

**Review Article**

# Analysis of the Reform Process and Development Path of the Staff System in Colleges and Universities in China

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**Abstract:** Party and government administrators in colleges and universities, as an indispensable team in the development of colleges and universities, play an important role in promoting the normal operation of colleges and universities and the reform and development of undertakings. The staff system in colleges and universities is an innovative measure to deepen the reform of the personnel system in colleges and universities in China in recent years. Since the pilot of this system began in 2000, it has shown some advantages, but in the specific implementation process, it has gradually revealed some disadvantages and problems that need to be solved urgently. It is necessary to constantly improve its supporting measures. This paper discusses the reform process of the staff system in colleges and universities, and takes some colleges and universities in Jiangsu Province as examples to discuss the practical development of the staff system in colleges and universities in Jiangsu Province. Based on the analysis of the problems faced by the reform, from the establishment of a finely classified staff management system, the construction of a segmented staff rank performance salary incentive system Improve the long-term mechanism of staff training and professional development, and put forward the path choice to further promote the reform of the staff system in Colleges and universities, so as to further improve the staff system.

**Keywords:** Colleges, Universities, Staff System, Reform, Development Path

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## 1. Introduction

As an indispensable team in the development of colleges and universities, the party and government administrators in colleges and universities play an important role in promoting the normal operation of the school and the reform and development of the undertakings. De-administration should be an important starting point for the construction of the staff system in colleges and universities, but for a long time, there has been duality of administration in colleges and universities: professional and technical personnel management mode and government administration mode. For the management of Party and government administrators in colleges and universities, the idea of official standard still tends to be obvious. For party and government administrators, emphasis is placed on use and training, and the overall salary is low, which is not conducive to the improvement of the overall quality of party and government

administrators and the needs of team construction. Talent team is the core element of "double first-class" construction [1], Without a first-class talent team, there will be no first-class disciplines and universities. In the new era, it is of great significance for the connotative development of colleges and universities to continue to deepen the reform of the staff system in colleges and universities and build a capable and efficient team of party and government management talents, which is an important and urgent task to improve the modernization of the governance system and governance ability of colleges and universities under the background of the double first-class construction [2].

## 2. The Reform Process of the Staff System in Colleges and Universities

The "Education Law of the People's Republic of China"

implemented in 1995 stipulates: "The management personnel in schools and other educational institutions shall implement the education staff system". This is the first time the country has proposed the education staff system. In 1999, the "Interim Regulations on the Staff System of Institutions of Higher Education" pointed out: " Staff of institutions of higher learning refer to those who are engaged in management and service work in Institutions of higher learning ". The relevant provisions of the "Guiding Opinions on the Management of Post Setup in Colleges and Universities" further pointed out that the management positions in colleges and universities are different from professional technical positions and labor skills positions, and mainly refer to the positions with leadership responsibilities or management tasks, including schools, colleges/department and other management positions in internal institutions. In 2000, the "Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Personnel System in Institutions of Higher Learning" jointly issued by the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Personnel and the Ministry of Education pointed out: "The administrators of institutions of higher learning implement the education staff system. Educational staff implement the appointment system. The education staff system will be piloted in some colleges and universities, and will be gradually rolled out after gaining experience and improving methods." Subsequently, Wuhan University, Xiamen University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Central China Normal University, and Northeast Normal University, five institutions of higher learning directly under the Ministry of Education, have taken the lead in piloting the staff system since 2000, and formulated corresponding staff management measures and implementation rules. In 2017, the Ministry of Education and other five departments jointly issued the "Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Streamlining Administration and Delegating Powers, Combining Delegation and Regulation, and Optimizing Service Reforms in Higher Education", which clearly stated that "managers should implement the staff system", which is the basis for the education staff system in higher education institutions. Full implementation further points the way [3].

In August 2018, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, and the National Development and Reform Commission jointly issued the "Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of "Double First-Class" in Colleges and Universities (Jiaoyan [2018] No. 5), which proposed that it is necessary to " Establish a stable high-level experimental technology, engineering technology, practical guidance and management service talent team". Subsequently, the state has successively promulgated the "Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan" and the "National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for the Development of Educational Talents", which further clarified that colleges and universities should establish a professional and high-level staff team. The development of colleges and universities is inseparable from

the construction of management teams. The internal management of colleges and universities is a huge and complex system. The management team is responsible for the allocation of time and space such as human, financial, and physical tasks, involving planning, organization, execution, and communication between superiors and subordinates. The service awareness and service ability of the management team are the decisive factors for the normal operation and rapid development of colleges and universities. It is very important to attach importance to the construction of management team, broaden the development path of management personnel, attract more outstanding talents, and build a stable, capable and efficient management team. It is imperative to promote the reform of the staff appointment system that has a scientific assessment and evaluation mechanism and truly reflects post management.

