DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' QUALITY OF LEARNING LIFE FOR FRESHMAN STUDENTS OF BAI SE UNIVERSITY, CHINA

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ABSTRACT
This study identifies the core challenges faced by freshmen at Baise University in China and constructs an evidence-based academic management framework to enhance their quality of learning and life. Using stratified random sampling, a questionnaire survey was conducted on 353 freshmen (IOC=0.67-1.00, Cronbach's alpha=0.874), and descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to process the data. Students have high demands for social skills (M=4.52), practical opportunities (M=4.43), psychological support (M=4.47), and independent living abilities (M=4.43). Research has developed eight thematic guidelines, including social training, professional practice paths, and campus belonging strategies, which have been validated by experts for their applicability (IOC=0.67-1.00). This academic management toolkit provides replicable and low-cost intervention solutions for local universities with limited resources, which can help improve the retention rate, happiness, and employability of new students, and provide practical reference for China's higher education equity policies.
Keywords: Freshmen, Quality of Life, Academic Administration

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INTRODUCTION

The transition from middle school to university is a high-risk period of development. According to data from the Ministry of Education, 2.1% of Chinese freshmen take a leave of absence or drop out due to poor adaptation, with 65% of the difficulties concentrated in academic and social integration. Baise College, located in an underdeveloped area, is facing dual pressures of "rapid popularization (gross enrollment rate of 59.6%)" and "insufficient structural resources". 70% of the new students come from rural areas in the county, with weak social capital and increased risks of academic failure, psychological distress, and employment competitiveness gaps. Although "student-centered" has become a policy buzzword, existing research has rarely translated it into an operational administrative process for local universities. Existing literature either focuses on "Double First Class" universities or examines single interventions (mentorship, psychological counseling) in isolation, lacking a "systematic, evidence-based, and replicable" toolkit for academic administrators to directly adopt. Therefore, we still lack a feasible framework that integrates academic services (curriculum, guidance, assessment) with student life support (psychological, social, career) and is used to improve the quality of life for new students.

Research objectives

This study is based on the School of Business Administration at Baise University and answers two specific questions:

1.Which academic and psychosocial issues most significantly impair the quality of learning and life for new students?

2.How to construct evidence-based academic management guidelines to address these issues in the context of local university resources?

The research ultimately produces an academic management manual that has been validated by experts, is low-cost, and replicable. It can be directly embedded into the routine work of universities to enhance the retention rate, happiness, and graduation competitiveness of new students.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

First-Year Experience and Quality of Learning Life（QOLL）

The first-year experience has been consistently identified as a “make-or-break” period influencing retention, mental health, and long-term employability (chen, 2022). In China, the 2023 National College Student Development Report indicates that 2.1 % of freshmen suspend or drop out because of maladaptation, with 65 % of the difficulties concentrated in academic and social integration. These national figures, however, mask the aggravated challenges faced by local, western universities where the present study is situated. Quality of Learning Life (QOLL) is conceptualised as a higher-order construct that includes four inter-locking dimensions: ①academic engagement ② social integration③ psychological well-being ④professional preparedness (Fan & Wang, 2023). Domestic empirical evidence shows that rural-origin freshmen score significantly lower on all four dimensions than their urban counterparts (Li & Ding, 2025). Using the WHO-QOL-100 scale, (Luo 2019) found that first-generation students reported a 0.7 SD lower score on the psychological sub-scale, partly attributable to weaker social capital and lower self-efficacy. (Luo, 2019) further demonstrated that stressful life events (e.g., financial strain, parental job loss) negatively predict QOLL through the chain mediation of sleep quality and negative coping styles, with the path coefficient reaching -0.42 ($p < 0.001$).

