

# Exploring the Mechanism Construction and Strategies of Alumni Association Work in Local New Undergraduate Colleges and Universities: Evidence from Fujian University of Technology

Xiaorong Ye<sup>1,2</sup>, Rengeng Zhang<sup>1,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Thailand

<sup>2</sup> Fujian University of Technology, Fuzhou, Fujian, China

<sup>3</sup> Fujian Yonghong Construction Engineering Co., Ltd, Fujian, China

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**Abstract:** As the number of fresh undergraduate graduates of general colleges and universities across the country continues to climb, alumni associations play an increasingly important role as a liaison platform for communicating with school alumni. However, under the increasingly complex social environment in the new era, most of the new undergraduate colleges and universities have not yet formed their cultural system cultivation, and the problem of alumni resources integration is prominent; insufficient attention to the work of alumni associations, insufficient mechanism and personnel protection, lack of sound departmental and management system, as well as the lack of development planning and information technology platforms; make it difficult to carry out the work of their alumni associations. This paper will investigate the current situation of alumni association of local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities in China, analyze and summarize the main problems and difficulties of alumni association work, and take Fujian University of Science and Technology as an example, draw on the successful experience of its alumni association, and synthesize the experience of alumni associations of other general undergraduate colleges and universities, to take the best of their strengths and complement their weaknesses, and to solve the related problems. Finally, it explores the mechanism construction of alumni work of local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities in the new era and the corresponding innovative strategies.

**Keywords:** Local New Undergraduate Colleges and Universities; Alumni Association; Alumni Work.

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## 1. Introduction

Under the increasingly complex social environment in the new era, college alumni are the inheritance and valuable resources of a university's culture and spirit, and the career development and social achievements of alumni are an important reflection of a university's level of education and development quality. The alumni association is an important bridge to strengthen the connection between universities and alumni and the cooperation and win-win situation.

## 2. The Current Situation of Alumni Association Work in Local New Undergraduate Colleges and Universities

In recent years, the alumni associations of most local undergraduate colleges and universities have been serving the development of the university as their working purpose, and have made positive efforts in enhancing alumni liaison, university-enterprise cooperation, organizing activities, etc., which has formed a good situation of mutual concern, support and growth between the university and the alumni. However, due to the lack of experience, many new undergraduate colleges and universities often encounter some problems and difficulties in the process of alumni association work. For example, most of the new undergraduate colleges and universities do not have a long undergraduate education, the foundation of undergraduate teaching is relatively weak, and the cultivation of new universities' own culture system has not yet taken shape, which leads to the prominent problem of alumni resources integration; and the alumni associations of

the new undergraduate colleges and universities have mainly invested their energies in the construction of on-campus organizations, and they do not attach enough importance to the work of alumni associations, and do not have enough mechanisms and personnel to guarantee the work of the alumni associations, which leads to the lack of a sound management system, development and information platform. planning and informationization platform, etc.

### 2.1. Alumni Integration Issues Highlighted

New local undergraduate colleges and universities, due to the short time of undergraduate education, fewer undergraduate alumni, the development history of the merger and change, fragmented and incomplete alumni, undergraduate teaching foundation is weak, and has not formed its own university culture system. New undergraduate colleges and universities are usually formed by the merger of multiple campuses, and the problem of integrating alumni resources is especially prominent. School culture is the bond between alumni recognizing the school and alumni connecting with each other. The emergence of college culture is closely related to its running history, and is the result of long-term accumulation and recognition by generations of teachers, students and alumni, as well as the inheritance of the school's spiritual culture. New undergraduate colleges and universities, due to the integration and upgrading of several institutions, are bound to go through the process of mutual collision and intermingling of multiple cultures. In this process, the school culture has changed, and the recognition of alumni of predecessor schools to the newly built learning as well as the cultural identity often has a certain blockage, and some alumni's complex to the school may fade away

because of the cultural change. Fujian University of Technology, as an undergraduate institution formed by the merger of several schools, had the same problem in the early stage of new construction. The main manifestations are: due to the relocation of the school site and the change of the school name, the alumni's memories of campus life are lost, and it is difficult to establish a strong emotional resonance in the short term.

