

On Cultivation of Characteristic Talents in Law in Institutes of Technology

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Received: June 21, 2011

Accepted: July 4, 2011

Published: December 1, 2011

doi:10.5539/hes.v1n2p73

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/hes.v1n2p73>

Foundation Item: Jilin Higher Education Teaching Research Subject "Study and Practice of Cultivation of Talents in Law in Science and Technology Universities" in 2010.

Abstract

For the time being, professional education of law offered by institutes of technology has become an important component of cultivation of professional talents in law in China. Only if institutes of technology face up with their disadvantages, make full use of their resource advantages and cultivate characteristic talents in law, are they able to remain invincible in the fierce competition among universities. This paper analyzes predicament and advantages existing in cultivation of characteristic talents in law by institutes of technology. On that basis, the paper then puts forward the basic principles and specific approaches to be followed by institutes of technology to cultivate characteristic talents in law.

Keywords: Institutes of technology, Characteristic, Predicament, Advantages

In the past few years, with approaching of knowledge economy, the service market of law in China has taken earthshaking changes, which is mainly manifested as the tendency of increasing proportion year by year of legal controversy of high technology and legal controversy about industrial property rights. Proficiency in a foreign language and operation of computer has turned out to be the basic skills required for modern legal talents. Those industries that are closely related with knowledge technology have become newly born business in law, such as, real estate, securities and patent, etc., in which the scope of legal service has been continuously broadened and the service industry of law has also become more and more professionalized. All these new changes have proposed austere challenges to the former education of law, especially education of law in institutes of technology.

1. Predicament and Advantages Existing in Cultivation of Characteristic Talents in Institutes of Technology

A large majority of institutes of technology set up the major of law in the 90s of the Twentieth Century. Thus, it can be said that they started late and had lots of problems. Nevertheless, education of law in institutes of technology also has its own particular advantages. Institutes of technology ought to face up to their own disadvantages, break away from predicament, pay attention to utilization of advantaged subject advantages and professional strong points of institutes of technology, depend upon the background of science, define the professional development direction of law based on the intersection between arts and science, take a characteristic path to run a school and cultivate characteristic talents in law so as to strive for their own survival and development in the fierce competition among universities. This is where the advantages of institutes of technology in cultivating characteristic talents in law and is also where lies the true value of education of law in institutes of technology.

1.1 *Predicament Existing in Cultivation of Characteristic Talents in Institutes of Technology*

1.1.1 The aspect of construction of the team of teachers

The team of teachers in law is fragile and the strength of teacher resources is weak, which is a general phenomenon in institutes of technology. In the first place, the age structure of teachers in law is irrational. Since institutes of technology have set up the profession of law just for only several years and the foundation is fragile, most professional teachers of law are university students who have been allocated to teach law in the past few years immediately after they graduate. The majority of teachers are young people at the age of 30 or so and aged teachers

above the age of 45 with rich experiences are in serious shortage, the phenomenon of fault being serious. In the second place, the educational background structure of teachers in law is irrational. The proportion of teachers with the degree of doctor in law is relatively low and a large majority of teachers of law are graduates, and even some teachers merely have the educational background of undergraduate degree. In the third place, the title structure of teachers of law is irrational. Since a large majority of teachers in the team of teachers in law are young people, most teachers of law have the title of lecturer, and a minority of teachers in law have senior professional titles above associate professor. In the fourth place, the academic capacity of teachers of law is relatively weak and their scientific research level is low, lacking in high level academic foregoers. There are a limited number of teachers of law who have published research projects, monographs and papers. Especially, there are even fewer teachers of law who have published high-level scientific achievements in any national social science foundation item, provincial foundation item or national first – class academic journal.

1.1.2 The aspect of establishment of teaching hardware facilities

Quite a lot of institutes of technology open the department of law only to satisfy the requirement to transfer from a former professional university to a comprehensive university, and the department of law is regarded as nothing more than a “green leave” serving as a foil to the “red flower” of the departments of science and engineering. In the meantime, institutes of technology have set up the department of law for a limited period of time, together with a limited number of students, so this department has not aroused as sufficient emphasis as the departments of science and engineering. The schools are insufficient in investment of funds and the funds for the department of law to run the department is in shortage, deficient in hardware facilities of teaching. Some universities even have not had independent occasions for laboratories required by the department of law, such as, the moot court, etc.

1.1.3 The aspect of construction of books and reference materials

Books and reference materials are an important information resource for students of law and are an important factor that affects the knowledge scope and professional level of students. A department of law that owns a number of 400 students should have a total collection of more than 100,000 volumes in the library, among which there should be at least 10,000 kinds of books about law that have been published in the recent five years and each kind of book should be more than 30 volumes. In addition, the library of law ought to contain other books about humanities and social sciences in order to provide students with relevant necessary knowledge about humanities and social sciences. However, there has not had special library of law in the libraries of most institutes of technology. Even if they have a special library of law, the collection of books about law was old-fashioned, out-dated and deficient in academic quality as a result of shortage of funds and lack of investment of funds throughout the year.

