

# An Exploration into Strengthening the Student Management Functions of Higher Vocational Colleges in the Context of Vocational Undergraduate Program Development

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**Abstract:** Student management constitutes a critical component in ensuring the quality of talent cultivation in higher vocational colleges and serves as the essential pathway for fulfilling their fundamental mission of fostering virtue through education. Within the context of vocational undergraduate education development, student management in these institutions faces challenges regarding adaptability, professionalism, practical applicability, and contemporary relevance in terms of management philosophies, workforce composition, methodologies, and institutional frameworks. This paper takes vocational undergraduate education development as its starting point, conducts an in-depth analysis of the new expectations placed on student management functions in this context, and systematically examines the current state of existing student management practices in higher vocational colleges. Building on this foundation, the paper proposes a series of enhancement strategies aimed at strengthening student management functions, intending to provide theoretical guidance and practical references for their systematic reform.

**Keywords:** Vocational undergraduate program; Student management; Functional enhancement; Collaborative education; Management innovation

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## 1. Introduction

With the continuous deepening of vocational education reform, higher vocational colleges, serving as crucial bases for cultivating technical and skilled talents, have entered a new phase in student management, facing both challenges and opportunities. In the contemporary era, young students' ideologies have become increasingly diverse, making the traditional management model centered on administrative tasks inadequate for meeting the practical needs of hands-on education. Confronted with these evolving circumstances, effectively enhancing student management capabilities to better support high-quality talent development has become an urgent practical challenge requiring immediate resolution.

## **2. New expectations for student management functions in the development of vocational undergraduate programs**

### **2.1. Upgrading educational standards: Expectations for the restructuring of management objectives**

Vocational undergraduate education bears the crucial mission of cultivating high-level technical and skilled professionals, with its talent development standards undergoing fundamental transformations compared to traditional higher vocational education. Guided by an educational philosophy that equally emphasizes technical skills and foundational theories, students must not only possess solid theoretical knowledge and exceptional professional competencies but also demonstrate strong innovative thinking and professional ethics<sup>[1]</sup>. This interdisciplinary talent cultivation objective requires a shift in student management practices, from the traditional core concept of “maintaining order” to a new goal-oriented framework focused on “empowering growth.” Management should serve as an effective vehicle for unlocking students’ potential and fostering their holistic development. Consequently, contemporary management objectives must prioritize nurturing students’ innovative capabilities, critical thinking, and professional ethos while ensuring basic order maintenance, thereby establishing a goal framework aligned with the developmental patterns of high-caliber technical professionals.

### **2.2. Deep integration of industry and education promotes the expansion of management boundaries**

Vocational undergraduate education has propelled school-enterprise collaboration from superficial alignment to deep integration, with collaborative approaches such as joint curriculum development, mutual faculty appointments, and shared training bases becoming increasingly diverse. This comprehensive, multi-tiered industry-education integration model extends students’ learning environments beyond campus boundaries, establishing corporate workshops and production lines as vital educational hubs. Student management now faces the challenge of expanding from a single campus context to diversified spaces, as traditional on-campus systems struggle to meet students’ developmental needs during internships and project-based practices. Consequently, institutional administrators must establish collaborative mechanisms with corporate mentors and industry experts, fostering a management framework involving both educational institutions and enterprises with multi-stakeholder participation. This redefined operational paradigm requires management systems that balance campus culture with corporate culture, integrating industry-specific characteristics while preserving the essence of education.

### **2.3. Enhancing student subjectivity requires a transformation in management approaches**

The student body of vocational undergraduate programs exhibits diverse characteristics, comprising both recent graduates admitted directly through the national college entrance examination, students pursuing further education at vocational institutions, and individuals engaged in continuing education. Students from different backgrounds demonstrate significant differences in their academic backgrounds, career perspectives, and developmental aspirations, while their sense of autonomy and rights awareness has become more pronounced than ever. Given these heterogeneous student profiles, traditional disciplinary management approaches often provoke resistant attitudes among students, thereby undermining educational effectiveness. There is an urgent need to shift management practices toward participatory and service-oriented models that respect individual differences and growth rhythms. Participatory management emphasizes students’ active involvement in policy-making and activity organization, positioning them as proactive participants rather than passive recipients. Service-oriented management focuses on fulfilling students’ developmental needs, transforming administrative practices into supportive frameworks for growth and professional development.

## **3. Analysis of the current status of student management functions in higher vocational colleges**

### **3.1. There is a discrepancy between target positioning and educational enhancement**

Most higher vocational colleges still adhere to traditional approaches in setting student management objectives, focusing

primarily on disciplinary constraints and behavioral norms while paying relatively insufficient attention to enhancing students' overall competence and cultivating their innovative capabilities. The updating of management philosophies often lags behind the progress of vocational undergraduate education development; some administrators even lack a comprehensive understanding of the training requirements for high-level technical professionals, habitually equating management with mere control. In constructing goal systems, there is a lack of in-depth exploration into students' career development patterns, resulting in objectives that are either overly broad or overly specific, making it difficult to establish a well-structured, interconnected framework. Furthermore, the evaluation mechanisms for management goals remain relatively simplistic, over-relying on quantitative metrics while neglecting crucial qualities that are difficult to quantify, such as students' individual development and innovative thinking.

