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COLLABORATION AND RESOURCE SHARING AMONG LIS SCHOOLS IN CHINA

FAN FAN

*Department of Information Management,
Peking University, Beijing 100871, China
E-mail: ffan@pku.edu.cn*

Abstract. Over the past ninety years, and more so over the recent twenty years, Library and Information Science schools in China have done a lot of work in collaborating and resource sharing. These activities consists of establishing LIS schools, training of teachers, compilation of teaching materials, change of names, application for the authority to enroll graduates and conferring degrees both of master and doctor, and academic exchanges. The demands of society and the policies of the government are important factors promoting the collaboration and resource sharing. Academic exchanges, such as academic meetings, ex-change visits and research papers, are the main channels for LIS schools to collaborate and share re-sources with each other.

Introduction

Chinese Library and Information science education is in line with international standards at its beginning, so it is characterized by opening to the outside world, rather than secluding itself, which leads to a good tradition of cooperating with others. As far back as 1913, the American librarian, Harry Clemens, delivered the course of library science in Nanjing University for the first time. Then in 1920, the first library science school in China, Boone Library School, was founded in Wuhan, whose founders, Miss Mary Elizabeth Wood, Samuel Tsu Yung Seng and Thomas Ching - Sen Hu had accepted their LIS education in America. As the second higher education base of LIS in China, the Department of LIS in Shanghai Citizen University was founded in 1925. Du Dingyou, who had gotten his three bachelor degrees from University of the Philippines, was appointed the dean of this department. Among its faculty, Samuel Tsu Yung Seng, Li Xiaoyuan and Hong Youfeng all returned from the United States. Two years later, another department of library science was built in Nanjing University; Li Xiaoyuan became the head of this department. He invited Liu Guojun and Hong Youfeng as his colleagues. As we know, Liu Guojun became one of the famous professors in the Department of library science in Peking University. In short, all the people mentioned above had studied library science abroad, then came back to give the lectures in different library science schools. All what they have done have promoted the collaboration and resource sharing among library science schools in China.

In 1950s, Chinese library science education accepted a lot of ideas of the former Soviet Union, which recommended studying the experience of U.S.A. During the period of the first five-year plan, a great deal of works of Soviet library science had been translated into Chinese and published in China. After signing the "Sino-USSR cultural cooperation pact", China sent a passel of students, such as Tong Cenggong, Peng Feizhang, Bao Zhenxi, Zhao Shiliang, Lü Jimin, Zheng Lili, and Zhao Qi, etc. to study library science in USSR. The whole nation began to study the library experience of Soviet Union. Cheng Huanwen (2005) evaluated, "This generation growing up at that time was engaged in the library science research under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. What they had accepted more is Soviet library science mode. The library science system which established according to the Soviet mode produced an effect on the one of today's." Since reform and opening-up, China has cast the eyes on U.S.A. and other countries directly. Therefore, we can say that the idea of the cooperation and resource sharing is one of the best traditions that the Chinese library science education possesses all the time.

In 1980s, Chinese LIS education has stepped into a faster development and greater change stage. According to the statistics given by Wu Weici (2003), during the short period of 10 years(1980-1990), the amount of LIS schools in Chain has increased from 2 to 52, which were distributed throughout the country such as comprehensive university, normal university, medical university, college of engineering, and agricultural college, etc. The demands of the society and state policies have promoted further cooperation and resource sharing among LIS schools.

Seminar

Since 1978, The Chinese government has invested much more capital in libraries and information centers which led to the more need for LIS education, and the Ministry of Education has convened some conferences to discuss how to develop the LIS education in China. In 1980s, it is often for the deans of the LIS departments throughout the country to have a meeting together. In recent years, a series of national and international seminars of LIS education have been holden one by one. For example, 2000 Sino-U.S. Symposium and Workshop on Library and Information Science Education in the Digital Age was held in Wuhan University, which gave an opportunity for the relative experts, scholars and librarians to interchange their academic achievements. It also indicates that some universities in China were making efforts to make their LIS programs excellent toward the 21st century. Then in 2002, the Library Science Discipline Guiding Committee of the Ministry of Education held an inaugural meeting in Nankai University, which achieved gratifying successes, such as to carry out the research on LIS education system in the 21st century, to plan the core courses and teaching program of Library Science, and to hold the meeting on Library Science Education and Reformation every year, etc. The latest meeting on the LIS graduate education was held in Peking University in November, 2005. The deans from about 10 LIS Schools took part in the meeting. Most of them introduced their work in the past several years. They paid more attention to the problems in LIS graduate education brought by shorting the length of schooling from 3 years to 2 years, and tried to find some ways to deal with them. Besides this, some of them suggested to set profession degree system, which emphasizes professional skill of library and information work as the supplement of LIS education system, just as Chen Chuanfu (2000) insisted several years ago. We usually say that meeting is the main way to seek unity of thinking and action in China, so is the LIS seminar for LIS schools.

