A Probe into the New Development of University Clusters of Megalopolis Under the Policy of Beijing-tianjin-hebei Integration

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Abstract. In the age of knowledge and new economy, universities have become the principal institutions of the society and will push the society forward with tremendous motivation and impetus. With the national strategy of Beijing-tianjin-hebei integration and the coordinated development of these areas, university clusters of megalopolis have been vitalized with strong opportunities and yet great challenges at the same time. This paper is aimed to unveil the new development of the members of university clusters of megalopolis from the macro and micro perspectives.

Introduction

With the development of the society, more than 20 university clusters of megalopolis have come into being, among which the Beijing-tianjin-hebei university clusters of megalopolis is one of the most competitive and powerful. As a member of mainland China university clusters of megalopolis, Beijing-tianjin-hebei university clusters of megalopolis have formed into a knowledge community with the flow and interweaving of knowledge. As history proceeds, the central government has put forward the national strategy of Beijing-tianjin-hebei integration, which is setting the macro planning for the new development of university clusters of megalopolis. Therefore, member universities of the university clusters of megalopolis must put emphasis on benign interaction and building of structural and creative communities so as to maintain their strong momentum in such fierce competitive society.

Beijing-tianjin-hebei University Clusters of Megalopolis

The development of university clusters of megalopolis is by all means connected with the prosperity of the area. Since 2015, the orientation of the overall state of Beijing-tianjin-hebei is as follows: Beijing is the center of national politics, culture, international communication and science & technology innovation; Tianjin is the national base for manufacture and research, and the core of international shipping of North China, and demonstration area of financial innovation and the experimental area for reform and opening-up; Hebei province is set as the important base for national modern trade and logistics, and the experimental area for industry transformation and upgrading, and demonstration area of urbanization and urban and rural overall development, and it is also the supportive area for ecological environment of Beijing-tianjin-hebei. In this grand area, the university clusters of megalopolis consist of a good number of universities which were established at different historical point, indicating the high-quality level of higher education of this area. According to statistics released by the China Ministry of Education in 2016, there are 2595 universities and colleges altogether in mainland China. There are 91 in Beijing, 55 in Tianjin and 120 in Hebei Province. That is to say, Beijing-tianjin-hebei University Clusters of Megalopolis include more than 10.3% of all the universities and colleges in China (See Fig. 1 below). This university cluster of megalopolis has its unique characteristic and clear orientation and its members have contributed tremendously to the local economy and social development.
The National Strategy of Coordinated Development of Beijing-tianjin-hebei

The national strategy of coordinated development of Beijing-tianjin-hebei has undergone a long-term process, which reveals the high-aiming concept of governing of the China central government. Since 1999, the completion of the construction of Langfang College Town has embraced more than 50,000 students and teachers from a dozen of Beijing universities and colleges. In 2015, “Beijing-tianjin-hebei University Alliance of Collaborative Innovation of Textile and Clothing Industry” was founded. In the same year, “Beijing-tianjin-hebei Alliance of Coordinated Innovation” was established, too. In 2016, “Beijing-tianjin-hebei University Alliance of Collaborative Innovation of Business Studies” was built. What’s more, in 2017, Xiongan New Area was set up, which means an epoch-making decision by the central government. A training center of Guanghua School of Management of Peking University is to be established in Xiongan New Area. The Medical School of Peking University is about to open its medical center in Xiongan, too. In 2013, Beijing-tianjin-hebei area was upgraded as the main functional area of China; in 2014, the coordinated development of Beijing-tianjin-hebei was promoted as the significant national developmental strategy; in 2017, leaders of education bureaus from Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province held a promotional conference of education coordinated development; in March, 2017, Premier Li Keqiang elevated the coordinated development of these three areas towards a new height in his “Report on the Work of the Government”; in April, 2017, according to the notification of Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Council, a Smart New City will be built in Xiongan New Area, Hebei Province.

All of the above policies will boost the deepening integration of these three areas in essence.
Furthermore, the integrated process of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei Province will undoubtedly lay a solid foundation for the policy guarantee and a vast developmental space for the university clusters of megalopolis in this area. Under this giant umbrella of policy package, it is of vital importance for the university clusters of megalopolis to carry out profound thoughts on the strategic goals of higher education and their own orientation and countermeasures, and thus the new development of the university clusters of megalopolis will be highly evaluated and elevated.

The New Development of University Clusters of Megalopolis under the Policy of Beijing-tianjin-hebei Integration

New Interaction between University Clusters of Megalopolis and Local Communities—A Macro Perspective

In today’s world, there are mainly three ways of interaction between university clusters of megalopolis and cities (or communities): the interaction driven by universities, like the Silicon Valley which has been driven by Stanford University; the interaction led by enterprises, like the win-win cooperation between Tianjin University and Sinopec Shanghai; the interaction promoted by the government, like the “2020” Higher Education Plan of Qingdao City.

Since the way of interaction promoted by the government is universally adopted by various countries, the new policy of coordinated development of Beijing-tianjin-hebei is by no means far from the trend. The macroscopic control from the government details in its legislation, planning, suggestions and directions. The interaction between local community and university clusters of megalopolis will be guided, evaluated, forecasted and supervised. Therefore, in the grand blueprint of Beijing-tianjin-hebei integration, university clusters of megalopolis should function in their own characteristic way and serve the national and local development so as to achieve the prosperity of themselves.

Resources sharing, including the sharing and utilization of high-level scientific research, are one of the best ways for the interaction. In an innovation-motivated plan of development, scientific research and scientific techniques from university clusters of megalopolis are very likely to pierce into the national system of creativity. As a result, university clusters of megalopolis should face and confront the frontiers of world-class science and technology by undertaking fundamental research and applied fundamental research in which original innovation and intellectual creativity stand a large proportion. Today’s fundamental research will bring tomorrow’s applied technology, thus, university clusters of megalopolis will function as powerful support for local communities.

