

Research on the Practice Pathway of Embedding College Counselors into Student Community

Jiarui Liu

School of Humanities and Education, Hubei Business College, Zaoyang, 441200, Hubei, China

Abstract: Embedding university counselors in student communities is an important measure to extend the educational force to the student life domain. Student communities have multiple functions such as learning support, value guidance, behavior formation, psychological counseling, and life services. After counselors enter the communities, they can more directly grasp students' ideological dynamics, interaction status, and actual needs. Currently, there are still problems such as overlapping job responsibilities, poor coordination and operation, narrow activity carriers, and insufficient evaluation and incentives in practice, which affect the in-depth development of community education. Conducting practical explorations around the responsibility system, collaborative governance, educational scenarios, and guarantee mechanisms can help improve the accuracy of counselors' work, promote ideological and political education to extend from the classroom to daily life, and form a more warm and effective student community education pattern.

Keywords: University counselors; Student communities; Community education Introduction

DOI:10.12417/3029-2328.26.04.018

The educational work in universities in the new era is shifting from a single classroom setting to a comprehensive approach covering all time periods and scenarios. The growth needs of students are also showing diverse, immediate and personalized characteristics. The student community, as an important space for young students' life, interaction, self-management and emotional connection, has gradually become a key field for universities to fulfill the task of fostering virtue. Counselors have long been responsible for tasks such as ideological guidance, academic assistance, crisis intervention and daily management. Whether their working methods can be close to students' real lives directly affects the accuracy and affinity of the educational work. Based on this background, this article takes the embedding of university counselors in student communities as the research object, analyzes its practical significance and obstacles to promotion, and discusses feasible paths from aspects such as responsibility division, collaborative governance, carrier construction and evaluation guarantee, in order to provide reference for improving the quality and efficiency of educational work in student communities.

1. Practical Significance of Embedding College Counselors into Student Community

1.1 Meeting the Practical Need for Shifting the Focus of Student Management Downward

Many problems in the management of college students do not occur exclusively in the classroom, but are hidden in dormitory life, peer interactions, online expressions and emotional changes. The student community is a place where students spend a longer time and have a more genuine state. When counselors are integrated into this environment, they can detect situations such as academic burnout, interpersonal conflicts, and difficulties in adapting to life earlier. Shifting the management focus downward is not simply about increasing the frequency of visits; instead, it involves extending the work reach to the places where problems first arise, so that students' needs can be promptly noticed, responded to, and followed up in grassroots scenarios.

1.2 Promoting the Integration of Ideological and Political Education into Students' Daily Life

The student community encompasses various daily activities such as accommodation, interaction, learning, and self-management. It is an important space for the formation of value recognition and behavioral habits. After being integrated into the community, counselors can utilize methods like visiting dormitories, floor exchanges, community

【Author Information】Liu Jiarui, female, born on September 26, 1998, Han ethnicity, native of Zaoyang, Hubei Province, Master's degree holder, working at Hubei Business College. Research Direction: Ideological and Political Education of College Students

discussions, and peer mutual assistance to incorporate ideological guidance into specific and tangible situations that students can perceive and experience. Regarding issues such as dormitory relationships, online behaviors, and collective participation, counselors can promptly provide guidance, shifting ideological education from concentrated teaching to daily immersion.

1.3 Enhancing the Effectiveness of Student Community Governance and Service-Oriented Education

The student community is not only a living space but also a cutting-edge field for university governance and education. After being embedded in the community, counselors can integrate daily management, response to demands, resource coordination, and growth support, and promptly grasp the specific needs of students in areas such as study and life, psychological adaptation, and interpersonal communication. Through community discussions, visits to building sections, and the cultivation of student leaders, counselors can promote the extension of resources such as logistics, psychology, and academic guidance to the students' vicinity, making community governance more humane and service-oriented education more effective.

