

Research on the Construction and Implementation Strategy of High-Quality Characteristic Development Mode in Private Colleges and Universities

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Abstract

Against the background of the in-depth advancement of a strong educational nation and higher education entering a highly popularized stage, private colleges and universities, as an important part of China’s high-quality education system, are transforming from scale expansion to connotative and characteristic development. This is not only an inevitable requirement to respond to the national strategy of “promoting the reform and development of colleges and universities by classification”, but also a key path to solve their own development dilemmas and enhance core competitiveness. Based on the Outline of the Plan for Building a Strong Educational Country (2024–2035) and the spirit of the 15th Five-Year Plan proposals, combined with the current development status of private colleges and universities, this paper systematically analyzes the prominent problems in governance system, faculty construction, specialty setting, scientific research services and other aspects, clarifies the core connotation and value orientation of high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities, constructs a five-in-one development mode of “Party building guidance, precise positioning, connotation support, characteristic breakthrough and collaborative empowerment”, and then puts forward targeted implementation strategies from six dimensions: strategic planning, governance optimization, faculty construction, specialty construction, integration of industry and education, and quality assurance. It provides theoretical reference and practical reference for private colleges and universities to achieve high-quality characteristic development, help the implementation of scientific research projects, and promote the quality and efficiency of private higher education.

Keywords

Private Colleges and Universities; High-quality Development; Characteristic Development; Mode Construction; Implementation Strategy.

1. Introduction

The Proposal of the CPC Central Committee on Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development adopted at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee has placed “coordinating the construction of a strong educational, scientific and technological, and talent nation” in a prominent position, providing fundamental guidance for the reform and development of higher education in the new era. The Outline of the Plan for Building a Strong Educational Country (2024–2035) clearly proposes to support all kinds of colleges and universities to develop distinctive features and strive for first-class in different fields and tracks. As an important new force of China’s higher education, private higher education has formed a certain scale after decades of development. As of June 2025, there are 829 private colleges and universities in China, accounting for 28.4% of the total

ordinary colleges and universities, with 10.5224 million students enrolled, playing an important role in expanding educational supply and stimulating school-running vitality [1].

At present, private colleges and universities are facing multiple challenges such as intensified competition in higher education, the impact of low fertility rate and stricter policy supervision. Problems such as imperfect governance, unbalanced teaching staff, homogeneous majors and weak scientific research have put them in a passive position in dual competition. In this context, taking the road of high-quality characteristic development has become an inevitable choice for private colleges and universities to solve dilemmas and implement the strategy of building a strong educational country. Combined with the practice of scientific research projects, this paper focuses on the construction and implementation strategy of the development mode, puts forward innovative and operable paths, and provides reference for project conclusion and the high-quality development of private higher education.

2. Core Connotation and Era Value of High-Quality Characteristic Development of Private Colleges and Universities

2.1. Core Connotation of High-Quality Characteristic Development of Private Colleges and Universities

The high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities refers to a development mode that, on the basis of following the laws of higher education and adhering to the public welfare of education, takes the quality of talent training as the core and school-running characteristics as the starting point, coordinates scale and connotation construction, and realizes the coordinated improvement of quality, characteristics and benefits. Its core mainly includes three aspects: firstly, high quality, focusing on the five major school-running functions and comprehensively improving the school-running level; secondly, characterization, based on its own endowment and regional needs, to create distinctive school-running advantages; thirdly, coordination, realizing the in-depth integration of Party building and school governance, connotation and characteristics, and college and regional development. Compared with public colleges and universities, private colleges and universities have the characteristics of flexible market response, balancing public welfare and market, and taking the road of differentiated development.

2.2. Era Value of High-Quality Characteristic Development of Private Colleges and Universities

The high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities, firstly, helps to build a strong educational country, enriches the supply of higher education, optimizes the structure, and injects vitality into the construction of a strong educational country; it can also solve its own development dilemmas, get rid of path dependence by cultivating characteristics and improving quality, and realize the transformation from scale expansion to connotation improvement; at the same time, it can serve the regional economy, cultivate applied talents and carry out scientific research transformation focusing on local industrial needs, providing talent and intellectual support; fourthly, it meets the diverse educational needs of the masses, and promotes educational equity through characteristic majors and innovative training modes.