### **3.2. The management framework inadequately responds to the trend of industry-education integration**

The current student management system is primarily designed around campus environments, with relatively weak oversight of enterprise-based practical training components. As school-enterprise collaboration deepens, there remains an absence of effective mechanisms to manage students' ideological development, academic progress, and safety during corporate internships. Management frameworks are typically confined to campus settings, failing to address students' diverse needs across different learning environments. Although some institutions have established joint school-enterprise management systems, substantive coordination often falls short during implementation. Corporate management responsibilities remain poorly defined, while university authorities exhibit gaps in guiding and supervising intern students. Furthermore, management resources are unevenly distributed between on-campus and off-campus settings, with insufficient capacity for off-campus practical training, thereby undermining the effectiveness of industry-education integration in talent development<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **3.3. The management approach has not yet fully aligned with students' demands for autonomy**

Traditional student management primarily relies on administrative directives and institutional constraints, with students having limited participation throughout the process. For vocational undergraduate students whose sense of agency is increasingly prominent, this one-dimensional management approach proves rigid and outdated. A significant tension exists between students' demands for democratic participation and individual development on the one hand, and the current management practices on the other. Some students even develop resistance toward the system, severely undermining management effectiveness. The personalized services offered also lack depth, failing to meet the diverse needs of different student groups. Administrative departments lack a thorough understanding of students' developmental patterns and psychological characteristics, often adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach that overlooks individual differences. Furthermore, the student feedback mechanism remains inadequate, making it difficult for administrators to gather genuine student opinions and reasonable requests. Consequently, the scientific rigor and relevance of management decisions need substantial improvement.

### **3.4. A gap exists between the management team's capability structure and new expectations**

The professional competence of student management teams still has significant room for improvement, with some administrators lacking systematic professional training and theoretical knowledge. In terms of knowledge structure, the traditional background in ideological and political education remains dominant, resulting in relatively insufficient understanding of vocational education principles, industry development trends, and students' psychological characteristics. The capacity-building mechanisms for administrators are also inadequate, as training content primarily focuses on policy interpretation and operational skills while neglecting cutting-edge theories and innovative methodologies. Furthermore, incentive mechanisms for team development require optimization, and career advancement pathways remain limited, adversely affecting the recruitment and retention of outstanding talent. Regarding the application of management tools and methods, the level of digitalization remains low, and data analysis capabilities are relatively weak, making it difficult to

meet the demands of modern management practices.

## **4. Path selection for strengthening student management functions in higher vocational colleges under the background of vocational bachelor's degree program development**

### **4.1. Anchoring empowerment for growth: Reconstructing the management goal system**

Higher vocational institutions should establish a multi-dimensional goal system centered on empowering student growth, encompassing four key dimensions: refinement of professional skills, cultivation of innovative thinking, development of professional competence, and nurturing of social responsibility<sup>[3]</sup>. During goal-setting, administrative departments must conduct in-depth research on industry trends and actual employer requirements, effectively integrating external expectations with students' intrinsic motivation to create a goal-oriented framework that meets contemporary demands while respecting individual differences. The management evaluation system should move beyond traditional single-quantitative models, adopting a comprehensive framework that combines qualitative and quantitative assessments as well as process and outcome evaluations. Additionally, the pathways to goal achievement should demonstrate personalized characteristics, offering diverse growth pathways and development options for students with varying backgrounds and interests. Taking the "New Energy Vehicle Technology" program as an example, instructors can expand student management objectives from traditional criteria like "discipline adherence and punctual attendance" to multidimensional goals such as "mastering core new energy technologies, fostering green development concepts, enhancing innovative practical skills, and strengthening teamwork spirit." In implementation, administrative departments should establish personalized growth portfolios to document students' performance and progress across projects, including battery technology research, charging station installation training, and intelligent connectivity system development. Management evaluations should prioritize students' demonstrated innovative thinking, problem-solving abilities, and professional ethics throughout project execution. Such a goal-oriented framework not only enhances students' overall professional competencies but also stimulates their intrinsic motivation for proactive learning.

