

The Path and Strategy for the Professional Development of the Administrators of Teaching Management in Secondary Units of the Local Universities—Taking Yibin University as an Example

Tao Zhou^{1,a,*}, Dan Zhu¹, Liang Li²

¹School of Law and Public Administration, Yibin University, Yibin, Sichuan, China

²Yibin University Dean's Office, Yibin University, Yibin, Sichuan, China

^anongzi2@126.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract: In the process of transformation and development of the local universities, there has been a phenomenon that attaches importance to the introduction of high-level talents, infrastructure construction and data standards, while paying little attention to the teaching management at the grassroots level. However, in reality, improving the level and quality of grassroots teaching management is of great significance to the education and teaching in the local universities. On the basis of what has been mentioned above, this paper investigates the front-line teaching secretaries by adopting the questionnaire method and finds that they generally suffer from the occupational burnout, which is mainly caused by the problems in salary and promotion channels, unequal rights and responsibilities. What's more, it puts forward some suggestions on strengthening the psychological counseling, improving the work mechanisms and promoting the professional development of the teaching secretaries.

Keywords: Local universities; teaching management; Yibin University; specialization

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the social economy, the competition in the higher education is becoming increasingly violent. At the same time, the scale of newly local undergraduate universities keeps expanding and the number of students increases; The number of educational models is increasing; The general education and quality curriculum reform is being promoted continuously; Interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary learning has become a trend; External communication is constantly strengthening, and it becomes possible to conduct the cross school and cross-border learning with gradual development. In this context, it breaks the original mode of the teaching management, which makes the teaching management of the newly local undergraduate universities become complex and heavy. The level and quality of teaching management have a significant impact on the achievement of school organizational goals, the teaching quality and the improvement of educational quality.

Currently, the local universities is under development with the features of building and upgrading in a short time and a low starting point. They attach great importance to introducing the high-level talents and infrastructure construction, focusing on the data standards and paying more attention to the development of the counselors in grassroots management teams, which has resulted in the neglect of the construction and training of the teaching management teams^[1], especially the teaching secretary teams. However, as the foundation of the teaching management in the universities, the professional development of teaching secretaries is of great significance for improving the quality of education and teaching, promoting the teaching reform, improving the internal management and promoting the long-term development of the universities. To survive in the competition, the local universities shall strengthen the professional construction of the teaching secretary team. Taking Yibin University as an example, the paper analyzes the difficulties and challenges, explores the necessity and urgency of professional development and puts forward the corresponding paths and strategies by starting from the practical significance and current situation of the professional development of the teaching secretaries in the local universities. This study on the professional development of teaching secretaries in the local universities aims to provide the useful reference and inspiration for the teaching management in the

local universities and promote the prosperous development of higher education in China^[2].

2. The Practical Significance of Professional Development of Teaching Secretaries in the Local Universities

The professional development of teaching secretaries in the local universities can improve the quality and efficiency of teaching management, enhance the professional competence and management ability of the administrators of teaching management, enable them to better fulfill their teaching management responsibilities, strengthen the supervision and management of the teaching process, upgrade the teaching quality and efficiency, and promote the development of higher education. What's more, it also helps to promote the teaching reform and innovation. The teaching reform and innovation are not only the important tasks of higher education, but also the important ways to improve the teaching quality and efficiency. The professional development of the teaching secretaries can greatly support the teaching reform and innovation, promote the innovation in teaching modes and methods of higher education, improve the teaching quality and effectiveness and live up to the requirements of the social and economic development.

2.1 Improving the Efficiency of Teaching Management

As the front-line staff of the teaching management in the university, the teaching secretary is responsible for handling the daily teaching affairs, such as formulating the teaching plans, arranging the courses, organizing the exams and managing the student enrollment^[3]. A professional team of teaching secretaries is capable of getting the hang of the laws and skills of teaching management, which will help to effectively coordinate the teaching resources, optimize the management processes and improve the efficiency of teaching management significantly.