3. Current Situation and Prominent Problems of High-Quality Characteristic Development of Private Colleges and Universities

3.1. Current Situation of High-Quality Characteristic Development of Private Colleges and Universities

In recent years, China's private higher education has achieved leapfrog development under the dual effects of policy dividend release and market demand drive. The scale of running schools has not only expanded steadily, but also made remarkable progress in structural optimization, becoming an important force promoting the popularization of higher education. The conditions for running schools have been continuously improved, and many colleges and universities have increased investment in infrastructure, and the modernization level of campus environment and teaching equipment has been significantly improved. In terms of connotation construction, some forerunners, based on the needs of regional economic and social development, accurately connect the industrial chain, create a number of advantageous professional groups with distinct industry characteristics, and form a preliminary pattern of differentiated development. In particular, the state has issued a series of major policies such as Several Opinions on Encouraging Social Forces to Run Education and Promoting the Healthy Development of Private Education, which have clarified the public welfare attribute and development direction of private education from the top-level design. Through measures such as classified management, financial support and tax incentives, the survival and development environment of private colleges and universities has been greatly optimized, and the vitality of social forces in running schools has been stimulated [2].

3.2. Prominent Problems in High-Quality Characteristic Development of Private Colleges and Universities

Although private colleges and universities have made remarkable achievements in high-quality characteristic development, the deep-seated contradictions restricting development are still acute. First, the governance system is not perfect, the corporate governance structure of some colleges and universities is virtualized, the principal responsibility system under the leadership of the board of directors is not in place, and the integration of Party building work and school governance is low, resulting in insufficient decision-making efficiency and implementation efficiency [3]. Second, the construction of the teaching staff is facing severe challenges, with a prominent "dumbbell-shaped" structure: one end is the excessively high proportion of retired rehired teachers, the other end is the high mobility of young teachers, and the lack of middle backbone teachers; it is difficult to introduce and retain high-level talents, and there is a huge gap in "double-qualified" teachers, which is difficult to support the high standards of applied talent training [4]. Furthermore, the phenomenon of homogenization of professional Settings is serious, blindly chasing popular majors, lacking in-depth coupling with regional industries, and the lagging dynamic adjustment mechanism, resulting in insignificant characteristic advantages [5]. In addition, the ability of scientific research and innovation is weak, insufficient investment and single source of funds, relying too much on tuition income, and lack of sustainable financial security; the scientific research platform is backward, the school-enterprise cooperation mostly stays on the surface, the collaborative innovation mechanism is not smooth, and the contribution to serving local economic and social development is limited [6]. Finally, the internal quality assurance system has not yet been completely closed-loop, and the quality of talent training is still far from social expectations, so it is urgent to break the development bottleneck through deepening reform.

4. Construction of High-Quality Characteristic Development Mode of Private Colleges and Universities

Combined with the development status and problems of private colleges and universities, based on the requirements of building a strong educational country, following the laws of higher education and the characteristics of private colleges and universities, this paper constructs a five-in-one high-quality characteristic development mode of “Party building guidance, precise positioning, connotation support, characteristic breakthrough and collaborative empowerment”, clarifies the core functions and interrelationships of each element, realizes the coordinated development of high-quality and characterization, which can be divided into the following four core dimensions.

4.1. Party Building Guidance and Precise Positioning Lay a Solid Foundation for Development

Party building guidance is the fundamental political guarantee for private colleges to achieve high-quality and characteristic development, as well as the key support for ensuring the correct orientation of running schools and standardized governance structure. Private colleges should integrate Party building into all links of school governance, talent training, discipline construction and faculty development, further strengthen the political role of Party organizations in the decision-making of major issues, important personnel arrangements and development planning, and continuously improve the responsibility system of the board of directors under the leadership of Party organizations, so as to ensure that the development of colleges is highly consistent with national educational policies and guidelines and conforms to the basic laws of higher education development. Meanwhile, colleges should continuously strengthen the standardization of grassroots Party organizations, expand the backbone team of Party members, deeply integrate the construction of teachers’ ethics, ideological and political education with Party building, promote teaching style through Party style and learning style through teaching style, and create a positive and healthy campus atmosphere. Precise positioning is an important prerequisite for the characteristic development of private colleges. Private colleges must base on their own school-running history, resource endowments and regional advantages, closely connect with the needs of regional economic and social development and the direction of industrial structure adjustment, scientifically determine the school-running level and development path, and adhere to the application-oriented, vocational and characteristic development path. On this basis, colleges should focus resources on cultivating 1 to 2 core characteristic disciplines with outstanding advantages and strong competitiveness, build characteristic professional groups highly matched with local industries, adhere to the core goal of applied talent training, continuously enhance the pertinence, adaptability and practicality of talent training, and resolutely avoid blind upgrading, disorderly expansion and homogeneous competition.

