

Research Into Management Mechanism and Operation of Off-Campus Practice Bases in High-Standard Characteristic Campus

SHEN Zhongming^{[a],*}

^[a]Associate Professor, Department of Business and Trade, Rongchang Campus of Southwest University, Chongqing, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

Off-campus practice base is a guarantee to promote education and teaching reforms and quality of school running and admission rate. After several rounds of integration over 14 years, Sichuan Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, predecessor of Southwest University Rongchang Campus, has been built into a high-standard campus with its own characteristic. With great attention paid to the establishment of off-campus practice bases, it has built more than 30 practice bases for its students. Against the backdrop, this paper puts forward a “six-combination” management mechanism, including the combination of campus and off-campus practice bases, the combination of campus, functional departments (like the educational administration department) and colleges, the combination of production and operation management of off-campus practice bases and campus teaching and scientific research, the combination of campus student entrepreneurship and off-campus practice bases, the combination of teaching simulation and off-campus practice bases, and the combination of campus majors or research directions and demands of off-campus practice bases. It is found that the operation of the “six-combination” management mechanism could achieve remarkable results, including vigorously guaranteeing the continuous and steady improving of talent training quality.

Key words: Off-campus practice base; Management mechanism; Operation; Rongchang Campus

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INTRODUCTION

In *Several Suggestions for Improving Undergraduate Teaching Quality in Institutions of Higher Learning* and *Several Suggestions for Strengthening Teaching Work in Institutions of Higher Learning* issued by the Ministry of Education of the PRC, it is clearly pointed out “the necessity of establishing and improving campus and off-campus practice bases , attaching great importance to graduation field work and improving graduation paper quality.” (Peng & Long, 2009) Especially to campuses like Southwest University Rongchang Campus which positions itself a high-standard entity with Animal Medicine, Animal Science, Aquaculture Science and other traditional subjects as the characteristics, it should not only pay attention to its students’ study of basic theoretical knowledge, but also enhance its students’ training of professional skills, in response to the requirements of the traditional subjects and the current industries. The training of professional skills cannot be separated from practical teaching in universities and colleges. To enable students to experience the complete practical teaching process, the practical situation of workplace relies on the full utilization of social resources to serve the teaching practices. It is self-evident that the off-campus practice base of Rongchang Campus is both a basic platform and important part of practical teaching, which plays an important role in promoting students’ theoretical learning, social practices and professional skills. For years, Southwest University Rongchang Campus has stuck to the basic education and teaching concept of combining theoretical and practical education, and paid great attention

to establishing off-campus practice bases. However, currently few scholars study the management mechanism and operation of off-campus practice bases. Based on the construction achievements of Southwest University Rongchang Campus, this paper explores the management mechanism and operation of off-campus practice bases in Rongchang Campus. The research findings could improve the construction level and effect of off-campus practice bases, greatly enrich the teaching content and transform the teaching methods, and comprehensively promote the teaching effect in Rongchang Campus

1. DEFINITION OF OFF-CAMPUS PRACTICE BASES IN HIGH-STANDARD CHARACTERISTIC CAMPUS

1.1 The Origin of the High-Standard Campus With Its Own Characteristics (Rongchang Campus)

The positioning of Rongchang Campus is to be a high-standard campus with its own characteristics. Its predecessor is Sichuan Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine College, which has a history of 80 years by the year 2015. During China’s higher education reform process, Sichuan Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine College merged Agricultural University of Southwest and Southwest China Normal University. In essence, “characteristic” means “to be unique and outstanding.” It can be used to describe both the physical property and the spiritual side. The school running characteristics of Rongchang Campus is to focus on

Animal Science, Animal Medicine, Aquaculture Science and resolve its teaching activities around Marketing, Information and Information System in the final market for agricultural and animal products.

