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On Recruitment and Management of External Teachers in Universities

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Abstract

Based on the current demands for external teachers in universities, we analyze the problems and solutions in the management of external teachers based on the reality of our university. As to the problems such as excessive focus on academic title and diploma, lack of post-recruitment assessment and reward measures, much emphasis should be attached to examination before recruitment as well as training and assessment after recruitment. By establishing a whole management system to strictly control, carefully assess and offer fair rewards and punishment, we hope to achieve sharing of talent resources and improved teaching quality.

Keywords: External Teachers, Assessment, Management, Payment

Introduction

Along with the expansion of recruitment, increase and variation in curriculum setting in universities, their previous staff seems to be out of demand, failing to satisfy normal teaching demands. Therefore, in order to make up for such insufficiency, some professionals with experiences in teaching and practice are invited from other universities, enterprises and research institutions, which has become a dominant channel to increase teaching staff nowadays.

Advantage and Guiding Ideology of Recruiting External Teachers

It can relieve the shortage of professionals and therefore optimize the structure of staff and improve teaching quality to recruit excellent external teachers. While fulfilling teaching tasks, teachers from the university and external teachers have access to communication and discussion to learn about the teaching development in their universities, hence broadening their horizon, opening up minds and exerting positive effects on the cooperation between universities as well as between enterprises and universities. In addition, external teachers are only paid class fees, without basic salary, housing funds, various insurances or medical allowance, hence saving expenses and reducing costs (Yang, 2012).

The university we are working for has recruited many external teachers for different majors following the guiding idea of “making use of instead of possessing teaching resources” and the principle of “recruiting teachers on demands, guaranteeing quality, contract management and

emphasizing efficiency". Thus our staff can be better in guaranteeing current teaching demands as well as teaching quality.

Reality and Problems of External Teachers' Management

Requirements and Reality of Recruitment in our University

Currently, all departments in our university are permitted to hire external teachers to satisfy actual teaching demands, to improve staff's teaching standards and to cultivate young teachers by organizing them to be present at these external teachers' classes. Meanwhile, every term we invite some professionals from other universities and enterprises to give lectures, which exerts significant effects on teaching and helping the growth of young teachers. In 2011 and 2012, for instance, we only had 55 external teachers in 2011, taking up 5.5% of all, and had 74 ones in 2012, taking up approximately 7.4%.

The details on external teachers are listed as in Table 1, 2, 3, 4.

Currently, our university is witnessing a rising tendency in the number of external teachers, with an approximate 2% rise from 2011 to 2012. As is shown in the above tables, in 2011, 25% of the external teachers were professors, 25% associate professors, lecturers and above 79%, leaving the rest without any technical title; as for diploma, 7% had doctor's degree, 27% had master's degree and bachelor's degree or above reached 100%. The statistics in 2012 (19% professors, 33% associate professors and 98% lecturers and above) is a dramatic growth compared with those in 2011, so is in diploma (9% had doctor's degree, 34% master's degree and 100% bachelor's degree and above). The increase in the proportion of teachers with master's degree and the title of associate professor reveals greater importance attached to external teachers' diploma and title. With the development in diplomatic education and changes in knowledge structure, there is an obvious tendency toward young teachers with higher diploma among external teachers.

However, some problems have also arisen. For instance, due to the shortage of unified planning and selection and admission procedures, greater attention has been paid to diploma, technical title or teaching standard instead of actual social practice and experiences or teaching morality, hence leading to the loss of responsibility among some teachers.

Payment, Management and Assessment of External Teachers

At present, the payment for external teachers varies in different universities. I'll take our university as an example.

Our university distributes external teachers' salary based on the planned or actual class hours as well as the number of classes, which are shown in Table 5 and 6.

In addition to theoretical classes, external teachers are also paid for their instruction with students in their graduation projects, theses and experiment classes with the standard of 35 yuan per class hour. External teachers' payment for their research work is based on the same standards for full-time teachers. External teachers' salary is given at the end of term; in the case of dismissal, salary is given in lump sum.

From the above, we can see that our university has established a reasonable system based on multi-dimensions including diploma, technical title, the size of class and the types of class. However, there is no distinguishing among teachers with the same title and diploma according

to their teaching quality and level, especially for those professionals from enterprises with rich experiences and expertise. At the same time, the length of their stay makes no difference on their salary as well. The management of external teachers is a part of the employment unit's teaching management routines. At the end of each employment period, external teachers are assessed on their teaching tasks. Such management and assessment seem too loose, failing to form a unified management and assessment system. With teaching tasks accomplished, teachers will pass the assessment, receiving no punishment or reward at all. Even when they cannot finish teaching tasks, the worst result for them is to be dismissed. Obviously, such a system fails to guarantee the quality of teaching.

To sum up, it is of particular significance to strengthen the management on external teachers in order to make full use of them.

Strengthening Assessment and Management of External Teachers

Strengthening Management of External Teachers

(1) Exerting Macro-management on External Teachers

Due to the significance of external teachers, relevant working experiences should be enriched, management system should be perfected in which the personnel department takes the lead and the specific office conducts management details. With the joint efforts of the teaching affairs department and colleges, a complete set of monitoring and management system as well as teaching assessment system are to be established.

