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## Intellectual Support for Major Powers and University Think Tank Development: Post-print

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### Abstract

[Objective/Significance] This paper aims to investigate the establishment of a high-quality provincial-level university think tank—the Taihang Development Research Institute. [Method/Process] Grounded in a historical survey of think tanks and their personnel both domestically and internationally, it elucidates the profound significance of think tank development for national prosperity and social advancement. [Result/Conclusion] The study conducts an in-depth examination of the fundamental experiences and scientific evaluation systems pertaining to university think tank construction, achieving a correspondence between macroscopic and microscopic perspectives. During the emergent period of new-type university think tanks in China, this work possesses significant reference value and inspirational implications.

### Full Text

## Intellectual Support for Great Powers and the Construction of University Think Tanks

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This paper aims to explore the creation of a high-quality provincial university think tank—the Taihang Development Academy. [Method/Process] Based on a historical review of Chinese and foreign think tanks and their talent pools, this study elaborates on the profound significance of think tank construction for national prosperity and social progress.

**[Result/Conclusion]** The paper provides an in-depth discussion of the fundamental experiences and scientific evaluation systems for university think tank construction, with macro-level and micro-level perspectives echoing each other. In the emerging era of new-type university think tanks in China, this research holds important reference value and enlightenment significance.

**Keywords:** think tank history; university think tank; construction research

**Classification Number:** G312

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, think tank development has received high-level attention from the Party Central Committee and enthusiastic concern from all sectors of society. Think tank construction has gradually become an important pillar for the scientification, democratization, and legalization of Party and government decision-making, a major pillar of China's soft power development, and a firm cultural confidence and important ideological guide for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Historically, think tanks originated from knowledge repositories. The level of a country's scientific, cultural, and educational development not only determines its economic and social progress but also determines the caliber and influence of its think tanks. In contemporary society, universities not only supply think tank talent to the government but can also directly establish think tanks, becoming important components of various types of think tanks.

## 1. The Rise and Decline of Ancient Chinese Think Tanks

The literal translation of “think tank” is a repository of wisdom, broadly referring to external knowledge reserves and intellectual assistance beyond the principal entity. It can serve as an external brain for politicians, a senior advisor for military strategists, or an idea factory for entrepreneurs. While the concept of “think tank” emerged in the United States around World War II, its essence and physical entities have existed since ancient times. China was among the earliest countries to develop think tanks, known as “retainers” in the pre-Qin period and as “private advisors” or “staff members” during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Confucius served as a retainer for Duke Ai of Lu around 500 BCE, holding the position of Minister of Justice and acting as prime minister. Later, due to political disagreements, he resigned to become a professor with a following of 3,000 disciples and 72 virtuous students (Han Feizi's writings mention 70). Confucius' s life journey exemplified the transition from an official think tank to a civilian one, and from decision-making influence to educational and social influence. His pursued ideal was “governing through virtue,” and his enduring think tank product is the *Analects*. During the Warring States period around 230 BCE, the most prominent think tank figures involved in governance were Li Si and Han Feizi. They disdained Confucianism and advocated for “governing through law.” Li Si assisted Qin Shi Huang in unifying the six states and standardizing writing systems and measurements, rising to the position of prime minister and establishing China' s early unified territory. The debate between Confucianism

and Legalism has lasted over 2,000 years; from today's perspective, the approach should combine virtue-based governance with law-based governance.