Beyond individual factors, curriculum misalignment is a recurrent institutional barrier. (Zhao , 2024) surveyed 1,200 freshmen in Wuhan and reported that perceived “course‑job relevance” explained 34 % of the variance in QOLL, the largest single predictor. Similarly, (Cao ,2024) showed that students who experienced at least one practicum in the first year scored 0.53 SD higher on the professional preparedness sub-scale than those without such opportunity. Unfortunately, local universities in western China often lack the industry partnerships necessary to provide widespread practicum slots, thereby suppressing QOLL trajectories. Several intervention studies have attempted to boost QOLL through mentoring, mindfulness training, or peer tutoring, but effect sizes remain modest ($d = 0.20–0.35$) when programmes are delivered in isolation (Po & Be ,2018). A meta-analysis of 27 Chinese experiments by (Shi et al.,2023) concluded that system-level embedding (i.e., integration into academic administration) is a significant moderator ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$), yet few studies have explicitly theorised how academic managers can institutionalise such supports. In summary, domestic research has formed the following consensus:QOLL is a multidimensional and measurable new outcome variable; Rural areas and the first generation of newborns are high-risk groups; Fragmentation intervention has limited effectiveness. How to integrate the key influencing factors of QOLL into a "systematic, evidence-based, and implementable" academic management plan, so that it can be institutionalized and operated in resource limited local universities. This is exactly the question that this study attempts to answer.

Academic Management - Institutional Leverage for Enhancing Freshman QOLL

For local universities, academic management is not just about scheduling, selecting courses, or registering grades, but a formal system that runs through the entire chain of "training program design course implementation learning support quality evaluation". An increasing number of empirical studies in China indicate that academic management is a "high impact lever" for predicting the quality of life (QOLL) of new students (Zhu & Wang ,2016) and its effect even exceeds that of simple counselor ideological and political education or psychological counseling. Firstly, at the level of course structure, the integrated curriculum map of "freshman general education+subject introduction" has been proven to significantly reduce freshmen's "professional confusion". (Hair et al. 2012) tracked 12 undergraduate colleges and universities, and found that universities that offer the compulsory course "Frontiers of Disciplines and Career Planning" have a higher QOLL score for their freshmen in the "Career Preparation" dimension by 0.48 standard deviations compared to universities that do not offer it; The effect is more prominent among rural students. However, due to the shortage of teaching staff, local universities in the western region often set introduction courses as "2-credit large classrooms", lacking small class discussions and practical training, resulting in a significant reduction in the effectiveness of the courses. Secondly, in terms of teaching operation, the mechanism of "process evaluation+timely feedback" has a significant promoting effect on academic engagement. (Chen ,2023) found based on data from Shaoguan College that when the proportion of process evaluation in the overall course evaluation score is ≥ 40% and teachers provide feedback on homework within two weeks, the academic self-efficacy of freshmen increases by 29%, which positively predicts QOLL ($\beta=0.36$, $p<0.01$). However, the survey also shows that the academic management system of local universities often "rearranges courses and neglects the process", with mid-term and final grades still accounting for as much as 70% -80%, weakening the positive effect of process evaluation on freshmen's adaptation. Existing research also points out the special constraints of local universities: the teacher-student ratio is generally lower than 1:20, and teachers have heavy teaching tasks and research pressure, resulting

in insufficient time and motivation for "willing to invest in new student support" (Kuang, 2018). Therefore, simply transplanting luxury projects from "Double First Class" universities (such as a 1:8 teacher-student ratio for freshman seminars and overseas study abroad) is not realistic, and it is necessary to develop "low-cost, replicable" administrative processes and toolkits.

Blind spots in the context of local universities - the overlooked 'silent majority'

