

Postprint: Practices and Achievements in Promoting New-Type Think Tank Construction at Chongqing Municipal Party School

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Abstract

Abstract: [Purpose/Significance] This paper systematically elaborates the practical experience of the Chongqing Municipal Party School in advancing think tank construction, providing reference and lessons for think tank development in China. [Method/Process] Through case analysis method, it analyzes the practices and effectiveness of the Chongqing Municipal Party School in promoting new-type think tank construction. [Results/Conclusion] Building a new-type think tank relies on establishing and improving relevant mechanisms.

Full Text

The Practice and Effectiveness of Promoting New-Type Think Tank Construction at the Party School of Chongqing Municipal Committee of CPC

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Abstract

[Purpose/significance] This article systematically elaborates on the practical experience of promoting think tank construction at the Party School of Chongqing Municipal Committee of CPC, providing references and lessons for think tank construction in China. **[Method/process]** Through case analysis, this study examines the practices and effectiveness of promoting new-type think tank construction at the Party School of Chongqing Municipal Committee of CPC. **[Result/conclusion]** The development of new-type think tanks relies on establishing and improving relevant mechanisms.

Keywords: think tank; mechanism construction; decision-making consultation
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Leveraging the think tank function of Party schools to provide high-quality decision-making consultation products for Party committees and governments is not only an important task assigned to Party schools by Party committees but also an inherent responsibility of Party schools themselves. In recent years, the Party School of Chongqing Municipal Committee of CPC has actively responded to the needs of local economic and social development, aligned itself with the central work of Party committees and governments, focused on establishing and improving relevant mechanisms for decision-making consultation, and made concerted efforts to promote the construction of new-type Party school think tanks, achieving favorable results.

1. Establishing and Improving Incentive and Constraint Mechanisms to Cultivate Think Tank Backbone Talents

The talent team is the key to think tank construction. Only a first-class think tank talent team can shoulder the heavy responsibility of producing cutting-edge ideas and fruitful achievements. Therefore, cultivating and building a think tank talent team with both moral integrity and professional competence, and with the courage to innovate, constitutes a fundamental project in Party school think tank construction. To this end, the Party School of Chongqing Municipal Committee of CPC has focused on establishing and improving incentive and constraint mechanisms from both positive guidance and assessment constraints, vigorously promoting think tank team building and cultivating think tank backbone talents.

1.1 Strengthening Positive Guidance to Stimulate Conscious Awareness and Proactive Action in Decision-Making Consultation

In response to the situation, tasks, and requirements of think tank construction, the school promptly revised and improved the *Measures for Rewarding Scientific Research Achievements and Consultation Effectiveness*, establishing a special fund for decision-making consultation within the total performance-based salary of teaching and research staff and increasing rewards for high-end consultation achievements. It also formulated the *Detailed Implementation Rules for Consultation Project Management* to standardize decision-making consultation work, and regularly held consultation work symposiums and annual decision-making consultation awards, creating a strong atmosphere for think tank construction throughout the school.[1]

1.2 Strengthening Assessment Constraints to Ensure Decision-Making Consultation Becomes a “Hard Target” Rather Than a “Soft Task”

Centering on assessment constraints, the school reformed its annual target assessment system to ensure that decision-making consultation is planned, inspected, and evaluated alongside teaching and research work. Building on this foundation, it revised the methods for position appointment and professional title evaluation for Party school think tank talents, improved the think tank talent evaluation mechanism oriented toward moral character, capability, and contribution, and increased the weight of decision-making consultation achievements in professional title appointment, rank promotion, selection of outstanding experts, and performance rewards, enabling teaching and research staff to truly recognize decision-making consultation as their “duty” rather than something irrelevant to them.

Through simultaneous efforts in positive guidance and assessment constraints, the school has fostered a favorable situation where teaching and research departments compete with each other to promote think tank construction. A think tank talent system has initially taken shape, with backbone teachers born in the 1960s and 1970s serving as the “main force” and young teachers born in the 1980s as the “new force,” producing a group of decision-making consultation backbones with considerable influence in the city. Currently, 45 individuals from the Party School of Chongqing Municipal Committee of CPC have been appointed as legal advisors, emergency management experts, and members of the Chongqing “13th Five-Year Plan” Expert Consultation Committee by the Chongqing Municipal Government and municipal departments, gradually becoming an important base for theoretical research and decision-making consultation that the municipal Party committee and government “think of, use, and trust.”

2. Establishing and Improving Resource Integration Mechanisms to Aggregate Decision-Making Consultation Advantages

Think tank construction must be based on the present while focusing on the long term; it should emphasize not only countermeasure research but also forward-looking thinking. As noted, “in accordance with the principle of appropriate advancement, we must enhance strategic thinking capabilities and demonstrate the core competitiveness of think tanks with forward-looking policy recommendations.” [2] Therefore, only by building resource integration mechanisms and strengthening resource integration can we aggregate the advantages of decision-making consultation and continuously promote high-quality decision-making consultation.