2. Practical Difficulties in Embedding College Counselors into Student Community

2.1 Ambiguous Role Positioning and Unclear Boundaries of Community-Based Education Responsibilities

During the process of integrating counselors into student communities, a prominent issue is the unclear role definition. After entering the communities, counselors not only have to undertake their regular duties such as ideological education, daily management, and counseling, but are also frequently involved in various tasks such as dormitory inspections, conflict resolution, event organization, and logistical coordination. The boundaries of their work tend to be constantly expanded. Some universities lack detailed explanations for "integrating into the community", resulting in overlapping responsibilities between community education duties, college management duties, dormitory management duties, and logistical service duties. When dealing with student demands, there may be unclear responsibility attribution and repeated work promotion. The counselor's role in the community - whether as an educator, manager, service coordinator, or specific task executor - lacks a stable definition, which hinders the full realization of the community's educational function.

2.2 Lagging Coordination Mechanism and Weak Multi-Subject Linkage Effectiveness

After the counselors are integrated into the student community, the scope of their work and the types of situations they handle expand significantly. It is impossible for the counselors to cover all the complex issues within the student community by themselves. In actual operation, there is no smooth coordination among the college, the student affairs department, the logistics department, the dormitory administrators, the psychological center, the security department, and the student organizations. Information transmission mostly relies on temporary notifications or individual communications, lacking a stable chain of decision-making, feedback, and follow-up. The problems reported by students in the community may involve accommodation conditions, psychological pressure, interpersonal conflicts, academic difficulties, and safety risks. The information held by different entities is scattered, and the handling standards are not completely consistent, leading to situations such as "someone discovers, but no one coordinates" and "multiple parties intervene, but the connection is not smooth".

2.3 Single Educational Carrier and Insufficient Integration of Ideological and Political Education

In the practice of integrating counselors into student communities, the carriers of ideological and political education remain rather thin. Some universities merely view community-based education as entering buildings, entering dormitories, and organizing activities. The actual content mostly focuses on policy explanations, safety reminders, civilized dormitory evaluations, and thematic education check-ins, which are not closely linked to students' real lives. Although counselors enter the communities, their ideological guidance has not been fully integrated into specific scenarios such as student interaction, learning mutual assistance, conflict resolution, online expression, and public participation. This often leads to the phenomenon of "people in the community, but education

remains at the surface level". Some activities emphasize formality and display rather than continuous companionship. Students' participation is mostly due to task requirements, and there is insufficient active expression and in-depth interaction. The carriers of education lack the flavor of life and problem awareness, which will weaken the appeal and penetration of ideological and political education in the community.

2.4 Weak Evaluation and Incentive Mechanism and Insufficient Sustained Driving Force

Embedding counselors in student communities requires a significant investment of time and effort. However, in actual management, relevant evaluations and incentives often lag behind. Some universities still use the number of ledgers, the frequency of activities, visit records, and problem-solving results as the main assessment criteria, paying insufficient attention to the implicit work of counselors in the communities, such as emotional companionship, ideological guidance, risk anticipation, and relationship building. The educational effectiveness of the community has long-term and processual characteristics and is difficult to be directly quantified in the short term. It is often simplified to the completion of tasks. If the connection between community work and professional title evaluation, performance distribution, and position development is not strong, counselors may easily feel additional burdens. Unclear evaluation orientation and insufficient incentive support will affect the counselors' enthusiasm for continuously deepening their involvement in the communities, making embedded education difficult to maintain stable progress.

3. Practice Pathways for Embedding College Counselors into Student Community

3.1 Clarifying Responsibility Boundaries and Building a Community-Based Education Responsibility System

The counselors should integrate themselves into the student community and not merely adhere to the requirements of "visiting the dormitories more often and going to the buildings more frequently". Instead, they should clearly define the boundaries of their responsibility for community education. Universities can establish responsibility lists based on common affairs in the student community, categorizing them into types such as ideological guidance, academic support, psychological care, life services, safety management, and conflict resolution. The counselors mainly undertake tasks such as monitoring students' ideological trends, analyzing growth issues, having heart-to-heart talks, conducting activities in the community for class and student organizations, cultivating student leaders, and following up on key students; dormitory managers, the logistics department, the psychological center, and the security department respectively undertake responsibilities such as maintaining dormitory order, providing living support, offering professional psychological support, and handling safety incidents. This enables the counselors to return from the mundane tasks to the core of students' growth.

