

Competency Dimension of University Presidents: Balancing Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility

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Abstract—In today's increasingly close relationship between universities and society, it is not feasible for universities to "work behind closed doors" or to pander to society blindly. As the basic dimension of university presidents' competence, it is very important to balance academic freedom and social responsibility. The purpose of this paper is to study how university presidents balance academic freedom and social responsibility. This research starts from two aspects of academic freedom and social responsibility, and analyzes their connotation, importance and dilemma. Our research results are applicable to the presidents of general universities. The balance between the two requires university presidents to continuously improve their academic quality, create a loose and moderate academic environment for universities, and properly integrate with society in the process of running schools. Our conclusion is of universal significance, which is not only the basic dimension of university presidents' competence, but also the duty of university presidents to better protect free academic, lead the prosperity of universities and promote social development.

Keywords—academic freedom; social responsibility; Competency Dimension of University Presidents; balance

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to be competent for his position, the president of a university must clearly define several major functions of the university, namely, training talents, scientific research and serving the society. Academic freedom, as the basic spirit of the existence and development of universities, emphasizes that universities should concentrate on academic research and avoid secular interference. However, with the rapid development of society, the connection between modern universities and society is getting closer and closer, gradually moving from the edge of society to the center of society. Undoubtedly, modern universities must also bear certain social responsibilities. Therefore, the ability to balance the academic freedom and social responsibility of universities is especially important for university presidents, which is also the basic dimension for university presidents to be competent for their positions. The president of a university bears the responsibility of finding a balance between the social responsibility of the university and academic freedom.

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II. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A. Concept of academic freedom

Academic freedom has been advocated since the birth of universities. It is the basic spirit accompanying the emergence and development of universities. Different scholars have different opinions on the concept of academic freedom (as shown in TABLE I), but the central point of view is the same, that is, academic freedom refers to the freedom of teaching, research and learning in universities, and university teachers and students can independently solve academic research problems according to their own interests and hobbies, and no interference from any external forces is allowed.

TABLE I. SUMMARY OF "ACADEMIC FREEDOM" CONCEPT

Author	Viewpoints
Wang Jianhua (2001)	Academic freedom is mainly applicable to academic activities in universities. Academic freedom rights are granted mainly to university teachers and students. Academic freedom covers teaching and research in universities, specifically including school autonomy, research freedom, teaching freedom, learning freedom, thought freedom, speech freedom, publication freedom, etc. The purpose of academic freedom is to avoid unreasonable interference from the outside world, so as to probe into and spread the truth with great concentration[1].
Xiao Haitao (2000)	In the process of exploring truth, university teachers and students can solve academic problems independently and are not interfered by political, religious and other social factors outside the academic scope[2].
Sui Yifan (2001)	Academic freedom is mainly applicable to academic activities in universities, including teaching freedom, learning freedom and research freedom. The groups enjoying academic freedom are university teachers and students. The purpose of academic freedom is to protect scholars from the interference and influence of unreasonable factors in the process of pursuing truth[3].
Mao Rong (2007)	It refers to the right to pursue truth without hindrance. This right applies not only to institutions of higher education, but also to personnel engaged in academic work in these institutions[4].

B. The Basic Value of Academic Freedom

Derek Bok, a famous American educator, proposed three basic academic principles that universities must follow, namely, the principle of academic freedom, the principle of academic autonomy and the principle of academic neutrality. The Bok points out that academic freedom is the source of maintaining the vitality of universities. He believes that academic freedom is of vital importance to the university. It is the foundation to

realize the mission of the university, and is also an essential condition to safeguard the purpose of the university and the interests of university teachers and scholars. On the one hand, academic freedom is of great interest to teachers and scholars because they have devoted all their lives to developing new ideas and expounding new viewpoints. On the other hand, universities also attach great importance to academic freedom, because without academic freedom, the employment of the most creative scientists and scholars will be blocked, which will affect the university's exploration of knowledge and the creativity of university teachers and students, and this is the most critical part of the university's contribution to society.

C. The Dilemma of Academic Freedom

1) Social dependence on funding sources has kidnapped academic freedom

With the expansion of the scale and influence of the university, the financial demand increases sharply. The main sources of university funds are government grants, donations from social enterprises and alumni grants. Various huge and complicated social support networks connect universities and social institutions closely. When external funding becomes the main source of funding for modern universities and the demand for external funding is increasing, the traditional neutrality of universities is being questioned, and universities cannot enjoy full academic freedom.