1.2 Off-Campus Practice Bases of Rongchang Campus

Off-campus practice bases of Rongchang Campus include forestry, agricultural, animal, medicine and fishery enterprises, other non-agricultural enterprises, grounds, relevant government departments, public organizations and institution affiliated to social legal entities, which are willing to provide the bases for teaching and scientific research practices of students and teachers in Rongchang Campus. They do not include practice bases, labs, agricultural, forestry and fishery grounds in the campus. With the popularity of higher education, various colleges and universities are actively exploring their school running characteristics and improve their talent training quality. Practical teaching is one highlight of Rongchang Campus. It is estimated that Rongchang Campus has built more than 30 off-campus practical teaching bases. All these practice bases play an important role in improving the teaching and scientific research level, and undergraduate teaching quality.

2. MANAGEMENT MECHANISM OF OFF-CAMPUS PRACTICE BASES OF RONGCHANG CAMPUS

2.1 The “Six-Combination” Management Mechanism Operation Chart of Rongchang Campus

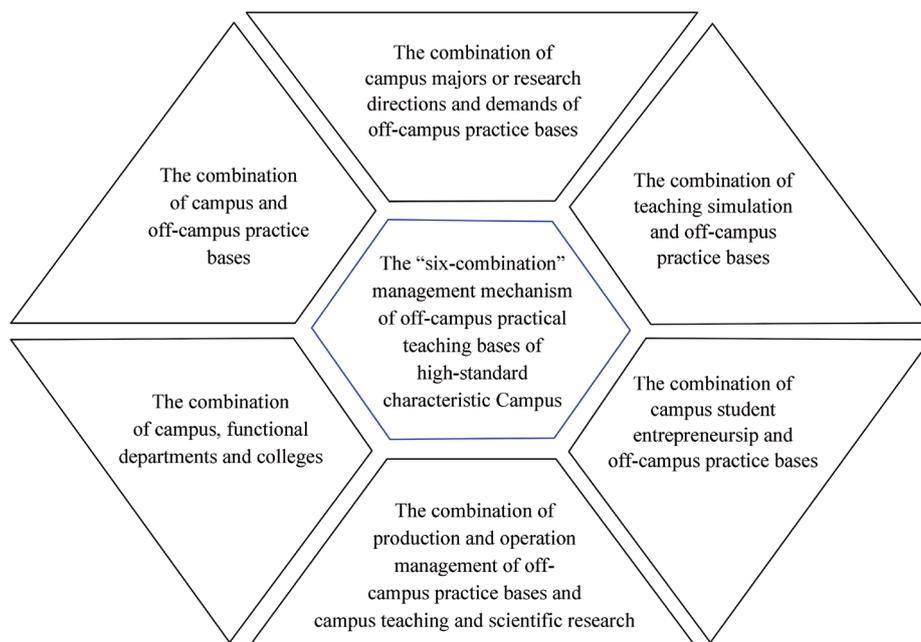


Figure 1
The “Six-Combination” Management Mechanism Schematic Diagram of Southwest University Rongchang Campus

As Rongchang Campus moves forward its construction of off-campus practice bases, the number and the scale and the enrolment of teachers and students from off-campus practice bases keep increasing, and the practice content is continuously enriched. The classes set up jointly with enterprises include Chia Tai Class and Beijing Centre Biology Class. The practice bases of Rongchang Campus are unique among those in other universities and colleges. Despite the numerous achievements obtained by Rongchang Campus, its off-campus practice bases have been faced with some problems due to the influence of social awareness, government policies, information communication and economic benefits. To put it specifically, the problems include the unstable and interrupted practices, the failure of practice content to meet practice requirements, the increasing deviation between practices and off-campus practical teaching bases and so on. Based on achievements Rongchang Campus has obtained in its construction of off-campus practical teaching campuses, and the requirements of the current social and economic development of the practical teaching in universities and colleges, this paper explores the establishment of the “six-combination” management mechanism in Rongchang Campus’ off-campus practice bases, and makes it become an effective guarantee for the talent training quality.