2.2 Guaranteeing the Teaching Quality

The teaching secretaries play an important part in guaranteeing the teaching quality. They are in charge of monitoring the teaching quality, providing the feedback on the teaching information, and handling the teaching accidents. With professional construction, the teaching secretaries will better perform such kind of responsibilities and guarantee the stability and improvement of the teaching quality. Besides, they can also assist the leaders of department in building a teaching system that meets the student's actual needs, forming their own educational characteristics and improving the teaching quality.

2.3 Promoting the Education Reform

With the further reform of the higher education, there are higher requirements for the professional quality and ability of teaching secretaries. The professional teaching secretaries will better meet the requirements of educational reform and greatly support the higher education reform. They can not only play an active role in planning and carrying out the projects of teaching reform, but also promote the innovation and development in the teaching management with their professional knowledge and skills.

2.4 Improving the Overall Management Level of the University

The professional development of the teaching secretary will help to improve the quality of teaching management as well as enhancing the overall management level of the university. Served as an important part of the university management, their professional quality and ability will have a direct impact on the overall management level of the university. Strengthening the professionalization of the teaching secretary can help to lead the school management to a more scientific, standardized and efficient direction.

3. The Realistic Dilemma of the Professional Development of Teaching Secretaries in the Local Universities

3.1 Basic Situation of Teaching Secretary

As a local undergraduate institution, Yibin University takes the undergraduate education and

teaching as the basis to cultivate the high-quality applied talents. There are 16 secondary teaching units and approximately 25,000 undergraduate students in the University. A questionnaire survey was conducted on the full-time and part-time teaching secretaries of 16 secondary colleges of Yibin University. And 30 copies were issued, 30 copies were collected and 30 copies were valid, with 100% of the effective rate^[4].

Currently, the basic situation of the teaching secretaries at Yibin University is mainly shown in the following aspects: firstly, they have not worked for a long time and most of them are young. The average age of the teaching secretaries is 32.3 years old, with a minimum of 25 years old and a maximum of 53 years old. The proportion of teaching secretaries under 35 years old is 62.5%, and the average age of the teaching secretaries under 35 years old is 29.8 years old; The average length of service as a teaching secretary is 4.43 years, with a maximum of 23 years and a minimum of less than 1 year. Excluding the extreme value, the length of service as a teaching secretary is 4.04 years, which shows that the majority of teaching secretaries are new teachers who started in 2020. Secondly, the females take an absolute advantage and the gender ratio is imbalanced. The ratio of males to females is 7:25, with females accounting for 78.13%. Thirdly, the structure of professional titles and educational qualifications is relatively low. Three teaching secretaries hold senior professional titles, accounting for 10%; 27 people are intermediate or below, of which 7 have intermediate professional titles, accounting for 23.3%, 17 have junior professional titles, accounting for 56.7%, and 3 have not yet obtained any professional titles, accounting for 10%. As for the educational background, 3 people hold undergraduate degrees, 3 people hold doctoral degrees, and the remaining 24 people hold the master's degrees, accounting for 80%. Their majors are mainly about the ones offered by each college. Fourth, there is no full-time post setting for most of them are transferred from other positions. According to the survey results, 83.3% of the teaching secretaries are converted to the positions from full-time teachers to teaching secretaries, while the rest are settled for the families of talents introduced by the school. The universities have not set up any recruitment channel for the full-time positions.

3.2 Severe Job Burnout

There is a general feeling of job burnout among the teaching secretaries of the universities. According to the survey results, 65.62% of teaching secretaries are dissatisfied with their current job, 53.13% have a clear intention to transfer to other positions, 28.13% are under hesitation on whether to transfer or not, and only 18.75% are content with their current position. The willingness to switch the positions objectively shows the current state of the job burnout among the teaching secretaries. And the main reasons are as follows:

Firstly, the teaching secretaries feel bored and lack the enthusiasm for their work due to the repetitive and tedious work of teaching secretary. And 90% of the teaching secretaries surveyed believe that the work lacks initiative with following the instructions from the superiors. Secondly, they bear the great pressure from the work of teaching secretary, because the teaching secretaries not only serve as the full-time administrative workers, but also they are in charge of the teaching and student counseling for multiple classes or majors, as well as dealing with different emergencies, all of which will consume a lot of energy and time and make them feel exhausted. Therefore, 84.38% of them think that the work of teaching secretaries is heavy, and 68.8% of them show that their working hours are far more than 8 hours. Finally, there is little room for their career development. Currently, the promotion of teaching secretary is limited in the administrative and technical positions. Due to the limitation of academic qualifications and titles, the section chief of administrative positions in the department has become the highest one; What's worse, the busy work greatly takes up their personal time, which has the limitation on the promotion of teaching secretaries' professional titles. Some teaching secretaries may choose to change the jobs or positions for better opportunities of the career development, which will have an impact on the stability and sustainable development of the teaching management in the universities.