4.2. Connotation Support and Characteristic Breakthrough Strengthen Core Competitiveness

Connotation construction is the core task for private colleges to achieve high-quality development and the internal requirement to improve school-running strength and consolidate the foundation of development. Private colleges should always adhere to the centrality of talent training, continuously optimize talent training programs, dynamically update the curriculum system, strengthen practical teaching and innovation and entrepreneurship education, and strive to improve students’ practical operation ability, comprehensive application ability and innovation ability. In terms of faculty construction, adhere to the simultaneous introduction and training, focus on introducing discipline leaders, young and middle-aged backbone teachers and “double-qualified” teachers with professional

ability and practical experience, improve teacher training, assessment, evaluation and incentive mechanisms, and continuously enhance the overall quality of the faculty. Meanwhile, continuously increase investment in scientific research, build characteristic scientific research platforms adapted to the school-running orientation, encourage teachers to carry out applied research and technological achievement transformation around regional industrial needs, so as to feed teaching with scientific research and support development with innovation. In addition, actively cultivate campus culture with its own identification, integrate the fundamental task of morality education into the whole process of education and teaching, and realize the organic unity of value guidance, knowledge imparting and ability cultivation. Characteristic breakthrough is the key path for private colleges to enhance core competitiveness and achieve differentiated development. Private colleges should concentrate superior resources, focus on key fields and core majors, build 1 to 2 characteristic professional brands with influence in the province and even the whole country, and form a development advantage of “unique advantages, excellent quality and distinctive features”. Innovate boldly in the talent training model, deeply promote the integration of industry and education and school-enterprise cooperation, actively implement diversified training modes such as order-based training and modern apprenticeship, and highlight the characteristics of cultivating applied, technical and compound talents. Meanwhile, strive to build characteristic social service brands and campus culture brands, and continuously improve the social reputation, industry recognition and comprehensive influence of colleges.

4.3. Collaborative Empowerment Integrates Internal and External Resources to Gather Development Joint Forces

Collaborative empowerment is an effective path to solve the practical constraints of insufficient resources, limited platforms and weak development momentum in private colleges, as well as an important support for achieving high-quality and characteristic development. Private colleges should focus on building a four-in-one collaborative development mechanism of “internal coordination, school-local coordination, school-enterprise coordination and school-school coordination”, fully integrate internal and external resources and gather development joint forces. At the level of internal coordination, coordinate and promote the efficient linkage and collaborative efforts of teaching, scientific research, management, service and other departments, break departmental barriers, optimize operation processes, and comprehensively improve school-running efficiency and governance level. At the level of school-local coordination, take the initiative to strengthen communication and cooperation with local governments, industry authorities and industry associations, accurately connect with the development needs of regional leading industries and emerging industries, actively strive for policy support, project support and resource guarantee, and promote the resonance and in-depth integration of college development and local economic and social development. At the level of school-enterprise coordination, continuously deepen the integration of industry and education, jointly build practical teaching bases, innovation and entrepreneurship platforms and technology research and development centers with leading enterprises and high-quality small and medium-sized enterprises in the industry, jointly formulate talent training programs, develop curriculum materials and carry out teaching and research activities, introduce industry experts and technical backbones to participate in the whole process of education, and truly realize school-enterprise collaborative education, collaborative innovation and collaborative development. At the level of school-school coordination, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with public colleges and high-level private colleges, carry out multi-dimensional cooperation such as mutual employment of teachers, curriculum sharing, joint scientific research and construction of

teaching resources, so as to achieve complementary advantages, resource sharing and common improvement.

4.4. Mode Coordination and Connection to Construct a Long-Term Development Mechanism

The core essence of the five-in-one high-quality characteristic development mode of “Party building guidance, precise positioning, connotation support, characteristic breakthrough and collaborative empowerment” constructed in this paper lies in the interconnection, organic integration and collaborative efforts of all elements, rather than isolated operation. Party building guidance provides fundamental political direction and ideological guarantee for precise positioning, connotation construction, characteristic development and collaborative innovation; precise positioning clarifies the goal orientation and implementation path for connotation construction, characteristic breakthrough and collaborative empowerment; connotation support consolidates the school-running foundation and improves core capabilities for characteristic breakthrough and collaborative empowerment; characteristic breakthrough injects impetus and shapes advantages for connotation construction and collaborative empowerment; collaborative empowerment provides resource guarantee, platform support and external assistance for Party building guidance, precise positioning, connotation support and characteristic breakthrough. The five dimensions support and promote each other and operate in a closed loop, forming a development system with rigorous logic, efficient operation and sustainability. Through promoting the in-depth collaborative linkage of all dimensions, private colleges can gradually build a long-term development mechanism with “clear direction, clear goals, solid foundation, outstanding advantages, sufficient joint forces and smooth operation”, provide a stable and reliable institutional guarantee and impetus support for the continuous promotion of high-quality characteristic development, and promote colleges to move towards a new stage of higher quality, more distinctive and more sustainable development.