The responsibility list should also be accompanied by a matter circulation method to avoid clear regulations but chaotic implementation. Taking the handling of dormitory conflicts as an example, after the building manager notices that students have been arguing for a long time or frequently complaining, they can register the "abnormal interpersonal relationship" matter on the community platform, specifying the dormitory, the situation and the initial details; after receiving the information, the counselor should have a conversation with the relevant students, determine whether the conflict is due to differences in living habits, accumulation of emotional pressure, or risks such as bullying or psychological crisis. If it is only about schedules and hygiene, they can organize dormitory members to make a common agreement, guide students to learn communication and respect boundaries, and arrange floor leaders to follow up; if students show symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, or avoidance of group activities, they should be coordinated by the psychological center for intervention. Each type of matter should clearly specify the person receiving the matter, the person handling it, the person providing feedback, and the completion standards, forming a "discovery - assessment - diversion - follow-up - feedback" closed loop for community education.

3.2 Improving Coordination Mechanisms and Enhancing Multi-Subject Collaborative Governance Effectiveness

After the counselors are integrated into the student community, the community governance should not be solely

the responsibility of the counselors. Instead, the college, the student affairs department, the dormitory administrators, the logistics department, the psychological center, the security department, the professional teachers, and the student leaders should all be included in the same operational chain. Universities can establish community collaborative working groups by floor or area, with the counselors responsible for analyzing student situations, extracting educational issues, and following up, the dormitory administrators responsible for daily inspections and reporting of abnormal information, the logistics department responsible for maintenance and living services, the psychological center responsible for professional assessment and crisis support, the security department responsible for handling safety risks, and the professional teachers responsible for academic assistance. Fixed communication groups and issue ledgers can be set up within the community, and student demands, abnormal behaviors, resource needs, and processing progress are summarized weekly. A monthly area assessment is conducted to centralize and handle the scattered information on the same platform.

The collaborative mechanism should also be embedded in specific event processes to avoid remaining in the "contact when there's a problem" temporary cooperation. For example, if a student returns home late continuously, the dormitory administrator marks the abnormality in the record and sends it to the counselor; the counselor talks with the student that day to understand their daily routine, academic situation, interpersonal relationships, and family situation, and then verifies the classroom performance with the teacher. If it is determined to be related to study pressure, a professional teacher can be contacted for academic assistance; if there are symptoms such as insomnia, anxiety, crying, etc., it should be referred to the psychological center for assessment; if the late return involves off-campus part-time jobs or safety hazards, the funding department and the security department should be contacted for intervention. The entire process is led by the counselor, and each department provides feedback on the handling results within the prescribed time. The community platform retains follow-up records, forming a "floor discovery - counselor assessment - department collaboration - result feedback - continuous follow-up" operational process, shifting the multi-party forces from temporary cooperation to regular collaboration.

3.3 Enriching Educational Carriers and Promoting the Integration of Ideological and Political Education into Community Life

After the counselors are integrated into the student community, ideological and political education cannot be accomplished merely through centralized lectures, theme class meetings, and activity check-ins. Instead, it should rely on the real-life situations of students in the community to design educational carriers. Universities can divide the community space into areas for building communication among buildings, shared learning areas, peer assistance zones, volunteer service areas, and online interaction areas. Different scenarios can carry different educational tasks. The building communication area can be used to conduct small-scale conversations, adjust dormitory relationships, and guide civilized habits; the shared learning area can organize academic assistance, postgraduate exchange, and career planning sharing; the peer assistance area can have student party members, student cadres, and outstanding dormitory leaders on duty to help students solve daily problems; the volunteer service area can carry out practical activities such as community cleaning, old item recycling, and assistance for difficulties. In this way, ideological and political education can shift from "telling principles" to "doing it in life".

