

**Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools as a new normal ——
promote the construction of a quality guarantee system**

Speech at “Sino-Australia Forum on Transnational Education and Student Mobility”

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Honorable host, distinguished guests, and dear friends,

Good afternoon!

It's a great pleasure to be here at Sino-Australia Forum on Transnational Education and Student Mobility. Today, transnational education is undoubtedly an important part of education, and we all have a stake in student mobility. Therefore, it is certainly of great significance to exchange ideas on the theme of transnational education and student mobility.

My speech today concerns the following three aspects:

1. Features of current transnational education and student mobility in China; 2. New situations of developing transnational education and student mobility in China; 3. Common mission and responsibility of Sino-Australia transnational education and student mobility.

Over the past 3 decades of reform and opening-up, China's economy has rapidly developed with globalization, and China's education is also growing in this process of internationalization. In the past 30 years, China's transnational education (Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools) has appeared in various forms, including exchanges between universities, double degrees, Chinese-foreign joint educational programs, running educational institutions abroad, establishing Confucius institutions and Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run institutions and programs.

As is suggested by the organizer, first I would like to explain the differences between Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools and Chinese-foreign joint educational programs. In Chinese-foreign joint educational programs, Chinese and foreign universities recruit students who have passed the Chinese College Entrance Examination. The students will not only study their own majors, but also attend Chinese-foreign joint educational activities in the forms of 2+2, 3+1, etc. Chinese universities and the foreign universities that they cooperate with will apply their own training modes and teaching plans when the students study there. It's like the railway policemen who just mind business within the area they are in charge of. In this process, Chinese universities and foreign universities may work together to develop

some courses, but the joint educational programs does not involve any systematic introduction of foreign courses and educational resources, and it does not cause any change in the tuition for the students. By contrast, Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools involves a systemic introduction of educational resources, including teachers, courses, and cooperation in developing plans of cultivating talents. The tuition fee is based on the cost of running such schools.

1. Features of current transnational education and student mobility in China

Over the past 3 decades of China's reform and opening-up, Chinese students going abroad for study, foreign students coming to China for study, and Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools have become an important part of China's education opening-up to the world. I would like to list 3 sets of data related to Sino-Australia transnational education. The first is the number of Chinese students going abroad for study. Statistics show that 459,800 Chinese students went to over 80 countries for study in 2014. The second is the number of foreign students coming to China for study, which is 377,000. The third concerns Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools. So far, 2324 cooperatively-run educational institutions and programs have been officially approved, including 1100 Chinese and foreign universities in 33 countries and regions, and the total number of students at study reached 550,000. Australia, UK and America top the list of the countries that cooperate with China in running schools. The total number of Chinese students studying abroad, foreign students studying in China and those who study in Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools amounts to 1.2 million. They are studying in nearly 1,100 universities or colleges. The statistics indicate that China is now a great power in transnational education.

Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools is closely related to going abroad for study and it started in the 1980s. In the early stage of Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools, helping students to go abroad for study is a more important purpose than training bilingual teachers and introducing advanced educational ideas from abroad. In recent years, there are over 2,000 agreements of Chinese-foreign cooperation in school running. Almost all the agreements include clauses of studying abroad although the time duration of studying in foreign countries differs.

Among the 550,000 students who study in Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools, about one-fifth students (around 110,000 students) choose to study abroad. In 2014, the total number of Chinese students going abroad for study is 459,800, which means one-fourth students went abroad for study or visiting through Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run institutions or programs. The foreign countries where Chinese students choose to study are almost the same ones that cooperate with China in running schools. These countries are America, UK, Japan, Korea, Canada and Australia. In terms of majors, the popular majors in the Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools also coincide with the choices of the students who go abroad for study. These majors include management, economics, machine

manufacturing, engineering, physics and computer science, etc. In terms of structure levels, 82.4% of the Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run educational institutions or programs fall into the categories of undergraduate education and higher vocational education. According to the statistics about students studying abroad in 2014, students who went abroad for undergraduate education and for graduate education respectively take up 30% of the total 459,800 students going abroad. It's clear that Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools connect with going abroad for study on these two levels. There is no doubt that as a form of transnational education, Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools has become an effective way to make Chinese students' overseas study "safe, healthy and successful". In turn, overseas study will also serve as a driving force for the Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools. I believe many of the university teachers present today who are from China and other countries may share same views in this aspect.

