

## An Analysis of the Approaches to Building Learning Party Organizations in Colleges and Universities

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### Abstract

The Fourth Plenary Session of the Seventeenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party assigned the strategic task of building a learning Marxist Party, which is a major initiative made from the overall perspective of promoting the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics and of improving the building of Party. So the Party organizations at all levels should make joint efforts to implement the task of building a learning Party from all aspects and in all areas. Higher education plays an overall, fundamental, leading and humanistic role in the socialist construction in China, and the Party building is an important part of the Communist Party of China itself. In this sense, it is particularly important to promote the building of learning Party organizations in colleges and universities so as to build a comprehensive learning Party. And the writer is firmly convinced that it is of great significance to actively explore the approaches to building learning Party organizations in colleges and universities.

**Key words:** Colleges and universities; Learning Party organizations; Approaches

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## 1. UPDATING LEARNING CONCEPTS

### 1.1 Establishing the Learning Concept of Advancing With the Times

Nowadays, the world is undergoing major development, transformation and adjustment, and China is also in the critical period of social reform and transformation. The Report of the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China has clarified the current situation facing our country where the relationship between China and the world has undergone historic changes and where China's future is becoming more closely associated with the destiny of the world. Therefore, we must correctly grasp the global situation, national circumstances and the Party's status quo, advance with the times, and coordinate the domestic and international situation. Besides, we should build our Party and country with an international outlook and a strategic thinking.

As an important way to building a country with competent human resources, higher education should be studied and planned on the world stage. The Party organizations in colleges and universities should have a broad international vision and strategic thinking facing the world, adhere to sustainable development, advance with the times, and seek truth from facts, thus correctly grasping the direction of developing an international university. Meanwhile, based on the specific national condition of accelerating the transformation of the mode of economic development, colleges and universities should regard the strategies of serving the country, serving the regional development, and supporting the industrial upgrading as the focus of their work, which is also the important goal of the building of learning Party organizations in colleges and universities. In addition, they should combine their practices with the status quo of China's higher education, emancipate their minds, seek truth from facts, advance with the times, and be realistic and pragmatic to achieve scientific development and sustainable development, as

well as to examine the existing problems and find out the shortcomings. To the end, the Party organizations in universities should thoroughly implement the scientific concept of development based on national conditions and the school situation, ensure the endeavors towards modernization, world and future, and strive to improve the quality and level of higher education, thus building world-class universities and offering high-level services.

## **1.2 Forming the Learning Concept of Group Discussion**

Learning organization advocates the ideas and ways of group learning, emphasizes sharing information, knowledge and ideas through group learning, thereby enhancing the creativity and dynamics of the organization itself. The learning in a learning Party organization is not simply the total of the learning of each Party member; instead, it is the learning based on common objectives by virtue of group learning. In order to build learning Party organizations, we should guide Party members to learn individually, while at the same time organize grass-root Party organizations to carry out group learning.

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## **2. ENRICHING LEARNING CONTENT**

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### **2.1 Adhering to the Education of Marxist Basic Theories**

The primary principle of building learning Party organizations in colleges and universities is to persist on the guiding position of Marxism. At present, it is to stick to the leading position of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Moreover, we should strive to cultivate a firm Marxism belief in the Party cadres of universities, which is also the fundamental purpose of building learning Party organizations. In this regard, we must deeply understand the scientific nature of Marxism, as well as get to know its revolutionary and practical features.

Apart from those that have been mentioned, we should also integrate theory with practice and regard practice as the first principle. The primary reason why we say that Marxism is science is that the Marxist theory was essentially gained through practices and has gone through revolutions. It came from practices and took the practices as the sole criterion of testing its rational understanding. The basic tenet of Marxism is the truth that it is “universally applicable”, but it is through practices that it finally became a truth. Conversely, if stubbornly sticking to the basic theories in detachment from reality and practices, Marxist theories will be meaningless. So, in the process of building learning organizations, college Party organizations should closely associate their action with the actual situation of university reform and development, and apply their knowledge into practice. They should not only learn the Marxist classics, but

also learn China’s Marxism, an achievement developed in practices—the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in particular, learn the concept of scientific development theory, earnestly enhancing their learning in practice and also promoting the practice by virtue of learning. Here, the combination of theory and practice has two-level meanings: first, be targeted to organize learning and teaching on the basis of the current thoughts of Party cadres at colleges and universities; second, seriously analyze and deal with the theoretical and practical problems in accordance with the actual reality of social life. In order to give full play to the power of truth, they should also be good at using the specific principles of truth, and uphold its features of being universal, historical and conditional in the observation and problem-solving process.