(2) Refinement of Recruitment Requirements

On actual demands, external teachers can be hired; for those overstuffed colleges, external teachers are only permitted in the case of unreasonable staff structure due to historical reasons and actual demands. For those newly-opened majors, external teachers can be hired to make up for staff deficiency. The recruitment of external teachers should cover a complete course in which the principle of quality first and teaching effect guaranteed should be clung to strictly.

(3) Enhancing Recruitment Procedures

Those newly-recruited teachers should be recommended by colleges first, then interviewed by the experts from the personnel department, the teaching affairs department and colleges when these applicants will be assessed on their manners, teaching ability, teaching standard, teaching skills and level of expertise and so on to decide whether they are qualified or not (Li, 2009).

(4) Strengthening Post-recruitment Training

Once employed, external teachers should be trained about teaching management rules to equip them with an overall knowledge of the specific university's teaching management, with which they will follow relevant rules and regulations especially those related to teaching, including curriculum setting, specialty development, teaching outline, teaching plan, teaching procedures, examination, assignments, after-class instruction and the basic information about students. They are also required to attend teaching meetings and research activities and to be involved in teaching quality assessment (Li, 2009). Specific requirements related to the teaching process should also be given.

Enhancing Assessment on External Teachers

A sound and unified assessment system should be established in which assessment on external teachers is not only based on the accomplishment of teaching tasks but on personnel restrictions, forming a multi-level, multi-perspective assessment pattern.

(1) Choosing Assessment Methods

The personnel department should organize the assessment on external teachers jointly with colleges every term in different forms such as organizing experts to lectures, students' evaluation on teachers, students' academic performance and so on.

(2) Confirming Assessment Levels and Establishing Items and Objectives of Assessment

A range of levels are established including excellent, good, qualified, unqualified with a proportion for each level. For instance, there are less than 10% of the total falling into the excellent level; less than 20% of all fall into the good level. If a teacher has less than 120 class hours in a term, he cannot be assessed as excellent or good.

(3) Establishing Specific Methods for Reward and Punishment

Specific methods for reward and punishment should be established when an employment contract is signed. For those teachers assessed as excellent, good and qualified, different bonuses will be distributed. In addition, the length of employment is taken into consideration, according to which long-term employment will be rewarded. According to demands, the first recruitment period is one term and for those who have worked more than a year, vacation allowance can be given according to relevant school policies. Especially for those external teachers with right attitudes, responsible manners, favorable teaching effects and popularity with students, excellence certificates and priority to renewal should be awarded. For those unqualified, however, a certain amount of salary will be deducted and they will not be renewed. In this way, we can maximize our profits by making full use of talents with the minimum costs.

Establishing a Multi-Dimensional Payment System

Based on the current payment system of diploma and technical title, different sources of external teachers should also be taken into account. For example, for those experts and technicians coming from enterprises with rich practical experiences, higher payment should be given to ensure their significant roles in the teaching process.

Establishing the Database of External Teachers

In such a database of external teachers, two categories should be listed: one is their basic information, including diploma, technical title, age, working unit, the college they are working for, course and so on; the other is the file of their teaching affairs. By keeping a record of the accomplishment of their teaching tasks and assessment results, the quality of education can be guaranteed, hence avoiding random or blind recruitment of teachers as well as ensuring the quality and quantity of external teachers.

Finally, the standards for non-qualification should also be given, such as terminating the contract before the expiry, being absent from class with no reasonable excuse, not handing in curriculum

plans and lesson plans, not giving or checking students' assignments sufficiently according to relevant rules, having no enough extracurricular instruction and not attending teaching research activities sufficiently.

To sum up, it is positive to share resources from the perspectives of teaching and saving resources if we can make full use of those excellent teachers in teaching or their majors from other universities. With improved assessment and management before, during and after recruitment, we'll form a group of external teachers on certain scale, which can help to improve the teaching quality as well as to save resources. Only in this way will higher education make a step forward.

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Table 1: Technical Titles of External Teachers in 2011

Title	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Other	Total
Number	14	14	16	11	55
Proportion	25%	25%	29%	21%	

Table 2: Diplomas of External Teachers in 2011

Diploma	Doctor	Master	Bachelor	other	Total
Number		11	40	0	55
Proportion	7%	20%	73%		

Table 3: Technical Titles of External Teachers in 2012

Title	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Other	Total
Number	14	25	34	1	55
Proportion	19%	33%	46%	2%	

Table 4: Diplomas of External Teachers in 2012

	Doctor	Master	Bachelor	other	Total
Number	7	25	42	0	74
Proportion	9%	34%	57%		

Table 5: Payment Standards for Undergraduate and Junior College Courses (yuan/planned class hours)

	1 class	2 classes	3 classes	4 classes	5 classes or more
Professor	50	55	60	70	80
Associate professor	40	45	50	60	70
Doctor	35	40	45	50	60
Master	20	25	30	40	50

Table 6: Payment Standards for Undergraduate and Junior College Courses (yuan/planned class hours)

Number of students Title	Optional courses		Compulsory course		Public
	Below 100	Above 100	Below 100	Above 100	
Professor	50	60	60	70	80
Associate professor	40	50	50	60	70
Doctor	30	40	40	50	60