

The Analysis on Admission Affairs of International Education in China

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Abstract

Recent years, China has realized the importance of international education and accepted many international students. However, excellent degree and research students are still in low proportion. As the main body of international education, university authority should organize the whole campus to work together on internalization, supporting the admission office to manage concrete affairs. Meanwhile, the education administrative departments should support, design and monitor the international education.

Key words: international education, international students, admission affairs, strategies of admission

Introduction

In China, more and more universities and higher education institutes realize the importance of international education, which has been regarded as a catalyst to its reform and development. Furthermore, international education is an important driving force for realizing its educational modernization, which is conducive to promote *Reform and Opening-up* in some aspects. By 2020, international students studying in China's universities and secondary schools throughout the year will reach to 500 000, hopefully, 150 000 of whom receive higher academic education. China will become the largest abroad study country in Asia. According to the principle of "Expanding the Quantity, Improving the Study Levels, Ensuring the Qualities and Standardizing the

Management”, the international education has obtained certain achievements by the effort of education authorities at all levels and universities. The number of overseas students has increased tremendously but the admission work still has a lot of things to improve. This article will make a special effort to investigate the international students’ admission work in China and present some suggestions.

Achievements in international students’ admission affairs

1. China receives a progressive growth of international students in number.

In 2013, there are 356 499 international students from 200 countries and regions in the world studying in 746 universities and other higher education institutions in China. In 2012, the number is 328 330. Compared with the year of 2012, the number of international students increased 8.6% in 2013. For the scholarship students, the total number is 33 322, including 29 037 degree students, accounting for 87.1% of the total number of scholarship international students. Compared with 2012, the number of the scholarship international students increased by 15.8% and degree students increased by 16.0%, non-academic students increased by 14.5%.

2. China makes rigorous effort in improving international students’ study level.

In 2013, there are 147 890 international degree students in China, accounting for 41.5% of the total number of the international students, increased 10.8% than 2012. The number of the non-academic students was 208 609, accounting for 58.5% of the total number, increased 7.1% than 2012. Among the degree students, the percentage of postgraduate students, bachelor students and diploma-program students account for 11.4%, 29.5% and 0.6% separately. Compared with 2012, the number of the graduate students increased by 12.6%. The general visiting students had very high rates in the non-degree students, accounting for 32.6%, but the number of senior visiting students increased sharply to 31.3%.

3. New technologies have been introduced to admission affairs.

With the rapid growing of internet, most of the universities chose online application as their main application method. The change of trend from hardware to software application makes it convenient and faster. Students can apply through the university’s online application system, and make all necessary payments.

Problems in international students’ admission affairs

In recent years, China’s international students’ scale has been growing rapidly, ranking 3rd in the world, but compared with western developed countries,

international students' education is still at the primary stage. The education quality and students level are low in comparison with western countries. In western developed countries, universities have more research programs for international students and more equipment as well, and most of supervisors use English as the communication medium. In China, even campus culture and atmosphere is not so international, and local students and teachers haven't benefited from the internationalization too much. Take U.S.A. as an example from western developed countries, its huge, high-quality higher education system, and the establishment of various scholarships, make the international students so enthusiastic that keep USA going ahead of any other countries in the number of international students. It leads to a virtuous cycle for attracting talents and achieving economic returns. The discrepancy is obviously large, thus, the main reasons on admission affairs of international education established.

1. The idea of Internalization in some Universities has not been conceived.

It is commonly known that the rate of international bachelor students should be 10% or above as an international university, while the rate of international postgraduate (including master and PhD students) is supposed to be 20% or more, and 10% of staffs should come from abroad. Yuan Shouqi, the president of Jiangsu University, China, thinks that the high level university must be an international one. Prof. Yuan Shouqi realizes that Internationalization is a new trend after expanding student's number, the great fundamental construction and huge improvement of education quality in China, and internationalization level is the key factor in a new round of reshuffle of universities. However, he also acknowledges that the concept of internalization in the university is not strong enough. He argues that most of the teachers and students have not fully realized the important function of internationalization, and even some of them think internationalization is simply the task of the international office. They feel internationalization is an additional burden, rather than teaching and research jobs. These teachers represent the common idea in China's universities, and many colleges and universities have not place internationalization as a priority. Many universities are not aware of the importance of internationalization, and therefore, are afraid, not daring to recruit international students on large scales.