The construction of carriers should also have fixed themes and continuous arrangements to avoid the fragmentation of activities. Taking the "Community Civilized Construction Month" as an example, the counselor can determine four types of tasks in advance: "dormitory code formulation, floor deliberation meetings, community volunteer posts, and civilized case sharing". In the first week, each dormitory can discuss rules for rest, hygiene, electricity use, and the use of public spaces, forming a dormitory code; in the second week, a floor deliberation meeting can be held, allowing students to propose solutions to issues such as noise, hygiene, and the placement of public items; in the third week, community volunteer posts can be set up, with students taking turns to participate in cleaning the corridors, lost and found registration, and maintenance of public areas; in the fourth week, sharing and exchange can be carried out, guiding students to connect the rules awareness, responsibility awareness, and

collective awareness. The counselor not only organizes in each stage but also, through questioning, comments, and individual conversations, transforms daily behaviors into value guidance, making ideological and political education truly embedded in community life.

3.4 Improving Evaluation and Incentive Mechanisms and Strengthening the Sustained Driving Force of Community-Based Education

The counselors are embedded in the student community. The evaluation mechanism should not only focus on the number of visits, the number of activities held, and the number of pages in the records, but also pay attention to the quality and actual effect of the community's educational process. Universities can incorporate community work into the annual assessment, performance distribution, and tenure evaluation of counselors. The evaluation content can be divided into dimensions such as basic performance, problem handling, student feedback, collaborative effectiveness, and educational achievements. Basic performance can be evaluated by checking whether the contact with the building, heart-to-heart talks, and follow-up for key students are in place; problem handling can be evaluated by checking whether student demands are promptly responded to and whether risk matters are closed-loop handled; student feedback can be obtained through anonymous questionnaires, community meeting records, and individual interviews to understand the true feelings of students; collaborative effectiveness can be evaluated by checking whether the counselor effectively collaborates with dormitory administrators, logistics, psychological center, and professional teachers. The more closely the evaluation indicators are set to the actual situation of the community, the easier it will be for counselors to demonstrate the value of their deep involvement in the community.

The incentive mechanism should be linked with the evaluation results to avoid community work becoming an additional burden. Taking the recognition of community educational projects as an example, the school can set up several "small but practical" projects each semester, such as academic assistance floors, psychological support corners, Party member responsibility zones, and civilized dormitory co-construction, etc. The counselors can apply for implementation plans, clearly stating the service targets, activity arrangements, expected effects, and follow-up methods. After the project ends, not only photos and summary materials will be checked, but also the student participation degree, problem improvement situation, departmental collaboration records, and student evaluations will be combined for recognition. For projects with better results, their effectiveness can be reflected in workload calculation, performance rewards, merit awards and promotions, and training and further education. This can encourage counselors to be willing to invest in the community for a long time and transform community education from a phased task into a continuous work.

4. Conclusion

The embedding of university counselors in student communities is not merely an extension of their working location, but also a shift in the way of education. Only by integrating the division of responsibilities, collaborative operation, construction of carriers, and evaluation and guarantee, can the community-based education break away from the tendencies of being temporary and transactional. In practice, counselors should be truly close to students' lives, while avoiding being overly consumed by trivial matters; multiple forces should be involved, yet clear divisions of labor and continuous follow-up should be maintained. Daily problems, interpersonal relationships, and growth needs in the student community can all be transformed into educational resources. Working around students' real lives can enhance the stability, targeting, and effectiveness of community-based education.

References:

- [1] HALEY J D. How staff matter to students: Examining students' experiences in student affairs contexts[J]. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 2023, 60(4): 508-520.
- [2] CARTER K E, GRABSCH D K, NADLER M. Exploring the relationship between residential affinity efforts and sense of belonging[J]. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 2023, 50(1): 74-98.

- [3] MCLEVAIN OVERTON M,SRIRAM R.A model for understanding student-faculty interaction within faculty-in-residence programs[J].Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice,2024,61(4):459-474.
- [4] ERCK R W,SRIRAM R.Thriving through interactions:Investigating how distinct relationships influence college student success[J].Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice,2023,60(5):608-624.
- [5] DOST G,MAZZOLI SMITH L.Understanding higher education students'sense of belonging:A qualitative meta-ethnographic analysis[J].Journal of Further and Higher Education,2023,47(6):822-849.