## **2.2. Lack of Sound Management Systems and Departments**

Due to the lack of experience in carrying out the work of the alumni association of local new undergraduate colleges and universities and the fact that their main efforts are invested in the construction of on-campus teaching organizations, they do not pay enough attention to the work of the alumni association, and they lack a sound organizational structure and an imperfect management system. The university failed to recognize the importance of alumni work, did not set up a special alumni organization, no full-time staff responsible for communication and liaison with alumni, and did not actively promote the development of alumni work, resulting in a number of problems in the process of alumni work, which has brought a series of difficulties and challenges to the alumni work. In the early stage of the new construction of Fujian University of Technology, the alumni department was also equipped with fewer full-time staff, generally only 2 to 3 people due to the personnel establishment limitations. The understaffing of the alumni department directly led to the lack of confusion in the division of labor and the lack of clear responsibilities in the alumni work. The imperfection of the alumni management related system also makes it impossible to carry out extensive communication and exchange, and in the face of the vast alumni group, it is impossible to complete the alumni management work properly; the lack of service consciousness, the alumni work is generally in a passive state in the service, and the consciousness of caring for the alumni is not enough to pay attention to the alumni, and it is not possible to provide alumni with high-quality services in an all-rounded and sustainable way.

## **2.3. Lack of Alumni Resource Development Planning and Information Management**

Due to the imperfection of the management system and departments, the alumni association of local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities also leads to the lack of overall alumni resource development planning, as well as the low level of informationization of alumni management. Alumni resource management is a complex and long-term work, alumni for colleges and universities, not only as the actual value of high-quality human resources, but also its material resources, economic resources, information resources, cultural resources, and social influence and other comprehensive value. However, at present, the vast majority of new undergraduate colleges and universities, faced with the increasingly large alumni resources, extensive collection, organization and management of alumni, as in the early days of Fujian University of Science and Technology, have trouble in the management of alumni work. For the comprehensive development and utilization of alumni resources is the lack of planning and specific initiatives, more colleges and universities are still using the traditional Excel forms, word documents and other tools to record alumni information by

manual entry, which is time-consuming, inefficient, and inaccurate, and the personal information of alumni held by the school does not match with the actual situation from time to time.

## **3. Problem Solving of Alumni Associations of New Local Undergraduate Colleges and Universities**

The main problems and difficulties of the alumni associations of local new undergraduate colleges and universities are mainly reflected in the problems of alumni integration, the lack of a sound management system and department, and the lack of alumni resource development planning and information management. To solve these problems, first of all, we should understand that the alumni work of colleges and universities is a comprehensive service work, integrating communication, exchange, service, cooperation, development and win-win situation. General local new undergraduate colleges and universities at the time of its establishment, are in the critical period of transformation and upgrading, in a new historical orientation, the school resources from the survival of the shortage to the development of the shortage of resources of the binding constraints tend to tighten, how to fully tap and utilize the alumni resources is particularly important. At the same time, actively innovate the work of the alumni association, build alumni service platform, gather the strength of the alumni, take the initiative to integrate into the school's central work, and build a community of development between the alumni and the school. Helping the school to form a cultural pulse, build a sound management system and platform, and establish a development planning and service informationization platform, so that colleges and universities can better accomplish the goal of building and promoting the school's high-quality development beyond. Taking Fujian University of Technology as an example, the school's alumni association has formed its own unique methods and countermeasures for the problems and difficulties of new undergraduate colleges and universities in the early stage of establishment, when the alumni association carries out its work.

### **3.1. Formation of a Cultural Lineage**

The local undergraduate colleges and universities that have been established for a long time in China have a strong and good alumni culture, and have formed a unique cultural vein by broadening the channel of regularized interaction. In the new era, with the continuous promotion of alumni work, the value of resources in terms of financial resources, material resources, intelligence and the social and interpersonal relationships of alumni groups in the development of colleges and universities is becoming increasingly prominent, and more and more colleges and universities attach importance to the creation of a good alumni cultural atmosphere between alumni and schools and the broadening of interaction channels. Take Fujian University of Technology as an example, the university provides alumni customized services, including mailing alumni newspapers and magazines on a regular basis, customizing alumni credit cards, giving school souvenirs to alumni, setting up alumni homecoming anniversaries, designing and planning special homecoming activities for alumni, inviting alumni back to school to participate in the freshmen's opening ceremony and

graduation ceremony, providing alumni or enterprises with industry study opportunities and publicity and display platforms, and assisting alumni in setting up teaching and scholarship funds. Alumni set up teaching aid funds and scholarships, set up regional alumni academic salons and other ways. Gradually form an overall cultural system for alumni, with school spirit as the core. To revitalize alumni's school complex and enhance alumni's sense of identification with the school. It plays an important role in establishing a long-term cultural vein between alumni and the school.