### **3. The Practical Development of College Staff System in Jiangsu Colleges and Universities**

Following the pilot program of the five universities under the Ministry of Education, many universities under the Ministry of Education and local universities have begun to implement the reform of the staff system. Taking the separation of government and schools, separation of management and administration, and de-administration of higher education as an opportunity, they have actively made breakthroughs, and constantly explored and accumulated valuable experience. Taking some colleges and universities in Jiangsu Province as an example, through the investigation of Southeast University, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing Forestry University, Suzhou University, Jiangsu University, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, etc., it is concluded that there are some common or individual practical problems:

Due to the limitation of the total number of positions and the ratio between the positions, the universities generally use the remaining position indicators for staff promotion competition after the existing leadership positions directly correspond to the corresponding staff ranks; Generally, years and seniority are the main promotion conditions, and management performance and work ability are also assessed; Party and government management personnel can only participate in the evaluation of educational management titles in the professional and technical job evaluation, and cannot participate in the evaluation of teaching and scientific research or other series of professional titles. Some colleges and universities only use years as the qualification condition, supplemented by excellent assessment during the employment period or individual honors at the school level and above as the rigid conditions for promotion to the upper-level staff; Some colleges and universities refer to the scientific research conditions for professional and technical personnel to evaluate professional and technical positions, and also set corresponding project or thesis or work report requirements

for staff promotion; Some colleges and universities set up senior professional and technical positions in education management to be senior staff positions, while some colleges and universities have no restrictions at all; after some colleges

and universities management positions are promoted to education management series titles, they will honor part of the salary, and some colleges and universities only participate in the evaluation and do not honor any treatment [4].

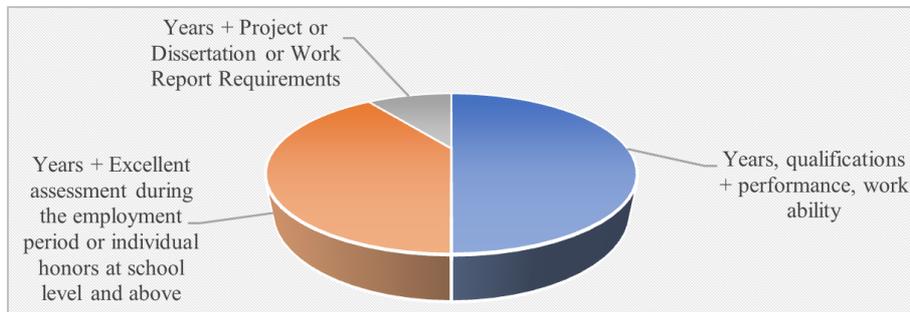


Figure 1. Promotion conditions of the staff system in colleges and universities.

#### 4. Problems Existing in the Reform of the Staff System in Colleges and Universities

The original intention of setting up the staff system in colleges and universities is to establish and improve the postemployment system, realize the transition from identity management to post management, realize the ascending and exiting mechanism that can go up and down, promote the "de-administration" of colleges and universities, and create professional personnel team [5]. In this long-term development process, although the reform of the staff system in colleges and universities has achieved some results, it has not yet formed a consensus nationwide in the past 20 years, and has not yet formed an effective practical experience and system for promotion. Taking the above surveyed universities as an example, the reform of the staff system in colleges and universities still faces many problems:

##### 4.1. Limited Development Space and Promotion Channels for Senior Staff

The staff positions in colleges and universities are divided into three grades, namely higher, middle and junior and ten levels, which seems to provide multi-level development steps, but the actual positions are set at a small level and the gap is large, and senior staff are subject to strict restrictions on the number of cadre posts [6]. The latest post setting management document released by Jiangsu Province in 2021 clarifies that the highest control standard for the proportion of senior professional and technical positions: 65% of the national "double first-class" universities and 60% of Jiangsu high-level universities [2]. The proportion of senior staff in management positions is clearly stipulated in the "Interim Regulations on the Staff System of Higher Education Institutions of the Ministry of Education", and the upper limit of the number of senior staff is 35% of the total number of staff. Taking the above-mentioned colleges and universities as an example, actual cadres have taken up a lot of staff positions. In practice,

the available senior staff positions are often limited, and the promotion of middle and junior staff, that is, the seventh to tenth level staff positions, is relatively fast, but it is relatively difficult to promote middle-level staff to senior staff. Due to the limitation of positions, some party and government management personnel with high management level and strong ability have been lingering in mid-level staff positions for a long time. When they encounter the ceiling of career development, it is not conducive to the initiative to exert their enthusiasm for follow-up work, and it is easy to cause job burnout.

##### 4.2. Lack of Professional Management Knowledge Training and Career Planning

Taking the above-mentioned colleges and universities as an example, most of the party and government management personnel are generally the spouses of openly recruiting graduates and introducing talents. In recent years, the number of counselors who have worked for a certain number of years has gradually increased, which has actually improved the overall level of the party and government management personnel. However, their sources are relatively complex, their educational levels and professional backgrounds are different, and they have insufficient professional knowledge reserves for university management. At present, colleges and universities are developing rapidly, management functions are gradually becoming more complex, job division is becoming more refined, and coordination between departments and departments is complicated. Business training, which is difficult to grasp from the overall work and conduct in-depth research. At the same time, colleges and universities do not pay enough attention to the training of party and government management personnel, and sometimes even restrict the on-the-job training of management personnel. Party and government management personnel often lack long-term career planning, resulting in insufficient matching between personnel quality and job fitness. Facing the higher demands of the modernization of the governance system and governance capacity of colleges and universities, building a high-quality, professional and international management team

has become an inevitable requirement for the development of colleges and universities [7].

#### 4.3. *Insufficient Professional Recognition of Party and Government Managers*

With professional and technical personnel as the main team, colleges and universities have greater advantages in career promotion, social status, student respect, and academic recognition. The team of party and government management personnel in colleges and universities is relatively special, which can neither correspond to the government civil servant system, nor is it different from professional and technical personnel in colleges and universities, and there is a deviation in social recognition. According to the latest salary structure system of public institutions in 2021, the previous salary structure is still continued, and the salary level of college staff is generally lower than that of professional and technical personnel with administrative levels and their corresponding

titles. As can be seen from the table below, if the level 4 professional and technical posts are transferred to the corresponding level 4 staff (generally, they are already school-level leaders and deputy department-level staff), if the staff post management is strictly followed, they will directly face the consequences of the post wage decline [8]. Taking the above-mentioned research universities as an example, most of them adopt the flexible operation of "following the higher salary principle", the post salary is still in accordance with the original professional and technical post standard, and the school performance is cashed according to the management staff. In fact, this practice does not conform to the original intention and principles of post management, but also causes confusion in staff management, which is easy to give managers the bad impression that the staff rank is inferior to the professional and technical post, and is always inferior, and the sense of professional identity is reduced [9].

*Table 1. Corresponding relationship between professional and technical positions and staff salary.*

Job level	Post salary (yuan)	Job level	Post salary (yuan)
Professional technology Level 3 (Senior)	4660	Management Level 4 (Assisting roles of departments)	3840
Professional technology Level 4 (Senior)	4080	Management Level 5 (Leading roles of divisions)	3120
Professional technology Level 5 (Deputy senior)	3420	Management Level 6 (Assisting roles of divisions)	2600
Professional technology Level 6 (Deputy senior)	2950	Management Level 7 (Leading roles of sections)	2240
Professional technology Level 7 (Deputy senior)	2740		
Professional Technology Level 8 (Intermediate)	2370		

## 5. Path Selection for Further Promoting the Reform of the Staff System in Colleges and Universities

The reform of the staff system in colleges and universities is a complex and huge work. To improve the career development system of Party and government administrators in colleges and universities and solve the fundamental institutional guarantee, we need to start with the basic work, avoid blind "De-administration" and the pursuit of flat management, and further explore the actual management problems to further promote the reform of the staff system in colleges and universities [10].