The Qin dynasty fell during the reign of the second emperor due to Chen Sheng's uprising and Xiang Yu's dominance, yet Liu Bang ultimately claimed the throne. Why? Xiang Yu, of noble birth, was arrogant and refused to use external brains. Liu Bang, however, sought out the virtuous Zhang Liang and trusted Xiao He. Without Zhang Liang's strategic planning and Xiao He's "pursuit of Han Xin under the moonlight," Liu Bang could not have defeated the stronger Xiang Yu. The fall of the Han dynasty gave rise to the Three Kingdoms period. Liu Bei, a descendant of a declining noble family, was no match for Cao Cao. Therefore, he visited Zhuge Liang's thatched cottage three times in heavy snow, securing one-third of the empire. Zhu Yuanzhang was originally an impoverished peasant, but after gaining military power, he invited Liu Bowen as his senior advisor, achieving the great cause of founding the Ming dynasty. Sima Guang, a high-ranking official in the Northern Song dynasty, was dismissed for opposing Wang Anshi's reforms. After returning home, he devoted himself to scholarship and authored the *Zizhi Tongjian (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government)*, which became a famous textbook for future emperors on statecraft.

Chinese think tanks declined in the late Qing dynasty, primarily because the Qing government gradually became authoritarian. In the mid-to-late 19th century, among local officials, apart from Zeng Guofan's advisor Li Hongzhang, the Hanlin Academy of the central government focused mainly on ancient text compilation and had long lost its think tank function. Moreover, these compilation officials primarily studied Confucian classics, resulting in rigid and conservative thinking. In a time of national crisis, Zhang Zhidong proposed "Chinese learning as the essence, Western learning for practical use," but conservative forces were so powerful that they not only delayed reforms but also engaged in fake reforms, ultimately forcing Sun Yat-sen's revolution.

Think tanks and their products cover a wide range of fields, including politics, economics, military affairs, literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography, and biology. We believe that think tanks should not be simplistically regarded as solely a matter of humanities and social sciences; their essence is the intersection of arts and sciences. During the over 2,000 years before 1750 when agriculture was the global focus, China consistently ranked first among world nations, experiencing multiple golden ages: the Han-Tang prosperity, Northern Song prosperity, Ming prosperity, and early Qing prosperity. Before Kangxi's pacification of the Dzungars, China's GDP accounted for approximately 32% of the global total [1]. This was due to China's advanced culture and leading technology, including three major crafts (silk, porcelain, tea) and four great inventions (papermaking, printing, gunpowder, compass). Additionally, there were four major scientific think tank products: Li Shizhen's *Compendium of Materia Medica*, Song Yingxing's *Tiangong Kaiwu (The Exploitation of the Works of Nature)*, Xu Guangqi's *Complete Treatise on Agricultural Administration*, and Xu Xiake's *Xu Xiake's Travel Notes*.

How should we answer Joseph Needham' s question: Why was ancient Chinese technology advanced but modern technology backward? Summarizing history, from an ideological perspective, the reasons include serious emphasis on agriculture over commerce, literature over technology, isolationism, and arrogance [2]; China transitioned from adapting to and leading historical trends in ancient times to departing from and resisting them in later periods. The mission of think tanks is to innovate ideas, update concepts, offer strategies, and lead the trends of the times.

## 2. The Gradual Rise of Modern British and American Think Tanks

While Chinese think tanks were declining, Britain established a national-level scientific and technological society in the mid-17th century—the Royal Society of London. Its mission was to develop scientific endeavors, but it also served a think tank function. William Petty, founder of British classical economics, was an important member of the Society, and Newton served as its president for over 20 years (1703–1727). Petty wrote a lengthy letter to the British queen titled *Political Arithmetic*, later presented by his son, calling for industrial development and overseas trade. Through research, he concluded that industry generates higher income than agriculture, and commerce and overseas trade generate higher income than industry—representing the earliest theoretical perspective on industrial structure upgrading in modern human history.

The Royal Society also accomplished a remarkable feat: offering substantial rewards for technological inventions. In 1751, to promote textile machine reform, the Society offered a reward for inventing a textile machine that could spin six threads simultaneously with only one operator. As a result, a carpenter from a textile factory modified and invented a machine that could spin 80 cotton threads at once with one operator, increasing Britain' s textile labor productivity by 79 times. Under this policy guidance, James Watt, a factory machinery repairman, invented the steam engine to solve power problems for factory drainage. The reformed textile machines provided the working machinery, and the steam engine provided the power machinery, enabling Britain to achieve the first and greatest industrial revolution in modern human history despite lagging behind other European nations.

