

Research on the Innovative Path of Constructing the Internal Supervision System of Colleges and Universities in the New Era

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Abstract: Establishing an internal supervision system for colleges and universities in the new era is an urgent need to ensure the authority and efficiency of school governance, protect the legitimate rights and interests of teachers and students, foster a good educational environment, and promote the high-quality development of schools. In the face of practical dilemmas, this article proposes to construct a “five-vertical and four-horizontal” supervision grid for colleges and universities, innovatively develop the “Risk Prevention and Control Manual”, improve the internal supervision system of colleges and universities, strengthen the awareness of discipline and rules among cadres and employees, and enhance the risk prevention and control capabilities of colleges and universities.

Keywords: “Five-type Supervisors”; Monitoring the “three Lines of Defence”; Five vertical and four horizontal; Risk prevention and control

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1. Introduction

China’s power system is based on the functional separation of powers, with the decision-making power, executive power, and supervision power restricting and coordinating with each other ^[1]. Constructing a scientific and effective decision-making mechanism, operation mechanism, and supervision mechanism is an inevitable requirement for promoting the modernization of college governance. The supervision mechanism plays an important guarantee role for decision-making and operation. Supervision means entrusting a specific organ, department, or individual with the public power to manage a certain type (or specific matter), and then setting up a special organ or establishing some necessary mechanisms to allow this special organ, the media, and ordinary people to observe whether they perform their duties legally, compliantly, and reasonably in accordance with the established purpose, spirit, and specific regulations of the authorization ^[2]. In recent years, power-related problems have frequently occurred in Chinese colleges and universities, involving fields such as enrollment, infrastructure construction, personnel, and finance. To a large extent, these problems stem from the lack of a scientific and reasonable power restriction and supervision mechanism within colleges and universities ^[3]. A sound internal supervision mechanism can effectively supervise the management work and teaching

quality of schools, protect the legitimate rights and interests of students, improve school governance efficiency, and foster a good educational environment.

At present, in the research on the construction path of the internal supervision system of colleges and universities, some propose a coordinated supervision structure system consisting of four types: supervision through letters and visits, proactive supervision, democratic supervision, and discipline-enforcement supervision^[4]. Some suggest that the supervision system of colleges and universities should focus on strengthening top-level design, firmly grasping political supervision, effectively carrying out daily supervision, carefully conducting functional supervision, and deeply promoting grass-roots supervision^[5]. Some colleges and universities have issued systems such as coordinated supervision joint meeting systems^[6]. These supervision methods are more based on the relationship of horizontal supervision coordination, and the research on the linkage mechanism between horizontal and vertical supervision is insufficient.

2. The significance of constructing the internal supervision system of colleges and universities in the new era

2.1. The inevitable requirement for protecting the legitimate rights and interests of teachers and students

The “Implementation Outline for Comprehensively Promoting the Rule of Law in Schools” provides institutional guarantees for the rights and interests of teachers and students in participating in school management, exercising supervision power, and achieving self-development. It requires efforts to standardize the internal governance structure and power operation rules of schools. The rights and interests of teachers and students in colleges and universities are protected by laws and regulations. The key to establishing the rule of law lies in forming an effective power control system. Constructing a sound supervision system plays a crucial role in protecting the rights and interests of teachers and students. For example, in aspects such as tuition fee transparency, enrollment and employment, faculty title evaluation, and faculty performance assessment, effective supervision can increase management transparency and promote fairness and justice.

2.2. The only way to improve the governance efficiency of schools

Governance is the application of administrative technical means. In academic theory, university governance means the process of participation, gaming, and institutional construction among stakeholders^[7]. Some scholars have proposed that “in those East Asian countries or regions with good governance, due to the continuous supervision of major interest groups, there are few cycles of chaos and order”^[8]. It can be seen that the key to governance is power governance, and power governance cannot be separated from effective supervision and restriction. A sound supervision system can ensure the scientific and reasonable decision-making. Without strong and effective supervision and restriction, governance will malfunction. Vertically constructing multi-level supervisors from the school level, party branches, departments, to sections, strengthening supervision from top to bottom, and promptly discovering prominent problems in school education and teaching activities and operation management, correcting deviant powers, and then promoting rectification, improving systems, and cyclic development can ensure the effective operation of the governance system and the continuous improvement of governance capabilities.

2.3. The necessary condition for fostering a good educational environment

Colleges and universities in the new era shoulder the fundamental task of cultivating morality and talents. Building a clean and upright educational environment is a basic prerequisite. It is particularly important to run schools, teach, and study strictly. Only when students study and live in a clean campus environment can they establish correct outlooks on life, values, and the world. Horizontally coordinating with various functional departments to cover the management

field, and integrating with the vertical multi-level supervision to form a supervision grid that extends horizontally to the edges and vertically to the bottom can foster a clean and upright campus environment and achieve “whole-process, whole-staff, and all-around education”.

