

Deconstruction of the Connotation and Value Reconstruction of Ideological and Political Leadership in Universities from the Perspective of the Six Major Capabilities of an Education Power

Jiayue Lu

Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu 610500, Sichuan, China

*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited

Abstract: The proposition of the “Six Major Capabilities of an Education Power” systematically outlines the strategic functional map of Chinese higher education in the new era. Among them, “Powerful Ideological and Political Leadership” holds the primary position, possessing profound logical necessity and strategic foresight. This paper argues that, from the perspective of the “Six Major Capabilities”, the connotation of ideological and political leadership in universities has undergone a fundamental leap. It is no longer merely a political guarantee but has become the core driving force generating and developing talent competitiveness, scientific and technological support capability, people’s livelihood security capability, social synergy capability, and international influence. This paper aims to systematically deconstruct this new connotation, defining it as an organic system integrating five dimensions: “Direction-Setting and Soul-Shaping Power”, “Value-Navigating Power”, “Spirit-Driving Power”, “Cultural-Infiltrating Power”, and “Synergistic-Cohesive Power”. On this basis, it focuses on reconstructing its contemporary value, demonstrating its value paradigm shift from “Service and Guarantee” to “Strategic Leadership”, and from “Soft Power” to “Hard Core”. Finally, it proposes practical pathways to strengthen the ideological and political leadership in universities to empower the overall capabilities, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for comprehensively advancing the construction of an education power.

Keywords: Education power; Six major capabilities; Ideological and political leadership; Connotation deconstruction; Value reconstruction; Core driving force

Online publication: October 26, 2025

1. Introduction

The “Six Major Capabilities of an Education Power”, “Powerful Ideological and Political Leadership”, “Talent Competitiveness”, “Scientific and Technological Support Capability”, “People’s Livelihood Security Capability”, “Social Synergy Capability, and International Influence”, constitute a logically rigorous and organically unified system of strategic capabilities. This sequence itself implies profound strategic insight: “Powerful Ideological and Political Leadership” is not simply juxtaposed with the other five capabilities but runs through and commands their development as the “soul” and “main

thread". It fundamentally answers the major directional questions of "for whom to cultivate people", how to strengthen the foundation", and "how to achieve sustainability" for an education power.

Currently, ideological and political work in universities is facing an era of transformation from "passive response" to "active leadership". In the traditional perspective, ideological and political work was often positioned as a "safety line" for maintaining stability and unifying thought; however, within the grand narrative of the "Six Major Capabilities", its role must be reconstructed as the "leading line" driving the high-quality development of higher education. The strength of ideological and political leadership directly relates to whether the cultivated talents can shoulder great responsibilities, whether the innovative technologies can serve the nation, whether the exported wisdom can benefit the people, whether collaborative efforts can build consensus, and whether the international influence can demonstrate exemplary character.

Therefore, conducting an in-depth deconstruction of the connotation and a strategic reconstruction of the value of ideological and political leadership in universities from the perspective of the "Six Major Capabilities of an Education Power" is not only an urgent requirement for theoretical innovation but also a prerequisite for action in practical development^[1].

2. Connotation deconstruction: The five-dimensional framework of ideological and political guidance as the "core driving force"

Against the macro background of building a powerful education nation in the new era, the ideological and political guidance capacity of colleges and universities has broken through the limitations of traditional political education and demonstrated richer connotations of the times. This kind of guiding power has transcended the old boundaries, and its core connotations can be systematically analyzed from five interrelated dimensions, which together form a complete framework of guiding capacity.

2.1. Direction-setting and soul-shaping power: Steering the course of building a powerful education nation

As the fundamental dimension of ideological and political guidance capacity, the direction-setting and soul-shaping power essentially determines the political orientation and development path of university operation. This power is mainly realized through systematic Marxist theoretical education, especially through the value guidance of President Xi Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a new era. It helps teachers and students establish correct political positions and ideological orientations, and thoroughly addresses the primary question of "for whom to cultivate talents"^[2].

In practice, this guiding power is specifically reflected in three aspects. Regarding talent training objectives, it unswervingly adheres to the socialist orientation in running schools. In the teaching and educational process, it fully implements the Party's educational guidelines. In the field of academic research, it consciously upholds the guiding status of Marxism.

Functioning like the helm of a ship, this direction-setting and soul-shaping power ensures that colleges and universities always maintain the correct political direction amid the complex and volatile social environment. It enables them to keep a clear political mind and firm ideals and beliefs in the face of all challenges, laying a solid ideological foundation for cultivating a new generation of young people who can shoulder the responsibility of national rejuvenation^[3].

2.2. Value navigation power: Calibrating the benchmark for striving for excellence

As a crucial component of ideological and political guidance capacity, the value navigation power internalizes the core socialist values to provide value norms, moral guidance, value standards and ethical criteria for various school-running activities of colleges and universities.