3.3 The Considerable Brain Drain

One of the practical difficulties challenging the professionalization of the teaching secretary in the local universities is the considerable brain drain, which many local universities encounter^[5]. Yibin University also suffers from an unstable teaching secretary with high personnel turnover. The survey results shows that the teaching administrators believe the teaching secretaries shall not have a high turnover, which is not conducive to the education and teaching. However, according to the actual situation of the school, the problem of frequent turnover of teaching secretaries arises in different colleges, some of which find it hard to construct a team of stable teaching secretary. So they adopt the

method of new teachers taking turns to act as the teaching secretaries, with a work cycle of 1 to 2 years; Some colleges have a high turnover of teaching secretaries, with an average of 2 people per year. And it refers to that the replacement of teaching secretaries is done in one year. There are two main reasons for this phenomenon: on the one hand, the salary of the teaching secretaries in some local universities may be lower than those of other industries with the same education and work experience. For example, the survey results show that only 12.51% of people believe that the work effort is equal to income, resulting in some capable talents giving up the positions of teaching management to seek for a higher pay. Therefore, the positions of teaching management fail to attract the high-quality talents. On the other hand, in some local universities, the teaching secretaries may work in the unhealthy working atmosphere or with the unfriendly management methods, which will cause the brain drain. For example, some teaching secretaries may suffer from great pressure and workload without any necessary support or assistance at that time. The survey shows that 90.63% of people say their work fail to be recognized by other colleagues, which may cause the decline in their work enthusiasm and satisfaction, and they will give up the position.

3.4 Lack of Innovation Awareness

The lack of innovation awareness among the teaching secretaries in local universities are caused by many factors, including the education system, job responsibilities, educational culture and personal qualities. Firstly, the current education system attaches great importance to the exam scores and the evaluation on the teaching quality, focusing on the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation of test taking abilities, but pays little attention to cultivating the innovative awareness and abilities. As a result, some teaching secretaries may pay more attention to the teaching quality and the students' exam scores but neglect the innovation of teaching methods and management models. Secondly, the job responsibilities of teaching secretaries are simple, mainly responsible for the work such as course design and exam management. So they are short of opportunities and motivation for the innovation of teaching and management. In addition, the rigid mechanisms of salary and promotion may make it difficult to motivate them to play an active part in exploring and trying new teaching methods and management models. Thirdly, the training and achievements of the positions of teaching secretary also seem to be little. There is no relevant training system for the teaching secretaries in the universities and the secondary colleges. And 78.13% of the teaching secretaries have not engaged in different training of teaching management, 76.6% have not applied for the projects of teaching management, and 90.63% have not been invited to participate in the research projects of teaching management.

3.5 Lack of Incentive Mechanism

The nature and characteristics of the work of teaching secretary make it difficult to directly quantify the results. The results of general teaching management often need to be accumulated and precipitated for a long time, and many results are difficult to be measured by specific indicators, for example, the quality of teaching management and the student satisfaction. Therefore, it is hard to directly quantify the results of the work of teaching secretary, and 87.49% of the teaching secretaries believe that their work efforts are difficult to get the motivation and rewards they deserve. On the other hand, the nature and characteristics of the work of teaching secretaries also make it difficult to directly reflect their work results in the current performance evaluation system that values the papers and projects. This is because many of the tasks of teaching secretaries are mainly about the teaching operation management, and they should deal with the complex affairs among the teachers and the students, which will take up most of the working time. However, the teaching innovation, management and achievements of the reform are often completed by multi-departments, not by the individuals^[6].

