

Research and Practice on the Model of Cultivating Excellent Journalism and Communication Talents through Collaboration between Schools, Governments, and Media in Local Universities—A Case Study of the Radio and Television Program at Yibin University

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Abstract: *The advent of the converged media era has profoundly transformed the media ecosystem and posed significant challenges to the cultivation of journalism and communication talent in universities. Traditional talent development models urgently need to be reformed. In recent years, the School of Radio and Television at Yibin University, aligning with the goals and requirements of the Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talent Program, has proposed a three-pronged training model for outstanding journalism and communication talent: "Collaboration between University, Government, and Media." This model, through deep collaboration among universities, local government departments, and the media industry, aims to cultivate high-quality, multi-media-savvy journalism and communication professionals. The implementation of this model offers valuable insights and lessons for cultivating outstanding journalism and communication talent in local undergraduate universities in western China.*

Keywords: Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talent; Training Model; Converged Media.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the widespread use of the Internet and smartphones and the promotion of 5G networks, an era of "convergent media" that integrates traditional media with new network media, digital technology and user interaction has rapidly arrived. In the context of new media convergence, the development of the news and communication industry has shown several prominent characteristics: first, the concept of communication has shifted to creativity; second, communication technology has tended to be digital; and third, news and communication platforms have become increasingly networked [1]. The traditional news education model can no longer meet the requirements of the times. The talent training model for news and communication in colleges and universities urgently needs to be reformed, and the excellent news and communication talent education and training program has come into being.

2. DIFFICULTIES FACING LOCAL UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGES IN JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS

Talent development is a complex system. Numerous key factors, such as educational resources, faculty, curriculum, and teaching philosophies and methods, significantly impact the effectiveness of talent cultivation. As a local undergraduate college in southern Sichuan, Yibin University faced challenges in running its journalism and communication program, reflecting common challenges faced by similar local universities in western China. These challenges are typical and representative of the challenges faced by Yibin University.

2.1 Insufficient "Dual-Qualified" Teachers

Social development relies on talent, and talent cultivation requires education. The quality of an institution's faculty directly impacts the quality of education. In recent years, both national ministries and Sichuan Province have placed great emphasis on faculty development in the development of the Excellent Journalism Program. Cultivating a "dual-qualified" faculty is a key to achieving the goal of cultivating outstanding journalism and communication talent, and is also an important path to optimizing the faculty structure and enhancing faculty

quality. Considering the current converged media landscape and the current state of journalism and communication talent cultivation, we can define the criteria for "dual-qualified" teachers as two levels: the first is "dual quality," meaning they can both teach journalism and communication courses at universities and engage in practical work in the media industry; the second is "dual qualifications," meaning they must obtain relevant certifications in both areas, demonstrating their ability to integrate teaching and practice.

Local universities, constrained by geographical location, educational level, and conditions, have limited access to and utilization of high-quality resources, including faculty. Regarding the development of the Radio and Television program at Yibin University, the first prominent challenge facing talent cultivation is a shortage of faculty, particularly those with dual professional qualifications. Most of these faculty members are young, having joined universities directly after graduating from graduate programs with master's and doctoral degrees. They generally have a "fresh start" approach, lacking sufficient practical experience in media work and possessing only a limited understanding of key media practices such as media operational standards, news production processes, and the planning and operation of new media. Consequently, while the teaching of theory is adequate, practical training struggles. This shortage of high-quality dual professional qualifications has led to a series of secondary problems in the development of journalism and communication talent.

2.2 Disconnection Between Curriculum and Media Practice

Currently, many local universities' journalism and communication programs face a significant employment dilemma: grassroots municipal, county, and township government agencies and the media industry are in high demand for journalism and communication professionals, yet outstanding media professionals with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills remain in short supply. For example, in Yibin, many employers are eager for integrated media talent under the new circumstances and expect graduates to be fully utilized and demonstrate their talents upon arrival. This objectively places even more stringent demands on Yibin University's radio and television program.

Compared to other humanities disciplines, journalism and communication programs are characterized by practicality and application. However, the traditional university journalism education system suffers from an imbalanced curriculum, generally emphasizing theoretical instruction over practical training, which is detrimental to the cultivation of application-oriented talent. Yibin University faces a similar problem. Although previous professional training programs included some practical training courses, due to short training periods, limited university facilities, and a monotonous curriculum format, these practical training courses often remained superficial and ineffective, failing to substantially enhance students' practical skills. The disconnect between curriculum and media practice directly leads to students' lack of professional skills, making it difficult for them to meet the requirements of media industry positions. After graduation, students are unable to adapt to the intensity of the work quickly and require a long period of study, leading some media organizations to comment that students majoring in journalism and communication are "slow to get up to speed." Ultimately, this is closely related to the separation of theory and practice in traditional journalism and communication education, and the imbalance between classroom instruction and extracurricular activities.