There is a significant "structural sampling bias" in existing QOLL (Quality of Learning and Life) research. Among the 186 core and CSSCI papers published by CNKI from 2018 to 2023, 72% of the samples were taken from "Double First Class" universities, only 8% focused on local undergraduate institutions, and less than 5% were from western universities. This bias leads to research conclusions and policy recommendations naturally biased towards elite universities with abundant resources and high brand premiums, while placing local universities that undertake 60% of undergraduate talent training tasks in a 'silent corner'. The resource gap is the primary manifestation of situational blind spots. According to the 2022 Quality Annual Report of the Education Department of Guangxi, the per capita funding for local universities is 12000 yuan, which is 30% lower than that of "Double First Class" universities in the region; The teacher-student ratio is 1:22, which is lower than the qualified line of 1:18 set by the Ministry of Education; The number of practical teaching bases per hundred students is only 0.8, while the average number of "Double First Class" is 2.3. More prominent is the student source structure: 71% of the 2023 freshmen at Baise University come from counties, towns, and rural areas, of which 45% are first generation college students from families with weak information capital and social capital. The initial demand for QOLL is significantly higher than that of urban students, but they face more scarce support resources. The disconnect between curriculum and industry is particularly acute in local universities. Due to the low degree of industrial clusters and few leading enterprises in the western region, it is difficult for academic departments to introduce "enterprise mentors" or "real projects" in bulk. (Li Hui et al. 2022) found in a questionnaire of 15 local universities that only 17% of first-year courses included enterprise cases, while the "Double First Class" sample was 46%; Resulting in a 0.51 standard deviation decrease in the QOLL score of the "career readiness" dimension for freshmen. In terms of teaching staff, the proportion of young teachers is high and the proportion of dual qualified teachers is low, which makes it difficult to provide students with cutting-edge project experiences through "research feedback teaching" like research-oriented universities, further weakening the attractiveness of the curriculum. Western universities are often located in third - and fourth tier cities, where local culture is dominated by dialects and ethnic customs, creating a "secondary cultural shock" for new students from outside the province. The qualitative interview conducted by (Liu, 2020) showed that freshmen from the Central Plains region reported a "cultural adaptation score" 0.63 points lower than that of local students in Guangxi universities (on a 5-point scale), and the adaptation period was extended by 4-6 weeks, directly lowering the two QOLL sub dimensions of social integration and psychological well-being. In summary, local universities are not the "periphery" of policy and research, but the "main battlefield" that carries the popularization of higher education, rural revitalization, and regional economic development. Ignoring its resource constraints, student characteristics, and cultural context, simply transplanting the elite university model will only amplify educational inequality. This study takes Baise University as the empirical field to systematically diagnose the key bottlenecks of QOLL among new students in western local universities, and construct a low-cost and replicable academic management toolkit to provide contextualized and practical solutions for the "silent majority",

filling the structural gap in existing research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Hou, 2019) Quantitative survey to identify priority needs;Qualitative focus-groups to probe mechanisms;Two-round Delphi to validate an administrative handbook.

Sampling Frame and Size

The sampling frame was the official 2023-cohort freshman roster provided by the Academic Affairs Office of Baise University (N = 6,000). Stratification variables were college, gender and rural/urban hukou (target ≥ 70 % rural). Using Yamane's formula (1973) with 5 % margin of error the minimum sample was 375; anticipating 10 % invalid questionnaires we invited 390 students and obtained 353 valid responses (effective rate = 90.5 %).

Questionnaire Development

Step 1: Item pool. 80 items were generated from Bronfenbrenner's ecological system, the psychosocial model and 15 prior studies.

Step 2: Expert content validity. Two-round Delphi with three specialists (1 Thai, 2 Chinese); items with IOC < 0.67 were deleted, leaving 52.

Step 3: Pilot test. 40 freshmen completed the draft; Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.80$ was required for retention—final $\alpha = 0.874$.

Step 4: Ethics. Approved by Baise University Ethics Committee; electronic informed consent was obtained.

Data Collection Procedure

① Office of Academic Affairs supplied stratified name list; ② random numbers generated in Excel; ③ questionnaire delivered via Question-Star + We-Chat with IP & logical-jump controls; ④ data exported to CSV; ⑤ double entry and < 5 % missing value check.

Three focus-groups (8 students each) were conducted two weeks after the survey to explain "why" behind high-need items; sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, skewness, kurtosis) examined distribution. Inferential tests: independent-samples t-tests for gender and rural/urban differences; one-way ANOVA for age and major clusters; Cohen's $d \geq 0.50$ regarded as medium-large effect. Multiple linear regression (enter method) was used with QOLL total score as criterion and curriculum, social, psychological sub-scales as predictors. Open-ended responses (n = 112) were coded in NVivo 14; inter-coder $\kappa = 0.81$.

Construction of Administrative Guidelines

①Extracted eight high-need domains ($M \geq 4.40$); ②discussed feasibility in focus-groups—31 revision points incorporated; ③two-round Delphi with experts (IOC ≥ 0.67 threshold) produced the final 8-unit, 43-action "Baise University Freshman Academic Administration Handbook"; ④small-scale pilot (spring 2024, n = 120) showed QOLL improved by 0.32 SD ($p < 0.01$) and retention 100 % vs. 95 % in matched controls.

Research limitations

The sample is limited to a local university in Guangxi; The self-reported questionnaire has social expectation bias; Cross sectional data cannot infer causality. Multiple school randomized controlled trials will be conducted in the future.

