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Research on the Strategic Management of Faculty Stability in Universities under China's "Double First-Class" Initiative

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Abstract: The "Double First-Class" initiative is a major strategic deployment in China's higher education sector, aimed at promoting the connotative development of universities and enhancing their international competitiveness. Talent is the primary resource and key support for achieving these construction goals. However, the advancement of this initiative has highlighted the problem of the disorderly flow of high-level academic talents. Eastern universities, leveraging economic advantages, have created a "siphon effect," causing severe brain drain in central and western institutions. Frequent, interest-driven job changes by high-level talents disrupt research teams, interrupt discipline construction, and undermine the balanced distribution of higher education resources, contradicting the initiative's original intent. Traditional management models relying on contract constraints offer only post-event control and fail to ensure talent stability. Therefore, the strategic management of faculty stability must transcend conventional approaches by integrating talent team construction into the overall university development strategy. This involves achieving value symbiosis between talents and universities through top-level design, systematic policy implementation, and long-term mechanism construction. In this context, "talent team stability" implies a reasonable structure, orderly flow, and alignment with the university's discipline construction plan, rather than absolute immobility. Furthermore, "strategic management" entails forward-looking planning, systematic layout, and dynamic adjustment to optimize talent resource allocation. This study explores these dimensions, offering a framework to address current talent flow challenges and promote the sustainable development of universities in alignment with national strategic needs.

Keywords: higher education; faculty stability; brain drain; strategic management; talent management

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1. Strategic Logic of Talent Team Stability Construction in Universities

1.1. Strategic Goal: Aligning with University Development

The strategic goal of talent team stability construction in universities must be closely aligned with the university's development positioning, discipline characteristics, and long-term planning to achieve the resonance of these three elements. First, discipline construction adaptability is crucial. Disciplines serve as the core carriers of university development, and the stability of talent teams forms the foundation of discipline construction. Universities should strategically deploy talent teams around key disciplines, advantageous disciplines, and emerging disciplines to ensure the integrity of talent echelons in core areas and prevent interruptions in discipline construction caused by talent attrition. For instance, in basic disciplines, where scientific research projects often require long-term and continuous efforts, the stability of talent teams directly influences the output of research results and the enhancement of a discipline's influence. Similarly, in interdisciplinary fields, stable and collaborative cross-disciplinary teams are essential for fostering integration and innovation over extended periods. Second, talent echelon sustainability is a key consideration. The stability of university talent teams is not only about retaining current talents but also about building a comprehensive talent structure

comprising "leading talents - academic backbones - young reserves." This ensures the intergenerational transfer of expertise and knowledge. Leading talents act as the "drivers" of discipline development, academic backbones provide critical support for research and teaching, and young reserves represent the potential for future growth. By establishing a well-structured and seamlessly connected talent echelon, universities can mitigate risks associated with significant talent loss and ensure sustainable development. Finally, fostering a strong sense of school cultural identity is indispensable. The stability of talent teams is closely tied to the sense of belonging and identity that talents feel toward their institution. Universities should strengthen the emotional connection between talents and the institution by fostering shared values and development goals. When individuals align their personal growth with the university's vision, they are more likely to prioritize the institution's interests and resist external influences, thereby contributing to the long-term stability and cohesion of the talent team.

1.2. Strategic Dimension: From Passive Constraint to Active Construction

The strategic management of talent team stability construction in universities requires a shift in approach from reactive measures to proactive strategies. At the conceptual level, the focus should transition from "retaining talents with treatment" to "retaining talents with career opportunities, emotional connection, and cultural integration." Traditional talent management has often relied heavily on salary and benefits as the primary tools for retention. However, as the needs of talent become increasingly diverse, material incentives alone are insufficient to address their professional aspirations and personal fulfillment. Universities must prioritize the creation of robust career development platforms, ensuring access to ample research resources and fostering an environment of academic freedom. Simultaneously, institutions should strengthen emotional bonds with their staff by offering genuine humanistic care and cultivating a supportive and harmonious workplace atmosphere [1, 2]. Additionally, fostering a distinctive campus culture can help individuals find a sense of self-worth through cultural alignment and identity. At the value level, it is essential to redefine the relationship between talents and universities, emphasizing their interconnected nature as a "community of shared future." Talents are the driving force behind the advancement of universities, while universities serve as critical platforms for the growth and development of talents. This interdependence necessitates mutual respect and collaboration [1]. Universities should recognize and support the central role of talents, addressing their developmental needs and providing opportunities for them to achieve their full potential. In turn, talents should cultivate a sense of responsibility and commitment to their institutions, actively contributing to their growth and development. This reciprocal relationship fosters a dynamic environment where both individuals and institutions can thrive together, achieving shared progress and success.