### 5.1. *Establish a Refined and Classified Staff Management System*

The internal management positions in colleges and universities are complex and diverse, and the premise of orderly competition is a fair system setting, the construction of a scientific and refined staff management system, and the classification management of existing management positions according to the nature of the position, job level, work content, and service objects. For example, according to the nature of the position, it can be divided into leadership management positions and affairs management positions; according to the work level, it can be divided into management positions of organs, groups and teaching and research units; according to

the content of work, it can be divided into general management positions and operational management positions, such as accounting, auditing, editing, engineering, etc.; according to service objects, it can be divided into For administrative, teaching, scientific research, discipline, student services and other management positions. On the basis of this classification, the job responsibilities, service conditions and assessment and promotion basis of different categories of employees are determined respectively [11]. For example, leadership management positions can use the overall work performance of individuals and units as the basis for evaluation and promotion, while business management positions can use business scientific research ability as the basis for evaluation and promotion. Setting up different staff classification evaluation and assessment methods according to the post, distinguishing different staff post management and promotion channels, is also more conducive to the professional and professional development of the management talent team [12].

### 5.2. *Constructing a Subdivided Employee Rank Performance Salary Incentive System*

After the country implemented the post-setting reform, it shifted from identity management to post management, and remuneration was also carried out in accordance with the principle of "fixing salary by post and changing salary by post". Taking the above-mentioned universities as an example, at present, most of them are still setting the corresponding salary and benefits under the macro system of the third-level

and tenth-level staff set by the state, so that there is no room for further subdivision between positions at the same level, and it is impossible to effectively realize the incentive effect of performance pay [13].

In view of the relatively extensive macro guidance of the staff system, combined with the actual situation of the existing management personnel in colleges and universities, without changing the existing staff rank system, the internal levels of some ranks can be refined. Taking the above surveyed universities as an example, for senior staff positions, without breaking through the number of post indicators, three levels can be divided within the posts of level 5 and level 6 staff. For example, level 6 staff can be divided into level 6 grade 1, level 6 grade 2 and level 6 grade 3. In practice, deputy cadres with leadership positions can be directly corresponding to level 6 grade 2, For employees who are promoted from level 7 to level 6 without leadership positions, they can be corresponding to level 6 and grade 3. In this way, it can not only reflect the corresponding connection between the job rank and the employee rank in the staff system, but also reflect the distinction of performance pay in the merger; at the same time, it can make the performance pay incentive scope and target wider, and have a higher level through a certain evaluation and promotion mechanism. Employees are promoted to a higher position, and this position can enjoy the same performance salary as employees with leadership positions. This incentive is undoubtedly positive, and can further promote the management team to actively improve their own ability and quality, fully Get motivated to work [14].

### **5.3. Improve the Long-Term Mechanism for Staff Training and Professional Development**

In addition to improving the staff rank management system and improving the performance-based salary system, colleges and universities should also strive to provide staff with continuing education, professional training, and quality development content to meet the strong needs of staff for self-improvement and development, and promote the sustainable career development and self-development of managers. Realization of value. Taking the research colleges as an example, some colleges and universities have set up oral language training courses for management cadres for management personnel. The content is highly targeted. It is mainly used to deal with the oral language required by foreign teachers and students and students. Generally, one training session per semester. However, in general, managers are often busy with complex transactional work. Compared with professional and technical personnel, managers have fewer opportunities to receive training, with variable training time, untargeted training content, single form and unsatisfactory effect. Systematic training system is of great significance to staff's orientation and career planning. Improve the long-acting mechanism for the training of staff, planning staff training content, training process for a long time, according to the theory of higher education and university management system and management ability of modern content combined with special training, office document management business

skills training, such as theoretical knowledge and practical operation skills, the combination of full staff and post-match. At the same time, we should create learning conditions for managers to improve their academic qualifications, and encourage staff, especially senior staff, to carry out educational management research by combining their professional background with their post characteristics, so as to further improve the professional and professional level of the management team [15].

## **6. Conclusion**

Since the existence of China's higher education staff system, it has been practiced and developed in continuous reforms. However, there are still problems such as limited development space and promotion channels for senior staff, lack of professional management knowledge training and career planning, and insufficient professional recognition of party and government managers. At present, there are the following ways to continue the reform to solve these problems: establish a refined and classified staff management system, build a subdivided staff rank performance salary incentive system, and improve the long-term mechanism for staff training and professional development.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

## **Author Contributions**

Shuqin Song and Yunlong Pan edited the manuscript. Shuqin Song designed the project.

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