal design than VIS. UIS is not simply a graphic or a road sign. It has played an important role in assisting and promoting the visual promotion of university brands. At present, especially some famous universities in China, they follow the international pace in this aspect. Some of them have designed new landmarks to be more perfect, but the details and overall design, as well as the importance of the entire UIS, needs to be improved.

Gannan Normal University, located in Ganzhou City, Jiangxi Province, was passed the assessment of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China on March 4, 2016. Based on this opportunity, it should integrate its own

identity, and improve the communication power of internal and external visual identity in detail.

2. Background

2.1 Cognition of University Identity System

The UIS radiates from the university's logo, covering numerous aspects like the offline campus development, the official website design and even various social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook pushes. It is difficult to define a specific category for UIS, but it does not mean that UIS is not rigorous. As a matter of fact, the rigor of the system begins at the moment when the university's logo is established since a series of requirements are made including the minimum application standard, inviolable area, standard color and sub color of the logo. Through this process, no matter what the catalog is, all the university identity will be unified and further the relation of the various details such as color deviation, which may occur when different materials are printed on different ink. Moreover, the irregularity of the various hanging signs leads to their failure of acting as an indicator. If it is placed too high, visitors cannot get the information at a reasonable time. In fact, the visitor always feels anxious for the first time. If they don't see the information they need in time, strong anxiety starts to grow increasingly, which further affects his or her search for the destination. For example, (Fig. 1), this is the view from the second floor of a college from the stairs, the right is where the offices are and the left is where the exhibition hall is. Furthermore, is no interior sign, and the exit sign is not only too high, but the placement was meaningless. However, if the visitor can find his or her destination smoothly through the sign, they will naturally go to the destination because the initial discomfort is alleviated. In addition, a detail design in logo application is also essential. If the signboard is not in harmony with the surrounding environment, the overall spatial effect will be destroyed even if it can be seen at first sight.



Fig.1 Perspective View of the Second Floor of a College

3. Details of University Identity System Design in Universities of the U.S.

3.1 Columbia University

The introduction and improvement of UIS in universities of the U.S. started earlier and became more advanced than China. They have the function of a “map” on the official website of the college so that people can preview the college and other distributions through the map before visiting. In fact, the map not only gives a graphic plan, but it also gives an elevation map, and some details to the 3D map increases the intuitiveness, so that when you preview the campus map, it seems to be immersive; in order to take care of a special crowd, the entrance and exit for disabled people on the map is specifically marked. Columbia University is an excellent example. The option “Map” in “Quick Links” on its official website not only marks the entrances and exits of buildings, but it also marks the entrances and exits for disabled people, so disabled people can quickly find convenient access to buildings (Fig. 2). The example shows a very universal design display and design, which many universities lack in China.

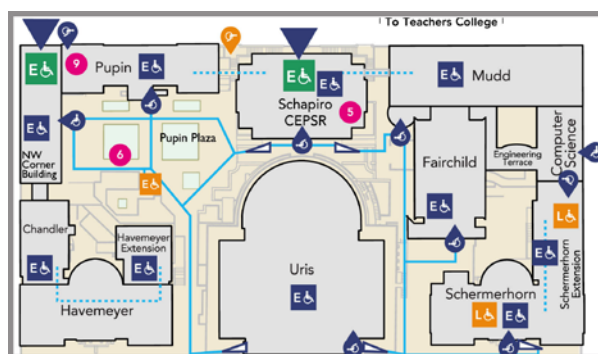


Fig.2 Part of Columbia University Disabled Accessibility Map[1]

3.2 College of Visual and Performing Arts, Northern Illinois University, Chicago

1) Consummate Campus Official Website Map and Detailed Design

Northern Illinois University (NIU), founded in 1895, is a century-old college. The Map options can be easily found on NIU's official website. The 3D map of NIU not only can be seen through the location distribution of each college but can also be seen through the basic appearance of each building. Moreover, NIU's official website will update maps from time to time; for example, by adding 360° videos of each building to show the inside, it is like visiting NIU in person.



Fig.3 360 Panoramas of Building, Niu[2]

College of Visual and Performing Arts is located in the southeastern corner of NIU. It is a four-story independent building. Signboards are clearly placed outside the College of Visual and Performing Arts to indicate parking spaces for university staff and visitors to standardize parking because there are parking requirements for university staff, students and visitors on campus. The ground floor of the teaching building is the second floor of the building because its first floor is underground. Nevertheless, there is no need to worry about confusion. First of all, there are general floor instructions at the entrance of the second floor of the Academy of Art; besides the instructions, there are clearly displays of activities from each research studios or art lectures and exhibitions during the current month. In addition, the College of Visual and Performing Arts has posted instructions for the classrooms and their locations at the entrance of each floor, with details of the person who oversees the room. Recent activities and exhibitions on the floor are posted below. Therefore, first-time visitors can quickly find out which room on the floor he or she will visit and know where the work display is located without missing any information. More importantly, although the building has only four floors, it has access and elevators with obvious signs for disabled people. Disabled people only need to press the button to open the doors (Fig. 4). Most universities in China do not take accessibility into account in UIS. There are almost no elevators in buildings that are below seven-story levels.