5. Construction of High-Quality Characteristic Development Mode of Private Colleges and Universities

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the “five-in-one” development model, combined with the actual development of private colleges and universities, integrate the original implementation dimensions, extract four core implementation strategies, each strategy focuses on key links, coordinates relevant tasks, and ensures pertinence and operability.

5.1. Strengthen Strategic Planning and Governance Optimization to Clarify the Development Direction

Formulate a scientific 15th Five-Year Development Plan, clarify the development goals, school-running positioning and key tasks of colleges and universities, integrate the concept of high-quality characteristic development into the whole process of planning, establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism, and avoid short-sighted behavior and blind expansion. At the same time, optimize the governance system, improve the corporate governance structure, clarify the responsibilities and powers of Party organizations, the board of directors, the administrative team, the faculty congress and the academic committee, improve the rules of procedure and decision-making, strengthen the democratic supervision role of the faculty congress and the academic check role of the academic committee; promote the in-depth integration of Party building and school governance, strengthen the construction of grass-roots Party organizations and Party members; optimize the internal management organization, implement refined and information-based management, improve management

efficiency and standardization level, and provide institutional guarantee for the implementation of the model.

5.2. Strengthen the Construction of Teaching Staff and Professional Upgrading to Consolidate the Development Foundation

The teaching staff and professional construction are the core support for the high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities. In terms of teaching staff construction, optimize the structure of teaching staff, focus on introducing academic leaders, backbone teachers and “double-qualified” teachers, strengthen the training of young teachers, improve the evaluation system and salary and welfare system oriented by ability, performance and contribution, improve the social security mechanism, and enhance the stability and comprehensive quality of teaching staff. In terms of professional construction, build a characteristic professional group system, integrate professional resources focusing on regional industrial needs, and focus on the construction of core characteristic majors; promote the reform of curriculum system, optimize curriculum structure, update teaching content, innovate teaching methods, and strengthen the construction of practical and innovative entrepreneurship courses; improve the professional dynamic adjustment mechanism, regularly investigate industrial needs, optimize professional structure, and build professional characteristic brands.

5.3. Deepen the Integration of Industry and Education and Scientific Research Empowerment to Improve Service Capacity

The integration of industry and education and scientific research services are important paths for the characteristic development of private colleges and universities. Deepen the integration of industry and education, establish long-term and stable cooperative relations with leading enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises in the industry, jointly build school-enterprise cooperation councils, teaching practice bases and scientific research platforms, implement order-based and apprenticeship training, introduce industry and enterprise experts to participate in teaching and scientific research, and realize the precise connection between talent training and enterprise needs. Strengthen scientific research empowerment, increase investment in scientific research, build characteristic scientific research platforms, form high-level scientific research teams, focus on practical problems in regional industrial development, carry out applied scientific research and scientific and technological achievement transformation; deepen school-local collaboration, strengthen cooperation with local governments and industry associations, carry out technical consulting, vocational skills training and other services, and improve the ability of colleges and universities to serve regional economic and social development.

5.4. Improve Quality Assurance and Cultural Cultivation to Strengthen Development Guarantee

Quality assurance and campus culture are important supports for the high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities. Improve the quality assurance system, clarify the quality objectives of talent training, refine the quality standards combined with regional industrial needs and student development needs, improve the quality monitoring system of “pre-prevention, in-process monitoring and post-evaluation”, improve the multiple evaluation mechanism combined with student evaluation, teacher evaluation, peer evaluation and social evaluation, strengthen the construction of quality monitoring team, establish a quality feedback and rectification mechanism, and continuously improve the quality of talent training. Cultivate characteristic campus culture, combine the school-running philosophy, history and regional cultural characteristics of colleges and universities, cultivate campus culture with its own characteristics, integrate morality education into the whole

process of campus culture construction, create a campus atmosphere of respecting teachers and valuing education, diligent learning and good thinking, and brave innovation, and enhance the cultural soft power of colleges and universities.

6. Conclusion

The high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities is an important part of the construction of a strong educational country, and an inevitable choice for them to solve their development dilemmas. At present, many problems faced by private colleges and universities restrict the improvement of their core competitiveness. The five-in-one development model constructed in this paper provides a clear path for their development. By strengthening strategic planning and governance optimization, strengthening the construction of teaching staff and professional upgrading, deepening the integration of industry and education and scientific research empowerment, and improving quality assurance and cultural cultivation, we can effectively promote the high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities. The high-quality characteristic development of private colleges and universities is a systematic project, which requires the government to improve policies, society to enhance recognition, and colleges and universities to take the initiative to innovate. In the future, private colleges and universities should base on their positioning, improve the model and innovate strategies to help the high-quality development of higher education. Subsequent research can be combined with specific cases to provide more targeted practical guidance.

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