

The Professional Orientation Bases for the Public Affairs Administration Major

LES BASES DE POSITIONNEMENT DE LA SPÉCIALITÉ EN GESTION DES AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES

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Abstract: Public affairs administration is the major that needs to establish professional orientation most. And it is a common issue needs to be addressed urgently to scientifically define the bases of the professional orientations. Professional orientation determination primarily depends on four primary bases of major property, subject advantage, industry dependence, and employment guidance. The major property is the core basis and any party can not break this bottom line. Both the subject advantage and the industry dependence highlight the feasibility of the professional orientation. And the employment guidance is the driving force to maintain the vigorous vitality of the professional orientation. An excellent professional orientation is supposed to be the outcome based on the comprehensive consideration on these bases.

Keywords: public affairs administration; major orientation; orientation basis

Résumé: La gestion des affaires publique est une spécialité qui nécessite le plus une orientation professionnelle. Les bases de définition scientifique de l'orientation restent des problèmes communs à résoudre. Les bases principales de la définition de l'orientation professionnelle sont les attributs professionnels, les avantages de la spécialité, les supports professionnels et le guide de l'emploi. Les attributs professionnels est la base fondamentale qui ne peut pas être dépassée. Les avantages de la spécialité et les supports professionnels mettent en évidence la faisabilité de l'orientation professionnelle. Le guide de l'emploi est de maintenir la vitalité de l'orientation professionnelle. Une orientation professionnelle de bonne qualité devrait être fondée sur une prise en considération complète de tous ces éléments.

Mots-clés: gestion des affaires publiques; orientation professionnelle; bases de positionnement

The public affair, in China is a category containing both enriched connotation and broad extension. There is no any university is able to include all fields in public affairs; and it is in fact impossible for a single university to open the major of Public Affairs Administration covering everything. In this case, it will be fairly difficult to highlight major features and employment advantages without clear school operation direction, even possibly lose the life-force of a major. Thereby public affairs administration is the major needs to establish orientation most. In terms of colleges with already-established major orientations, most of them either face the issues of “overbroad, serious dislocations, and the tendency of mixing up”, or go off

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major properties, excluding normal, medical, and sports education colleges that have clearly defined major orientations. Some colleges thoughtlessly copy other schools' operation orientations regardless of their own situations, leading schools to fall into operational dilemma. Some schools even "change education solutions once a year and determine major orientations every single year". Determining major orientation is the primary task in the establishment of Public Affairs Administration major. The generation of clear and reasonable major orientation must depend on scientific orientation bases.

1. MAJOR PROPERTY

Public affairs administration publicly manages its subordinate subjects and owns two major essential properties of public affairs and dual management. Public affairs are non-profit social activities to take meeting public needs as fundamental goal and directly create conditions or offer services for social and economic development and people's lifestyle improvement. In addition to traditional sectors of "science, education, culture, health, and sports", public affairs administration as well covers emerging ones of social security, environmental protection, community services, and charities. The organizational carrier undertaking public affairs is generally called "public affairs organization" in academic circle. Public affairs organizations own non-profit, non-governmental, and broad social serving features, and they, in China, should include three legal types of institutions, social groups (excluding political organizations such as democratic parties), and privately owned non-enterprise institutions. The dual-management property is demonstrated: the first one is the dual-contents, or the managed objects include both public affairs and public affairs organizations; the second one is its distinct management features, public affairs administration conforms to general management process and have the fundamental links of planning, organizing, coordination, and control; however itself differs from the management ideals and value orientations in business and industrial administration, and administrative fields. Regardless of the management on public affairs, or the routine management or standard management on public affairs organizations, management yet is the ultimate attribution of public affairs administration. As an important measure, the ultimate management purpose is to promote the development and prosperity of public affairs, and achieve the maximized public interests.

Major property is the important basis to determine major orientations. It can tell by making a comprehensive review on the properties of public affairs and dual-management, the category of Public Affairs Administration major is in public field instead of private one, a cause instead of an industry, and managerial instead of technical. Take cultural field as an example. It is appropriate to establish the orientations of "cultural cause management and cultural heritage protection and development", instead of the ones of "cultural creative design and cultural industry management, etc", since these orientations deviate major properties and go beyond major category as well. Major orientations must be determined based on major properties and within their scopes; otherwise it might occur the issues of over-wideness and dislocation. Some colleges for instance establish orientations as "social management", which is an overbroad orientation same as in fact no orientation at all. Also, a few of colleges have severely dislocated orientations, such as the established orientations of "administrative management, human resource management, real estate management, and political science, etc". In General Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Major Index (1998), administrative management and public affairs administration are two different majors in public management; while human resource management and real estate management belong to business management, and political science belongs to the science of law. Severely "dislocated" major orientation is the "tort" on other major orientations, and it certainly is equivalent to "losing" its own major orientations. From this point, major orientation as well is one of the important measures to judge major orientation justifiability. Conclusively, major orientation determination can not go beyond major property, the "low-line" requirement, and it meanwhile needs to correct inappropriate major orientations based on major properties.

