

Exploring Strategies to Enhance and Optimize the File Management of International Students in Chinese Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Global economy is interconnected, and university collaborations are becoming more global. As more international students come to study in China, student file management is being put to the test. In this essay, we look at strategies to improve and maximize the management of students' files in light of current practices. Second, suggestions are made on how to improve and optimize the management of student files from a development perspective.

Keywords: International students; Higher education; Chinese colleges and universities; File management

International exchange and cooperation between nations provide a resource that is otherwise unavailable for the long-term expansion of universities because of the rapid development of economic globalization. The opportunity for the globalization of Chinese higher education and the internationalization of foreign students has been greatly enhanced by China's rapid development. Based on this, improving the management of international students' files is a crucial link to advancing the long-term advancement of the educational endeavors of these students.

1. Current situation of international student file management in Chinese colleges and universities

1.1 Unclear file management system

Distinct institutions currently use different admission management strategies, resulting in various file management strategies. The university file management department, the international student management department, and the teaching units are among those involved in the file management system. Each department is accountable for its own tasks and operates independently with insufficient communication. Additionally, each department collects and stores the data of only its own, which leads to varied filing practices and even unified student data across departments. The management of files is too loose as a result of this multifaceted strategy, making it challenging to maintain integrity and systematization.

1.2 Administrative decentralization

Universities' management responsibilities fluctuate due to different student populations. Usually, all foreign students are overseen by the International Cooperation and Exchange Office, however once enrolled, they continue to study in different schools. Each school involved carries out teaching independently. Before students graduate, the university will compile all the data and transmit it to the Registrar's Office or Graduate School for processing, and then the data will be held in the International Exchange Center. The loose management of student files brings challenge to integrity and systematization.

1.3 Inadequate preservation methods

Firstly, storage cycles are different. Most institutions have policies for the horizontal archiving of international student files, which are given to the university archives after graduation. However, it might be challenging to locate and use this sort of grouping. In general, the files of international students are maintained for ever, whereas those of non-academic students are preserved for as long as necessary.

Secondly, inconsistent management exists across units. Since the identity information of foreign students is complicated and the overlapping of names and passport numbers happens occasionally, omissions often occur in the process of decentralization. Due to objective factors such as enlistment in the military and academic difficulties, academic students need to suspend, transfer, repeat and resume their studies. Due to long formation period, changes in circumstances and inconsistent departments, uncoordinated files can easily arise.

Thirdly, preservation conditions are different. The management of student files varies with different education levels. Generally, the archive office focuses on the files of academic students who have been studying and learning for a long time, while there are no strict rules for those who are less qualified. Currently, most of the student files kept are paper files. However even if available, students are not required to organize and submit them to the archive office. The paper files of international students lack cross-institutional universality and cannot be used as an intermediary to exchange experiences.

2. Main problems of current file management

As the number of international students continues to grow, file management awareness increases and strengthens. Standardization of student files becomes more prominent. Currently, shortcomings still exist in student file management, leaving a big gap with the rapid development of the university's foreign exchange and cooperation.

Firstly, the function orientation is unclear and the awareness of archives is weak. Currently, most universities in China do not set up a special archives office. Due to the unsound management system of archives and the lack of specialized managers, their awareness of archival confidentiality, management and service is relatively weak, which affects the management service level and the quality of effective utilization of foreign students' archives.

Secondly, document management as well as information collection is not standardized. The study activities of international students involve study, living and employment, and each of them has different functions. For example, teaching materials are mainly handled by the academic affairs office, living materials by the logistics and property departments, and employment materials by the admission and employment departments. The lack of coordination causes scattered collection and storage, which brings inconvenience to the use of students' archives.

3. Ways to improve and optimize the file management of international students

3.1 International student file management system

Since the Ministry of Education promulgated the regulations on the physical classification of university archives, foreign affairs archives have been included in the national categories. The Ministry of Education has also issued regulations on the management of archives, which clarify the scope and methods of foreign student archives management. Colleges and universities should formulate a scientific management system according to relevant laws and regulations and combine the management status of all aspects. International student file management should be strengthened and the training of relevant staff should be enhanced to improve quality.

3.2 Strengthen the overall management of archives

International students' data are currently organized by relevant departments and transferred to the archives office. As a result, each functional department's personnel play a crucial role in the standardization of papers, information gathering, and the accuracy of the system. Because of the complexity of their jobs and the absence of a formal professional education program, they usually have poor file management knowledge and abilities.

The archives department shall actively perform hands-on training for foreign affairs work and routinely monitor the quality in accordance with the separation of daily student work and instructional management. To ensure the materials transferred to the archives after students graduate are more thorough and reliable, it is important to improve archival awareness and training. Therefore, the staff will be better able to keep track of gathering various types of documents and audiovisual materials, classifying and organizing them, and determining their potential value.

3.3 Strengthen the management of international student files

In order to manage student files more effectively, we should start by reducing the basic information input procedure for students, sharing the information resources of student files, and integrating data on student performance.

3.3.1 Simplified process of international students registration

Administrators often register and submit student personal information in accordance with the specifications on the school registration form. It is required for managers to update and improve student information in a timely manner. Students who use

an electronic file management system can use the Internet to download the data they require. At this point, the school may scientifically screen and use it based on the student's whole profile, and the student can update and augment their profile accordingly.

3.3.2 Integrated management of grade information

The management of student grade information, which includes regular grades and elective grades, is a crucial role for students' academic achievement. The administration of students' academic performance in the past was laborious. However, the development of suitable management strategies for the subject matter of each semester's teaching program is possible with the installation of an information file management system. Students may readily review and manage the information about their marks for studies and professional growth since teachers keep thorough files of students' grades and publish them after verifying. We should concentrate on gathering different types of documentation, such as images, audio recordings, videos, and emails, in addition to standard paper papers, to better depict the entire educational journey of overseas students. Relevant units should work together with the archival unit to effectively gather all types of photographs and audio-visual materials during the education of international students, describe them in detail in accordance with the regulations, and file them as soon as possible to prevent the loss of materials.

3.4 Strengthen computer system management

The National Information System for the Management of International Students in China was established by the Ministry of Education in 2009, making electronic documents the primary content of the file management of students studying in China. The management system has various features, including enrollment, daily processing, statistical analysis of student information, and data query on graduation in international study programs. All universities and institutions must register and log in as independent working unit after implementing the national system. Other institutions may then check through the network, enabling internal sharing.

However, for general colleges and universities, electronic file information is still in an early stage. Only a few universities have been able to put in place dedicated administration staff, timely updating of student information, use of instructional management platforms and visa expiration alerts to track students' study hours and study time, and use of web-based features to generate different certificates. Easy access and convenient archiving are two benefits of the electronic document system, but stability and usability require robust technological support. The electronic archiving work in ordinary universities suffers from the problems of insufficient manpower and lack of full-time management personnel. Insufficient staffing and a lack of management people who work full-time are challenges that affect the electronic archiving activity in typical universities.

The author of this essay suggests that colleges and universities should enhance and utilize the current file management system as soon as possible and gradually establish electronic files based on paper file optimization, entering students' personal information, semester courses, and study results into the system, and sharing internal information through encryption. We can only speed up networked file management and use by reasonably standardizing paper files and electronic files.

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