In summary, the teaching secretaries in the local undergraduate universities generally have the difficulties of high work pressure, unequal rights and responsibilities, complex tasks, low sense of identity and few promotion channels. It is urgent to strengthen the construction of the team of teaching secretary by coordinating the university and college, guarantee the stability of the teaching secretary and actively develop the professional construction of the teaching secretary.

4. Exploration of the Professional Development Path of Teaching Secretaries in the Local Universities

4.1 Improve the Work Efficiency and Quality by Carrying out the Psychological Counseling

Carrying out the psychological counseling and promoting the psychological construction are of importance to promote the professional development of the teaching secretaries in the local universities, which can effectively improve their work efficiency and quality. Firstly, the local universities shall actively carry out the mental health education for the teaching secretaries, including offering the knowledge and skills in psychological adjustment, stress management and emotional control. The mental health lectures and courses regularly held will help to improve the mental health of the teaching secretaries. Secondly, the local universities shall strengthen the communication and collaboration among the teaching secretaries, and create the atmosphere with team spirit. The team meetings and team building activities regularly held will help to promote the communication and interaction among the teaching secretaries and enhance the team cohesion. Thirdly, the local universities shall provide the psychological counseling services to help the teaching secretaries address the psychological problems encountered in work and life, by offering the psychological counseling hotlines, providing the online counseling and giving the timely and effective psychological support. Finally, the universities shall offer guidance to the teaching secretaries to strengthen their self-awareness and growth, improve their abilities of self-management and self-motivation, and help them find out their strengths and weaknesses through regular self-reflection and self-evaluation and make their personal growth plans.

4.2 Improve the Management Systems and the Talent Development Systems

Firstly, the local universities shall formulate the teaching management systems on the basis of the actual situations, figure out the responsibilities, authorities, procedures and requirements of teaching management, standardize the teaching management and guarantee the teaching management to be conducted successfully. Secondly, the local universities shall establish a scientific, fair and effective assessment mechanism to regularly evaluate the work of teaching management, assess the quality and effectiveness of teaching management, identify and settle the problems timely, establish the professional development channels for the teaching secretaries, such as career promotion and title evaluation, and encourage them to improve their professional level and quality with continuous learning and practice. What's more, they shall establish a comprehensive performance evaluation system with professional development as one of the evaluation indicators, to encourage the teaching secretaries to continuously improve their professional level. Additionally, the local universities shall attach great importance to constructing the team of teaching secretary, provide the diversified training platforms for the teaching secretaries, establish a tutor system assigning the tutor to each teaching secretary, help them develop the individual career plans and development paths, and improve their abilities and levels of teaching management by adopting the methods of training, introduction and incentives, which will enhance the professionalization of the teaching management. Finally, the local universities shall establish a sound monitoring mechanism of teaching quality to monitor and evaluate the teaching process and quality, timely identify and settle the problems in teaching, and guarantee the teaching quality and effectiveness.

4.3 Strengthen the Skill Training and Improve the Job Competency

To establish a learning oriented team, there must be opportunities for learning first. And according to our survey, currently, the new local undergraduate universities lack the system of on-the-job training. Therefore, improving the on-the-job training system for the teaching secretaries and providing the learning opportunities for the positions are the basic guarantees for establishing a learning oriented team and the fundamental guarantee for the professional construction of teaching secretaries. A sound on-the-job training system shall include the aspects as follows: firstly, the universities shall include the on-the-job training of teaching secretaries in the training plan of all faculty and staff, and treat it equally as full-time teacher training. Secondly, figure out the goals and significance of the training, fully ensure the allocation of funds and establish a long-term system to supervise the implementation. In addition, the universities shall develop the targeted training plans on the basis of the characteristics of the work of teaching secretary, carefully design the training content and modes and continuously improve the training curriculum system according to practical demands. What's more, the universities shall offer learning methods for the training of teaching secretaries, including providing the short-term training courses, engaging in the seminars of teaching management, carrying out the experience