University clusters of megalopolis and local communities have geographical relationship, which reinforces the interaction between them. As a matter of fact, university clusters of megalopolis are developed on the basis of local communities and are with the features of intensive talents, intensive knowledge and intensive production. Modern scientific research has become a collective activity, which means large capital input and long-term support by the community government and support from universities themselves. Modern university clusters of megalopolis are inclusive and comprehensive, with their boundary spreading to almost all parts of the community. During the interaction, positive circulation between social capital, market and government will achieve a state of social balance, as well as highly effective cooperation, trust and mutual benefits.

One of the important measures to improve the interaction between university clusters of megalopolis and local communities is to hold up the resources sharing platform by introducing a system of regulations, solutions and proposals. The platform will activate the flow of resources between them. For instance, libraries, museums, theatres, department stores, and hospitals situated in both universities and communities can be accessed easily by a single “octopus card”. Some community activities can be transferred to college classes by virtual or partially real ways. Even road system and green space can be connected in which aspect the usage rate is surely to be improved. As a result, land and fund are used sparingly, resulting in a good leap towards a series of construction goals like smart campus and ecological city.
An Exploration into Building An Academic Community Among University Clusters of Megalopolis – A Micro Perspective

Because of the dual nature of universities, the contradiction between “academic power” and “executive power” comes into being. The building of an academic community is a wise and sensible solution to optimizing internal structures, improving governing abilities, guaranteeing teaching quality and balancing “academic power” and “executive power”.

Academic community refers to a group of scholars who share the common values or similar tastes and interests. Academic community is not a loose alliance of various colleges and universities inside the university clusters of megalopolis, and it is also different from the past heatedly discussed “multi-campus university”, i.e. a college or university with several campuses. The real essence of the academic community is like a giant university system, which is similar to the University of California. In this giant system, the random alliance of colleges and departments does not exist, nor does the development mode of one headquarter plus several campuses. The real situation is that the establishment of each independent yet connected high-quality branches enables the overall development and prosperity. All of the branches of University of California are first-class higher educational institutions, like UC Berkeley, UC San Francisco, UC San Diego and UC Los Angeles.

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The secrets for this giant system lie in balancing the “academic power” and “executive power” during the process of which, the active participation of academic community is highly appreciated. The academic community requires substantialized committees such as: professor committee, teaching committee, academic committee, and academic degrees committee. All of this safeguards the decision-making power of committees and guarantees the academic power. The university clusters of megalopolis should take the opportunity of Beijing-tianjin-hebei integration to strengthen the setup of an academic community so as to realize the mutual sharing of top educational resources and eliminate the barriers hindering coordinated development.

A Probe into the Improvement on Guarantee System of Employment – A Micro Perspective

With the reason of various elements, it is tougher and tougher for college students to find suitable jobs in recent years. According to related studies, there are more than 24 million new workforces pouring into the market each year. By the contrast, posts offered on the job market can only satisfy 12 million of the total number. To make the situation even worse, annually, there are approximately 7 million graduates from higher education institutions becoming part of the new workforces as a result of the expansion and development of higher education scale in China. University clusters of megalopolis of Beijing-tianjin-hebei are faced with the same situation nowadays. Hence, it has become urgent to tackle the dual dilemma of both employment difficulty and low quality of employment. Under the framework of Beijing-tianjin-hebei integration and coordinated development, a guarantee system of employment should be put forward, and there are some ways to be explored as follows: on the one hand, employment guidance and training courses should be researched and applied. All of these training courses can be proposed based on MOOC. MOOC is short for “massive open online courses” and this new teaching and learning mode together with its technology has swept the globe since its birth in 2012. Within the university clusters of megalopolis, it would be very convenient for graduates to gain access to those courses. At the same time, self-employment is highly advocated which will boost graduates’ self-confidence. On the other hand, a new system and mechanism of free transfer and flow of personal information record and files should be set up and further introduced. All the data would be stored and shared inside the circle of university clusters of megalopolis. On the basis of free transfer of information, such technological means of wechat, weibo and websites will be adopted.

Conclusion

In today’s society, universities and university clusters are playing more and more obvious role in neighboring areas and communities. Countries all over the world are actively probing and exploring the new paths, platforms and solutions for the development of university clusters of megalopolis.
The coordination development of higher education is an essential way to improve and strength the comprehensive power and core competitiveness of a nation or area. The great strategy of Beijing-tianjin-hebei integration has provided unprecedented opportunity for university clusters of megalopolis in this area. Under this policy, some new development of university clusters of megalopolis has shown and will be further pushed.

Among the varied aspect of new development, the interaction between university clusters of megalopolis and local communities is quite trendy and distinct. This interaction is undergoing the transition from accompanying interaction to mutually-leading interaction. Faced with fierce demand and plural modes of interaction, more thoughts should be emphasized on this interactive development. In the second aspect, building an academic community among university clusters of megalopolis belongs to the micro perspective of new development. With explicit understanding of strategic goals and orientation, such academic community will show tremendous charm and thus bring forth fruitful influence. It is beyond doubt that the academic community will reinforce the internal connection among university clusters and will optimize the internal advantageous resources, meantime offering a positive selection to improve education quality among the members of the university cluster. Thirdly, a micro perspective of a guarantee system of employment is probably the most welcomed part of new development of university clusters of megalopolis, its essence being solving the social challenge. Employment has always been the strongest momentum for higher education development. This paper has put forward an academic support and reference for the government and education bureaus, as well as thoughts being offered to university leaders among the university clusters in this area.

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References