### **4.2. Transcending campus boundaries to build a collaborative management ecosystem**

The development of vocational undergraduate programs should integrate multiple stakeholders, including industry-academia collaboration, community engagement, and family participation, into a comprehensive student support system, fostering an open and shared management ecosystem<sup>[4]</sup>. Institutions should establish an Industry-Academia Cooperation Management Committee that holds regular joint meetings, incorporating external experts such as corporate mentors, industry specialists, and community practitioners into decision-making processes while clarifying their respective roles in student development. A digital management platform can be implemented, enabling enterprises to upload real-time internship evaluation data, communities to record students' social practice performance, and families to participate in formulating and adjusting student development plans. The core of collaborative management lies in establishing an operational mechanism characterized by information sharing, shared accountability, and outcome co-creation, aligning different stakeholders under unified educational objectives. Taking the "New Media Communication" program as an example, instructors may invite content directors from partner media companies to serve as practice mentors, integrating authentic short-video production projects from enterprises into curriculum delivery. When students engage in corporate marketing initiatives, industry mentors provide professional guidance online, promptly correcting deviations during production to ensure seamless alignment between industry standards and academic requirements. Meanwhile, community outreach departments can offer practical platforms for cultural dissemination, allowing student teams to produce local image promotional videos that serve both as course assessment criteria and showcases of community achievements. Parents should regularly attend corporate open days to gain insights into industry trends and collaborate with educators in discussing students' career pathways. The three-party management entities share students' growth trajectory data in the cloud, establishing multi-dimensional, end-to-end development profiles. Based on this dynamic feedback, schools

promptly optimize their educational strategies.

### **4.3. Respect the pace of growth and implement a participatory service model**

Enhancing the management functions for vocational undergraduate students requires establishing a student-centered participatory service system. University administrative departments must thoroughly understand individual student differences and recognize the diverse developmental trajectories of students from different backgrounds <sup>[5]</sup>. The implementation of participatory management mechanisms should grant students decision-making authority in critical areas such as institutional design, policy formulation, and activity organization, transforming them from passive recipients of management to active participants. Student self-governance organizations should elevate their roles from operational execution to decision-making participation, playing proactive roles in dormitory management, academic support, and cultural activities. A service-oriented management philosophy should prioritize meeting students' developmental needs, transforming managerial practices into developmental support and growth guidance through comprehensive networks covering academic planning, career counseling, mental health services, and daily life assistance.

Additionally, personalized service systems should be developed based on student profile analysis, offering tailored management solutions for students with varying academic backgrounds, learning capacities, and developmental goals. Taking the "E-commerce" program as an example, administrative departments can implement a growth support model combining professional mentorship with peer collaboration, where senior outstanding students serve as learning partners for junior students in joint participation in specialized courses, innovation and entrepreneurship projects, and practical skill training. During implementation, students can independently select mentors and peers to form study groups aligned with their interests and career aspirations, engaging in practical projects such as e-commerce platform operations, data analysis, and marketing strategy development. The administration can regularly organize student representatives to participate in evaluating and revising management policies, gather students' feedback on areas such as program development, internship arrangements, and career guidance, thereby establishing a democratic decision-making mechanism.

### **4.4. Reinventing team capabilities and establishing a professional support system**

The professional transformation of student management teams requires systematic restructuring across multiple dimensions, including talent composition, capacity building, incentive mechanisms, and research capabilities. During recruitment, it is advisable to hire interdisciplinary professionals with experience in corporate human resource management, industrial development research, or legal consulting expertise to enrich the team's knowledge base and practical perspective. For instance, professionals with HR management experience from large manufacturing enterprises could serve as career development mentors, while legal experts specializing in intellectual property law could address student rights protection in industry-academia collaborations. Regarding capacity enhancement, a tiered "empowerment-oriented" training system should be established, covering diverse modules such as interpretation of industry-education integration policies, analysis of industry trends, legal practice operations, and nonviolent communication techniques, ensuring managers are equipped to handle complex work scenarios. Specialized training programs like "Industry Mentors on Campus" could invite industry experts to share insights on cutting-edge technological developments and evolving talent demands. Concurrently, performance evaluation mechanisms must be reformed by reducing the weight of traditional administrative metrics and increasing emphasis on core competencies such as student development guidance effectiveness, crisis intervention capabilities, and industry-academia collaboration. Additionally, dedicated research funds should be established to stimulate managers' innovative practices, encouraging in-depth action research on emerging management challenges in the context of vocational undergraduate education development. For example, funding could be allocated to counselors for research projects such as "Research on Students" Adaptation Issues and Intervention Strategies under the School-Enterprise Collaborative Education Model, fostering a positive interaction between management practice and theoretical research. This would yield forward-looking and actionable research findings that provide valuable insights for student management across the industry.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, the underlying demands of vocational undergraduate education development are driving a paradigm shift in the management of higher vocational students, from control to empowerment. Only by achieving systematic synergy across four dimensions, objectives, scope, methods, and capabilities, can we address the contemporary challenge of cultivating high-level technical talent. In the future, as reforms deepen, more flexible and adaptive governance models will continue to emerge, providing critical support for the maturation and stabilization of China's distinctive vocational education system.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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