### **2.2 Expanding the Teaching and Learning of Socialist Core Value System**

Socialist core value system represents the essence and content of the socialist ideology and is the spiritual banner of our Party in the situation of economic globalization and social diversification to unite and lead the people to advance ahead. When building Marxist learning Party organizations, colleges and universities should take the improvement of all Party members’ ideological and moral level as the center of work and enhance their cohesion and combat effectiveness. Besides, they should further study the socialist core value system, learn and implement the scientific concept of development, and enhance the understanding of Party members’ basic theory, basic line, basic program and the basic experience of the socialism with Chinese characteristics, as well as improve their consciousness and firmness in practicing the socialist core value system, in taking the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and in struggling for the Party and people’s education.

In order to promote the building of learning Party organizations, colleges and universities should attach great importance to the learning and research of Marxism, which is an important aspect of the socialist core value system, and is also the fundamental principle for building a Marxist learning Party organizations. First, universities should take the socialist core value system as an important part of teaching and learning, establish sound and effective incentive, monitoring, constraint, and evaluation mechanisms, and further learn and promote the socialist core value system, so that rich atmosphere of learning socialist core value system among all Party members will be fostered. Second, they should penetrate the socialist core value system in all aspects of the building of their learning Party organizations, promote the socialist core value system in important festivals and major events, and vigorously carry forward socialist morality as well as encourage such socialist ethnic concepts as dedication, friendship, mutual assistance, and win-win progress,

thus forming a good moral atmosphere. Third, colleges and universities should integrate the socialist core value system throughout the process of teaching and learning activities. On the one hand, university teachers should actively learn and advocate socialist core value system, and enhance their charisma and theoretical knowledge; on the other hand, they should impart the socialist core value system to students in accordance with the characteristics of the contemporary young students and with the educational laws.

### **2.3 Enriching the Education of Knowledge Necessary for Modernization**

In order to promote the building of learning Party organizations, colleges and universities should seriously apply the theoretical knowledge from all aspects that is necessary for modernization into learning activities.

#### **2.3.1 Learning the Various Aspects of Knowledge Necessary for Modernization**

In the first place, universities should combine the learning of Party's theories with the learning of professional skills and various new knowledge; constantly enrich the learning content, so that a broader range of social knowledge and historical knowledge that have been gained could provide a wealth of nutrition and soil for the improvement of theoretical levels. In the second place, they should optimize the knowledge structure and improve the overall quality. To be more specific, they should extensively learn philosophy, history and traditional culture, study the modern market economy, modern international relations, and modern management, as well as strive to achieve good mastery of all the knowledge, continue to broaden their horizons and expand their knowledge. In addition, they should continue to learn Party's theories, and constantly improve the theoretical knowledge. What is more, they should further study Marxist theories, especially the latest achievements of Marxism in China, try to master the position, viewpoint, methods running through within, and improve the ability of applying scientific theory to analyze and solve practical problems. Last but not least, they should learn more about the Party's basic theories, basic program, basic line, and basic experience, thus solving the problems on the road ahead.

#### **2.3.2 Adhering to the Principle of Combing Learning With Practice.**

Good practice shows that in order to learn in a real sense we should not only be dedicated and diligent to learn but also be good at learning. It is highly recommended to insist on combing learning with thinking, application, and innovation, constantly improve the efficiency and quality of learning and strive to improve learning outcomes.

To some degree, the combination of learning and thinking put more focus on the development of one's potential and on the realization of self-transcendence. Moreover, it emphasizes improving the working ability

and working level of the organization coupled with the members within, and more emphasis is given on self-improvement and sustainable development of the organization and its members. In this sense, every Party members should proceed from their actual conditions, improve their learning methods, and learn with humility and perseverance, so that a learning Party organization will be formed.