3. The practical dilemmas in constructing the internal supervision system of colleges and universities

3.1. Weak supervision awareness among supervisors

At present, the supervision power in colleges and universities is still weak. The “last mile” of grass-roots supervision has not been effectively connected, and the supervision responsibility and pressure are gradually decreasing in transmission. Some middle-level cadres have insufficient understanding of school rules and regulations in terms of breadth and depth. Some general management personnel do not strictly implement the system processes, and some front-line teaching staff have a weak sense of discipline. Facing these problems, supervisors in an “acquaintance society” still have issues such as being afraid to supervise and being unable to supervise effectively. Irregular behaviors and unhealthy trends cannot be corrected in a timely manner.

3.2. Weak awareness of coordinated supervision among functional departments

According to the existing research on the integration mechanism, the three main obstacles to mechanism establishment are that functional departments have insufficient understanding of the integration pattern, there is poor communication during the collaboration process, and the dispatched personnel lack the necessary capabilities and qualities^[9]. Some functional departments, as the first line of management supervision, only focus on solving current problems in their own fields after discovering problems. They have a weak awareness of coordinated supervision, do not communicate with other departments in a timely manner, resulting in management disconnection, and cannot solve problems systematically, in the long-term, and fundamentally.

3.3. Insufficient effectiveness of mass supervision

Whether the power operation procedures in colleges and universities are fair and just must rely on the supervision and restriction of the masses. The ways for supervision departments in colleges and universities to actively discover violations of discipline and regulations are still insufficient. They mainly rely on the reports of teachers, students, and employees passively. Many employees, out of consideration for personal relationships, choose to “mind their own business” and not report problems that do not involve their own interests to relevant departments. The supervision by teachers, students, and employees lacks universality, timeliness, and effectiveness.

3.4. Insufficient awareness of pre-event risk prevention

Specialized supervision departments do not have an in-depth understanding of risks. Influenced by inertial thinking, they focus more on post-event accountability and handling, and less on pre-event supervision^[10]. Some colleges and universities do not fully identify key positions with high risks. Cadres are not clear about the red lines of key positions, and employees do not fully implement the required actions in key links. Many colleges and universities have not established a pre-event risk prevention and control system with comprehensive prevention and control points and detailed prevention and control measures based on their actual situations.

4. The practical paths for constructing the internal supervision system of colleges and universities

4.1. Supervising from top to bottom, establishing the “Five-type Supervisors” mechanism

Under the overall coordination of discipline inspection and supervision, various types of supervision perform their

respective duties, cooperate, and support each other^[11]. Establish the “Five-type Supervisors” mechanism (**Table 1**) to form a vertical supervision chain that promotes the implementation of supervision at the grass-roots level. Develop supervision responsibility lists for the three types of grass-roots supervisors, namely, branch discipline inspection committee members, department discipline inspection supervisors, and section supervisors, clarify specific supervision matters, and compact supervision responsibilities. Regularly carry out capacity-building training and work seminars to improve the supervision capabilities of supervisors. Provide monthly special subsidies to the three types of grass-roots supervisors, conduct annual evaluations for grass-roots discipline inspection personnel, and open up preferential promotion channels to form a supervision incentive mechanism. The three types of grass-roots supervisors submit supervision reports to the discipline inspection commission every month.

Table 1. Work Responsibilities of the Five Supervisory Personnel

| Five-Type Supervisors | Supervision Scope | Supervision Content |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Full-time Discipline Inspection Personnel | The Whole School | Overall leadership in the construction of the internal supervision system and supervision work |
| Part-time Discipline Inspection Committee Members | The Whole School | Responsible for special supervision and guidance in combination with their own positions |
| Branch Discipline Inspection Committee Members | Party Branches | Implementation of Party organization work in the branch, development of warning education, etc. |
| Department Supervisors | Departments | Department work style construction, risk prevention and control, etc. |
| Section Supervisors | Sections, Project Departments | Procurement, fund use, employees' compliance with laws and regulations, and implementation of systems, etc. |

4.2. Supervising horizontally to the edges, strengthening the synergistic effect of the “Three Lines of Defense” for supervision