2. Lack of international atmosphere on campus.

The staff is not internationally oriented. At present, China is still in the primary stage of development, which causes some barriers on recruiting more international staff, due to complicated recruitment process and shortage of funds. Therefore, it's really difficult to attract international teachers and academics from the world-class universities on large scales. As a result, the rate of the international teachers in

universities is relatively low, and majority of the foreign teachers mainly concentrate on language teaching. Among these foreign teachers, some are good, and some are not. For fostering domestic lecturers, it will take a certain long period. Although some senior scholars join universities after studying and training abroad, it is impossible to recruit abundant advanced teachers who have overseas education or work background, proficient in English and strong in the research field in a short time. Therefore, as our professors or lecturers are lack of international and academic influence in the world, it is not conducive to expand reputation in international academic field, promote academic influence and improve the university's internationalization level.

There is still a long way to go on mutual recognition of academic credentials and degrees between China and western countries. As we all know that most countries in the world adopt American and British standard system in education, but China has a self-constrained education system so the knowledge structure and background are different from international students. It makes international students have difficulty in recognition of credits and degrees, which will cause some troubles in job-hunting and study further. Furthermore, for the teaching language, China Scholarship Council requires undergraduate students to use Chinese as the teaching language, and also encourages the graduate students to use it, but not compulsory. For international students, it is very difficult to master and use a completely unfamiliar language to study in 1 or 2 years. Some students have to learn some more years in mastering Chinese, which will cost international students more time and money. Recent years, we are glad to see that many universities start using English as teaching medium in many degree programs. For a good example, the Ministry of Education has a serious selection and guidance for the English program of clinical medicine (MBBS). The ministry of education has approved about 50 universities to teach international students in English. Though more English programs have been introduced, it still does not meet the requirement.

The daily management in some universities doesn't meet international standard. Currently, many universities have set up a special department for overseas students and equipped with professional management staff. They try to use international rules and ways to deal with students affairs, which is very successful. But there are still a lot of problems in some universities because they think international office should take full responsibility of international education, from very beginning till end. These departments always do not take international students into their work plan and annual appraisal index system for lack of international staff. In practice, international students not only needs help of international office, but also needs a lot of supports from any other departments in the university because a university is just like a body. Only every part of the whole body starts to work, can organs and blood run very well. From the very beginning of campus bilingual signs to teaching, daily management, and logistics support, every aspect and department should adopt international concept

and working method, so that the whole university can win recognition from international students.

3. Scholarships application is too competitive.

Presently, there are a lot of international student scholarships set by the central government, local governments, universities, enterprises and individual etc. in China. However, comparing with the increasing number of international students, scholarship seats are few, and have become very competitive and difficult. In view of this, some best students flow to other countries for scholarship options.

In some provinces or universities, the authorities pay much more attention to attract new students, which make them put large portion of scholarship seats to new students. These new students are evaluated by different criteria, but not by judging their academic performance and personality on campus. This kind of scholarship can help choosing best students.

4. Admission process needs improvement.

The specific process of admission is a bit arbitrary in universities because of the tension of international education resources and other factors.

It mainly represent, lack of personnel and material resources in the admission department of a university. It is universal that all universities have an international education college or international office. Currently, many universities place the international students' admission office at the international education college of the university. The staff number of the admission office is limited, generally 2 or 3 members, and some universities with larger group of international students may have more. The university will give the explanation that every year they admitted around 5 000 or more local students by 2 or 3 staff members, while international education college admit some hundred students only. In fact, it's totally different for admitting local students from international students, only those who have the admission experience can understand. Therefore, staff of the international students' admission office bear amount of pressure and work intensity. In addition, the finance and material resources are insufficient to support the expanding demand of international students.