exchange meeting among the inter-school teaching secretaries, observing and learning at other colleges, and encouraging to pursue the master's and doctoral degrees. Finally, on-the-job training shall set a goal and coordinate the development of teaching secretaries. The universities provide the corresponding training for the teaching secretaries as planned according to the demands of work, the individual conditions and ambitions. The distinguished teaching secretaries who are enthusiastic about the work of teaching secretary and have great professional abilities and outstanding achievements can continue to stay in the positions of teaching management and develop in the direction of specialization and professionalism^[7]. For those who have made outstanding achievements in the teaching secretary post and have worked for the prescribed period of time, if they are willing to engage in teaching and research, the school will give priority to recommending them to engage in further education and learning, so that they can quickly reach the professional level of full-time teachers. In this way, not only do the teaching secretaries have the opportunity to learn, but also has the motivation to learn, which helps them have the firm belief in learning and improve themselves continuously.

4.4 Strengthen the Humanistic Care and Establish the Effective Incentive Mechanism

Strengthening the humanistic care and establishing the effective incentive mechanisms are the important ways for the professional development of teaching secretaries in the local universities. On the one hand, it shall strengthen the humanistic care. The local universities shall improve the working environment and conditions for the teaching secretaries, such as providing better office facilities, reducing the work burden and increasing the rest time to reduce the work pressure and tiredness. Besides, it shall also strengthen the communication and feedback with the teaching secretaries, understand their requirements and feedback, help them tackle the problems and difficulties arisen from the work, actively encourage them to cooperate and help each other and enhance team cohesion and team spirit. On the other hand, establish the effective incentive mechanisms. The incentive mechanism is an important means to arouse the enthusiasm and creativity of the administrators of teaching management. Establishing the mechanisms for rewarding the achievements of teaching management, evaluating the quality of teaching management and promoting the professional titles will motivate the administrators of teaching management to actively engage in the teaching and improve the teaching quality and level. What's more, it shall attach importance to the spiritual motivation of the administrators of teaching management, such as commending the outstanding individuals and setting the good example, to arouse their enthusiasm and creativity of work. In addition, it shall establish the effective feedback mechanisms to timely understand the effectiveness and problems of the teaching management, which will provide reference for improving the teaching management and help to enhance the quality and level of the teaching management.

5. Conclusion

With the continuous development of society and education reform, the professionalization of the teaching secretaries in the local universities has become an essential requirement for improving the teaching quality and promoting the development of education. Further improving the professionalization of the teaching secretaries can not only provide the students with better education and services, but also lay a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the local universities. It shall be noted that the professional development of teaching secretaries in the local universities is a systematic project. Only with the comprehensive reform and innovation can they continuously improve the teaching quality, cultivate more outstanding talents for the society and contribute to realizing the goal of building a leading country in education.

Acknowledgements

Fund Project supported by: The Teaching Reform Project of Yibin University in 2023, NO: JGY202310.

References

- [1] Guo Cong. *A Review of Research on the Status of Teaching Secretaries and Research Teams in Chinese Universities* [J]. *Science and Technology Information*, 2024, 22 (15): 243-248
- [2] Du Yanjun, Zhou Qing, Liu Yibao. *Research on the Current Situation and Optimization Path of the*

Teaching Secretary Team in Universities[M].*A Case Study of the University Teaching and Educating (Higher Education Forum)*, 2024, (12): 37-40

[3] Li Xuehan. *A Brief Discussion on Strategies for Enhancing the Professional Literacy of Teaching Secretaries in Vocational Colleges* [J]. *Public Relations World*, 2023, (03): 71-73

[4] Yang Junping. *Exploring the Role of Teaching Secretaries in Teaching management of the Universities* [J]. *The Theory and Practice of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 2022, 5 (23): 127-129

[5] Wang Jing. *Strategies for Enhancing the Management and Service Capability of Teaching Secretaries in Local Undergraduate Universities* [J]. *Academy*, 2022, 15 (25): 66-68

[6] Xu Yingyuan. *The Current Situation and Response Strategies of Position Service and Management of Teaching Secretary*[M].*Taking the Universities as an Example*. *Shanxi Youth*, 2022, (08): 174-176

[7] Tang Yuanlin. *A Preliminary Analysis of the Standardization Construction and Capacity Enhancement of Teaching Secretaries in Higher Education Institutions* [J]. *China Standardization*, 2022, (02): 182-184