1.2 *Advantages Existing in Cultivation of Characteristic Talents in Institutes of Technology*

1.2.1 Profound scientific deposits

In modern society, science and technology is the primary productive forces. Some courses of the department of law are closely related with the natural science and technology, such as, patent law, real estate law and financial law, etc., which contain abundant knowledge of science and technology and natural science. Institutes of technology is the cradle for scientists and engineers and are the fresh troops for knowledge innovation and technology innovation, which possess a large quantity of excellent talents, abundant scientific research strength, unique advantages in science and engineering and profound deposits, which offer convenience for students of institutes of technology to select courses in the subjects of science and engineering. Especially, selection of science and engineering courses with connotation of economy and management, such as, knowledge economics and project management, etc., can greatly enrich the natural science and technology knowledge of students of law, cultivate students' mode of thinking in science and engineering and enhance the scientific and cultural quality of students of law (Xu Songlin, 2001).

1.2.2 Rich industrial resources

The employment situation of graduates has always been an important factor to measure the teaching quality of a university. In the past several years, the employment situation of students in the major of law has been unoptimistic. On one hand, the scale of enrollment of students in law all over the country has been unprecedentedly inflated and the number of graduates in law has been on the increase for years on end. On the other end, a great contrast has been formed between the gradually converged model of cultivation of talents in law and the diversified social demands. However, the department of law in institutes of technology has its own particular advantages in science and engineering, with abundant industrial resources in opto-electrical industry, maritime industry, water conservancy industry and building industry, etc., in which institutes of technology have great influential power, which helps them to cultivate characteristic talents of law in relevant fields. Thus, institutes of technology have to give full play to this

advantage, take the initiative in getting contact with relevant industries, help recommend graduates of law and promote employment of graduates of law (Zheng Shibao, 2007).

2. Principles to Be Followed by Institutes of Technology to Cultivate Characteristic Talents in Law

2.1 The Principle of Particularity

In the final analysis, the education of law in institutes of technology ought to have its own particularity, and then the education of law in these institutes can survive in the long run and continue to be developed. The education of law in institutes of technology should not take the former path of the traditional education of law, but should concentrate on combining the particular characteristics of institutes of technology and their actual situation to define their own professional development direction, and take their own new path of running a particular school, with combination of arts and science and penetration of arts and science.

2.2 The Principle of Applicability

Law is a subject with strong applicability. The principle of applicability requires institutes of technology to face up to the society and to the market of demands on talents in law in their cultivation of talents, which requires them to cultivate compound talents of law both with professional knowledge of law and with professional knowledge and capacity in agriculture, fiscalit, finance, trade, science and technology, education, culture and sanitation, etc. It is the everlasting vitality of the department of law in institutes of technology to serve for practice of establishment of rule by law, to serve the market economy and to serve the local regional economic construction.

3. Specific Approaches for Institutes of Technology to Cultivate Characteristic Talents in Law

3.1 To Strengthen Construction of Teacher Resources

The department of law in institutes of technology ought to be closely combined with the target of talents cultivation so as to establish a professional team of teachers in law with rational age structure, high degree of doctors and spirit of innovation. In order to achieve this, the institutes have to adopt the method of combining cultivating and introducing teachers with employing full-time and part-time teachers. They should cultivate and introduce a certain quantity of scientific research personnel with innovation spirit and innovative capacity, develop and expand the team of scientific research personnel, gradually form a superiority scientific team, integrate scientific research strength and enhance the structure of the team so as to adapt to the need of scientific research work. Those institutes of technology that are qualified may preserve one to two professional foreign teachers in the long run, set up the system of senior visiting scholar, absorb advanced domestic and foreign talents to visit or cooperate in terms of scientific research, and enable the teachers and students of the institutes to be able to keep track of the frontier academic tendency of law, to broaden their vision of field and improve their academic tastes. In terms of the quantity, the institutes of technology have to have a basic proportion of teachers and students and pay attention that at least each core curriculum of the department of law should be equipped with two to three full-time teachers who can be classified into the roles of A and B so as to help to form the team of teaching and establishment of the curriculum. Teaching hours of the teachers should be limited to a certain period of time so as to guarantee that teachers have enough time to prepare their classes with all their heart, conduct scientific research and offer guidance to students. It is necessary to have a certain proportion of academic pacesetters at home who have certain academic influential strength, provincial experts and new century talents in the Ministry of Education, etc. as the foregoers of the establishment of the law department.

