

From University Town of Shenzhen to Multi-district Education and University Development

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Abstract: This essay mainly discusses the start-up process and management method as well as the current status of University Town of Shenzhen (UTS). It analyzes the characteristics of UTS comparing with other domestic and foreign university town (UT). As an emerging pattern of higher education, the UTS' experience has a reference value to realize multi-district university education and management.

Keywords: University Town of Shenzhen, university development, multi-district education

1. UTS Introduction

UTS is situated along the Xili Lake in Nanshan District of Shenzhen with green mountains surrounded. From October 2000 when the Shenzhen government decided to establish UTS till now, It has completed constructions of the west area with 1.45 km² putting in use.

Shenzhen is the most successful module of the economic reform in China. After less than 20 years, It has become the fourth big economic output of the whole nation after Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou from a small fishing village. Now Shenzhen has a population of more than 7 million but the number of universities is quite small. This not only affects the Shenzhen image, at the same time it also restricts the high-speed development of the city—Shenzhen has to introduce ten thousand university graduates from the outside areas every year. Human resource has already become the bottleneck of Shenzhen's sustainable development.

In the end of 2000 year, Shenzhen government proposed to organize UTS to realize "university resources localization" and promote the development speed of higher education in Shenzhen. Its aim is to

build Shenzhen into a characteristics distinctively, cultural atmosphere strongly and ecological environment pleasant city. Shenzhen should be a center of research, study and industrialization. UTS will have the leading disciplines in the whole nation. Till 2005, it is planned to have 10 thousand registered students among which postgraduates will account for 70%. The universities introduced in must be advanced and well-known, especially are among the nine "211 Project" universities or the top 100 in the world.

In the first period of UTS construction, it got investment mainly from the local government. With 10 km² land near Xili Town and 2 billion RMB input in 2002, the UTS starts the campus construction. It was put in use in November of the same year. At present it already introduced the universities including Tsinghua University, Peking University, Haerbin Institution of Technology and Nankai University. Now the number of graduate students in UTS reaches 2000. It is moving towards the regular operation gradually.

2. UTS management mechanism with case study—Shenzhen Graduate School of Peking University

In the policy-making level, UTS has a special council from the municipal government department. This council is responsible for the UTS construction and decision-making work about significant items. In the management level there is a UTS management committee which is composed together by Shenzhen government and the universities. The management committee office is responsible specifically for the unified administration and daily coordination. Each graduate school implements independent management. At the same time logistic service is fully commercialized and socialized.

Take Shenzhen Graduate School of PKU as an example, now it totally subordinates in Peking University and is mainly supported by Shenzhen government. Since Shenzhen Graduate School of PKU established, it fully displays the PKU standard, facing the demand of Shenzhen regional economy and the social development, to raise the multi-skilled and research-applied graduates. It insists in the same PKU brand principle as well as equal requirement and treatment with the students in Beijing campus. As the only one multi-district education branch of PKU in China, Shenzhen Graduate School intends to combine the advantages of academic influence and advanced research in PKU with the regional superiority

of Shenzhen to attempt a new pattern to enhance the educational cooperation and technological innovation among the government-university-enterprise, meanwhile to impel the education organizational reform process. Its aim is to be the important institution in the southern part of China and create more cultural and academic atmosphere in this internationalized city of Shenzhen. Currently there are 5 colleges in Shenzhen Graduate School of PKU including Business School, Law School, Biotechnology and Medicine Institute, Information Engineering Institute and College of Environmental Studies.

3. UTS running status

Under the Shenzhen government's investment, UTS already completed 38 modernized tall buildings with stadium, library, international convention center and multimedia hub all around. The teaching, scientific researching and students living area are independent from one another. The peripheral environment of UTS is very perfect with a nice view of hills and river. In order to meet student's life need, UTS specially introduced a large-scale supermarket; In addition, the government has also opened five public transportation lines. UTS also took the lead to use "One Card in Shenzhen", so teachers and students with the IC card may complete the lodging, local transportation, books borrowing and so on which is quite rare in the nation.