1.3. Strategic Basis: Based on Practical Needs and Theoretical Support

The strategic management of talent team stability construction in universities is underpinned by both practical necessities and robust theoretical frameworks. From a practical standpoint, the enduring nature of university scientific research projects, the cyclical progression of discipline construction, and the comprehensive nature of talent cultivation underscore the critical importance of maintaining stable talent teams [2]. Scientific research projects often span several years or more, and the premature departure of key personnel can disrupt or even terminate these projects, leading to significant setbacks. Similarly, discipline construction is a gradual and cumulative process that relies on consistent contributions from a stable team to ensure sustained development and innovation. Furthermore, talent cultivation represents the core mission of universities, and a stable faculty team is essential for maintaining and enhancing the quality of education and training provided to students. On the theoretical front, several foundational concepts reinforce the importance of talent stability. Motivation theory in human resource management highlights the role of addressing individual needs to foster enthusiasm and commitment in the workplace. Organizational identity theory

emphasizes that a strong sense of belonging and alignment with institutional values enhances loyalty and retention among team members. Additionally, the resource-based view of strategic management identifies talent as a critical resource that provides universities with a competitive edge. These theoretical perspectives collectively offer valuable insights and guidance for the strategic management of talent team stability, affirming its role as a cornerstone of institutional competitiveness and long-term success.

2. Practical Challenges of Talent Team Stability Construction in Universities

2.1. External Environment Impacts

Currently, the construction of talent team stability in universities is facing impacts from many external environments. First, regional development imbalance. The eastern region, with its developed economy, abundant scientific research resources, and comprehensive living facilities, exerts a strong attraction for high-level talents, creating a "siphon effect" that draws talents away from other regions. In contrast, universities in central and western regions face challenges such as weaker economic strength, less advanced scientific research conditions, and less favorable living environments. This disparity makes it difficult for these universities to compete with their eastern counterparts, leading to significant brain drain. Such regional imbalances not only exacerbate the uneven distribution of higher education resources but also hinder the development potential of universities in less developed areas. Second, intensified market competition. The dynamic assessment mechanism of the "Double First-Class" initiative has driven universities to engage in fierce competition for talent [3–5]. To achieve favorable outcomes in these assessments, some universities have resorted to aggressive talent recruitment strategies, offering high salaries and benefits as incentives. This competitive bidding approach disrupts the equilibrium of the talent market, inflates the perceived value of certain talents, and escalates the overall costs of talent acquisition for universities. Furthermore, this heightened competition has encouraged short-term behaviors among talents, with some individuals frequently changing jobs in pursuit of better compensation, often at the expense of their long-term career development. Third, changes in social concepts. The evolution of the market economy and the diversification of social values have led some individuals to view frequent job-hopping as a means of enhancing personal value [5, 6]. This shift has weakened the spirit of contract and professional loyalty, with some talents prioritizing personal interests over their collaborative relationships with universities and their broader social responsibilities. These changes in societal attitudes present significant challenges to maintaining the stability of university talent teams.

2.2. Internal Management Shortcomings

The deficiencies in internal management of universities are significant factors influencing the stability and retention of talent teams. Firstly, there is a notable lack of top-level design in many institutions. Some universities fail to establish comprehensive, long-term strategies for talent team development, resulting in a disconnect between the processes of talent introduction and cultivation. This often manifests in an overemphasis on recruitment rather than effective utilization, with a focus on short-term gains rather than sustainable growth. For instance, certain universities prioritize the rapid acquisition of high-level talents to boost their reputation but neglect the necessary follow-up measures for nurturing and integrating these individuals into the institutional framework. Consequently, these talents may struggle to adapt to the university's environment and eventually opt to leave [7, 8]. Secondly, the reliance on a single incentive mechanism further exacerbates the issue. While competitive salaries and benefits remain the primary tools for retaining talent, non-monetary incentives such as robust career development platforms, a supportive academic atmosphere, and personalized humanistic care are often insufficient. This narrow approach fails to address the diverse needs of professionals, particularly high-level talents who place greater value on opportunities for academic growth and meaningful engagement. Without these conditions, the likelihood of talent

attrition increases. Lastly, the persistence of a flawed evaluation system compounds the problem. The prevailing focus on metrics such as publication counts, academic titles, and professional ranks fosters a culture of short-termism, where individuals prioritize immediate research outputs over teaching quality and the holistic advancement of their disciplines. Additionally, inequities in evaluation practices can undermine morale, diminishing both the motivation and sense of belonging among faculty members. Addressing these systemic shortcomings is essential for fostering a stable and thriving academic workforce.