2.1 Establishing Teaching Project Teams to Integrate Teacher and Student Resources

Party schools possess a stable teaching faculty that conducts long-term research on major theoretical and practical issues of socialism with Chinese characteristics, demonstrating obvious theoretical advantages.[3] This constitutes the main talent support for Party school think tank construction. Meanwhile, Party schools also have numerous students from the frontlines of practice and reform and opening-up, who are experts in creative work and effective problem-solving, possessing prominent practical advantages. This represents a unique and valuable resource for Party schools. Fully tapping into and utilizing student resources, and effectively absorbing students' intellectual achievements as an important source for promoting Party school think tank construction, can ensure the relevance, operability, and innovation of research findings.[4] To this end, we have established teaching project teams with project research as the carrier, effectively achieving the integration of theoretical and practical advantages. Since last year, we have organized 12 teaching project teams on themes such as "Governing the City According to Law and Building a Law-Based Government," "Deepening Administrative Examination and Approval System Reform and Building a Service-Oriented Government," "Deeply Integrating into the Belt and Road Initiative and Yangtze River Economic Belt Strategy," "Green Development and Ecological Civilization Construction," "Supply-Side Structural Reform and the New Economic Normal," and "China-Singapore Demonstration Projects and Building an Inland Open Highlands," with each team conducting in-depth research around a specific theme. Through establishing teaching project teams, we have effectively built a platform for joint research between teachers and students, connected teaching with research consultation, promoted mutual improvement in teaching and learning, and achieved the organic unity of talent cultivation and research output. For instance, in 2016 alone, under the guidance of teaching project team teachers, 67 student research achievements received instructions from municipal leaders. Furthermore, teachers can conveniently access grassroots hotspots and development difficulties through cooperative research with students from the practice frontlines, identifying "excitement points" for research consultation, thereby enhancing both research quality and the theoretical depth and academic content of teaching and training.

2.2 Establishing Youth Academic Innovation Teams to Integrate Disciplinary Resources

Most issues in economic and social development are comprehensive and complex, making it difficult for a single discipline to "diagnose" them comprehensively, scientifically, and accurately and prescribe "remedies." Multi-disciplinary collaborative research and collective analysis are required. Based on this understanding, we have broken down disciplinary and teaching-research department boundaries to establish six youth academic innovation teams, including "Local Government Governance" and "China-Singapore Demonstration Projects,"

promoting the transformation of decision-making consultation from “barefoot doctors treating common ailments” to “expert group consultations,” significantly improving the quality of decision-making consultation outcomes and enhancing the influence of the Party school think tank. In the past two years, youth research and consultation innovation teams have undertaken 23 Chongqing municipal decision-making consultation projects, including “Practical Issues and Countermeasures of Emergency Risk Management in Chongqing,” “Research on Social Governance Mechanisms in the Internet Plus Era,” “Research on Consolidating the Foundation of Grassroots Mass Organization Work,” and “Research on Strengthening Party Committee Leadership over Mass Organizations.”

2.3 Integrating Practical Resources and Organizing Special Teaching and Research Teams

To make decision-making consultation reports more “down-to-earth” and more practical and operable, we have established 32 teaching and research bases and a number of social sentiment survey points throughout the city. On this basis, with teaching and research bases as units and carriers, we have formed special teaching and research teams composed mainly of school teaching and research personnel, together with teaching and research staff from district and county Party schools and frontline grassroots cadres, conducting continuous tracking and on-site research to collect and master a large amount of first-hand materials and data. Through in-depth and meticulous investigation and research, and full integration of internal and external resources, different ideas and viewpoints are “integrated” and “assembled,” achieving seamless connection between the theoretical advantages of experts and scholars and the practical advantages of grassroots cadres. This has effectively promoted the transformation of decision-making consultation from “individual operations” to “group charges,” enhancing the theoretical depth and practical value of decision-making consultation achievements.

3. Establishing and Improving Connectivity and Transformation Mechanisms to Leverage Think Tank Construction Effectiveness

Serving the central work of Party committees and governments and the teaching and training of Party schools with decision-making consultation achievements represents both the purpose of Party school think tank construction and decision-making consultation, and an important indicator for measuring the effectiveness of think tank construction. Therefore, building connectivity and transformation mechanisms and platforms to promote the integration of decision-making consultation achievements into classrooms and decision-making processes is an inevitable choice for new-type Party school think tank construction.

3.1 Building a Connectivity Platform Between Research and Teaching to Promote Achievements Entering Classrooms

We have closely centered on the central work of Party committees and governments, treating major issues concerning overall economic and social development, key and difficult reform and development issues during the “13th Five-Year Plan” period, and hot topics of concern to cadres and the masses as both research topics and teaching content for cadre training. We have successively developed multiple research topics and teaching subjects, including “Research on Several Issues in Comprehensively Promoting Law-Based City Governance,” “Research on Innovating Social Governance Systems,” “Research on Poverty Alleviation Issues in Chongqing,” and “Research on Chongqing Free Trade Zone Construction.”

The research on these topics has enhanced the research capabilities of teaching and research staff while the final research findings were promptly transformed into teaching content for cadre training, thereby improving teaching quality, which has gained widespread recognition. The school has consecutively won both the “Teaching Management Excellence Award” and “Excellent Course Award” in the national Party school system for two sessions, with student satisfaction with teaching evaluation exceeding 95%.

3.2 Creating a Decision-Making Consultation Platform to Promote Consultation Entering Decision-Making

The transformation of decision-making consultation achievements must rely on appropriate carriers. To this end, the school has carefully created the consultation periodical *Leadership Horizon* as a “direct channel” for decision-making consultation, guiding teaching and research staff to transform their academic thinking advantages into policy recommendation strengths and major research achievements into decision-making consultation masterpieces, which are directly submitted to municipal leaders through *Leadership Horizon*. Currently, *Leadership Horizon* has become an important decision-making reference for the municipal Party committee and government, receiving full affirmation from all parties. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, *Leadership Horizon* has submitted 305 decision-making consultation reports, with 203 receiving affirmative instructions from municipal leaders, and some consultation achievements have been transformed into public policies. The continuous improvement in quality and effective function of decision-making consultation have attracted an increasing number of authors and high-quality consultation submissions. *Leadership Horizon* has not only become an important platform for school teachers and training students to conduct decision-making consultation but also an important vehicle for many authors from outside the school and even outside the city to conduct decision-making consultation and contribute to Chongqing’s development, receiving over 500 submissions annually, further expanding the influence of the school’s think tank construction.

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