2) The rampant academic corruption in universities endangers academic freedom.

The phenomenon of academic utilitarianism in universities is becoming more and more common, which directly leads to the current situation of academic corruption. In order to complete the assessment indicators, teachers have to try to publish papers and collect Numbers, which directly leads to the output of academic garbage in universities. Academic corruption not only wastes limited academic resources, but also corrupts the atmosphere of academic freedom, hinders academic progress, damages the image of universities and scholars, and has a bad impact on the development of higher education.

3) Undergraduate education only focuses on knowledge transmission, which disturbs academic freedom

For a long time, China's undergraduate education has formed a "teacher-centered" and "score-only" teaching model. The education of undergraduates only focuses on imparting knowledge, but not on cultivating independent thinking ability. The undergraduate stage is originally the embryonic starting point of professional learning. It is necessary to strengthen the cultivation of students' thinking on professional learning instead of "full house filling" of knowledge input, which is not conducive to students' free-thinking and the formation of academic freedom atmosphere in universities.

III. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIVERSITIES

One of the most important events for universities to gradually move from the edge of society to the center of society is the establishment of university's function of serving society. The social service function of universities originated from the land grant movement in the United States. The Morel Act of 1862 provided the legal basis for the social service

function of American universities. Wisconsin thought is the symbol of the establishment of the university's social service function. Its core is "the university should walk out of the wall, push the university's knowledge and technological advantages to the society, let university professors and students directly participate in production, and realize the integration of university, community and society."

With the social involvement in universities getting deeper and deeper, the academic research of universities can no longer be done behind closed doors, it must contact with social problems, can no longer ignore the development of society, and should take the initiative to assume the responsibility of serving the society. Under the background of the rapid development of science and technology, social change and development depend not only on the update and progress of knowledge, but also on people with higher education. The social responsibility of universities helps the country to make progress and solve some difficult problems of the country.

The social responsibilities that modern universities should undertake include: training talents needed by the country and society, which has always been one of the most basic functions of universities. In today's world with rapid development of knowledge economy, the competition in comprehensive national strength is increasingly fierce. Talents become the most important factor affecting comprehensive national strength. The most important responsibility of universities is to cultivate talents. Through academic research and technology transfer, new products and industries will be created, which will eventually stimulate the development of productive forces and promote economic development. Universities should also look forward to the future, guide the healthy and orderly development of society, make science benefit mankind, and thus better create the future. Undergraduate education, basic and applied research, promoting economic growth and eliminating social ills are the connotations of universities taking on their social responsibilities[5].

IV. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS SHOULD BALANCE ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Adhering to the principle of academic freedom and fulfilling social responsibilities are not always contradictory. On the one hand, upholding academic freedom can better fulfill social responsibilities. As Hutchins said, if universities do not have different voices, they will not have done their duty. On the other hand, performing social duties can often lead to a higher degree of academic freedom and promote academic development.

University presidents should try their best to balance academic freedom and social responsibility in universities, not only because the president is the supreme leader of a university, but also because the ability to balance basic academic freedom and social responsibility is the basic dimension of university presidents' competence, and is also one of the factors that affect university presidents' competence. Balance the relationship between the two can start from the following aspects:

A. University Presidents Should Continuously Improve Their Academic Accomplishment

The university president's own academic attainments and academic attainments are the keys to the free development of the university's academic. This is determined by the nature of the university. The university is a holy place for studying advanced knowledge. If the leaders of a school do not understand the importance of academic freedom, then academic freedom is not respected in this university. Therefore, the president of a university should have a certain academic quality, so that he can understand the importance of academic freedom and lead the whole university to have an atmosphere of academic freedom. For example, during the period of the Republic of China, president Cai Yuanpei of Peking university, Mr. Cai Yuanpei himself was a very famous educator. during his leadership of Peking university, he carried out reforms to Peking university "to implement the principle of running a school freely and in an all-inclusive way", making Peking university, a decaying feudal school, regain a new life. Mr. Mei Yiqi, former president of Tsinghua University, was a famous professor of physics and a famous educator at that time before he became president of Tsinghua University. Because of his high academic attainments and academic attainments, during his tenure as president of Tsinghua University, Tsinghua offered thousands of courses, and each had different academic interests and hobbies, but it was a thriving scene. It can be seen that a university president's academic attainments and academic attainments are particularly important to his understanding of the importance of academic freedom. As the president of a modern university, he must not forget the improvement of his academic accomplishment while improving his management ability.