Although UTS is already extremely advanced in the hardware aspect, in software aspect it is not entirely as desired. Take Shenzhen Graduate School of Peking University for instance, so far, there are altogether almost 400 teaching and administrative staff. Most teachers come from Beijing campus, but majority of them are not "full-time" in Shenzhen which affects the teaching effect to some extent. While the library is not sufficient with only 400 thousand book collections compared the millions volume in Beijing. Even the students in UTS can get the same diploma, but their employed choice scopes are much narrower relatively. This causes many outside areas students unwill-

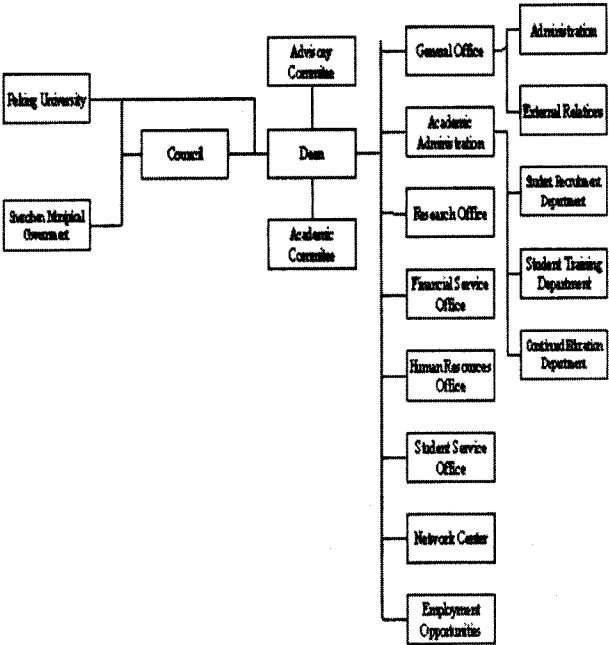


Chart: Shenzhen Graduate School of PKU Organization Framework

ing to come.

Though UTS is facing all sorts of difficulties at present, but the school and the students both positively attempt the new way to settle. As a graduate student in UTS, my experience is that, the postgraduate studies firstly must be depended on deep research in some special area which is different from the comprehensive study during undergraduate years. Besides taking some essential and elective courses, the most kernel duty is to study independently in my own academic field. From this way, the external environment of UTS extremely suits. On one hand the library book collection quantity is increasing gradually; moreover, convenient internet facility makes it possible to get massive readable e-essays. To exchange ideas with directors, schoolmates here need to make Beijing - Shenzhen two places round-trip as long as remote control like internet conference, email and so on.

In order to solve the lack of teaching strength, PKU Shenzhen campus is also making new attempt. Through the internet method, it can realize the Shenzhen - Beijing synchronization, so Shenzhen students may real-time watch the Beijing campus teaching process, and participate in discussion. Besides, PKU Shenzhen Graduate School is also diligently seeking cooperation with the local teaching resources. Take the College of Environmental Studies as an example, in the past year, the college invited the leaders, experts and scholars in Shenzhen environmental protection, to give lecture or conduct courses. This not only helps students get practical understanding of Shenzhen environment system, but also increases the social influence of UTS and provides help for student employment.

Another superiority of Shenzhen is close to Hong Kong and many Universities in Hong Kong are leading in Asia regardless of teaching or research. UTS uses the regional superiority to carry out exchange cooperation with Hong Kong Universities gradually. Every year there is a specific research topic about which UTS will organize students to carry on the investigation and study in Hong Kong, or invites Hong Kong professors to give a speech and so on. These ways all promote the academic exchange

between UTS and Hong Kong, and impel the development of UTS.