This power exerts its influence at multiple levels. In talent training, it emphasizes the educational philosophy of nurturing people with both moral integrity and professional competence, prioritizing moral character. In scientific research,

it guides teachers and students to abide by academic norms, promote the spirit of scientists, and advocate a rigorous and innovative academic attitude. In social services, it adheres to the principle of putting people first, upholds fairness and justice, and embraces the value pursuit of serving the people and contributing to society.

Especially in the current context of diverse values, this navigation power is of particular importance. It not only provides a clear value coordinate for teachers and students but also establishes a moral benchmark for the development of various university undertakings, ensuring that colleges and universities always move forward along the correct value path in their pursuit of excellence.

2.3. Spiritual driving power: Igniting the engine for proactive endeavor

The spiritual driving power serves as the source of motivation for ideological and political guidance capacity. By inheriting the red gene and promoting the national spirit and the spirit of the times, it ignites teachers and students' aspiration to study for the nation, their integrity to scale the heights of science and technology, and their confidence to foster a strong sense of care for people's livelihood, thereby injecting robust spiritual strength into the development of colleges and universities ^[4].

This power is mainly reflected in three aspects:

- (1) It stimulates the patriotic feelings of teachers and students and strengthens their sense of mission to serve the country;
- (2) It cultivates their spirit of perseverance and enhances their courage to overcome difficulties;
- (3) It shapes their awareness of innovation and fosters their character of pursuing excellence.

Beyond material incentives, this spiritual power acts as a strong "internal engine" that drives teachers and students to tackle challenges and pursue first-class standards in their respective fields, directly empowering both "scientific and technological support capacity" and "people's livelihood security capacity". In practice, through various approaches such as school history education, recognition of role models, and cultural inheritance, spiritual strength is transformed into concrete actions of teachers and students in their work and entrepreneurship, providing an inexhaustible source of motivation for the development of various university undertakings.

2.4. Cultural edification power: Cultivating the soil for morality education

As an implicit dimension of ideological and political guidance capacity, the cultural edification power uniquely achieves value guidance and character cultivation in a subtle way through cultural influence and environmental nurturing.

Cultivating this power requires the systematic integration of three cultural dimensions: absorbing the educational wisdom from fine traditional Chinese culture, inheriting the red gene of revolutionary culture, and developing the contemporary connotations of advanced socialist culture. The integration of these three elements jointly builds a cultural ecosystem with Chinese characteristics and distinct university features, creating a silent educational atmosphere ^[5].

Different from direct indoctrination, this cultural edification permeates every corner of the campus like air. It continuously influences the spiritual world of teachers and students through diverse means such as environment construction, atmosphere influence and model demonstration. Its profound significance lies not only in providing rich cultural heritage and a nurturing growth environment for "talent competitiveness" but also in shaping a university culture that embodies Chinese styles and ethos, laying a solid cultural foundation for enhancing "international influence".

2.5. Collaborative cohesion: Weaving a network for joint education and mutual development

As the institutional guarantee of ideological and political guidance capacity in practice, the core essence of collaborative cohesion lies in building an organically connected educational community that advances toward the same goal. It thereby systematically integrates various educational resources to form a strong synergy in education ^[6].

To give full play to its effectiveness currently, efforts must be made to break three major practical barriers as outlined:

- (1) It is necessary to break disciplinary boundaries, deepen the coordination between ideological and political courses and the integration of ideological and political elements into all courses, and integrate value shaping into the

knowledge system;

- (2) It is essential to eliminate departmental barriers, promoting the transformation of teaching, research, management, and service sectors from individual operations to systematic linkage;
- (3) It is crucial to break down the divide between campuses and society, facilitating effective connection between internal and external education and constructing an open and collaborative educational ecosystem.

The essence of these breakthroughs is to resolve the long-standing problem of fragmented education in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor education, and to translate the concept of “all-round education involving all staff, throughout the whole process, and in all aspects” into vivid educational practices. This not only improves the internal governance efficiency of colleges and universities but also consolidates the foundation of “social coordination capacity” by strengthening positive interaction between universities and society. Furthermore, it expands the depth and breadth of “international influence” by promoting cross-cultural understanding and exchanges, thus providing systematic support for building a powerful education nation^[7].

These five dimensions support and promote each other, jointly forming a complete system of ideological and political guidance capacity for colleges and universities in the new era. Among them, the direction-setting and soul-shaping power is the foundation, the value navigation power is the criterion, the spiritual driving power is the source, the cultural edification power is the underpinning, and the collaborative cohesion is the guarantee. Their combined effect enables the ideological and political guidance capacity to truly become the core driving force for promoting the development of colleges and universities, providing strong spiritual motivation and ideological guarantee for building a powerful education nation.