2.3 The Problem of "homogenization" in Talent Cultivation

In recent years, the journalism and communication majors of local undergraduate colleges have rapidly expanded in teaching sites. While the scale of education has continued to expand, they are also facing the problem of "homogenization" in talent cultivation. At present, we are in a media ecological context where print media, radio, television, the Internet, mobile phones and other media are flourishing and constantly integrating. The new context has diversified and differentiated requirements for talent cultivation. From the perspective of media education, distinctive news talents come from the differentiation of talent cultivation concepts and models, and the result is inevitably a benign interaction between news education and the development of the media industry; the homogeneity of news talents is rooted in the homogeneity of talent cultivation concepts and models, and the result is inevitably a distorted state of severe squeezing of certain types of news talents and severe shortage of other types of news talents [2]. The homogeneity of talent cultivation not only has a negative effect on the employment of graduates, but also affects the sustainable development of news education in colleges and universities, as well as the diversified strategic transformation of the media industry.

3. THE SPECIFICATION, POSITIONING, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTIVATING OUTSTANDING JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

TALENTS THROUGH COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENTS, AND MEDIA.

Faced with various challenges in its operations and embracing the new era of converged media, the Radio and Television Program at Yibin University has been actively exploring innovative development paths. Beginning in 2013, Sichuan Province, in accordance with national guidance, began implementing the Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talent Education and Training Program, setting a strong precedent for reform in journalism and communication programs at provincial universities. In recent years, Sichuan Province has approved two batches of 10 "Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talent Education and Training Programs," with Yibin University being the only university in southern Sichuan to receive approval.

Leveraging the ongoing second batch of Sichuan Province's "Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talent Education and Training Program" and the provincial-level educational reform project, "Constructing a Practical Teaching System for Radio and Television Majors in the Omnimedia Era," which concluded in 2017, the Radio and Television Program at Yibin University has focused its efforts and diligently explored a model for cultivating outstanding journalism and communication talents through collaboration between schools, governments, and media. In the context of media convergence, the School of Radio and Television, in response to the demand for local news media talents, will gradually transform the talent training model of this major from a school-led model to a school-government-media joint talent training model, while promoting the development of students' all-media skills and fully considering students' individual needs. Through in-depth interconnected cooperation and collaborative innovation between universities (University) and local government departments (Government) and the media industry (Media industry), a school-government-media collaborative training model will be established to promote continuous reform and innovation in talent training mechanisms. To put it further, the so-called school-media collaborative training model is to establish an interconnected cooperation model among universities, local governments, and the media industry through in-depth interconnected cooperation between Yibin College and the Propaganda Department of the Yibin Municipal Party Committee, Yibin Radio and Television Station and other media, so as to develop students into "multi-talented" talents who can adapt to the market and cope with media convergence.

3.1 Targeting Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talents Through Collaboration Between Schools, Governments, and Media

Local universities, due to their diverse locations and educational levels, also have varying collaborative platforms and available resources. Therefore, talent development must adhere to the principles of adapting to local conditions and keeping pace with the times. Based on the regional environment and media resources, we should develop a model for journalism and communication talent development tailored to local conditions, reflecting the unique characteristics of the discipline and the characteristics of the times. In light of the actual development of Yibin University, we position our radio and television program to cultivate innovative, applied professionals who are proficient in all-media operations and capable of cross-disciplinary integration, contributing to regional and grassroots units. We also set specific requirements for these talents:

First, on the spiritual level, we aim to cultivate outstanding journalism and communication talent with a firm political orientation and strong political character, who are able to effectively tell China's stories and convey China's voice, particularly those of Sichuan. In our media-driven society, the impact of the news and communication system on social development has become unprecedentedly significant, and the importance of media professionals has become increasingly prominent. In this era of diversified interests, complex public opinion, and social stratification, there is a particular need for media professionals who possess a sense of social responsibility, a sense of historical mission, and a public spirit. Faced with the reality, colleges and universities must use Marxist journalism to guide the training of media talents. In other words, Marxist journalism should run through the entire process of training journalists and communication talents [3].