## **3. IMPROVING THE LEARNING METHODS**

### **3.1 Enhancing Investigation**

Investigation is a traditional learning method of the Communist Party of China. Making a good use of investigation for the learning inside the Party will enable us to have a deeper understanding of the world, country, Party, and people. Besides, we can also have an access to the actual situation of colleges, so that our thinking will be more in line with the objective reality, and our decision-making will be more scientific and reasonable. Party members in colleges and universities should associate reading with investigation, thus fully understanding the actual reality and grasping the first-hand information. Furthermore, they will be able to discard the dross and select the essential, eliminate the false and retain the true, and command the inherent regularity of things through this learning method, so that they will truly respect the laws in practical work and do things in a scientific manner.

In order to meet the end, colleges and universities should promote and apply the investigation method in major work. Specifically, they should proceed from the following aspects: first, Party members should combine the book knowledge with the instructions from the superior level and with the actual situation of the department through the use of investigation method in learning so as to be practical in carrying out work. Second, they should proceed from reality, exclude all kinds of interference, and especially exclude preconceptions, truthfully reflecting the real situation without personal thoughts and without yielding to the pressure from the outside. Third, they should take correct learning method. It is suggested to take a holistic approach from the viewpoints of universal relations and constant development to observe and analyze problems in conducting investigation, processing the obtained materials and analyzing cases.

### **3.2 Advancing the Building of Grass-Root Party Organizations**

Grass-root Party organizations are the solid foundation and fighting bastion for the whole Party to advance and implement its work. To give full play to such role, we must improve their executive force and combat effectiveness through constantly learning. In specific, all the grass-root Party organizations in colleges and universities should

adhere to group learning and all-member learning, so that the Party organizations will become a melting pot where Party members could enhance Party spirit and raise their political consciousness, thus it will become a major school where Party members could acquire new knowledge and new skills.

As for the Party committees in colleges and universities, they should actively carry out mass activities to create a learning Party, regularly appraise and elect "learning branch" within the whole school, and associate activities with traditional Party building, ideological and political education, and spiritual civilization development such as undertaking the activity of "Harmony College (Department)", "Best Party Day" and "Five Projects" to form a lively atmosphere of building mass learning Party organizations.

### **3.3 Attaching Importance to Classroom Learning**

We should adhere to combining the building of learning Party organizations with learning, teaching, research and management, ensuring that learning activities are fully implemented. Besides, learning among Party members should be more targeted. They should learn with tasks and problems in mind. The working practice and reality should also be taken into account. Furthermore, it is advisable that they should permeate the building of learning Party organizations into various works of college teaching, research, administration and service. In particular, they should explore the new features and laws of Party cadres' learning under the new circumstances, try to make the learning Party organization building truly reflect the characteristics of the times and cater to the Party members' needs, and make it more in line with the actual situation of colleges. In addition, they should also make the learning Party organization building fruitful, so that the fruits could be finally reflected in all aspects of teaching, research, management and services.

### **3.4 Valuing the Building of Network Educational Platform**

With the rapid development of network technology and the continued progress of college information construction, college campus network is increasingly becoming a major platform for the majority of Party members to learn and exchange ideas. In this sense, it has become an emerging power to impact the thought and behavior of Party members. On April 19, 2012, the Ninth National Reading Survey showed that China's national book reading rate has declined from 60.4% in 1999 to 53.9% in 2011. However, in stark contrast to the decline of traditional book reading rate, online reading, as a new media, has witnessed a robust increase from 3.7% in 1999 to 29.9% in 2011. In relation to this reality, in order to guide the majority of Party members to read more and better books, the learning Party organizations in colleges and universities should give full play to the features and advantages of campus network such as heavy information,

rapid transmission, and wide coverage. In addition to this, they should actively expand the time and scope of teaching and learning, so that teaching and learning is no longer confined to the limited classroom and the teaching resources are no longer confined to those in colleges. With campus network, Party members can learn anytime and anywhere; they can independently determine the way to evaluate their learning progress, and can take advantage of the best educational resources to carry out learning activities, for campus network provides online learning platform for learning and exchanging ideas. However, it should be noted that the Internet is a double-edged sword, which thus requires a high degree of political responsibility to undertake ideological and political work. Public opinions on university campus network should be timely and accurately grasped; targeted measures should be taken to guide and resolve the contradictions during the work; and illegal and harmful information should be resolutely eradicated from the campus network.