Faculty

The new-established LIS schools learn actively from relevant brother's LIS schools for lack of experience and teachers which are glad to share resources with them. The former send their teachers to study in the latter, and invite experienced teachers as their part-time professors. The key LIS schools take on heavy responsibilities to train teachers for the new-established ones, which guarantee that the teachers in different LIS schools have the same teaching methods. Take the Department of Information Management in SUN YAT-SEN University as an example. On the one hand, it sends its teachers to study abroad, to participate actively various academic activities, and to contact extensively with the peers in the world. They bring back knowledge and teaching experience, which enrich the content of course and raise the research level. On the other hand, it invites famous specialists from other countries to give short-term lectures and the domestic experts to act as part-time professors. By doing this, it has a teacher troop with higher reputation. Another example is the Department of LIS in Nankai University. It also invites domestic and international well-known scholars, which includes some members of the Academic Degree Committee of the State Council as its part-time professors.

One important indicator judging the quality of faculty is degree, but most of the teachers in LIS are bachelors or masters. Today more and more young teachers in the LIS schools are trying to get the doctoral degrees without leaving their teaching posts. What they are doing ties the LIS schools where their study and where they teach tightly.

Textbook

The curriculum is vital to the realization of education goals, thus the teaching material is often compiled and used together. As a result, the curricula and the teaching content are alike very much. The history of compiling textbooks together can trace back to 1961. Three textbooks named "An Introduction of Library Science", "Library Collection and Catalogue" and "bibliography" were compiled by Peking University, Wuhan University and Culture University. Then in 1978, in order to fit in with the needs of the higher education, Peking University and Wuhan University made the education project of LIS, and began to compile the new textbooks. Among them, "An Introduction of Library Science" and "An Introduction to bibliography" were selected as the "selecting and editing project of liberal art textbooks in colleges and universities" made by the Ministry of Education. Thereafter there are other 50 textbooks selected into this project. In 1996, the Higher Education Bureau of Ministry of Education compiled and published the library science teaching program, which includes 10 core courses of library science, that is, Introduction to Library Science, Library Management, Document Classification, Library Collection and Reader Service, Document Catalogue, Bibliography and Library automation, etc.

In 1998, with the agreement of the Higher Education Bureau of Ministry of Education, Department of Information Management in Peking University, School of Library and Information Science in Wuhan University and Department of Information Management in Hebei University held a seminar on national professional education of information management in college and university. 46 representatives from 37 universities all over the country took part in the meeting. The topic of this meeting was to study and set the compulsory courses, which is the core courses for information management majors, namely, Management Science, Economics, Information Management, Data Structure and Database, Information Organization and retrieval, Computer Network and Management Information System. It has saved much time for each LIS school to make its own decisions.

Renaming

The renaming climaxes raised respectively by the school of library and information science in Wuhan University in 1984 and the department of information management in Peking University in 1992, no doubt, were the result of cooperation and the resources sharing among LIS schools in China. Perhaps renaming is regarded as a superficial reform, and more attention should be paid to the adjustment and deepening of inn structure of the discipline and teaching content. But the aim of rename is to enlarge the containing capacity of the traditional LIS with discipline development and social demands, to extend new research and teaching field, to train the students to possess more extensive scope of knowledge and adaptable abilities. And the change of the names still reflects the important transformation in Chinese LIS education. At the first time, many departments of Library Science added another specialty of Information Science, so they changed their name into Department of Library and Information Science. At the Second time, the Library and Information Science has been changed into Information Management.

Application for Authorization of Enrolling Graduates and Conferring Masters and Doctoral Degrees

It was in 1981 and 1984 that China formally set library science and information science graduate system respectively. As late as 1990, China set LIS doctoral degree system. In recent years, another turn of application for the authority of enrolling graduates and conferring degrees of both master and doctor is surging. According to the statistics given by Wu Weici (2000), by the end of 1999, there were 13 units, which can award Master's degree in library science, 18 units, which can award Master's degree in information science, 3 units, which can award Doctor's degree in library science, and 3 units, which can award Doctor's degree in information science. By the end of 2003, the amount increase sharply, there were 28 units, which can award Master's degree in library science, 36 units, which can award Master's degree in information science, 6 units, which can award Doctor's degree in library science, and 5 units, which can award Doctor's degree in information science. But now, there are other 6 units which have gotten the authority to award Doctor's degree in library science or information science. This try to keep the same pace with others is the newest form of cooperation and the resources sharing among LIS schools in China. The reason of this phenomenon is that people have recognized that only by enlarging the scale and increasing the level can develop LIS education to the full, consequently increase the discipline status and social influence of LIS.

Conclusion

LIS schools are both education institutions and scientific research bases. Thus it's important for LIS schools to strength the cooperation and resource sharing. Some people may think that the cooperation and resource sharing mentioned above are mostly imitation, that is, the key LIS schools in China copy the ones' example in USA, and the ordinary LIS schools follow the ones both in Peking University and Wuhan University. We need creation of our own, but following is not an absolutely bad thing. By cooperating and resource sharing, we can save much time to do other more necessary things.

Academic exchanges, such as academic meeting, exchange visits and research paper, are the main channels for the LIS schools to collaborate and share resource with each other. Besides the seminars of LIS education mentioned above, there are a lot of other meetings in the LIS circle, which give them abundant opportunities to share their ideas and experience. Moreover, the authorities guide the direction of LIS development by making speeches or publishing articles. Besides these channels, Internet has become more and more important in the communication among the LIS schools. We believe that Internet will make the cooperation and the resources sharing among LIS schools much easier and faster than ever, which will in turn make the library science education in China get further development.

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