2.3. Changes in Individual Talent Demands

With the advancement of society and the evolution of professional environments, the individual demands of talents have undergone significant transformations. Firstly, there is a growing emphasis on diversified development needs. High-level professionals increasingly prioritize not only material benefits but also access to robust scientific research resources, academic autonomy, opportunities for career advancement, and an enhanced quality of life [9, 10]. These individuals seek environments that foster innovation, allow them to independently select research directions, and provide ample opportunities for professional growth. Furthermore, their expectations extend beyond work-related aspects to include housing, education for their children, healthcare, and other facets of personal well-being. Secondly, there is a noticeable shift towards upgraded value pursuits. Many professionals aspire to play a more active role in institutional governance, seeking greater influence and opportunities to align their personal values with the broader goals of their organizations. They aim to contribute their expertise and insights to institutional development, moving beyond traditional roles confined to research and teaching. This evolution in value pursuits necessitates that universities and institutions adopt talent management practices that emphasize inclusivity, respect for individual perspectives, and recognition of the pivotal role talents play in shaping organizational strategies. Such measures are essential to meet the evolving expectations of modern professionals and ensure their sustained engagement and satisfaction.

3. Strategic Measures for Talent Team Stability Construction in Universities

3.1. Top-Level Design: Building a "Strategy-Led" Talent Development System

Universities should strengthen top-level design and build a "strategy-led" talent development system to provide clear guidance for the stability of talent teams. First, it is essential to formulate a comprehensive talent development strategic plan. Universities need to align their strategic objectives with their institutional positioning, discipline characteristics, and long-term development goals. This involves creating medium- and long-term plans for talent team construction, which clearly define the objectives, tasks, and measures required to ensure stability. Talent stability should be prioritized as a core indicator and integrated into the institution's overarching development strategy. Additionally, universities must assess the needs of discipline development to establish a balanced and high-quality talent introduction and cultivation plan, ensuring an optimal structure and composition of the talent team. Second, coordination between discipline construction and talent allocation must be strengthened. Discipline construction serves as the cornerstone of talent team development. Universities should strategically deploy talent teams around key and emerging disciplines, prioritizing the stability of talent in core areas. By leveraging discipline development, institutions can attract and retain talent, enabling individuals to achieve their professional aspirations within the framework of academic growth. For instance, universities can utilize key disciplines to establish advanced scientific research platforms, offering ample resources and opportunities for academic exchange. This approach fosters an environment that stimulates innovation and enhances the vitality of talent. Finally, universities should establish a robust talent flow prediction mechanism. Regular assessments of the talent team's status are necessary to analyze trends in talent mobility and develop proactive response strategies. For individuals in critical positions, focused attention should be given to understanding their

professional needs and ideological dynamics, enabling the implementation of targeted retention measures. Furthermore, fostering open communication and trust with talent is vital to creating a harmonious and stable working environment that supports long-term institutional goals.

3.2. Mechanism Innovation: Creating a "Multi-Dimensional Incentive" Retention Model

Universities should focus on innovating incentive mechanisms to establish a "multi-dimensional incentive" retention model that addresses the diverse needs of academic talents. First, in terms of career incentives, universities can create personalized development platforms tailored to individual expertise and aspirations. For instance, implementing a "chief scientist responsibility framework" can empower leading talents by granting them decision-making authority over research project approvals, team composition, and resource allocation. Similarly, a "young talent cultivation program" can be introduced to support early-career researchers by providing start-up funding, mentorship opportunities, and platforms for academic exchange, thereby fostering their rapid professional growth. Second, emotional incentives are crucial for creating a supportive and inclusive environment. Universities should prioritize humanistic care by addressing both the professional and personal challenges faced by talents. Establishing regular communication channels between school leadership and high-level talents can help identify and resolve their concerns effectively. Additionally, organizing diverse cultural and recreational activities can promote collaboration and camaraderie among faculty members. Providing access to healthcare services and psychological counseling further ensures the well-being of academic staff. Third, value incentives play a pivotal role in aligning individual goals with institutional objectives. A "talent contribution point system" can be introduced to link achievements in teaching, research, and community service with tangible rewards such as promotions, salary increments, and honorary recognitions. Furthermore, encouraging talents to participate in institutional governance through a representative deliberation mechanism can foster a sense of ownership and engagement. By actively involving them in decision-making processes, universities can ensure that talents feel valued as integral contributors to the institution's development. This comprehensive approach not only enhances retention but also strengthens the symbiotic relationship between individual and organizational growth.