2.2 Analysis of the Connotation of the Management Mechanism in Off-Campus Practice Bases of Rongchang Campus

The concept of mechanism has been widely applied to various aspects of social and economic activities. Thus, mechanism is defined differently in different fields. Generally speaking, it is a general term for the institutions and systems that an organization sticks to during its operation. The management mechanism of off-campus practice bases in Rongchang Campus refers to the “six-combination” management mechanism, namely the combination of campus and off-campus practice bases, the combination of campus, functional departments (like the educational administration department) and colleges, the combination of production and operation management of off-campus practice bases and campus teaching and scientific research, the combination of campus student entrepreneurship and off-campus practice bases, the combination of teaching simulation and off-campus practice bases, and the combination of campus majors or research directors and demands of off-campus practice bases. It also guarantees the institutions and policy systems for various resources related to off-campus practice bases.

The combination of campus and off-campus practice bases means that Rongchang Campus actively establishes off-campus practice bases through its friendsourcing and geographical advantages according to the requirements of teaching and scientific research, and rules in line with

the higher education and teaching reform, and social and economic development. Its purpose is to provide the bases for the teaching and scientific research practices of teachers and students from various departments. The combination of campus, functional departments and colleges means that various functional departments and colleges jointly promote the construction of off-campus practice bases, and allocate corresponding resources well. The combination of production and operation management of off-campus practice bases and campus teaching and scientific research means that teachers and students conduct teaching and scientific research activities based on the demands reflected in the practical production, operation and management process of relevant practice bases. The combination between campus student entrepreneurship and off-campus practice bases means that the implementation of campus students’ entrepreneurship and employment activities are in line with the off-campus practice bases so that students start business or are employed by the practice bases. The combination of teaching simulation and off-campus practice bases means teaching simulation and practice activities are conducted in off-campus practice bases to enable students to experience the future workplace. The combination of campus majors or research directions for off-campus practice bases means Rongchang Campus sets up its majors and research directors based on the demands of off-campus practice bases for talents and scientific research so as to achieve the combination of education, industry and research.

3. OPERATION PRACTICE OF THE MANAGEMENT MECHANISM OF OFF-CAMPUS PRACTICE BASES IN RONGCHANG CAMPUS

3.1 The Conformity Between the Practice Content of the “Six-Combination” Management Mechanism and the Demands of Off-Campus Practice Bases

In response to the requirements of *Confirmation and Management Methods of Innovative Practice Credits of Southwest University Undergraduates (Trial)*, it is necessary to keep reforming and enriching the practical teaching content, establish a favorable practical teaching system and make it meet the production, operation and management demands of the practice bases; encourage students to participate in scientific research training, comprehensive training and social practices based on the demands of the off-campus practice bases, and cultivate and hone students’ scientific research abilities so as to provide vigorous talent resource support for off-campus practice bases. For example, Rongchang Campus has established off-campus practice bases in eight GMP

veterinary pharmacy enterprises in Rongchang County. The teaching, scientific research and other practical activities of students and teachers in Rongchang Campus have not only consolidated students' and teachers' theoretical knowledge and operational abilities, but also contributed to the market expansion and product R&D of these enterprises. Some teachers and students helped developed relevant products for these enterprises, and won patents and corresponding rewards. The husbandry, medicine and fishery enterprises of various scales have provided various employment opportunities for students in Rongchang Campus. Currently, students majoring in some competitive subjects, such as Animal Medicine and Animal Science, are even short in supply. To solve the problem, various large-scale enterprises contend to input special funds in Rongchang Campus. Dozens of enterprise order training classes, including Chia Tai Class, Beijing Central Biology Class and Tequ Pig Farm Head Class and so on. There is a Fuxin Practical Training class set in the campus with the Vice-President of Southwest University as the head teacher.