2) Concise and Eye-catching Design Style blends With Architecture

All the interior building signs and the door sign design of the research studios of College of Visual and Performing Arts are very simple and clear. As for color: grey along with coffee brown, white and light blue are matched to form a background color block. The number of floors is warm orange and room functions are uniformly black, showing an overall grey tone direction. The information on each floor in the general guide sign is distinguished by the size of the font. For example, the size of the office and research studios are larger while the number of detailed information in each room is smaller.

The background color of the interior building signs on each floor is coffee brown, which is placed close to the wall. The information text part is uniformly white; hence, it is striking and harmonious. In Figure 2, the whole wall is used for an exhibition of students' works. The works are done with different colors, and the

exhibition information is on the wall, which is usually posted in disorder. This explains why all the instructions of the College of Visual and Performing Arts are concise modern designs. The function of the guide signs will be disturbed if they are too gorgeous or colorful to be seen clearly in these works. Even if the interior building signs are placed in an obvious position, it is difficult to find it quickly.

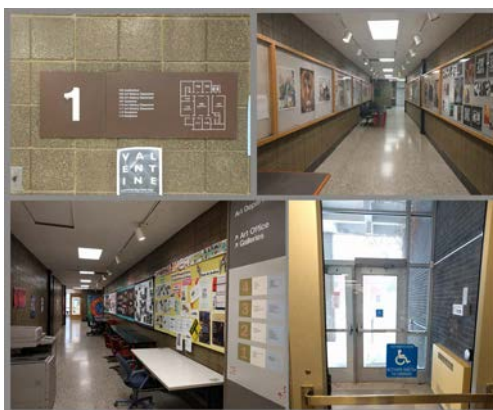


Fig.4 Part of Interior Sign of College of Visual and Performing Arts, Niu

3.3 Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw State University (KSU) is a public institution that was founded in 1963; it is a high-quality university in Georgia[3]. The picture below from left to right is the official logo of KSU: Official Logo; Seal, the seal is restricted for use on formal, official, ceremonial and presidential materials only; School Spirit Marks, the mascot is school spirit. Any official communication or overall branding of the departments must be performed with the official university mark. [4] For more logo and marking requirements, please refer to the school's official website; they have an Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing for assistance.

KSU has two campuses in Marietta and Kennesaw. Unlike many closed campuses in China, the teaching buildings in Kennesaw Campus are not clustered together. For example, the KSU Center is two blocks east of the main campus, while the International Exchange Office is two blocks south of the campus. However, first-time visitors usually have no obstacles to finding their destination. First, they have maps at major intersections. Secondly, if visitors ask students or staff for directions, they will open the official app of the map and tell them the exact location. There are also free shuttles to buildings and the Marietta Campus. All the buses have KSU mascots, a lovely owl on their surfaces. Of course, the mascot can also be seen on the school's official website. Rider, a campus shuttles phone application, makes it easy to know when the shuttles will arrive. It is also used at Georgia State University and Emory University. In addition, each classroom's house number has a raised

point for Braille to be recognized by the blind; this is part of a universal UIS design in detail.