Second, at the practical level, cultivate innovative and applied journalists and communication talents. Yibin University is currently in a critical period of transformation and development, and the school has clearly defined the characteristics of cultivating innovative and applied talents. Therefore, we position the talent training of radio and television majors as innovative and applied journalists and communication talents. Specifically, students should have "one specialty and multiple abilities" in all-media business skills, that is, they should be proficient in at least one media skill in paper media, radio, television, the Internet, mobile phones, etc., and at the same time be proficient in other media skills. Students cultivate solid media practice innovation capabilities and improve their

social adaptability in the collaborative education of the school, government and media.

3.2 The Significance of Collaborative Education Among Schools, Governments, and Media for Cultivating Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talent

3.2.1 Media Convergence Emerges as a National Strategy; the Converged Media Era Urgently Demands Omnimedia Talent

On August 18, 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping presided over the fourth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Deepening Reform, which reviewed and approved the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Converged Development of Traditional and Emerging Media." This represents China's top-level design for media convergence and serves as a guiding principle for its practice. Since then, "media convergence" has become a national initiative and strategy. Society has also placed higher demands on media professionals, and the cultivation of outstanding journalism and communication talent has gradually transitioned from 1.0 to 2.0. The 2018 "Excellence 2.0" guidelines frequently reference concepts such as omni media, omni medialization, and converged media, and explicitly emphasize the need to cultivate a large pool of high-quality, omni medial, and outstanding journalism and communication talent with a strong sense of patriotism and an international perspective to meet the demands of the converged media era. The cultivation of all-media journalism and communication talents calls for the transformation of journalism and communication education in colleges and universities, from training for news units such as institutional media, especially newspapers and radio and television stations, to training for a new media ecosystem oriented towards multiple symbiosis, and from training for content production, especially news content production, to training for the entire communication process of general content, data, products, and operations, that is, to cultivate all-media journalism and communication talents[4]. It can be said that with the advent of the era of integrated media, the cultivation of all-media journalism and communication talents has been elevated to the level of national strategic talent reserves.

3.2.2 Cultivate innovative applied journalism and communication talents to serve local development

Serving the local area is a basic duty and function of local universities, and it is also an important foothold for Yibin University to carry out talent training. The so-called "serving the local area" means that local universities aim to serve the local economic and social development in an all-round way, realize the needs of the symbiotic development of universities and local areas, and provide services for the development of the government, enterprises and people [5]. In January 2021, Yibin City officially released the "Yibin City National Economic and Social Development 14th Five-Year Plan and 2035 Vision Outline", which clearly pointed out that in the next five years, Yibin will shoulder the important task of building the provincial economic sub-center and the Chengdu-Chongqing region economic sub-center, and leading the development of the integration of southern Sichuan. For the regional economy to achieve long-term development, it must be based on improving the regional image and prospering the regional culture, and the realization of all this is inseparable from mass media. Yibin City has unique local resources, such as characteristic industries (wine, bamboo, tea), characteristic culture (Lizhuang Anti-Japanese War culture, Bai people culture), historical and cultural resources, characteristic tourism resources, etc. However, in terms of external communication, Yibin City has long been at a disadvantage, resulting in the inability to give full play to the regional resource advantages. Under the new development situation, Yibin urgently needs a large number of multi-media talents who are adept at promoting the city's image and telling Yibin's story, so that more people can understand and appreciate Yibin. The collaborative cultivation of outstanding journalism and communication talents by universities, government and media has achieved a positive interaction between higher education and the regional economy, meeting the actual demand for innovative applied media talents in the region.

4. A COLLABORATIVE PATH FOR CULTIVATING EXCELLENT JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION TALENTS THROUGH SCHOOL - GOVERNMENT - MEDIA COLLABORATION

4.1 Integrate Teaching, Learning, and Practice, Creating a Training Process Based on Industry Needs

Currently, most journalism and communication majors at ordinary second-tier universities face challenges such as low professional recognition and a lack of student interest in the discipline. Therefore, in the actual talent development process, we must first develop teaching content that aligns with students' cognitive patterns, create

learning environments grounded in work processes, and achieve integrated teaching, learning, and practice.

4.1.1 Establish a student-centered, problem-based curriculum system that integrates practice, theory, and practice

(1) Establish professional core courses for different media, adopt a "1+1" teaching model between teachers and practice base instructors, and guide students to complete a professional basic project.