3.2 To Strengthen Construction of Books and Reference Materials

Undergraduate teaching proficiency assessment by the Ministry of Education requires that, each student should possess more than 80 volumes of books and reference materials. Considering this requirement, each student should have an appropriate number of 40-50 volumes of professional books and reference materials. Therefore, the universities have to increase the quantity and categories of books and reference materials and pay attention to timely updating according to the number of students in the universities. With development of social informationization, network has become an important approach for students and teachers to obtain information resources. Thus, the universities ought to strengthen construction of network library materials, provide students with the convenience to read well-known website and information free of charge through a variety of means, attempt to create conditions to enable each students in the major of law to read monographs, journals, articles and other materials online and lay foundation for their writing their thesis. The universities should also strengthen management of the books and reference materials, make sound the system of borrowing library books and make all books and reference materials about law open to students.

3.3 To Pay Attention to Penetration and Integration and Law and Science

Institutes of technology are an important base to disseminate and research natural science and engineering science, which have the superiority of subjects of advanced science and management, and, thus, can generate an interpenetrative interaction relation between law and these subjects. The major of law has a lot of aspects that are interlinked with the major of science and engineering. Thus, construction of the major of law in institutes of technology has to be based on combination of law with science and engineering. In setting of the direction of subjects in the major of law, the institutes can take into consideration of the superiority subjects of science and engineering, with interaction within the campus, adopting others' strong points and avoiding their own weak points, making reference from each other and bringing out the best in each other (Xu Songlin, 2001). In the cultivation project of the major of law, in addition to some necessary courses with integration of arts and science, such as, scientific and technical law, communications law and national defense security law, etc., we also may set up some selective courses of law for the non-law majors, such as, intellectual property law and general jurisprudence, etc, so as to realize sharing of resources among different majors. Furthermore, as a result of differences in superiority of subjects in different institutes of technology, the characteristics of their education of law are also varied. For example, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics depends on its superiority in aeronautics and astronautics to set up the research center of outer space law, introduces outer space law and aeronautics law in its establishment of subject direction, course design and scientific research, realizes its leap forward development in the major of law and forms its core competitive strength that other universities are unable to compare with. In addition, the School of Law of Harbin Engineering University has its own superiority in "shipping industry, navy equipment, ocean development and nuclear energy application". Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications has its superiority in network law, communications law and information law. Development of double degrees education in institutes of technology is also a better way to integrate arts and science. Double degree means that at the time when undergraduates obtain their bachelor's degree in taking the courses of their majors, they also take other majors' courses to obtain a degree of other majors. Exploration and practice of this sort of talent cultivation mode not only can satisfy demands of social development upon characteristic talents, but also can satisfy students' demand on their own individual development. In the meantime, this sort of cultivation mode is able to give full play to the subject superiority of institutes of technology and form their own characteristics in running the school.

3.4 To Improve the Consciousness to Serve for Local Legal System Construction and Economic Development

Teachers of the major of law ought to bear in mind the concept that education of law serves for local legal system construction and economic development and take the initiative in leading students to go outside of the campus. By means of searching for subjects for research from local legal system and economic construction practice, teachers can organize students to take part in research subjects, get themselves familiar with the society and employ what they have learned. Also, by means of all sorts of legal consultation or social investigation activities that are conducted by the communities, enterprises and schools, on one hand, teachers can assess the theoretical foundation of students and their capacity of social insight, and on the other hand, they can contribute their strength to local economic development and social stability. In the meanwhile, theory of law is finally to be applied to and serve the practice. Only if education of law is combined with local legal system and economic construction, can it really reflect its value and maintain its everlasting vitality (Li Long, 2007, 6, p.56). Also, teachers may sign an agreement of co-construction together with local court, procuratorate and law office, etc., such as, internship base. And they can invite local excellent law practitioners, such as, lawyers, judges, and procurators, to accept the position of guest professors in their universities, broaden students' vision of field through the various means of lecture, forum and so on, and guide students in their practice.

3.5 To Enhance the Teaching Level with Modern Education Technology

Application of modern information technology in teaching activities is an important means and measure to enhance the quality of teaching of law. Cultivation of talents in law means and methods of teaching of law have to correspond with the requirement of information technology development. At present, quite a large number of institutions of higher learning have strengthened construction of digitalized teaching environment, such as, campus network, electronic library and multi-media classroom, which has created conditions for the vast majority of teachers and students to apply information technology. Teachers have to learn modernized education technology as fast as they can, update teaching means and positively guide students to participate in network teaching and practice.

In one word, only if cultivation of talents in law in institutes of technology continues to adapt to new changes in the law service market in China, can they be continuously developed and can they have everlasting vitality. Although institutes of technology still have lots of disadvantages compared with the comprehensive universities and professional universities of law, they also have their own advantages in subjects. It is believed that, the law

department in institutes of technology will furnish more characteristic talents in law for the market economy development in China through continuous exploration and innovation.

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