

Regional Collaboration and Cooperation in Higher Education 地区高等教育合作

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Introduction (导言)

- ◆ The benefits of collaboration and cooperation (地区合作收益) are at a maximum (最大化) when the two collaborating regions/institutions are the most different. When they are different they can complement (互补) each other—one's strength can compensate for the other's weakness. There is less to be gained when the two collaborating regions/institutions are very similar, except through economies of scale but such economies are easier to achieve within regions rather than across regions.
- ◆ Inter-regional collaboration and cooperation (地区间合作) can yield more significant benefits than intra-regional collaboration and cooperation (地区内合作) because the institutions are likely to be more different (and also do not have a history of competition).

Introduction (导言)

- ◆ However, the differences between regions/institutions should be more on the fields of study (学科领域) and the environment (教研环境), rather than the quality of the faculty members and students (教师及学生的质量). The qualities of the faculty members and students of the collaborating universities in the two regions should actually be comparable so that both the faculty members and the students at one university will fit in comfortably at the other university and vice versa.
- ◆ Moreover, similar qualities of faculty members and students generally imply similar academic standards, which in turn make the mutual and reciprocal recognition of courses and credits across the two collaborating universities much easier.

Introduction (导言)

- ◆ Differences in the languages used between two regions can impede collaboration and cooperation but can be an advantage under some circumstances in this age of globalization because they allow the faculty and students to broaden their perspectives and experience different cultural environments, in addition to having the opportunity to improve their language skills.

Regional Differences and Similarities

地区间的异同

- ◆ What are the relevant regional differences and similarities in addition to languages?
 - ◆ The infrastructure, facilities and equipment (e.g., cyclotron, linear accelerator, library collections)
 - ◆ The costs of teachers and staff, including technical manpower
 - ◆ The size and quality of the manpower pool
 - ◆ The availability of research funding
 - ◆ The fields of study offered
 - ◆ The degree of internationalization

The Natural Advantages of Beijing

北京的天然优势

- ◆ Beijing has the following advantages:
 - ◆ As the nation's capital, Beijing has unique advantages—there is an abundance of resources, not only from the Ministry of Education and the People's Government of the Municipality of Beijing, but also from all the other Ministries and other Government Agencies
 - ◆ Beijing also has a long and glorious history and is the location of great universities, museums, galleries, research institutes, national research institutions such as the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
 - ◆ Beijing has a long tradition of culture
 - ◆ Beijing has comprehensive coverage of almost all fields of study
 - ◆ Beijing attracts the best talents from the entire nation

The Natural Advantages of Hong Kong

香港的天然优势

- ◆ Hong Kong has the following advantages:
 - ◆ Hong Kong has first-rate, comprehensive, research-based universities, with strong links to the international academic community
 - ◆ Hong Kong attracts a large number of international teachers and students. A non-Chinese speaker can live, study and work in Hong Kong using only English without any problem.
 - ◆ There is complete academic freedom in the educational institutions in Hong Kong.
 - ◆ There is also complete freedom of access to information—the internet is entirely open and the press is among the freest in the world.
 - ◆ Hong Kong provides excellent protection to intellectual property rights.
 - ◆ As a financial, international trade and logistics center, Hong Kong also has special capabilities in these fields.

The Modes of Regional Collaboration (地区合作模式)

- ◆ Exchange of undergraduate students (本科生的交换)
- ◆ Exchange of research graduate students (研究生的交换)
- ◆ Exchange of faculty members (教师的交换)
- ◆ Collaborative research (合作研究) between faculty members of collaborating universities in the two regions
- ◆ Joint programmes and joint degrees (联合培养项目及联合学位) —expansion of both the pool of faculty members and the pool of students, enabling deeper coverage of fields and sub-fields of study
- ◆ Special dedicated programmes (特殊专业项目) (e.g., veterinary medicine, contemporary Chinese history, nuclear engineering)—educating the students of one region at a university at the other region in a field of study not available in the local region

The Benefits of Regional Collaboration and Cooperation (地区合作收益)

- ◆ Specialization and comparative advantage (专业化及比较优势) —both regions/institutions are better off. Students, both undergraduate and graduate, can take courses and participate in programmes not otherwise offered in the universities in their home regions. Faculty members with special expertise can offer courses at a collaborating university in the other region which are otherwise unavailable, thus enriching its curriculum.
- ◆ Economies of scale (规模经济) through specialization and division of labour across regions. (Thus critical mass can be achieved.)

The Benefits of Regional Collaboration and Cooperation (地区合作收益)

- ◆ Free movement of manpower resources (人力资源的自由流动) —augmentation of potential supply
- ◆ Counter-cyclical movements of skilled manpower (技术人员的反经济周期流动)
- ◆ Exchange students (交换生) are exposed to different cultures and ways of life which enable them to broaden their perspective and develop the tolerance for alternative views. They are also better equip to live and work in an increasingly globalised world.

Examples of Possible Fields for Beijing-Hong Kong Collaboration and Cooperation

- ◆ Architecture/Urban Planning (建筑学或城市规划)
- ◆ Bio-Medical Research (生物医学研究)
- ◆ Chinese Art, Culture and History (中国艺术、文化及历史)
- ◆ Medicine (医学)
- ◆ Nuclear Engineering (核工程)
- ◆ Physics (High Energy) (物理学 (高能))
- ◆ Remote Sensing (遥感技术)

The Necessary Conditions for Successful Regional Collaboration

- ◆ In general, it is more effective to have collaboration at the institutional (university) and sub-institutional level (科研机构间的合作) rather than the regional level. Collaboration at the regional level led by the regional governments works less well, except in circumstances that certain fields of study are only offered in one region but not the other.
- ◆ Each university and its faculty members themselves must be motivated (自发的) to collaborate with their respective counterparts in the other region—that is—they themselves must seek and expect direct benefits resulting from the collaboration and cooperation. Only then will they work hard to make collaboration and cooperation a success.
- ◆ However, the regional governments must also be supportive (地区政府的支持), especially if the educational institutions are publicly funded institutions.

The Necessary Conditions for Successful Regional Collaboration

- ◆ What the regional governments can do:
 - ◆ The respective governments can facilitate recruitment, entry and exit of faculty members and students.
 - ◆ They can facilitate the two-way remittance or transfer of funds.
 - ◆ They can relax restrictions on the use of research funds outside the region. Moreover, they can also encourage joint application for public research funds from collaborating universities in both regions.
 - ◆ They can establish procedures for mutual and reciprocal recognition of degrees and professional qualifications, and for participation in examinations leading to academic and/or professional qualifications.
 - ◆ They can authorize joint programmes between collaborating universities in the respective regions as well as the award of joint degrees by collaborating universities.
 - ◆ They can provide scholarships and fellowships for the exchange of undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and faculty members between the two regions.

The Necessary Conditions for Successful Regional Collaboration

- ◆ What the universities can do:
 - ◆ They can establish procedures for mutual and reciprocal recognition of courses and credits for degree purposes.
 - ◆ They can facilitate joint programmes and the award of joint degrees with selected partner universities and in selected fields of study.
 - ◆ They can facilitate the exchange of students, faculty members, and post-doctoral fellows with collaborating partner universities.

Concluding Remarks

- ◆ There is a great deal of room for fruitful collaboration and cooperation between higher educational institutions of Beijing and Hong Kong.
- ◆ Such collaboration and cooperation can be greatly facilitated by the respective regional governments.
- ◆ However, ultimately, success of such collaboration and cooperation depends on the active, voluntary participation of the faculty members and students in the higher educational institutions in the two regions.