The admission office needs restructuring. For the aspect of information exchange, though almost all universities have established English website in order to make international applicants know university's admission information more conveniently, in fact, their English website is not active. Seldom do they update contents, and many links go back to the Chinese page after the secondary-level directory. Not to mention logical arrangement and beautiful page design, questionable English presentations and usage make applicants stop exploring further. Some higher level universities make English website informative and attractive, some even set real

online application system, and students can finish all application procedures online. On the specific process of admission, it is difficult for some universities to convey the policies, answer questions, examine and verify application materials timely, which will affect international students' choice a lot.

The strategies of expanding the enrollment scale of international students

As universities are facing a lot of problems on current admission affairs, some actions have to be taken so that they can accept more international students and achieve the internalization aim in this aspect. Universities should response actively and take the main responsibilities. In one hand, universities should unite and appeal to ministry of education to make more relevant policies and support from governments, including province level. On the other hand, universities can examine their own problems in full scale, and find a set of suitable solution so that they can open up a new prospect of the international students' enrollment work.

1. Universities try to get more suitable policies and supports from the education administrative departments in all levels.

Education administrative departments in all levels have duties to develop international education and exchange so that local education can be promoted. After more than 30 years' reforms and opening-up, China's education career has developed a lot. Therefore, the ministry of education can introduce its advantages through various channels and do some advertisements in international media on the national level to attract more international students. The authorities of provincial education can also introduce their advantages and scholarship programs through various channels to prompt the provincial recruitment work of international students.

The ministry of education should play a leading role in making overall direction of international students' enrollment, releasing general guidelines and policies, considering central government scholarship programs, coordinating with foreign governments and organizations. Furthermore, Ministry of Education should negotiate with other ministries to win support from them. With more international students are coming, it's impossible to put all students on campus. International students will step into every aspect of common people, and socialization management should be considered like in western countries. By this way, universities will reduce their worries and spare no effort to provide students with the international teaching resources and services.

The education administrative departments should monitor and regulate admission requirement, process and result, so that can maintain national education reputation. Annual censorship policy should be adopted, and some unqualified universities should be forbidden to admit international students. Chinese students are

popular in the international education market because of the high quality of basic education. If China wants to become the international students' first choice, the international education reputation is very important. We can not only focus on the increase of the international students, the high quality education environment, education resources, teaching quality and efficiency of education output are even more important. Good quality will make international youth students feel valuable studying in China and aspire to come to China.

2. Colleges and universities play a key role and coordinate all kinds of resources in attracting international students.

The number and study level of international students represent a university's general level, while the level of opening-up and international reputation are the important evaluating indexes of the school's internationalization. Under the trend of the internationalization of higher education, the colleges and universities should light enthusiasm of all departments for international education. Expanding the scale of international students is not just a matter of admission office of the international education college, which needs all departments to work together. With combination of all efforts can create a wonderful academic and living environment for international students as well as local students. International students will directly affect the internationalization level and is closely associated with the school's comprehensive coordinating ability. Therefore, the colleges and universities should change their ideas and put the international students' work in more important place, supporting with all kinds of policies and funds. At the same time, they should establish a capable group of staff for international students' management and cultivate the idea of internationalization in all departments of the school, making the environment of internationalization and prompting the quality of education.

Firstly, universities have to make themselves to be known by potential students through advertisement or other channels, and strengthen cooperation with some large education consulting companies. The multilingual website of a university is a window for potential students, from where they can easily get sufficient and accurate admission information, as well as other related news. Therefore, colleges and universities should firstly improve the English website, and try to make the website logically settled and complete. On one hand, it is convenient for the ongoing international students to live and study on campus. On the other hand, the window provides necessary information to the potential students. In addition, the English website has to set up a special sector for admission affair, providing all kinds of enrollment information. If possible, the website can have more languages versions for different aim students, like Arabic, French, Hindi, Korean, Russian etc. If university's English website is already fine, then the university can do something more to promote it. Due to limited resources, universities can also choose famous international social

communication websites like Facebook, Twitter to introduce the schools and attract overseas students. Education consulting companies have an irreplaceable effect on international students' enrollment, and they have their own channels for disseminating information for universities. Universities can strengthen the cooperation with them to achieve mutually win-win effect. Universities can also pay attention to researching international student market, organize or participate in some education exhibition to develop new market. Besides, universities can make some printings of enrollment to demonstrate themselves in an all-round way, reflecting the current research and teaching achievements, international student education and daily life.