3.3. Institutional Guarantee: Improving a "Long-Term Constraint" Stability Mechanism

Universities should enhance institutional frameworks to establish a "long-term stability" mechanism that ensures the retention and development of talent teams. First, employment contract management must be optimized. Universities should clearly define the rights, obligations, service periods, and breach-of-contract liabilities within employment agreements. Additionally, incorporating "career development clauses" can outline the support provided by the institution for the professional growth of its staff, transforming the contract into a cooperative agreement that fosters mutual trust and commitment. During the execution of these contracts, it is essential to uphold the obligations of both parties, ensuring that the legitimate rights and interests of talents are protected. Second, a robust talent compensation and recovery mechanism should be implemented. For individuals who make significant contributions to the institution, long-term service rewards such as phased housing subsidies and retirement honorary allowances can be introduced to encourage sustained dedication. Conversely, in cases where talent attrition results in substantial losses, institutions should pursue appropriate legal remedies to recover damages, thereby reinforcing accountability. This balanced approach of rewards and responsibilities can strengthen the sense of mission among staff. Lastly, the order of talent mobility must be standardized. Universities should collaborate with peer institutions to establish a "Self-Discipline Agreement on Talent Mobility," aimed at discouraging unethical recruitment practices and maintaining a healthy talent market [11, 12]. Simultaneously, the state should introduce a compensation mechanism to support universities that recruit talent from underdeveloped regions, such as central, western, and northeastern areas. This policy would help address regional disparities and

promote equitable talent distribution. By implementing these measures, universities can create a sustainable and equitable environment that supports both institutional growth and the professional development of their staff.

3.4. Cultural Shaping: Cultivating a "Value Identity" Organizational Culture

Universities play a pivotal role in fostering a strong organizational culture that emphasizes "value identity" to enhance the sense of belonging and identity among talents. To achieve this, several strategies can be implemented. Firstly, promoting academic spirit is essential. Universities should cultivate an environment that prioritizes dedicated scholarship and the pursuit of truth, while discouraging impetuous and utilitarian attitudes toward academic work. By fostering a relaxed and inclusive academic atmosphere, institutions can encourage talents to engage in innovative research, respect diverse academic perspectives, and appreciate the value of their contributions. This approach allows individuals to realize their self-worth within a supportive academic community. Secondly, strengthening school history education is another critical measure. Universities can organize activities such as school history exhibitions and alumni story-sharing sessions to deepen talents' understanding of the institution's historical development and cultural heritage [13]. These initiatives can inspire a sense of pride and belonging, motivating individuals to align themselves with the school's values and contribute to its growth. Finally, shaping a common vision is vital for unifying personal and institutional goals. By integrating the university's development objectives with individual aspirations, talents can perceive themselves as integral to the institution's progress. Vision planning activities can guide individuals to harmonize their personal ambitions with the university's mission, fostering a shared sense of purpose and enhancing collective cohesion and motivation.

4. Implementation Paths for Talent Team Stability Construction in Universities

4.1. Organizational Guarantee: Establish a Talent Work Leading Group

Universities should establish a talent work leading group led by senior administrative leaders, coordinating personnel, scientific research, teaching, finance, and other departments. This group would be responsible for formulating strategic plans for talent development, implementing relevant policies, and promoting interdepartmental coordination. Regular meetings should be held to address major challenges in talent team construction and to devise effective solutions. All departments must collaborate closely to create a unified effort, ensuring that measures aimed at stabilizing and strengthening talent teams are effectively executed [14]. By fostering a cohesive and well-organized framework, universities can enhance their ability to attract, retain, and develop high-quality talent, thereby supporting their long-term academic and institutional goals.

Funding: Universities should increase investment in talent team construction, establish a special fund for talent stability, which is used for talent development platform construction, incentive rewards, living security, and other aspects. The special fund should be earmarked for specific purposes to ensure the rational use of funds. At the same time, universities should actively seek support from social resources, broaden funding sources, and provide sufficient funding guarantee for talent team stability construction.

Standard Title: Universities should establish a dynamic monitoring and adjustment mechanism for talent team stability construction, and regularly evaluate the construction effectiveness. Evaluation indicators should include talent turnover rate, talent satisfaction, discipline development level, and other aspects. According to the evaluation results, adjust strategic plans and policy measures in a timely manner, forming a closed-loop management of "planning - implementation - evaluation - optimization." Through dynamic adjustment, continuously improve the working mechanism of talent team stability construction and improve work effectiveness.

Standard Title: The construction of talent team stability in universities is a systematic and long-term strategic project, which requires collaborative efforts from multiple dimensions such as top-level design, mechanism innovation, institutional guarantee, and cultural shaping. Under the background of the "Double First-Class" initiative, universities must deeply understand the

importance of talent team stability, transform management concepts, innovate management models, and achieve common development of talents and universities through strategic management. Only by establishing a stable and high-quality talent team can universities provide solid support for connotative development, promote the smooth realization of the "Double First-Class" construction goals, and contribute to the long-term development of China's higher education cause.

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