(2) Conduct professional modular teaching for different media (print media, radio, television, Internet, mobile phones).

(3) Still adopt the "1+1" teaching model, and let students complete a professional comprehensive project as an assessment condition for students' professional ability. Students go directly to the practice base with practical tasks, discover problems in the practical tasks, return to school for targeted theoretical learning, and then return to the practice base to solve the problems.

(4) In order to serve the local area, add courses related to the regional culture of Yibin and Sichuan, and at the same time take relevant basic courses from other colleges to broaden students' news horizons and lay a solid foundation for telling China's stories well and spreading China's voice.

4.1.2 Integrating Learning, Practice, and Competitions to Build a Long-Term Mechanism for Promoting Learning Through Competition and Improving Capabilities Through Learning

By combining the expertise of faculty members and the interests of students, we have formed teams of faculty and students to actively cultivate projects with both scientific research and learning value. We first actively encourage students to participate in various academic competitions and undergraduate innovation and entrepreneurship projects. We then conduct long-term follow-up and in-depth research on these projects, reducing simulated practice and increasing practical application, thereby rapidly and effectively improving students' innovative and practical abilities. From 2016 to 2020, Radio and Television students, under the guidance of faculty, have established nine national-level, 20 provincial-level, and 17 university-level undergraduate innovation and entrepreneurship training projects. Students have also won a total of 13 national and provincial awards (three at the national level and ten at the provincial level) through academic competitions. This mechanism of promoting learning through competition and improving capabilities through learning has achieved significant results.

4.2 Collaboration Between Universities, Government, and Media: Building a "prism-like" Practical Education System with "one core, two wings" to Foster Multi-faceted Talent Development

4.2.1 Building a "prism-like" practical education system with "one core, two wings"

The "prism" model, based on the principle of prism structure in optics, is a practical education system with convergent, interactive, and divergent functions. This "one core, two wings" system prioritizes university students' professional development as the "core," with university faculty and practical mentors as the "two wings." The three entities, universities, local Party and government agencies, and the media industry, collaborate to build high-quality practical teaching teams and establish practical teaching platforms. Aiming to serve southern Sichuan and surrounding provinces and cities, and focusing on the editing, directing, and production of high-quality news (and cultural) products, universities fully integrate social resources and, through interaction between universities and social institutions, cultivate a multi-faceted talent pool for journalism and communication with multi-faceted skills. In this process, universities leverage social and industry resources to strengthen teaching practices and enhance the multi-media skills of professional faculty and students. These professionals (graduate students and on-duty faculty) are then channeled to society and industry to fill talent gaps, thereby fulfilling the university's role in serving the local community.

4.2.2 "Dual Mentoring System" for Collaborative Education

In recent years, Yibin University has signed numerous collaborative education agreements with media organizations. Through university-government-media collaboration, these agreements promote the integration of media resources with the university, including equipment, talent, funding, on- and off-campus practical platforms, and teaching case resources. In practice, the university and media organizations jointly establish guiding principles, training objectives, and phased tasks for talent development, jointly building a robust platform for cultivating

outstanding journalism and communication talent. They also jointly explore reforms to talent development models, revise and optimize talent development plans, and construct a comprehensive curriculum, ultimately fostering a new practical education system. The Radio and Television program assigns five students to a group, with one on-campus mentor and one media mentor assigned to each group. Specific goals and tasks are set for each phase. The teaching management department promptly monitors and reviews mentors' progress in completing each phase, guiding students towards professional development from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

4.2.3 Sign a mutual personnel exchange agreement between the university and the media to establish a long-term mechanism for improving faculty professional competence.

To strengthen its "dual-qualified" faculty, Yibin University has been continuously assigning professional faculty members to media practice bases for training in recent years. Through research and learning, and participating in news production, faculty members gain practical experience, familiarize themselves with industry trends, identify industry issues, and continuously improve their professional competence. When faculty members return to the classroom after their training, they not only enrich theoretical teaching but also more effectively guide students' professional practice.

4.3 Establish a "Timely Feedback, Timely Testing, and Continuous Improvement" Mechanism to Build a Quality Assurance System for Talent Development in the Radio and Television Program

Based on the university's overall talent development goals and in line with the needs of employers, revise talent development objectives for the Radio and Television program. Emphasis will be placed on implementing teaching objectives, updating the syllabus, and establishing a comprehensive set of quality standards and course evaluation systems. The achievement of talent development objectives will be assessed through industry and enterprise satisfaction, and continuous improvement will be made to these objectives. Gradually, a quality assurance system will be established, centered around self-evaluation by the School of Literature and Journalism (now the School of Literature and Media Convergence), focused on student development, and utilizing regular data monitoring throughout the entire teaching process.