B. University Presidents Should Create a Loose and Moderate Academic Environment for Universities

In balancing the relationship between academic freedom and social responsibility in universities, scholars must be given a relaxed academic environment, and they must respect and advocate academic. University presidents should create a relaxed academic environment for universities, especially to change the performance evaluation mechanism of teachers.

Many universities in our country have made rigid regulations on the number of papers published and the number of topics that teachers have each year, which is not only directly related to the year-end assessment of teachers, but also directly related to the selection of teachers' salaries and professional titles. Good research requires time for deliberation and long-term accumulation. As a university President, teachers should be provided with a relaxed academic environment rather than the pursuit of quick success and instant benefit, which creates excessive pressure on teachers.

Of course, university presidents should not only create a relaxed academic environment for universities, but also grasp the degree of academic freedom. Too much academic "freedom" will easily lead to the phenomenon of academic corruption and academic anomy[6]. Therefore, it is very important to grasp the degree of freedom. To grasp the degree of freedom, university presidents can establish correct academic criticism and punishment mechanism. Academic criticism is an important content to promote academic progress and realize academic freedom. The academic punishment mechanism can severely punish academic misconduct such as academic plagiarism to maintain academic freedom.

C. The president of the university should combine with the society properly in the course of running the school.

The proper combination with society in running schools should first change the traditional teaching mode. At present, China's classroom teaching mode is still dominated by "indoctrination", making students in a state of passive digestion and absorption for a long time, which is also an important reason for students' indifference to the society. Due to the limitations of the traditional education mode, students only accept classroom teaching and lack the ability to connect with the society and actively think about problems. As the President of a university, we should change the traditional teaching mode of "full teaching" and cultivate more students' ability to think actively, pay attention to and think about social problems. There are many examples of universities changing their teaching modes (as shown in TABLE II). University presidents can set up their own teaching modes according to the characteristics of their own schools.

TABLE II. MEASURES FOR CHANGING TEACHING MODE IN SOME UNIVERSITIES

School	Measures	Specific practices
Beijing Forestry University	Professional Courses Highlight the Cultivation of Practical Ability	Strengthen scientific research and innovation experiments and make scientific research and innovation training a compulsory course. Instruct students to carry out systematic professional theory and modular practical teaching.
Tianjin University	Academician Class, Jie Qing University Class	Not only pay attention to imparting knowledge, but also pay more attention to students' ability to think about problems.
Sichuan University	small-class instruction	To adopt the inquiry teaching mode of a small class, change the traditional teaching method of "full house filling", promote interactive communication and cultivate students' thinking ability
University of Electronic Science and Technology of China	Challenging learning class	Take students as the center, cultivate students' ability of knowledge synthesis and problem thinking, so that teachers can teach and students can learn in a research-oriented way.

The application research should also be carried out in combining with society in running schools. At present, many scientific researches in universities, especially those in liberal arts, are out of touch with reality and blindly pursue "higher". This situation leads to the disconnection between scientific

research and society, which is not conducive to the universities to assume social responsibilities. As the President of a university, he can carry out some applied scientific research in colleges and universities, so that the research results can be used in the society, contribute his strength to social

development, assume some social responsibilities and strengthen some links with the society.

V. CONCLUSION

The contemporary university is no longer an "ivory tower". It has more and more close ties with society and bears more and more social responsibilities. The premise of fulfilling social responsibility is to ensure the academic freedom of the university, which is also indispensable to the teaching and research of the university. The balance between academic freedom and social responsibility is the basic dimension of university presidents' competence. University presidents should continuously improve their academic attainments, create a relaxed and moderate academic environment for universities, and properly combine with the society in the process of running schools to balance the academic freedom and social responsibility of universities from these three aspects. It is also necessary to avoid excessive academic freedom and excessive social responsibility and lead universities to develop in a more comprehensive direction.

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