2. New situations of transnational education

As is known to all, China's economy is entering a "new normal". The "new normal" has the following three characteristics. First, China is experiencing the transition from high-speed development to medium-speed development. Second, the mode of development is changing from extensive growth of expanding scale and quantity to intensive and connotative growth emphasizing quality. Third, the driving force of development is shifting from production factors and investment to innovation. When the economy is entering a new normal, new requirements are raised for talents training. This will certainly produce new tasks for people involved in education.

How can Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools and overseas study get adjusted to the new conditions of China's economic development and respond to new situations?

According to statistics, students who come back from overseas study are not optimistic about the job market. The main reason is that when studying abroad most of them chose majors such as economic management, computer science and machine manufacturing, which happen to be covered by Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools. In addition, the education quality of Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools is getting better and better, so competition is inevitable. From another perspective, higher education in China is entering a stage of modernized education. We aim to modernize higher education by 2020 as prescribed in the National Education Plan. That means the quality of talents produced in Chinese universities and colleges is improving, which will certainly exert great pressure on overseas study and Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools, and will raise new requirements for the adjustments of talent cultivation. The economic new normal requires us to adjust and improve the direction of development of cooperatively-run schools and overseas study.

National Education Plan stipulates that the talents we cultivate should have international perspective and good knowledge of international cultures and rules, and

be skilled at international communication and cooperation. I think this should be an important goal for the cooperation in running schools and students studying abroad. To achieve this goal, in the past five years Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools has entered a new development stage and a new normal, which is featured by the following 3 elements.

First, the development of cooperation in running schools has shifted from pursuing scale expansion to improving quality. At present, there are 7 Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run universities in China, including University of Nottingham Ningbo, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, New York University Shanghai, Kunshan Duke University. They are mostly run by “985 Project” universities in China and world-renowned universities in foreign countries. At the same time, the connections between these Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run institutions are highly valued, so the 7 cooperatively-run universities formed the Sino-Foreign Cooperatively-run University Union last year. In addition, the 10 cooperatively-run secondary institutions also established Association of Deans. The establishment of such professional associations can help achieve self-control, solve the problems and difficulties in the process of running schools, further improve the education quality and take up the mission of cultivating talents through Chinese-foreign cooperation.

Second, the driving force for the development of Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools should be changed from student mobility to improving the capacity of discipline construction. In recent years, we have higher requirements for establishing Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run institutions. We require systematic introduction of high-quality educational resources from foreign universities and Chinese-foreign double certificates in China so that students can get access to overseas study without going abroad. However, it does not mean students do not have the chance to go abroad. We stress systematic and overall introduction of high-quality resources and we don't deny the diversity in the forms of running schools. We have strict criteria for program approval and we must follow the rules of four “one-third”, which means the number of the foreign teachers that are hired, the number of the foreign courses that are introduced into China, the number of classes that foreign teachers teach and others must be 1/3 of the total number respectively. This is a rigid standard that all universities going for cooperatively-run programs should follow.

Third, the Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools is witnessing a change from fluctuating-speed development to steady-speed development. In the history of developing Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools, we experienced the stages of approval pause, review approval and approval banning. But the approval work has gone into a new normal since 2010 and we approve programs twice a year. This greatly improves the efficiency of administrative approval and helps maintain the enthusiasm of cooperation between Chinese schools and foreign schools.

In conclusion, Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools has the characteristics of change in speed, optimization of structure and a change of the driving force.