3.2 Institutional Guarantee for the Operation of the “Six-Combination” Management Mechanism

First, Rongchang Campus strictly implements documents formulated by Southwest University, including *Construction and Management Methods for Southwest University Undergraduate Teaching and Practice Bases (Trial)* and *Eleventh and Twelfth “Five-Year” Construction Plan for Southwest University Practice Bases*, because these documents are the institutional guarantee for the construction of practice bases. The close combination of industry, university and research in Rongchang Campus speeds up the construction of practice bases, vigorously guarantees the smooth progress of practices and steadily improve the practice quality. Currently, Rongchang Campus has established 59 campuses and off-campus practice bases of the campus level and the department level, of which 43 are off-campus practice bases having signed contracts with Rongchang Campus. Among the 43 off-campus practice bases, there are government departments, such as Chongqing Municipal Animal Husbandry Bureau and Agricultural Bureau, and medium- and large-scale enterprises, such as Chia Tai Group and Hope Group. All these quality practice bases not only provide practice opportunities for students, but also give them subsidies to ensure their smooth completion of the practice tasks. Second, Rongchang Campus strictly implements Southwest University Undergraduate Practice Fund Management Methods to effectively guarantee the input of practice funds and standardize the management process. The practice and teaching funds are allocated to every major according to the teaching plans, the number of students and the nature of majors. Various departments must formulate internship plans, hold practice mobilization meetings, appoint teachers with

rich experiences to guide students and arrange proper practice opportunities for students, enhance the guidance and supervision of the practice work, and conduct practice summary and evaluation activities. Rongchang Campus also regularly or irregularly conduct practice inspection to strictly monitor students' practice process and teachers' guide process, connect teachers' guide performance with their general performance evaluation so as to ensure the practice quality.

3.3 Operation of the “Six-Combination” Management Mechanism and Strict Implementation of Various Management Documents

Relying on the off-campus practice bases, Rongchang Campus pays great attention to students' practice and training, and strictly implements various regulations and institutions. During the teaching practices, Rongchang Campus strictly implements Southwest University Full-time Undergraduate Graduation Paper (Design) Administrative Regulations (Trial); and formulates Southwest University Rongchang Campus Lab Work Regulations. Various teaching departments have drawn up the experimental practice outline for various majors, and management regulations and systems for course-related practices, teaching and production practices, graduation practices and teaching work; specifies the organization and management of courses, teaching, production and graduation practices, and the inspection, summary, examination and evaluation to ensure a good plan, implementation, organization, inspection, examination and summary of practical teaching, and fully guarantee students training and practice time and quality. Rongchang Campus makes it clear about the weeks and credits required by practical teaching for various majors in its talent training plan, and adopts the appraisal provided by the off-campus practice bases as part of the evaluation basis.

3.4 Win-Win Pattern Between Rongchang Campus and Cooperative Enterprises Through the “Six-Combination” Management Mechanism

The “six-combination” management mechanism is to establish off-campus practice bases in accordance with the principle of creating a win-win pattern among Rongchang Campus, the local region and enterprises. By doing so, it has consolidated the construction of its off-campus practice bases, standardized and enforced the management of its practical teaching links. Various teaching departments stick to holding practical teaching experience exchanges in the off-campus practice bases on an annual basis. Leaders and relevant personnel in the off-campus practice bases are invited to participate in the exchanges so as to summarize the practical teaching practices. Their suggestions for the campus practice work can keep improving the construction of off-campus practice bases, effectively guarantee the conduction

of students' specialized course practices, teaching and production practices, graduation practices and graduation paper (design), social survey and practices.

CONCLUSION

The construction of off-campus practice bases is directly related to the talent training quality of Rongchang Campus. The management mechanism of off-campus practice bases is a key to the off-campus practice bases, the practical teaching and scientific research effect. Rongchang Campus' management mechanism for its off-campus practice bases is a "six-combination" management mechanism featuring the combination of campus and off-campus practice bases, the combination of campus, functional departments (like the educational administration department) and colleges, the combination of production and operation management of off-campus practice bases and campus teaching and scientific research, the combination of campus student entrepreneurship and off-campus practice bases, the combination of teaching simulation and off-campus

practice bases, and the combination of campus majors or research directions and demands of off-campus practice bases. Besides, it has drawn up various systems and policies to guarantee the smooth progress of practices in its off-campus practice bases. Thanks to the great attention and the strict management of Rongchang Campus, its "six-combination" management mechanism has made remarkable achievements in the practice teaching work of various departments and majors. Students get more learning and training opportunities, and improve their professional skills, ideological level and professional abilities. Moreover, many of them have been praised by leaders and the public of the practice bases. The graduates with professional skills meet the human resource demands of China's husbandry, pharmacy and fishery development.

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