The United States was established relatively late, originally a British semi-colony or penal settlement, learning primarily from Britain. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded in 1910 with a \$10 million donation from Andrew Carnegie [3], initially focused on war prevention and peace promotion, later expanding to African issues. The Rockefeller Foundation, established in 1913, primarily studied economic and social issues. The Hoover Institution was founded in 1919 [3], focusing on peace and war issues. Think tanks established during this period were mostly civilian and known as America' s first wave of think tanks. After World War II in 1945, America saw a second wave of think tanks emerge. The most famous was the RAND Corporation, a civilian

think tank initiated by retired military officers in cooperation with the armed forces, focusing on military and major international issues. RAND' s strategic, forward-looking, and predictive research is unparalleled in the world.

Currently, besides those mentioned, the most famous American think tanks include the Brookings Institution. Although Harvard University' s Kennedy School of Government is not positioned as a think tank, many of its products serve think tank functions. This demonstrates that renowned universities need not specialize in running think tanks; the ideological and application value of their research outcomes is no less than that of professional think tank products. The greatest characteristic of American think tanks is their close connection with government and parliament, largely because American universities and think tanks are willing to absorb retired officials and social celebrities for academic research—a practice worth learning from.

### 3. Contemporary High-End Think Tanks in China

During the Republican era, China learned from the West, establishing new schools such as Peking University and Tsinghua University, which were positioned to cultivate talent rather than serve as think tanks. However, these institutions produced the founders of the Communist Party of China, such as Li Dazhao and Mao Zedong (including from Hunan Normal School). The May Fourth Movement also originated at Peking University. The era' s elite emerging from Peking University and intellectual circles nationwide became leaders and high-end think tank figures of China' s modern revolution, accomplishing an earth-shaking transformation.

After the founding of the People' s Republic, the first comprehensive military think tank was the Academy of Military Science, which Mao Zedong entrusted Marshal Ye Jianying to plan and establish. In 1977, to strengthen humanities and social sciences research, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was created by separating and upgrading the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, simultaneously assuming certain think tank tasks assigned by the Central Committee. In 1980, the State Council established the Development Research Center at the ministerial level—China' s first clearly positioned high-end government think tank, which has played a major role in China' s reform and opening up. During General Secretary Hu Jintao' s tenure, Central Committee documents twice mentioned the construction of “brain trusts” and “think tanks,” but at that time, people paid little attention and insufficient emphasis.

After the 18th Party Congress, the Party Central Committee has attached great importance to think tank construction, with General Secretary Xi Jinping issuing multiple instructions. On December 1, 2015, the “National High-End Think Tank Construction Pilot Work Conference” was held in Beijing, officially launching the pilot work for high-end think tank construction. Pilot units began concentrating their efforts toward the goals of “national urgency, distinctive fea-

tures, institutional innovation, and leading development,” committed to setting benchmarks and charting courses for Chinese think tank construction. They actively conduct research on “global, comprehensive, strategic, long-term, and forward-looking” issues concerning China’s economic reform, opening up, and modernization, providing intellectual support for realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Currently, 25 institutions have been selected as the first batch of national high-end think tank construction pilot units, divided into four categories, with university think tanks accounting for 6 institutions.

The first category comprises comprehensive research institutions directly under the Party Central Committee, State Council, and Central Military Commission, totaling 10: the State Council Development Research Center, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chinese Academy of Engineering, Central Party School, National School of Administration, Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, Xinhua News Agency, Academy of Military Science, and National Defense University. The second category consists of specialized think tanks relying on universities and research institutions, totaling 12: the National Institute of Finance and Development and the National Institute of Global Strategy of CASS, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Macroeconomic Research Institute of NDRC, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation of MOFCOM, National School of Development at Peking University, Institute for Contemporary China Studies at Tsinghua University, National Academy of Development and Strategy at Renmin University, China Institute at Fudan University, Institute of International Law at Wuhan University, Institute for Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao Development at Sun Yat-sen University, and Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. The third category, relying on large state-owned enterprises, has only 1: China Petroleum Economics and Technology Research Institute. The fourth category comprises well-established social think tanks, totaling 2: China Center for International Economic Exchanges and China Development Institute (Shenzhen).