3. Common mission and responsibility of Sino-Australia transnational education and student mobility.

Australia is China's largest partner in cooperation in running schools. China and Australia together established 449 cooperatively-run programs and institutions, which concern almost all undergraduate and above level universities and some vocational and technical colleges and educational institutions in Australia. The subjects involved cover 10 major disciplines. It's obvious that Sino-Australia cooperation in running schools has achieved remarkable success and has greatly promoted the cultural and educational communication and cooperation between the two countries.

However, we can still see huge room for improvement in terms of the level of cooperation. Actually, the American and British universities we cooperate with are world-famous ones with high ranking on the list of world universities, such as Duke University, New York University, Liverpool University and Nottingham University, etc. Besides, we have many cooperative programs with universities from other countries that are in the process of approval and application, and they also involve high-level universities. By contrast, except for Southeast University and Monash University, we need to improve the level of other Australian educational institutions that cooperate with China in running schools. Besides, there exists the problem of one foreign university cooperating with several Chinese universities in running schools, which is called "Chain stores" by the media. Therefore, how to improve the quality of Sino-Australia cooperation in running schools should be a shared concern.

First, we should improve the education quality of the cooperatively-run schools. In November 2013, Chinese Ministry of Education launched its guidance to guarantee the education quality of cooperatively-run schools. It includes the following 4 goals: establishing high-level cooperatively-run institutions and programs; optimizing school distribution and planning reasonable structure; establishing a quality guarantee system for China's transnational education; and improving the education quality and management level so that these cooperatively-run schools will eventually serve the local economic development.

To achieve the above goals, we can take measures in three aspects.

First, we should manage and control the level, the region and the disciplines of the cooperatively-run schools. We must elevate the threshold for universities with independent legal entities. The cooperation must be carried out between two famous universities. They should set up good examples for others and take up the mission of Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run universities. For those secondary institutes without independent legal entities, we should choose similar fields of disciplines for cooperation. Usually secondary colleges should carry out educational and teaching activities on one particular subject or discipline. China encourages the Chinese

universities and foreign universities to exploit more cooperation opportunities in agriculture, forestry, medical science, engineering and leading-edge inter-disciplinary areas that are in dire need. This adjustment suits the present economic development of China. It is fair to say that we have trained enough talents specialized in business or commercial management. Our next step is to make appropriate adjustments to meet the needs of the nation and its economic development.

Second, we should regulate and manage the process of cooperation by means of reasonable evaluation. In recent years, we have launched the evaluation for Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools, which is mainly carried out by China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Center and China Education Association for International Exchange. We have achieved notable achievements in evaluation over the past years. Three years' evaluation has made it possible for us to regulate school behaviors, improve education quality and uphold the interests of students. Nearly 100 cooperatively-run programs that fail to meet the standards have quit from the market. In the past, it was a rather daunting task for us to remove these unqualified programs. Through evaluation and qualification authentication, we hope we can establish a governance system where management, operation and evaluation are independent of each other, that is to say, society evaluates the qualification, schools run the programs and governments supervise the whole process.

Third, we should apply information technology to the management of cooperatively-run schools. We have developed the online application system, the filing system, the review system, the evaluation system, the annual report system, and the registration and authentication system for Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools. With the help of these online systems, we are able to set up a one-stop review and approval framework, covering all stages from entering, process to exiting. The management of Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools has basically been informatized.

Finally, I'd like to put forward two suggestions. In the first place, I hope China and Australia can establish a connectivity mechanism for transnational education or for the Sino-Australia cooperation in running schools at a senior level. And then, we need to set up a common quality guarantee system. The biggest problem of Sino-Australia cooperation in running schools is how the students of cooperatively-run institutions and programs can get a certificate issued by the foreign university within the territory of China. Therefore, we should figure out how to establish a common quality guarantee system and make the cooperation certificate-oriented, so as to ensure good quality and maintain the image and reputation of the universities concerned.

Thank you!