### **3.2. Building Sound Management Systems and Platforms**

China's local undergraduate colleges and universities have good experience in improving the management system and building a sustainable win-win platform. Taking Fujian University of Technology as an example, the university has gained good experience in deepening the university-enterprise cooperation mechanism, relying on its own advantages in faculty strength advantages in facilities and academic research platforms (e.g., key laboratories, scientific research institutes, etc.), etc.: (1) In promoting the cooperation of industrial practice, transformation of scientific research results, and technological industrial upgrading between the university and alumni enterprises, and promoting the mutually beneficial cooperation between the university and the alumni enterprises; (2) In consolidating the employment linkage mechanism, inviting alumni enterprises to hold various graduate employment fairs in schools to provide assistance to students' employment and synchronize the solution of alumni enterprises' talent demand. (3) In improving the cooperation mechanism of continuing education, through the organization of various training courses at all levels, we will cultivate technical backbones for local alumni and provide alumni with opportunities to re-study and further their education. (4) In the aspect of serving local development, establish a comprehensive teacher mechanism of "full-time + part-time", make full use of excellent alumni talent resources, and employ alumni as part-time professors and visiting professors. The university regularly invites alumni to participate in joint teaching and thematic academic lectures, organizes freshmen to visit and study in alumni enterprises, and arranges graduates to practice and exercise in alumni enterprises. Broaden teaching and practice resources. (5), in exploring the benign interaction mechanism of donation, focusing on the combination of online project promotion and offline fund-raising activities, and attempting to maintain the state of long-term decentralized donations and small donations of basic needs.

### **3.3. Establishment of an Information Platform for Development Planning and Services**

Many local undergraduate colleges and universities in China are tapping alumni resources, and have also established alumni resources development planning and alumni management service informationization platform. Taking Fujian University of Technology as an example, although the university has a history of 100 years, the alumni resources are fragmented and incomplete due to the development process of several mergers and changes. In this regard, the Alumni Association of Fujian University of Technology solves the problem through relevant planning and information technology, such as: planning the construction of portal website, online interactive community, mobile WeChat client,

etc., in-depth excavation, collation and improvement of alumni data and information, and the establishment of a complete and dynamic alumni service information technology platform. These construction planning and improvement, in turn, effectively help the school on the implementation of alumni resource development planning, so that the school and alumni around the world more convenient access to contact and information sharing, and strengthen the interaction and communication between alumni and alumni. Schools can also use the information technology platform to make regular visits to areas with a better foundation for alumni work and better alumni activities, to draw on the experience of that alumni work and promote it nationwide; to learn about the information on the work situation of alumni associations across the country, and to adopt the principle of highlighting the key points and taking into account the overall situation, the school leadership organizes the school's alumni association management personnel and the relevant leaders to meet with the management personnel of the local alumni associations and alumni associations in various parts of the country. The school leaders organized school alumni association managers and related leaders to meet with local alumni association managers and alumni associations in different parts of the country to understand the situation of alumni and maintain alumni resources.

## **4. Exploration of Alumni Mechanism Construction and Strategy of Local New Undergraduate Colleges and Universities**

The alumni associations of local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities should be oriented to cohesion of alumni and stimulation of alumni potential, and enhance alumni participation in school construction. Give full play to the supportive role of alumni organizations in different cities in the construction of the school, gather the wisdom and strength of alumni, and contribute to the school's career to create another brilliant; with the goal of helping alumni development and realizing the win-win situation of the three parties, it will add bricks and mortar to the development and growth of the university. Actively strengthen the alumni contact and cooperation, promote each other, and strive to realize the multi-win development of alumni, schools and society. Therefore, new colleges and universities, based on the experience of other colleges and universities, should also take advantage of their strengths and complement their weaknesses to explore the mechanism construction of college alumni work and the corresponding innovative strategies in the new era.

### **4.1. Nurturing University Culture and Forming Cohesive Centripetal Force for Alumni Work**

Local new undergraduate colleges and universities need to cultivate university culture and form a cohesive centripetal force for alumni work. Schools should first focus on tapping into the cultural imprint of the campus. In order to mobilize the alumni, the alumni association needs to rely on the cultural recognition and spiritual cultivation of the school. Alumni have studied and lived in the same school, experienced the school's unique "temperament" inculcation, this learning background is similar, the spirit of "intersection" evolved from the cultural imprint, is an important impetus to

attract alumni to come back together. Secondly, we should focus on the university's own cultural heritage. The use of school celebrity culture, school motto culture, school history and culture, rich in school characteristics and deep infectious cultural symbols, through the new and old alumni cultural heritage and intercollegiate.