Think tanks funded by fiscal appropriations belong to public institutions, pursuing political and social benefits. However, improving decision-making levels or preventing decision-making errors also generates significant economic benefits. Think tanks are an important foundation for scientific and democratic decision-making, and their strength inevitably affects national strength. According to statistics, in 2015, there were 6,848 think tanks worldwide, including 1,931 in North America, 1,770 in Europe, and 1,262 in Asia. Among major countries, the United States ranks first with 1,835 think tanks, followed by China with 435 [4]. Currently, all provinces and municipalities in China are strengthening think tank construction. Meanwhile, due to limited staffing in Party and government institutions, many provincial-level agencies are looking to cooperate with local universities, providing favorable conditions and opportunities for university think tank construction. The rise of Chinese think tanks is both a manifestation of growing national strength and will inevitably provide strong

intellectual support for national rejuvenation.

## 4. Macro Perspective and Basic Situation of University Think Tanks

### 4.1 Macro Perspective: The Big Picture

The “big picture” discussed here refers to the international structure (see Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper])—the framework of interrelationships formed by various important forces in today’ s world. In common parlance, it means how many “factions” exist in the world and who are the “major and minor players.” After the bipolar structure represented by the US and USSR dissolved, America’ s strategic focus was to squeeze Russia’ s international activity space through NATO expansion and counter-terrorism using various means. After Russia’ s economic and political strength declined, it inevitably “shifted its strategy eastward,” known as “strategic rebalancing.”

Strategic thinking and macro perspective formation are crucial—without planning for the whole, it is difficult to succeed in any part. Macro perspective is built upon overall understanding and grasp of international and domestic situations, which is what General Secretary Xi Jinping calls the “two big pictures” of international and domestic contexts. The focus of grasping the international big picture is major power relations and dynamics that affect the globe. Without this macro perspective, manuscripts not only struggle to reach Zhongnanhai but also find it difficult to enter provincial-level decision-making documents. At the turn of the century, China’ s military high-end think tanks believed that dialectically, “without missiles raised, peaceful rise is impossible.” The concept of “trump card weapons” was proposed by Chairman Jiang after analyzing the international situation, particularly the comparison of Sino-US military strength. Over a decade has passed, and China has successfully developed “trump card weapons” capable of striking and restraining US Pacific Fleet aircraft carriers. This is a remarkable achievement and an important factor in China’ s fearlessness of US provocations in the South China Sea issue.

### 4.2 Education as the Source and Foundation of Think Tanks

When discussing think tanks, we must first recognize that education is their source and foundation. Although education had different historical levels in various periods, the establishment of think tanks or the emergence of think tank figures 都离不开 education. China had numerous think tank figures during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, stemming from flourishing education and diverse schools of thought. Both Li Si and Han Feizi were students of Xun Kuang, receiving high-level ideological and cultural education of their era. Developed education is not only the foundation for knowledge dissemination and wisdom generation in a nation but also a necessary condition for producing outstanding think tank figures.

The Western Zhou dynasty was the peak of China's slave society, forming a relatively complete educational organization: national schools and local schools. Local schools were regional general education institutions, while national schools were national higher education institutions. During the Spring and Autumn period, Confucius pioneered private education; after the Tang dynasty, private schools were mostly established in the form of "academies." By the Song dynasty, China's private education had become well-developed, with academies reaching 397 and receiving official support and funding. Although Chinese historical academies were privately run and located in remote areas, their three major functions— "collecting classics, free lecturing, and academic research" — played a significant role in ancient Chinese cultural development and knowledge dissemination. Until the Qing dynasty, many successful imperial examination candidates had academy learning experiences or backgrounds.