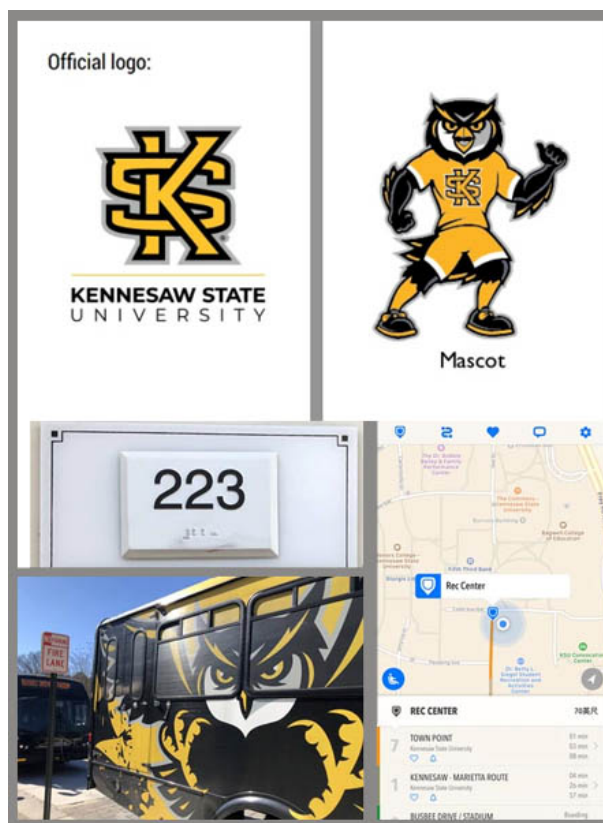


Fig.5 Ksu Logo and Application

3.4 Bookstore

We can see logos and various media of open campuses in the universities in America; sometimes there will be signs on the ground, but they can also be seen in bookstores. A bookstore is an important part of UIS in universities in the United States. It carries products that have a university's UIS on them, and it is also the best way for universities to publicize themselves to the outside world. Many Chinese university students complain when they graduate that they can't buy school-related souvenirs or uniform clothes to take graduation photographs, so they have to rent regular styles in a clothing rental studio. (In China, there are studios that rent a variety of clothing). If there are bookstores in Chinese universities, these seemingly minor problems can be solved. After all, primary and secondary schools have uniforms, so it is natural for universities to have uniforms. In the United States,

whether it is a teacher, a student or a visitor, they are likely to buy products at the bookstore as a souvenir or a gift. Isn't this an excellent way of publicity for universities?

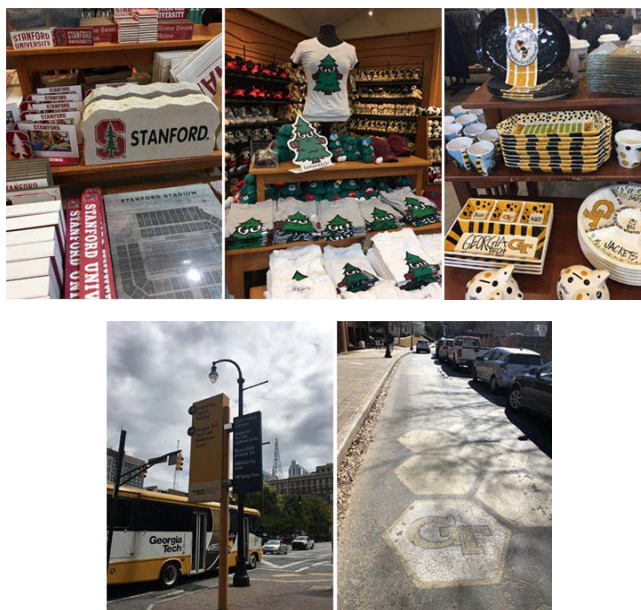


Fig.6 The Bookstore of Stanford University and Georgia Institute of Technology and Road Signs

4. University Identity System Scheme Design of Gannan Normal University

4.1 Improve and Perfect the Significance of Uis in Gannan Normal University

On March 4, 2016, Gannan Normal University was renamed with the formal approval of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, which upgraded to a comprehensive university. The change means that the teaching quality, scientific research level and personnel training of Gannan Normal University will be at a new era. At the same time, it also means that Gannan Normal University needs universal design. While improving VIS, it also needs to give priority to improving University Identity System design with outstanding posture, enhancing its image and influence, and gradually expanding its influence and reputation in universities in China.

As mentioned above, many universities in China do not pay attention to the application of the logo, such as road guide signs and business cards. However, a slight discrepancy in color can also have an impact because piracy can occur as a result. Piracy of university identity has not been taken seriously, because it is not as

common and serious as product piracy. In addition, most universities in China pay more attention to teaching and scientific research and believe that UIS is useless. An official promotional film on the centennial anniversary of a well-known university in China has been pointed out to copy the originality of a promotional film from a Japanese university. Even if the Chinese university later replaced this promotional film, as a well-known university in the world, it undoubtedly will become a joke.

In the design of a university badge, the theme is essence, energy, and spirit, which are the core values of Gannan Normal University. The wooden bell is a huge bell used to announce the decrees in ancient China. In the Analects of Confucius, it is said that “the heaven will take Confucius as a wooden bell”, which means that the god will instruct the world with Confucius as a saint. Taking the wooden bell as the main identity of the badge means that Gannan Normal University inherits the excellent educational tradition of China represented by Confucius. It symbolizes that Gannan Normal University is a teacher-oriented normal university, which is consistent with the orientation of Gannan Normal University as an educator. Three wooden bells form a herringbone, which means insisting on people-oriented, is consistent with the school's philosophy. [5]



Fig.7 Gannan Normal University's Logo[5]

4.2 Detailed Design in the Scheme

Gannan Normal University has three campuses: Golden Campus, Zhanggong Campus, and Baita Campus, covering an area of larger than 2,200 mu (about 1.46 square kilometers). Two aspects were considered and used for reference in the design of this project. First, drawn lessons from the UIS design system of foreign excellent universities, finely extending UIS to all categories in detail. The university badge was printed from all materials inside and outside, which should not be less than the minimum application specification. There should be no deviation in color.