#### **4.2. Build a Good Publicity Position and Give Play to the Infectious Appeal of Alumni Work**

Local new undergraduate colleges and universities need to build a good publicity position and exert the infectious appeal of alumni work. At the school level, the school should further increase the publicity of alumni work, open alumni columns in the website, WeChat public number and other major school-level media platforms, regularly displaying information on alumni activities, alumni news, alumni association construction results, so that the alumni have an exclusive channel of information in cyberspace. At the level of alumni associations, it is necessary to strengthen the guidance to some areas where alumni associations are weakly carried out, by focusing on the formation of alumni associations in areas where the conditions are ripe. Continuously give full play to the advantages of communication and interaction of local alumni associations, vigorously publicize the good and typical experiences and practices of local alumni associations, and compile them into a booklet for alumni organizations at all levels to learn from, so as to strengthen the convening power of alumni work.

#### **4.3. Strengthening System Construction and Promoting the Standardization and Scientificization of Alumni Work**

Local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities need to strengthen the system construction and promote the standardization and scientificization of alumni work. First of all, the school should pay more attention to the work of the alumni association. From the perspective of serving the overall situation of school development, adhere to the school's own alumni association purpose, and scientifically formulate the development plan of alumni association. Secondly, strengthen the systematic construction of the management system of the alumni association work. Promote the standardization, standardization and scientificization of the work process; enrich the contact system of the alumni association, give full play to the communication role of the alumni association in communicating the emotions between the school and the alumni, play the role of a think tank in uniting the alumni to discuss the development plan of the school, and play the role of organizing the alumni to coordinate the return to the school, so that the alumni association will be more emotionally cordial with the alumni. Finally, the organizational structure should be improved. Establish a team of full-time and part-time talents with strong organizational ability, high comprehensive quality and excellent liaison skills, and set up a volunteer team of alumni teachers and students to fully organize and mobilize alumni to undertake various projects to serve alumni.

#### **4.4. Enhance Digital Capacity and Promote the Informatization and Intelligence of Alumni Work**

Local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities

also need to strengthen to enhance their digital capabilities and promote the informatization and intelligence of alumni work. The school has just been upgraded to a university, so it is even more important to do a good job of alumni service work in a positive, more proactive, more thoughtful and more detailed way. First, we should use digital means to accurately grasp the situation of alumni, build a big data dynamic management platform for alumni resources, and empower the management and service work of the alumni association. Second, we should continue to carry out field visits and research activities, carry out fellowship and talks with alumni, understand the situation of alumni, convey the development dynamics of the university for alumni, and collect alumni's suggestions and opinions on the running of the university. Dynamically approve and update the alumni database. Thirdly, we should gradually develop a hierarchical management system, form a management mode of one level to one level, and promote the work linkage between the alumni association and each branch.

#### **4.5. Strengthen Service Consciousness and Promote Systematic Normalization of Alumni Work**

Local newly-built undergraduate colleges and universities need to strengthen the sense of service and promote the systematic normalization of alumni work. In the student stage, schools should gradually improve students' awareness of school love and honor, enrich the alumni cultural atmosphere, and establish school complexes with the help of effective ways such as new student entrance education, campus cultural activities, and weekly grade assemblies. In the alumni stage, the alumni association should take the initiative to provide more help and services for alumni in learning and work to solve the problems and help; take the initiative to organize targeted alumni activities to firmly cohesion of alumni resources around the school, such as for the newly graduated alumni, alumni wall signatures, graduation photo creativity competition, graduates of the collection of books for sale, sports activities, such as the competition and other graduates of the activities. For alumni who have graduated for a long time, we will carry out alumni experience talks, send blessing cards during festivals, and organize tea parties, etc. These activities will allow alumni who are outside the school to still be able to bask in the school's care.

### **5. Conclusion and Prospect**

As the most important and reliable support force for the development of the university in the new era, alumni should put more energy and enthusiasm into the work of alumni with heart, soul, dedication and best efforts. We should make more use of digital and intelligent systems, and use the contact information and channels that are popular with everyone, to dynamically and stage by stage convey the school's voice to the national alumni association and industry alumni associations, and liaise with alumni's feelings. To extend the alumni work line, starting from students' enrollment, to cultivate students' sense of identity and belonging to the school through various education and activities, to form the unique cultural centripetal force and spiritual cohesion, and to cultivate alumni adhesion. It is necessary to strengthen the sense of service, build a sound management system and platform, and establish an information platform for development planning and service, so as to better integrate

alumni resources, help alumni and alumni enterprises grow, and achieve the ideal effect of win-win cooperation and mutual achievement.

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