3. Value reconstruction: A paradigm leap from protective existence to guiding function

In-depth analysis of the connotative structure of ideological and political guidance capacity inevitably leads to the re-examination and theoretical construction of its value system. Within the overall framework of the “six major capacities for building a powerful education nation”, the ideological and political guidance capacity of colleges and universities is undergoing a profound value paradigm transformation, which is mainly reflected in three logically interrelated dimensions.

3.1. Reconstruction of value orientation: From “lifeline” to “growth line”

Traditional cognition positions ideological and political work as the “lifeline” for maintaining the direction of university operation, with its value primarily manifested in meeting the bottom-line requirement of ensuring that universities do not deviate from the socialist orientation in running schools. However, from the strategic perspective of building a powerful education nation in the new era, the value of ideological and political guidance capacity has broken through the limitations of its protective function and evolved into a “growth line” driving the connotative development of colleges and universities^[8].

The fundamental essence of this transformation lies in the fact that ideological and political guidance capacity, by shaping the spiritual world and value orientation of teachers and students, is directly converted into the core literacy of talent training, the innovative character of scientific research, and the practical effectiveness of social services. It has become the most dynamic component of universities’ core competitiveness system, providing a steady stream of internal motivation for the continuous improvement of other capacities.

3.2. Reconstruction of value functions: From “soft power” to “hard core”

For a long time, ideological and political work has been regarded as a “soft task” due to the difficulty in quantitatively evaluating its effects. Nevertheless, on the new journey of building a powerful education nation, the family and country feelings, sense of mission, and spirit of striving nurtured by ideological and political guidance capacity have become indispensable core elements for strategic tasks such as overcoming bottleneck problems in key core technologies, attracting

and gathering top global talents, and gaining widespread recognition from the international community^[9].

This kind of guidance capacity fundamentally addresses the motivation mechanism issues of “whether one is willing to act” and “for whom to act”, which is an internal driving force that cannot be replaced by any material investment or technical conditions, and thus constitutes the “hard core” for the high-quality development of colleges and universities.

3.3. Reconstruction of value field: From “parallel lines” to “concentric circles”

In past educational practices, ideological and political work often formed a pattern of “two separate tracks” with professional teaching, scientific research, and other operational activities, similar to two parallel lines with little intersection, each operating on relatively independent tracks. Under the new value paradigm, ideological and political guidance capacity requires the organic integration of value shaping into the entire process of knowledge impartment and competence cultivation, constructing a concentric circle structure with “fostering morality and cultivating talents” as the fundamental center and the comprehensive improvement of the “Six Major Capacities” as the radiating sectors^[10].

In this framework, ideological and political elements are no longer external labeled additions but are internalized as the value genes of every school-running activity, realizing in-depth integration and resonant development with functions such as talent training, scientific research, social services, cultural inheritance and innovation, and international exchanges and cooperation.

These three transformations of the value paradigm collectively delineate the strategic position of ideological and political guidance capacity in the development pattern of colleges and universities in the new era. They not only enrich its theoretical connotations but also provide clear directional guidance for its practical innovation.

4. Practical pathways: A systematic project to empower the coordinated enhancement of the “six major capacities”

Translating the ideological and political guidance capacity at the theoretical level into practical driving force for the coordinated development of the “Six Major Capacities” requires constructing a systematic and operable practical system. The development of this system should be based on the actual operation of colleges and universities, and advanced through multi-dimensional coordination such as institutional mechanism innovation, carrier and pathway expansion, professional team building, and evaluation system reform. This ensures that ideological and political guidance truly runs through all links and the entire process of school operation and governance.

4.1. Priority task: Build a holistic “One-Game Chess” work pattern

It is essential to uphold and improve the president responsibility system under the leadership of the Party committee, and establish an ideological and political work mechanism featuring unified leadership by the Party committee, joint management by Party and government departments, and coordinated linkage among multiple parties. This mechanism needs to possess cross-departmental and cross-college overall coordination capabilities, enabling effective integration of educational resources scattered across teaching, scientific research, management, services, and other links.

Through institutional guarantees, the requirements of ideological and political guidance are fully reflected in the university’s top-level design, discipline planning, major projects, and resource allocation. Ultimately, this achieves a comprehensive upgrade from “ideological and political courses” to “integration of ideological and political elements into all courses”, and further to “campus-wide ideological and political education”.

4.2. Innovation focus: Design “integrated” educational carriers and practical pathways

There is a need to innovate and design “integrated” educational carriers and practical pathways to enhance the permeability and appeal of ideological and political guidance. In curriculum development, efforts should be made to create brand courses with disciplinary characteristics, organically integrating national strategic needs, cutting-edge scientific and

technological developments, and global development issues into teaching content.