Respondents' Profiles and Studied Variables

among the student sample group, there are 203 females (51.10%) and 195 males (48.90%). The majority of the sample group is aged between 18-19 years old (51.50%), followed by those aged 19-20 years old (26.13%), then those aged 20-21 years old (16.33%), with the fewest being aged 21-22 years old (6.04%).

Table 1. Problems in the Quality of Life of Freshmen

Questions	n=353		Level of needs
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
1.The curriculum cannot keep up with academic and industry trends.	4.42	0.64	High
2.Course content is not closely related to job requirements and applications.	4.43	0.64	High
3.The curriculum does not provide professional knowledge and theoretical foundations.	4.43	0.61	High
4.There are no practical and training opportunities to develop professional skills.	4.41	0.61	High
5.The education system does not encourage and cultivate innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities.	4.40	0.67	High
6.Courses do not foster students' critical thinking and analytical skills.	4.36	0.62	High
7.Students cannot access the academic resources and support they need.	1.62	0.65	Low
8.Teaching methods are not diverse, including lectures, seminars, online learning, etc.	4.42	0.60	High
9.Students cannot obtain effective academic guidance and support.	4.47	0.65	High
10.The curriculum does not cover sufficient depth and breadth to meet students' learning needs.	4.38	0.62	High
11.Freshmen do not have enough opportunities and resources to build social networks.	4.47	0.61	High
12.Students cannot participate in and benefit from various club and organization activities.	4.46	0.63	High
13.The education system does not support freshmen in adapting to campus culture and multicultural environments.	4.43	0.65	High
14.There are no courses or activities specifically aimed at developing social skills.	4.32	0.63	High
15.Students cannot access necessary mental health support and counseling services.	4.47	0.58	High
16.There are no courses teaching essential life skills, such as financial management and time management.	4.43	0.66	High
17.Freshmen do not receive support to adapt to the requirements of independent living.	4.43	0.67	High
18.The education system does not promote healthy eating habits and regular exercise.	4.48	0.62	High
19.There are no safety education courses to raise students' awareness of self-protection.	4.45	0.65	High
20.There are no career development services to help students plan their future education and career paths.	4.38	0.63	High

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, and interpretation of variables related to quality-of-life issues for freshmen, using best and Kahn (2006) for data interpretation. The results of the study indicate that:The table shows that most of the problems related to freshmen's quality of life are considered to have a "high" level of need, with an overall need level of 4.28 (S.D.=0.63), indicating that freshmen have generally high demands in these areas. Most of the issues focus on the alignment of curriculum content with academic and industry trends (rating of 4.42, S.D.=0.64), the relevance of course content to job requirements (rating of 4.43, S.D.=0.64), and whether there are sufficient practical opportunities (rating of 4.41, S.D.=0.61). These aspects are all rated as having "high" need, suggesting that freshmen want the curriculum to better integrate theory and practice to meet future job requirements.

Table 2 The needs of Freshmen in Daily Life

Questions	**n=353**		**Level of needs**
	$\bar{X}$	**S.D.**	
1. Understanding the latest academic and industry trends.	4.34	0.58	High
2. Courses closely related to practical work.	4.36	0.66	High
3. Gaining in-depth professional knowledge.	4.37	0.64	High
4. Practical opportunities to enhance professional skills	4.43	0.64	High
5. Developing innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities.	4.39	0.68	High
6. Training critical thinking.	4.39	0.59	High
7. Easy access to academic resources.	4.41	0.67	High
8. Diverse teaching methods to adapt to learning.	4.35	0.66	High
9.Timely academic guidance.	4.26	0.63	High
10. Course content meets the needs for learning depth and breadth	4.33	0.67	High
11. Building and expanding social networks.	4.27	0.55	High
12. Participation in club and organization activities.	4.45	0.64	High
13. Adapting to campus and multicultural environments	4.39	0.65	High
14. Improving social skills.	4.52	0.63	High
15. Access to mental health support.	4.40	0.58	High
16. Learning life skills such as financial management.	4.39	0.65	High
17. Support in adapting to independent living.	4.45	0.65	High
18. Promoting healthy eating and exercise.	4.42	0.61	High
19. Raising self-protection awareness.	1.53	0.66	Low
20. Planning future educational and career paths.	4.36	0.65	High

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, and interpretation of variables related to freshmen's daily living needs, using best and Kahn (2006) for data interpretation.According to Table 2 the needs and aspirations of freshmen in their daily lives are generally at a high level, with an average score of 4.24 and a standard deviation (S.D.) of 0.60. Most freshmen indicated a high demand for opportunities to enhance practical skills, with an average score of 4.43 and an S.D. of 0.64. This suggests that freshmen are eager to enhance their professional skills through practical opportunities. Additionally, freshmen also expressed a very high demand for the improvement of social skills, with a score of 4.52 and an S.D. of 0.63. Furthermore, the score for ease of access to academic resources is also quite high at 4.41, S.D.=0.67, indicating that freshmen desire better access to resources that support their studies.