In modern times, think tanks established worldwide have been even more conditional upon professionals with higher education. In other words, think tanks must be knowledge-based, and universities are the cradle of think tanks and their talent. Taking the United States as an example, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government is a representative case. Positioned to cultivate civil servants for the US government with a focus on public management talent, the school has three functions: talent cultivation, project undertaking, and providing a "revolving door" between political and academic circles.

### 4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of University-Run Think Tanks

Among domestic universities, the earliest and most famous think tank is Tsinghua University's Center for China Studies [5]. Since 1996, it has been positioned as a "think tank for national high-level decision-making" while training doctoral students. Certain important advantages of Tsinghua University are incomparable to ordinary universities. Regarding the actual situation of most regional universities, the main advantages and disadvantages are as follows:

**Advantages:** Complete range of disciplines with rich academic accumulation; large teaching staff with concentrated talent; good office conditions with convenient information exchange.

**Disadvantages:** Unaware of Party and government needs, disconnected from grassroots realities; lack of special funding and full-time positions; sufficient book knowledge but insufficient practical experience. The primary task of university-run think tanks is to "leverage advantages and overcome disadvantages."

Of course, this requires a process. Once this process is completed, "high quality and first-class status" will be within reach. It should be noted that think tanks run solely by university teachers lacking work experience in Party and government institutions and practical social experience often struggle to achieve significant accomplishments, much like how most economics professors are not skilled at business and enterprise management. Therefore, American think tanks em-

phasize absorbing composite talents with certain practical experience—this is well worth learning from for China.

To leverage the advantages and roles of universities in China’s think tank construction, General Secretary Xi Jinping attaches great importance to hearing opinions from experts and scholars on major decision-making issues. On February 10, 2014, the Ministry of Education issued the “Plan for Promoting the Construction of New-Type University Think Tanks with Chinese Characteristics” ; on May 30, 2015, Vice Premier Liu Yandong put forward clear requirements regarding university think tank construction. In summary, university think tank construction should leverage their unique advantages of comprehensive disciplines and concentrated talent, focusing on major issues in national economic and social development, and serving national and regional development strategies.

Currently, several urgent problems exist among university think tanks in China: first, ideological motivation is significantly disturbed by the desire for professional title promotion and individual competition; second, funding sources are unclear and uncertain; third, dissemination of results is constrained by unclear audiences and blocked channels.

## 5. Principles and Evaluation of University Think Tank Construction

### 5.1 General Principles for New-Type University Think Tanks

New-type university think tanks are distinct from general “research centers” and other social science platforms within universities that have existed for many years. They emphasize “serving decision-making, serving society, problem orientation, and application focus,” as well as “Chinese characteristics, Chinese grandeur,” and “quality first.” They differ from personal writing projects and also significantly differ from university teachers’ focus on applying for social science foundation projects.

First, **goal positioning:** Serve local economic and social development, serve Party and government scientific decision-making, and serve national rejuvenation. Strive to achieve knowledge for the people, wisdom for the country, and creation of first-class institutions.

Second, **disciplinary setup:** Combine reality with either scale-type or intensive-type approaches. Intensive-type means concentrating on a specific field for systematic deepening and long-term tracking and leadership, suitable for building think tanks using advantageous majors or disciplines. Scale-type means multi-disciplinary and broad coverage—if one area doesn’t shine, another will, suitable for ordinary universities that may lack world-class disciplines but have certain talent and academic accumulation across various fields that can be broadly integrated.

Third, **working methods:** Adapt to the laws and characteristics of think tank work—problem orientation, application focus, and quick response. Therefore, adhere to three combinations and three priorities: combine basic research with applied research, prioritizing applied research; combine self-selected topics with assigned tasks, prioritizing task-based topics; combine long-term projects with short-term projects, prioritizing short-term projects.