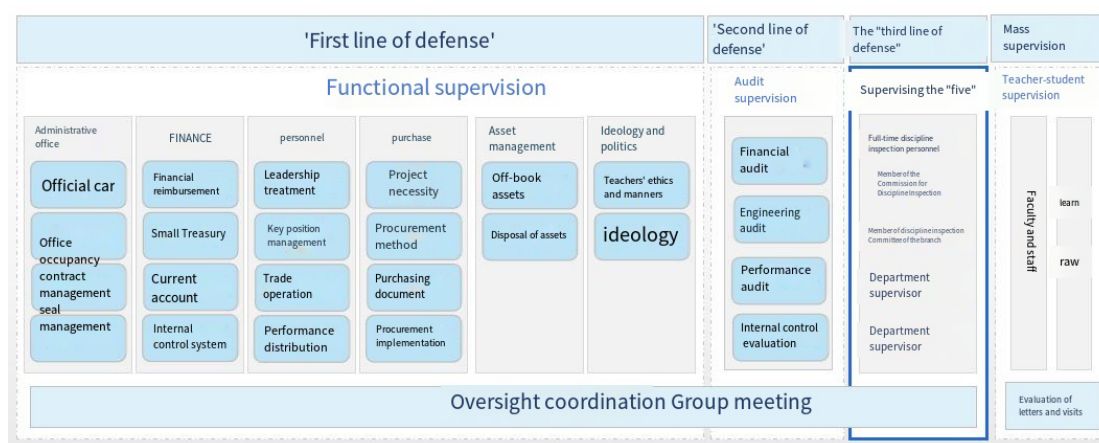
In 2010, FERMA and ECIIA jointly issued the position statement “Guidance for Boards and Audit Committees on the Implementation of Article 41-2b of the 8th Company Law Directive” (“Guidance I”), which proposed the “Three-Line of Defense Theory” for internal control^[12]. That is, the first line of defense is the operation management department and the internal control department, the second line of defense is the risk management functional department, and the third line of defense is the internal audit department. However, considering the actual work of colleges and universities, we have established a “Three-line of Defense” supervision system consisting of functional supervision, audit supervision, and discipline inspection and supervision. It is clear that the “first line of defense” is mainly composed of functional departments (**Table 2**), the “second line of defense” is mainly composed of the audit department, which discovers problems through internal financial audits and project audits, and the “third-line of defense” is mainly composed of the discipline inspection and supervision department, which discovers and handles problem clues through daily supervision and special supervision. Taking the quarterly supervision work coordination group meeting as a platform, the group leader organizes functional supervision departments to introduce supervision situations and conduct exchanges and discussions on multi-department coordinated supervision. Actively invite superior departments of the school to attend the meeting to guide the supervision work, compact the responsibilities of functional supervision, and form a horizontal supervision chain.

Table 2. Key contents of supervision by functional departments of the “First line of Defense”

| Functional Departments | Examples of Key Supervision Points |
|--|---|
| Administrative Office | Official vehicle use, office space use, contract content, seal management |
| Finance Department | Standardization of official reception and travel expense reimbursement, existence of private “small treasuries”, etc. |
| Personnel Department | Remuneration for leading personnel’s performance of duties, management of key positions, department performance distribution, and whether cadres engage in business, etc. |
| Procurement Management Department | Pre-event investigation, bidding methods, bidding documents, and the standardization of the procurement process |
| State-owned Assets Management Department | Existence of off-balance-sheet assets, loss of state-owned assets, etc. |
| Ideological and Political Department | Teachers’ professional ethics and style, ideological and political issues |

4.3. Focusing on mass supervision, forming a “Five-vertical and Four-horizontal” supervision network for colleges and universities

Mass supervision has the advantage of “supervising in all aspects and with great detail”, and plays a crucial role in power governance^[13]. Based on the vertical “Five-type Supervisors” and horizontal “Three Lines of Defense” for supervision, colleges and universities add horizontal mass supervision to form a “Five-vertical and Four-horizontal” supervision grid for colleges and universities (**Figure 1**). Specialized supervision departments regularly conduct mutual evaluations among teaching and administrative staff and evaluations of teachers by students. For those with problems in the evaluations, individual interviews are conducted to ensure that supervision follows wherever power is exercised.

**Figure 1.** “Five-vertical and Four-horizontal” university supervision grid

4.4. Preventing preventing problems before they occur, improving the risk prevention and control system

The competent departments of state-owned enterprises have realized the integration of management and control, and have shifted from emphasizing risk management to requiring the integrated construction of risk management, internal control, and compliance management^[14]. Influenced by the new public management trend, the government entrusted HEFCE to draw on the successful experience of enterprise risk management and actively introduce risk management into the daily management and governance of colleges and universities^[15]. Risk management requires precise and regular supervision, with a focus on people and matters prone to risks. Specialized supervision departments should focus on people, finances, and materials, investigate positions with public power and the links where public power is

exercised, set red lines for employees in key positions, identify risk links, and construct a risk prevention mechanism. For employees in key positions, strengthen pre-event prevention through warning education, heart-to-heart talks, and signing commitment letters. Construct a risk prevention and control mechanism, establish a prevention and control leading group, set standards for risk classification and risk level division, sort out risk links and prevention and control measures, and form the “Risk Prevention and Control Manual”.

This article has effectively solved problems such as insufficient extension of supervision to the grass-roots level, weak awareness of coordinated supervision among functional departments, insufficient effectiveness of mass supervision, and insufficient awareness of pre-event risk prevention by constructing a “Five-vertical and Four-horizontal” supervision network for colleges and universities and developing the “Risk Prevention and Control Manual”. It has improved the internal supervision system of colleges and universities, strengthened the sense of discipline among cadres and employees, enhanced the school’s risk prevention capabilities, and is conducive to promoting the authoritative and effective governance of colleges and universities, providing a guarantee for the high-quality development of schools.

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