

Chapter 19

Challenges Facing Chinese and European Universities in Mobility Cooperation: Managerial Administrative Staff Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, professional mobility opportunities for university staff and students enshrined within various initiatives have been an effective tool in increasing the international visibility of universities. Activities such as participation in EU sponsored programs (mainly Erasmus-MUNDUS followed by ERASMUS+) as well as opportunities provided by national agencies like the China Scholarship Council, Polish National Academic Exchange Agency, and relevant schemes in other EU member states are perceived as perfect tools for turning ideas into reality. Aside from the scientific profits collected by the beneficiaries, opportunities for academic mobility serve as eye-openers, triggering new ideas and solutions based on good practices and experience. The purpose of this chapter is to study the background, practices, and effects of cooperation between China and the EU. It argues that the process of accelerating mobility cooperation between universities in China and Europe should not only start from people mobility but also from project mobility and policy mobility.

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INTRODUCTION

Following the rapid development of economic globalization, people with high-level talent from all countries are now exchanging and learning across a range of fields, including politics, economic, and technology. The development of a country's overall education level and the accumulation of high-quality talent are important prerequisites for the comprehensive development of social economy and culture. Higher education can only meet the challenges of economic globalization by going international and cultivating talent with a global vision capable of displaying such talent on the international stage. To adapt to the growing trend for contact and exchanges in the future, countries generally attach great importance to strengthening the internationalization of education. International exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and European universities provide a platform for further convergence and the mutual influence of different cultural backgrounds and values. This provides an effective way to enhance scientific and technological development, cultural communication, and the exchange of talent between countries. International cooperation between colleges and universities refers not only to the exchange of higher education across borders, ethnic groups, and cultures but also the exchange of advanced science and technology and high-level talent. Chinese universities have been heavily involved in such cooperation. By the end of 2015, the Central Government of China issued an "Overall Plan for the Overall Development of First-class Universities and First-class Disciplines" (The Charlesworth Group, 2017), which stipulated that international exchanges and cooperation will be promoted, and that substantive cooperation with first-class universities and academic institutions across the world will be strengthened. All Chinese universities are now actively participating in the strategy of "The Double First-class". Thus, the transnational and trans-regional flow of students, academics, and staff has become the modern norm in Chinese higher education. Increasing mobility and cooperation is also an important policy goal for many European countries. The European Commission (EC) stated that the international mobility of students and staff was one of the primary ways to elevate the position of European higher education in the world (EC, 2013). The European Commission's Erasmus program plays a key role in this task, offering convenience and subsidizing overseas study experience for more than 250,000 students each year (EC, 2014a). Additionally, the new Erasmus program covering the 2014-2020 budget preparation period, the so-called Erasmus+, aims to "double the current number of participants" (EC, 2011).

The world of higher education is changing and the world in which higher education plays an important role is also changing. The international dimension of higher education is becoming ever more important, complex, and confusing. International mobility for short or longer periods is perceived as an important tool in achieving university and local community internationalization, which is an obvious must in the current globalized world (Jonkers & Tijssen, 2008). Internationalization is also an important index by which the educational quality of universities can be measured and a fundamental feature of the world's first-class universities (Deem, Mok, & Lucas, 2008; Gao, 2018; Olcay & Bulu, 2017). It has therefore become a central issue for European and Chinese HEIs willing to achieve ambitious goals, especially to promote the bi-directional mobility of students, academics, and other staff such as international and management staff (Altbach, 2015; Liu & Metcalfe, 2016; Yang, 2016). However, universities in China and Europe are deeply rooted in the society, history, and culture in which they have developed, and this has given rise to unique school traditions and styles (Wagenaar, Gilpin, & Beneitone, 2015). Therefore, the challenges facing colleges and universities arise from external environmental factors as well as the expectations associated with the internal interests of the university (Liu, 2015). Although institutional

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