4. UTS enlightenment to university development

4.1 Comparison between UTS and other domestic UTs

The establishment of UTS is partly due to the Shenzhen local government and each university itself, but it also has the macroscopic environment to build UT in the nation wide. From September 2000, the first UT "East University Town" in Hebei Province opened up; a UT construction upsurge emerges quietly in many places. In one investigation from National Resources Department in 2003, there was at least one UT each in most provinces, at most there were 9. According to incomplete statistics, the number of special parks related to UTs already surpassed 50. The number is quite large, while the scale is also considerable: West UT in Shanxi is 4 km², Heze UT in Shandong province is 4.67km², Liaoning UT is 5.43 km² and five UTs in Zhejiang are planned to be 22.40 km².

So many UTs being built, partly alleviate the pressure of university itself from the recruitment expanding and promote local science and technology level in certain degree, however in practice the majority of UTs' working condition is not optimistic. Except the insufficient fund supply causes the severance in construction, more serious is the university can not maintain the original teaching quality. From this way, some UTs have become another form of land commercialization.

The main difference of UTS from other UTs is to introduce only the leading university, at the same time educate graduate students primarily. At present the four universities in UTS adopt the same standard as the alma mater and unify recruitment of students to make sure the quality. Powerful financial support from shenzhen government avoids UTS to commercialize the land operation like other UTs.

4.2 Comparison between UTS and oversea UTs

From first beginning in the middle age, university already has nearly 800 years history. In the devel-

oping process, many universities gather at a place. Around the university or university campus itself become cities with a certain scale which is frequently called as University Town.(UT) .World-wide famous UTs are such as Oxford and Cambridge UT in UK, Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology UT in the U.S., Tsukuba UT in Japan and so on. These UTs generally have at least one influencing university and attract famous scholars, outstanding students and high-tech companies; they cooperate to improve regional development and become the cities which mix the universities, inhabitants and enterprises.

UTs are divided into two patterns: One kind is represented by Cambridge University which gathered after hundreds of years .The other is built up in a short period under the support of government. The latter pattern usually is represented by Tsukuba University and this pattern is closely related to the financial situation of local government. From this point of view, UTS is more like to the second pattern but with method of multi-district education by famous universities. Even there are only a few years since UTS starts up, it is not difficult to find out the big difference between the UT in China and the overseas ones from the history background, developing status and establishment purpose. The development of UT needs fully consider local conditions of society, economy, culture, education, technical industry and so on.

5. UTS enlightenment on multi-district education

The first master-degree students in UTS graduate in June 2005.From the employment in Haerbin Institute of Technology Shenzhen campus, majors like engineering, computer, communication, environmental protection and new materials are in urgent need in Shenzhen;these graduates are accepted by well-known enterprises here and the percentage is nearly 95%.From this way, the start-up operation of UTS achieves the win-win strategy between universities and Shenzhen. There is some enlightenment from UTS' 3-year actual experience:

Firstly UTS obtains the advantage of famous universities and controls qualified teaching strength.

From practical operation, the hardware facility is easy to build, but what is difficult lies in the software aspect. Four leading universities in UTS all decide the disciplines under the whole planning and fully use the existing research outcome. UTS adopts diversified teaching methods to shorten the spatial distance: professor's non-periodical courses, internet video conference, exchange between students' union, these all obtain a good effect in practice.

Secondly, UTS' success is unseparatable from the support of Shenzhen. So a UT must try to get the cooperation from local society and it is the factor determining the final result. UTS benefits in the investment from the Shenzhen government, and gets away from the most familiar traps of other UTs in China.

Thirdly, the students' education must link to application. A basic task of university is to train the high level talented persons and the education should fit in the regional economic demand. When a university selects majors should think about the potential competence.

Finally, to the multi-district university, the crucial factor of success is whether it can benefit the local society in the economic and technical aspects. The resources disposition of universities are mostly from the local government, and this support is connected with what a university can contribute to the local city. So the subjects settings should consider the demand of regional economy and with foresight in future. The close cooperation between colleges and enterprises will definitely improve the education effect.

As an emerging method, multi-district education needs more attempt in practice. UTS has particular research value as it has the features of Chinese education ,UT development and cross-cities education. This essay is aimed to share the experience of UTS and PKU Shenzhen Graduate School, and draw on deeper discussion to this new topic in higher education and university management.

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