2. SUBJECT ADVANTAGE

Taking advantaged subjects as orientation basis is the realistic requirements to expend major orientations, consolidate education resources, and highlight school-operation features. Public affairs administration comes from crossed and integrated subjects of management, law, sociology, and economics, etc, and

typical subject-cross features create favorite conditions for major orientation determinations. In education objectives, Ministry of Education specifies five orientations of “culture and education, sports, health, environmental protection, and social insurance”, which are clearly narrower scopes in terms of service orientations and objective determinations and thereby difficult to accommodate the needs of further expansions in public affairs fields after governmental reforms. This requires colleges to be based on their own realities, fully play subject advantages, and scientifically expand major orientations. The most essential issue to effectively operate majors is to have to own quality and rationally structured faculty. Yet the outstanding issue the major faces is the weak faculty force. Since there are no master and doctoral education in public affairs administration; it causes difficulties in introducing professional faculty. Most teachers at present are transferred from other majors and in general uneven in professional proficiency. To alleviate faculty pressure, it must consolidate current faculty via subject advantages, the realistic choice to ensure sustainable major development. The key to judge the life power strength of a major is to check if the major is socially competitive and unique; yet competitiveness and uniqueness tend to be reflected by advantaged subjects. Aiming at uniqueness is the value pursuit in college operation. Every college in general has its own advantaged subjects somehow, and different advantaged subjects introduce major orientation differences, thereby highlighting major features.

Accurately locating the joint points between advantaged subjects and public affairs administration is the key to determine major orientations based on subject advantages. The joint point of these two is just the advantages of major orientations. If Science of Law is the advantaged subject, then “Education Law and Medical Law” orientations can be accordingly established, Sociology for “Community Management, City Management”, Administrative Management for “Public Affairs Regulation, Cultural Market Management”, finance subject for “Institution Finance Management”, and insurance subject for “Medical Insurance” respectively. Following issues however need to be noticed when using subject advantages to determine major orientations: the first one is to avoid being far-fetched and mechanical in orientation determinations. It is not workable for all advantaged subjects (Philosophy for instance) to establish into major-oriented, and it thereby needs to notice associations and integrations among different subjects. The second one is by no means to reverse the subjective status of subjects. Regardless of the orientations to be established, the subjective status of public affairs administration can never be changed and can not let advantaged subjects take leading roles. The third one is to avoid the “mixture” tendency in major orientations, and guard against to establish sub-orientations in existing orientations. There are more than one advantaged subject in some colleges; if it uses multiple advantaged subjects to determine major orientations, the major orientations to be determined are not the mechanical adding up yet they need to be the coordinative combinations of these subjects instead. It better just establish one orientation in education solution instead of creating sub-orientation in the existing orientation; otherwise it will make subjects turn neither fish nor fowl.

3. INDUSTRY DEPENDENCE

As open-up school operations go in-depth, the relation between colleges and society is getting increasingly closed, which has been demonstrated as the combination of majors and industries in micro sense. Majors can not survive and grow up without the support from industries, and major construction owns distinct feature of industry dependence. The industry dependence refers to the objective, inherent, and inevitable associations with industries in major constructions, and the essence is the industry-dependence and correlation in major constructions. Public Affairs Administration major highly characterizes practice and application, and it thereby needs to pay more attentions on the close relations and interactive benefits between industries and the major. Industry resources have grown into important major construction resources, and major orientation determinations can not be separated from industry resource guidance. The industry resources associated with major orientations primarily include industry policy resources and industry demand resources. Government-developed industry promoting plans are able to mostly reflect current industry development highlights and future directions. Based on industry policy information guidance, it can generally determine majors' industry footholds. It can make specific and clear major orientations by using the demand information on professional employee shortage and professional employee qualifications. The information directly from industries generates more objective and pertinent major orientations; and it makes orientations more market-oriented and competitive.