Fourth, **core elements:** Leadership attention, excellent talent, and funding guarantee. These are the three major elements or core competitiveness of university think tanks. Leadership attention is the prerequisite—only with it can talent be recruited and funding provided. Excellent talent is the key—first-class think tanks require first-class talent support. Funding is the guarantee and foundation—without financial support, attention becomes empty talk, talent cannot be attracted, and those who come will leave. Think tanks are generally non-profit organizations. Given that China has not yet formed a climate of enterprise and social sponsorship, governments at all levels should provide policy and financial support.

Fifth, **never leave teaching:** We believe that university-run think tanks should not be separated from teaching. The specialization and systematization of disciplines are educational advantages of universities, and rich academic accumulation is an important condition for major think tank achievements. University teachers engaged in think tank work should rely on these advantages. Therefore, university think tank researchers can focus on research but should not completely abandon teaching.

Sixth, **thinking transformation:** This mainly refers to the difference between think tank manuscripts and classroom lectures or academic papers. Academic papers and lectures focus on theoretical or academic issues, with extensive citations to illustrate or solve theoretical problems. Think tank manuscripts focus on practical issues, with all arguments aimed at solving practical problems or providing decision-making basis. This transformation in thinking mode requires certain training and should be honed through practical work.

## 5.2 Evaluation System for University Think Tanks

Currently, China has no standardized or unified evaluation system and assessment standards for university think tanks, which is related to their relatively recent development and requires a process of practice and exploration. From an international perspective, due to different target tasks and value orientations among think tanks, it is also difficult to have ready-made or unified standard models. However, generally speaking, evaluation can be considered from five dimensions: a) foundational influence: per capita funding and talent positions; b) decision-making influence: internal reference levels and adoption status; c) social influence: publication levels and circulation numbers; d) academic influence: journal levels and citation indices; e) international influence: foreign translations and citation indices. Foundational influence refers to think tank

self-construction, including the academic status and social reputation of think tank talent. Based on this, think tank products are produced, public diplomacy or think tank diplomacy activities are conducted, forming comprehensive strength and brand value. Below are the preliminary evaluation systems formed by the Taihang Development Academy based on provincial realities, summarized in Tables 1 through 5 .

**Table 1** Self-Construction and Strength Score

Annual Research Funding (10k yuan)	Famous Scholars (referencing Changjiang Scholars, domestic celebrities, etc.)	Well-Known Scholars (referencing provincial celebrities and doctoral supervisors)	Score
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**Table 2** Decision-Making Influence and Performance Score

Submission Level	Base Score	Approval Score	Base Score	Approval Score
CASS <i>Yao Bao</i>				
Xinhua News				
Agency <i>Dong</i>				
<i>Tai Qing Yang</i>				
<i>People' s Daily</i>				
<i>Nei Can</i>				
<i>Guangming</i>				
<i>Daily Nei Can</i>				
Henan Provincial Party Committee and Government				
<i>Zheng Ce Yan</i>				
<i>Jiu, Nei Bu Zi</i>				
<i>Xun</i> , etc.				
Taihang Development Academy				
<i>Taihang Zhan</i>				
<i>Lue Zi Xun</i>				

Submission Level	Base Score	Approval Score	Base Score	Approval Score
Low-level internal publications approved by high-level leaders are scored according to high-level internal publications. Important manuscripts are scored as research reports.				
<b>Total</b>	<b>Pieces</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Pieces</b>	<b>Score</b>

**Table 3** Social Influence and Performance Score

Platform	Score
Central Politburo	
Central Party School Provincial/Ministerial Class	
Provincial/Ministerial Units and Party Committee Center Groups	
Provincial Party School Cadre Class, Prefectural/Departmental Units and Party Committee Center Groups	
“Three Papers and One Journal”	
3,000-word manuscripts	
<i>People’s Daily</i> Overseas Edition, <i>Global Times</i> , domestic industry major newspapers	
3,000-word manuscripts	
<i>Henan Daily</i> , <i>Dahe Daily</i> 3,000-word manuscripts	