Secondly, universities can take some adjustment to meet international education system. Many universities take course schedules for Chinese students to use for international students, which is not applicable. For international programs, universities have to consider about the cohesion from their education background and how to continue their further study in abroad as well. Therefore, universities should consider the fact and adjust teaching schedules, adding some Chinese traditional culture courses, like kung fu, folk customs, tourism, and so on, to increase enthusiasm of learning in China. Because different universities are strong in various disciplines, they can take advantage of their discipline superiority to establish characteristic programs, attractive higher level international students. About education language, universities can try to open more English programs for both international students and local students if possible, to shorten their study time, reduce their learning cost.

Thirdly, universities can receive degree students through holding non-degree programs. Many international students come to China for short-term non-degree programs because a lot of foreigners are obsessed with China's history and culture. According to statistics, around 58.5% of international students are taking non-degree programs, like Chinese linguistic program, Chinese Traditional Medicine programs, and Chinese Culture programs etc. Therefore, schools can offer some short-term programs which students can experience Chinese culture as listed. By running these programs, showing the positive aspects in Chinese culture, students can understand China and its people better. As the sponsor, the university gets a chance to show its advantage and superiorities. From the point of the actual fact, a lot of short-term students decided to stay in China for degree programs, or introduced positive information to their relatives and friends after returning back home.

Fourthly, schools can attract international students through international sister university cooperation programs and teacher exchange platform. International cooperation is an important factor in the process of internationalization. Nowadays, many universities signed agreements with foreign universities as sister-universities for cooperation, like teacher training, student exchange and scientific research. Usually, sister universities will dispatch their students to each other relying on the agreement. In addition, universities send many teachers to abroad for further study or research

exchange, who can be a great team to help enrollment. Because they will stay abroad for a long time, they are the representative of the university. They can spread the university information around and attract some high-level international students with their own academic platform.

Fifthly, universities can continually improve scholarship system for the international students. At present, all levels of governments are establishing scholarships for international students, from central government to the local government, though the beneficial percentage is low. Schools should try to have these diverse scholarships, including the national CSC scholarship, the Confucius scholarship, the provincial government scholarship, the municipal scholarship, the school scholarship and the enterprise scholarship etc. we can take CSC Scholarship as an example. The CSC Scholarship seats are really rare for a common university. However, if the university is in the CSC Scholarship name list, the MOE will put its name on the website, which has great advertisement impact. Universities can also actively contact export-oriented enterprises and construct university-enterprise cooperation platform, offering the assistance for international students both in finance and employment. In order to help some excellent but poor international students, universities can also providing some aid channels by setting up the post of teaching assistant, research assistant, management assistant and so on, creating an amazing education environment for international students.

In conclusion, admission staff should be regulated, professional, efficient, and passionate in dealing with the specific affairs of admission. When a potential student has the mind of study in China, they will contact some universities for inquiry. It's the first for this student to contact staff members from the university, which will obviously leave the first impression of this university and even Chinese. At the moment, if an unprofessional teacher replies the student's inquiry in an impatient sentence after several days, the applicant will feel disappointed. Admission department needs professional staff with good attitude and services in this specific work. For the process of inquiring, material review, making admission materials, checking the payment of application fee, pick-up service and registration, all these steps require the staff with spirits of responsibility and high patience, solving problems quickly and caring for them in details.

Discussion

Admission is a very important step of international education, which is related to the prosperity of China's education and international relations. Admission officers are standing on a very important position, like a window to the applicants, they should have the characteristics of patience, punctuality, justice, carefulness etc as they convey the beginning signals of Chinese. However, the career of international

education should be designed and arranged by education administrative departments in all levels, and the university authority is the organizer in the process.

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