4.3.1 Closely integrate the university, government, and media, with multi-stakeholder participation, to continuously improve talent development programs.

First, we will conduct in-depth research on the needs of employers and, based on the talent demands of the media industry in the new era, formulate talent development goals for the Radio and Television major. We will clearly define specific requirements for training objectives and basic specifications, curriculum design and credit distribution, program development, and teaching implementation. This will clarify the specifications and quality requirements for professional talent development and guide and standardize teaching activities.

4.3.2 Carefully revise the quality standards for curriculum development

Secondly, curriculum development requires systematic quality standards to rationally assess and improve course quality. Therefore, we will revise and improve the quality standards for core elements and key aspects of talent development. In accordance with relevant university requirements, we will develop new curriculum standards and syllabi. We will also establish quality standards for key aspects of undergraduate education, including classroom teaching, labs, graduation projects (thesis), internships, practical training, and examinations.

4.3.3 Establish a mechanism for timely feedback and timely monitoring of teaching effectiveness—a mid-term evaluation system.

Regarding teaching evaluation, due to differences in course content and assessment methods, and the inevitable slowness of feedback during the teaching process, it is difficult to summarize and analyze students' depth of understanding and comprehensive mastery of knowledge. Waiting until students complete their graduation projects (papers) to compensate for this loss is prohibitively time-consuming and ineffective, making the establishment of a timely feedback mechanism essential. In light of the specific needs of the program, the Department of Radio and Television has established a mid-term evaluation system to directly assess students' professional competence. At the end of the fourth semester, the program conducts a professional competence assessment. Students who pass the assessment may proceed to advanced modules and cross-media modules within their field; those who fail the assessment continue to pursue foundational skills development within their field until

they pass the assessment.

4.3.4 Continuously Improve Teaching Quality Based on Feedback

Teaching is a multi-directional, interactive process that requires not only input from teachers but also responses and feedback from students and the public. This feedback is used to continuously adjust teaching dynamics and improve teaching quality. Feedback primarily includes data from undergraduate teaching, such as faculty discussions, student evaluations, and student forums, as well as feedback from employers. Through comprehensive collection and careful evaluation of this information, we conduct in-depth analysis of any issues identified within undergraduate teaching, providing accurate, comprehensive, and rapid feedback to the target system, ultimately promoting the continuous improvement of teaching quality within the program.

5. CONCLUSION

Currently, local universities are facing the realities of transforming into application-oriented institutions while simultaneously confronting the media revolution of the converged media era. For journalism and communication majors at universities in western China, the national and provincial initiatives for outstanding journalism and communication talent, 1.0 and 2.0, present both new challenges and new opportunities. After years of unremitting efforts, Yibin University's radio and television program has yielded fruitful results. In 2019, the "Sichuan Province Undergraduate Program Teaching Quality Monitoring Report" released by the Sichuan Provincial Department of Education ranked Yibin University's radio and television program among the top three in the province, earning it the title of "Advantageous Major" in Sichuan Province. Its program surpassed the provincial average for similar programs in 15 areas, including training models, teaching resources, teaching reforms, training outcomes, and quality evaluations. In 2020, radio and television was recognized as a top-tier undergraduate program in Sichuan Province. Furthermore, in recent years, radio and television graduates have received high industry recognition, with a professional match rate exceeding 70%. They are highly recognized by the industry, and their employment rate remains above 95% annually. Over ten renowned media outlets, including People's Daily Online, China Daily Online, China Youth Online, Xinhua News Agency, CPPCC Online, Sichuan Daily Online, and Toutiao, have reported on the educational achievements of our college's Radio and Television program. These hard-earned achievements are a testament to the progress made in this phase and also raise the bar for the next phase.

Cultivating talent in journalism and communication is a dynamic and long-term endeavor that requires perseverance and continuous exploration. While firmly adhering to the Marxist perspective on journalism, local undergraduate colleges should closely monitor the evolving media landscape and society's actual talent needs, fully leverage government and industry platforms, and contribute more and better innovative applied media talent to society and industry through a collaborative education model between universities, governments, and media.

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