Platform	Score
<p><b>Note:</b> Using 3,000 words as the base, deduct 1 point for every 1,000 words fewer and add 1 point for every 1,000 words more. Publicly published articles approved by leaders receive additional points according to Table 2 levels. Policy suggestion manuscripts from Party/government special lectures that leaders instruct to be printed and circulated for expanded study receive one-third of the base score of the instructing leader' s level.</p>	

**Table 4** Academic Influence and Performance Score

Publication Level	Score
National authoritative publishers	
Provincial/ministerial level, 985 universities	
<i>Xinhua Digest</i> full reprint, <i>Chinese Social Sciences</i>	
authoritative core journals, full reprint in Renmin	
University photocopied materials	
Other CSSCI source journals	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Pieces</b>

**Table 5** External Exchange Influence and Performance Score

Activity	Score
15-20 minute presentations at 5 Henan universities	
15-20 minute presentations	
15-20 minute presentations	
<p><b>Note:</b> Conference keynote presentations of 30 minutes receive 2 additional points; conference papers awarded or rated as excellent papers are counted as key presentations and receive 5, 4, and 3 points respectively. Key presentations at expert symposiums chaired by provincial/ministerial leaders are counted as key presentations at academic conferences with three or more provinces.</p>	

### 5.3 Creation and Dissemination of Think Tank Products

First, **creation issues**. “Rich knowledge, wisdom, and good strategy” are the basic qualities of think tanks. Therefore, researching and writing think tank manuscripts should: reflect leadership concerns, urgent social needs, important issues, personal capability, and high impact in topic selection; demonstrate firm political stance, consistency with the Party, sharing the Party’s concerns, serving the people, and bringing glory to the nation in politics; and show originality, innovative thinking, conciseness, and superiority in content. “Conciseness” deserves particular attention. Teaching university students uses divergent thinking to enrich content (making books thicker), while writing policy suggestions for Party and government leaders uses convergent thinking to streamline manuscripts (making them thinner). Policy suggestions running over 10,000 words will not be read by high-level leaders who have no time for them. To our knowledge, policy suggestions for national leaders are 原则上 limited to 1,500–3,000 words; research reports on major issues should also be controlled within 8,000–10,000 words.

Second, **dissemination issues**. Many publicly distributed newspapers and journals exist in China. Generally, the “three newspapers and one journal” and full reprints in *Xinhua Digest* are considered higher-level dissemination channels. For leadership decision-making reference, several domestic channels exist: *People’s Daily*, Xinhua News Agency, and *Guangming Daily* all have internal references, and CASS’s *Yao Bao* also accepts high-quality external submissions. These internal references are legitimate channels reaching the Central Committee and national ministries. The internal references of the Central Party School and Academy of Military Science do not accept external submissions. However, generally speaking, university think tanks serving regional economic and social development should integrate with local Party and government institutions. Local Party and government institutions should assign research tasks and provide “internal reference” dissemination channels. This should become a mechanism to facilitate supply-demand matching.

## 6. Conclusion

Currently, China’s university think tanks have just emerged and require enthusiasm. However, for long-term construction, calm reflection is needed to gradually summarize experiences and accept the test of practice and history, forging a path of survival of the fittest for Chinese-style new-type university think tank construction and growth. The Taihang Development Academy is one of six university think tanks recognized this year by the Henan Provincial Department of Education, with Gu Jianquan, Director of the Provincial Government Development Research Center, serving as its dean. This represents a model of government-university collaboration in running think tanks and demonstrates the concrete manifestation of high attention to think tank construction from the Henan Provincial Department of Education leadership and Henan Polytechnic University Party Secretary Zou Youfeng and President Yang Xiaolin. Based on

current momentum, we should be full of expectation and confidence in running the Taihang Development Academy well. Our striving goals are: to create a first-class university think tank in Henan; to provide intellectual support for the revitalization and development of the Central Plains; and to contribute to the “Chinese Dream” of the second centenary goal.

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