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## **4. PERFECTING MECHANISMS AND SYSTEMS**

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### **4.1 Improving the Working Mechanism**

A sound working mechanism for the building of university learning Party organizations should be established, whose content is that the building should be "under a unified leadership of the Party committee, led by the propaganda department, in the charge of relevant departments through division of labor, and participated by Party organizations at all levels". Moreover, Party committee in universities should establish coordination leading groups if necessary, so that specific departments could be appointed to be responsible for making long-term plan, determining implementing program, making deployment on specific work, taking appropriate actions, and employing safeguarding measures. In this way, such working mechanism supervised by major leaders personally and in the charge of corresponding leaders will take shape. The departments responsible for publicity and organization as well as the students and retiree department can enjoy good coordination to fully implement the designed tasks. The Party organizations at all levels thus could actively participate in the whole process. Also, it is necessary to establish a categorized and hierarchical working mechanism so that every department will have a clear understanding of its own responsibilities, thus effectively carry out the building of learning Party organizations.

### **4.2 Optimizing the Evaluation and Supervision System**

#### **4.2.1 Establishing Performance Evaluation System**

In order to truly give play to the working mechanism for the building of learning Party organizations, we should earnestly establish an evaluation system.

First, we should clarify the principles for evaluating the performance of college learning Party organizations. The principles are the unity of the Party spirit and science, are the combination of motive and effect, are the integration of qualitative and quantitative research, and are the unity of static state and dynamic state. After having a clear understanding of the principles, we should also refine them, take into account the particularity of ideological and political education, and scientifically grasp the general principles of performance management. It is also beneficial to combine them together.

Second, we should clarify the basic content of the performance evaluation system for university learning Party organizations. Party committees in colleges and universities should design a set of qualitative and quantitative performance evaluation system through close connection with the actual learning situation and through combining the features of different levels of and positions in Party organization, and make changes from the aspects of self-study, concentrated-learning, theoretical results and achievement transformation, thus fundamentally avoiding arbitrariness in the evaluation work and make the task of building learning Party organizations be truly completed. These four indicators (self-study, concentrated-learning, theoretical results, and achievement transformation) mentioned above are some of the basic elements of the system for evaluating university learning Party organizations' performance. From the perspective of the breadth and diversity of learning, the four indicators fail to fully reflect all the learning circumstances of a unit. In order to reflect the openness of the evaluation system, colleges and universities can integrate those effective and innovative learning forms that are worthy of adding into the evaluation system in accordance with their own circumstances. This can enhance the openness and accuracy of the performance evaluation system.

#### 4.2.2 Improving the Supervision System

Supervision should be enhanced to keep abreast of Party members' learning situation, promote the accomplishment of various learning task, and ensure the smooth progress of the construction of learning Party organizations as well as guarantee that it does not go astray from the objectives but achieves good results.

In addition, supervision and monitoring of the construction of learning Party organizations should be consolidated to check the learning time and learning effects, and to supervise whether the persons in charge at all levels have performed their respective responsibilities. For this, feedback should be given in a timely manner. Problems and shortcomings during the process should be urged to be made up for, while the advanced experience should be summarized and promoted. In addition, supervision at the learning scene should be improved. We

can allow auditors to record and report the learning time, learning content, learning styles and learning effects to the higher level. For the problems found at the scene should be reported to the responsible person without delay, and the corresponding colleges and universities should be urged to improve school results.

## CONCLUSION

It is inevitable to build learning Party organizations in colleges and universities so as to deal with the social transformation and meet the needs of the social development. The building of learning Party organizations in colleges and universities is also an important part of the building of Marxist learning Party as well as the inevitable requirement for deepening the reform of higher education and promoting the growth of colleges themselves. In addition, it is not only the requirement of building a Marxist learning Party, but also the requirement of giving play to the role of the Party organizations in colleges as a political center and fighting bastion. Last but not least, it will be of immense significance for improving the quality of higher education, for enhancing personnel training, scientific research and social services, for promoting the development of higher education, and for accelerating the interaction among universities, economy, and society.

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