The same blue color of the markings on the paper and on the wall cannot be distinguished by the naked eye. Interior signage with the logo should be seen in any corner of the campus, additionally establishing campus cultural stationary stores. The store is mainly managed by the school and students can work and study part-time.

Second, highlight the details and personality. Gannan Normal University has fifteen colleges: one independent college, one affiliated middle school, and one affiliated primary school. We have designed unique logos for all of them. In order to not depart from the main badge of Gannan Normal University, all the logos are mainly blue, supplemented by the representative color of the College. For example, the representative color of College of Navel Orange is orange. As follows, Academy of Fine Arts will be an example.

1) Brief Introduction to the Academy of Fine Arts of Gannan Normal University

Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1960, was collectively called the Department of Art with the College of Music. In 2000, the Department of Arts was established independently. In 2003, it was transformed into the Academy of Fine Arts, which is the traditional golden Professional College of the school. The Academy of Fine Arts has always adhered to the concept of “harmony but difference, ending in the best”, inheriting and carrying forward the spirit of Hakka culture in southern Jiangxi. It also attaches great importance to the propaganda and teaching of Hakka culture in the field of teaching and scientific research and has achieved excellent results.

2) Combination of Culture and Information

There is a Hakka Museum of Cultural Relics on the 3rd floor of Building A of the Academy of Fine Arts. More than 10,000 cultural relics are mainly Gannan Hakka relics of Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China. Among them, the “Willow braided lines ru ding jar of Qili kiln of Qianzhou, Song Dynasty” won the most historical and cultural value award of the TV show Treasure Hunting in CCTV. The Hakka Museum of Cultural Relics has become a symbol of the Academy of Fine Arts and even Gannan Normal University. Academies with museums are very rare in art colleges in China. Visitors from all walks of life come to visit and study here every year. Therefore, UIS design in the scheme cannot simply require spatial indication. In addition, it cannot be the same as the general social public signs in a single form[6]. It should embody certain concepts and cultures. Therefore, the original intention of the design is that UIS indicators reflect the combination of traditional culture and modern design.

In the Hakka Culture Museum, we focus on patterns of costumes and architectures. Hakka traditional costume patterns mainly include animal, plant, character, fonts, and articles. They are used through forms like a filling, two-way continuity, picture and background reversal, and repetition of composition[7]. Architectural patterns are mainly round and square from Hakka Round House as well as Hakka ornamental column, archways, and plaques. Designs, shapes, and patterns are gorgeous and varied, but we have not found the satisfactory and appropriate patterns still. Instead, we find them in one of the many Hakka plaque

couplets. There are three characteristics of the plaque couplets in the museum, which are three-dimension, symmetrical external contours, and rich internal patterns. In the design of the guide icon, we basically retained the outside frame pattern of the plaque couplet. Because of the consideration of production technology and cost, we changed the more complex patterns into simpler auspicious propitious cloud patterns. The interior pattern is based on the prize-winning “Willow braided lines ru ding jar of Qili kiln of Qianzhou, Song Dynasty”, which is characterized by repeated geometric circles. As for the instructions and signs of teaching and research rooms, offices and so on, they are reconstructed and designed into geometric figures by the most basic way of composition. Taking the logo of Traditional Chinese Painting major as an example, the logo consists of three triangles, just like the mountains that often appear in traditional Chinese paintings. Also, solid bronze technology is used to produce the logo.

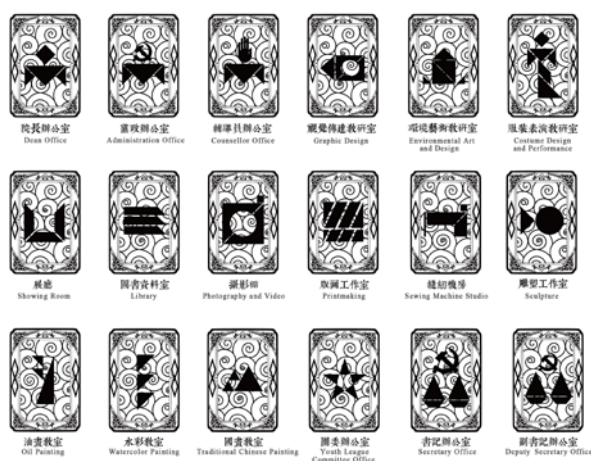


Fig.8 Sketch of Interior Signage Academy of Fine Arts, Gnu

5. Conclusion

For the design and promotion of UIS in university colleges, we must first find a suitable opportunity to cut in and consider our own image positioning, then, cut into the design from the details, college advantages, etc., whiling not copying it. In addition, UIS needs to be designed, and it needs to be promoted in the later stage. It requires the enthusiastic participation of all faculty and students, making UIS more abundant and perfect.

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