Determining major orientations by depending on industries generates “bridging” effects in improving major understandings and cracking the hard issue of “talent education and demand separations”. There is a low social understanding rate for Public Affairs Administration major, and one of the major reasons is over-broad major orientations with no pertinence. If major orientations comes from a certain industry, then the major orientation familiarity will naturally go up with industry familiarity. “Depending on” major orientations can gain higher major approval in a short time because of reduced understanding difficulty and simplified understanding process, which is more effective than “direct sale” mode. Professional education can not match markets, and reason is inconsistent standards between college “talent creation” and industry “talent demands”. Talent demand is the engine and driving force to let majors integrate into markets. Not that the duty is to educate senior management talents for industries, it then must design education plans by following industry position standards instead of others, ensuring the standard consistence of “talent creation” and “talent demands” initially. Determining major orientations by depending on industries must keep the principle of “based on the local situations” and the key is industry information processing. In addition to convenient information collections and research costs reductions, focusing on local situation as well is beneficial to full utilizations of advantaged resources in local industries, and providing convenient conditions for the follow links of major constructions as the same time. The four-year “delay period” in professional employee education determines that industry information processing does not just focus on “What happens now” and will place more attentions on “What will be in the future”. It thereby must group up with industry experts to perform scientific judgments on industry development trend and future demands via making in-depth probe on industry information. Only correctly grasping industry demand trend can it precisely determine major orientations.

4. EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE

Employment guidance is both a school-operation ideal and a school-operation mode, playing vitally important role in determining major orientations. Major-focused education objectives normally include knowledge-development type and employment-oriented type. There is currently no “public affairs” orientations in graduate education program index and the students in this major hence face unfair competition in graduate education program examinations. In addition, due to the constrains such as knowledge structure and the theoretical foundations, etc for undergraduate students, it is then unrealistic to take educating “knowledge-development” talents to participate graduate education program examinations as primary objective; and it is a wise move to educate “employment-oriented” talents. In view of employment situation, the undergraduate student employment is grim and can not be optimistic. The employment rate interval distribution of nationwide general college undergraduate majors in 2008 indicates that the employment rate interval of the major of Public Affairs Administration is in the second lowest class among 19 majors in management category. In terms of the major point, low professional specialty and high replacement are major reasons for employment difficulty. To break through the employment dilemma, colleges need to take major orientation determinations as the starting point to improve employment values. Employment guidance is the survival soil and development base as well of the major; the major orientation determination thereby must implement “employment guidance”.

Taking employment guidance to establish major orientation refers to establishing major orientations upon market demands under the premise of not going against the major properties of Public Affairs Administration. Market is employment “barometer”, and it requires performing scientific predictions on talent market. Only correctly grasping market move, can established orientations posses certain advanced features and stronger employment advantages. Employment guidance is the important measure to assess the quality of major orientations. Determining major orientations by major properties, subject advantages, and employment guidance might run into the situation that there are multiple available choices and it therefore is hard to make decisions; in this case it can select more market-demand oriented and more employment-featured orientations through employment guidance measuring and comparisons. The major orientation determination is by no means once and for all and it rather owns certain periodicity; while the term of period depends on employment market development. With market demand changes, previous major orientations might lose competitive advantages and generate “aging” issue. To let graduates win market favors, major orientations must come from the “hottest” sector in talent market. Major orientations needs to vary when employment markets change and develop. It therefore needs appropriate forward-thinking and closely follows market demands to promptly adjust major orientation determinations by following

employment guidance. It is worth mentioning that major orientation-corresponded hardware and software must follow up at the same pace when conducting major orientation adjustments.

Conclusively, major property, subject advantage, industry dependence, and employment guidance are primary bases to determine major orientations. The orientation and major is subordinate relation instead of parallel one, requiring determined orientations to strictly conform to major properties. Major property is the core basis to determine major orientations and the other bases can only generate sound effects under to premise of not going against major property. Subject advantages and industry dependency are the bases determined based on the internal and external resources of colleges and the important foundations to ensure smooth major orientation implementation. Employment guidance is yet the choice made to respond employment pressure from “outlet” dimension and the driving power to maintain the vigorous life-force of majors. The general trend of major orientation determinations at present is: comprehensive universities strive to be more comprehensive while non-comprehensive universities seek more featured. No matter seeking “comprehensive” or “featured”, a quality major orientation must be the result based on the comprehensive considerations on the above four bases.

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