In scientific research activities, explore the implementation of an “ideological and political tutor system”, incorporating discussions on research ethics, academic norms, and social responsibility into project approval, process management, and achievement evaluation. In social practice and international exchanges, carefully design projects with ideological and political themes, enabling value guidance to be naturally realized through practical actions and international interactions.

4.3. Talent support: Forge a professional and expert team of ideological and political workers

It is imperative to cultivate a professional and expert team of ideological and political workers to provide talent support for the effective exertion of ideological and political guidance capacity. A systematic “capacity enhancement program for ideological and political work teams” should be implemented, focusing on nurturing compound experts who are proficient in theories, familiar with professional fields, skilled in verbal teaching, and emphasize personal example.

Improve the collaborative training and cooperation mechanism among ideological and political course teachers, counselors, and professional course teachers, breaking down the barriers between ideological and political work and professional education to form a synergy in talent cultivation.

4.4. Key guarantee: Implement “development-oriented” evaluation reform oriented by educational effectiveness

The key lies in implementing “development-oriented” evaluation reform centered on educational effectiveness, forming a “baton” to promote the implementation of ideological and political guidance. Take the effectiveness of ideological and political education as a core indicator in college assessments, discipline evaluations, and teacher recruitment and promotion, assigning it appropriate weight.

For students, establish “ideological and political literacy development files”, using a combination of process-based records and multi-dimensional evaluation to track and assess their ideals and beliefs, social responsibility, innovative spirit, and other aspects. Through scientific evaluation orientation, promote the transformation of ideological and political work from focusing on form to emphasizing effectiveness, and from emphasizing indoctrination to prioritizing development, fully demonstrating the practical value of ideological and political guidance.

5. Conclusion

Within the system of the “Six Major Capacities for building a powerful education nation”, a strong ideological and political guidance capacity stands at the logical starting point and core of value. It serves as the core driving force that “guides the direction like a polar star”, “forges the foundation and soul”, and “ignites the engine” for building a powerful education nation. For colleges and universities, systematically constructing ideological and political guidance capacity in the new era essentially constitutes a profound reform concerning school-running philosophy, talent cultivation methods, and governance systems.

This reform requires universities to transform ideological and political guidance from an external requirement into an internal awareness, integrating it into every link of talent training, scientific research, social services, cultural inheritance, and international exchanges like blood flowing through veins. Only when ideological and political guidance is truly internalized as the organizational gene of the university and becomes the shared pursuit of teachers and students can Chinese higher education form a unique core competitiveness.

Constructing an educational ecosystem with ideological and political guidance capacity at its core is directly related to the process of national rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Only through solid ideological and political guidance can we cultivate a new generation of young people who can shoulder the responsibility of national rejuvenation, produce innovative achievements serving national strategies, form a cultural force leading society, and demonstrate the unique

charm of Chinese education on the international stage. This is the historical mission that colleges and universities must undertake in the new era, and it is also the fundamental guarantee for building a powerful education nation.

Funding

Southwest Petroleum University Natural Sciences “Starter Grant” Program (Project No.: 2023QHZ012)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Xi J, 2021, Strengthen Ideals and Beliefs to Replenish the Spiritual Calcium. *Qiushi*, 2021(21): 4–15.
- [2] Xi J, 2023, Accelerate the Construction of a Powerful Education Nation. *Qiushi*, 2023(15): 3–10.
- [3] Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2023, Outline for Building a Powerful Education Nation (Study Reader), Higher Education Press, Beijing.
- [4] Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2017, Implementation Outline for the Quality Improvement Project of Ideological and Political Work in Institutions of Higher Education.
- [5] Yang X, 2024, Building a Powerful Education Nation with Strong Ideological and Political Guidance Capacity. *Educational Research*, 45(9): 13–19.
- [6] Zhou L, Xuan J, 2024, Multi-Dimensional Reflections on Enhancing the Ideological and Political Guidance Capacity of Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Building a Powerful Education Nation. *China Moral Education*, 2024(23): 5–11.
- [7] Zhang L, 2020, Value Reconstruction of Universities’ Ideological and Political Guidance Capacity from the Perspective of Marxist Theory. *Studies on Marxism*, 2020(8): 142–150.
- [8] Liu S, 2021, Research on the Paradigm Transformation of Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities from “Guarantee” to “Guidance”. *Journal of Higher Education Management*, 2021(3): 56–63.
- [9] Li L, 2022, The Logic and Guarantee for the Coordinated Development of Universities’ “Six Major Capacities” from the Perspective of Building a Powerful Education Nation. *China Higher Education*, 2022(12): 18–21.
- [10] Feng R, Jin G, Wang M, 2025, Research on Enhancing Ideological and Political Guidance Capacity in the New Era, Liaoning People’s Publishing House, Shenyang.

Publisher’s note

Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.