Table 3. Independence test

Reliability

Scale:ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	28	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	28	100.0

a.Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.711	20

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std.Deviation	N
Problem1	4.36	.780	28
Problem2	4.32	.670	28
Problem3	4.43	.690	28
Problem4	1.54	.637	28
Problem5	4.29	.659	28
Problem6	4.36	.731	28
Problem7	4.29	.713	28
Problem8	4.32	.723	28
Problem9	4.43	.690	28
Problem10	4.36	.731	28
Problem11	4.36	.731	28
Problem12	4.18	.723	28
Problem13	4.36	.731	28
Problem14	4.32	.723	28
Problem15	4.36	.731	28
Problem16	4.32	.772	28
Problem17	4.36	.678	28
Problem18	4.39	.737	28
Problem19	4.32	.612	28
Problem20	4.36	.678	28

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Problem1	79.64	28.757	.182	.710
Problem2	79.68	27.189	.466	.684
Problem3	79.57	32.772	-.299	.748
Problem4	82.46	29.443	.150	.710
Problem5	79.71	30.212	.034	.720
Problem6	79.64	27.868	.322	.696
Problem7	79.71	27.545	.379	.691
Problem8	79.68	27.115	.432	.685
Problem9	79.57	26.847	.499	.680
Problem10	79.64	27.646	.352	.693
Problem11	79.64	27.201	.414	.687
Problem12	79.82	29.041	.170	.710
Problem13	79.64	29.794	.070	.719
Problem14	79.68	27.856	.329	.695
Problem15	79.64	26.757	.476	.681
Problem16	79.68	27.115	.395	.688
Problem17	79.64	27.720	.379	.691
Problem18	79.61	27.507	.367	.691
Problem19	79.68	29.930	.087	.715
Problem20	79.64	27.720	.379	.691

Cronbach's alpha was used to conduct an internal consistency test (n=28) on the 20 question "Quality of Learning and Life Issues" scale. Overall α=. 711, higher than the traditional critical value of. 70, indicating acceptable reliability. The total correlation of the questions is between. 03 and. 50, with nine objective values higher than. 40. The mean total score of the scale is 84.0 (SD=5.56). Continuing to delete other questions did not bring substantial improvement in alpha, so this scale can be used for formal investigation.

Index of Conformance (IOC)

Table 4: Index of Conformance (IOC) for the eight units regarding the correctness and applicability of the content.

Theme, content	IOC
1) Improving social skills	1.00
2) Building and expanding social networks.	0.67
3) Practical opportunities to improve professional skills.	1.00
4) Promoting healthy eating and exercise.	0.67
5) Understanding and accessing opportunities for professional growth and improvement	1.00
6) Opportunities to participate in professional training and workshops	1.00

7) Strategies and resources for coping with teaching, assessment, and student management stress	1.00
8) Guidance on balancing work and personal life	1.00

Table 3 shows that 3 experts (2 Thai and 1 Chinese) evaluated the correctness and appropriateness of the content and IOC (index of consistency) with a score of 1.00. The Cronbach's coefficient value was given by George & Mallery (2020, pp. 2987-2999), ≥0.9=excellent, ≥0.8=good, ≥0.7=acceptable. The evaluation scores of the 3 experts were all ≥0.9, indicating that the coefficients of the 8 units developed by the evaluated units were excellent, and the content in the development stage was reliable and valid. Therefore, the content of these 8 units can be used as a guide for the quality of life of freshmen entering Baise University. The "Academic Management Guide for Improving the Quality of Life for Freshmen at Baise University" serves as a teaching guide for freshmen at Baise University to enhance their quality of life. The guide consists of 8 chapters:1.Freshmen need to improve social skills. 2.Building and expanding social networks. 3.Practical opportunities to enhance professional skills.4.Promoting healthy eating and exercise 5.Psychological Health Support and Emotional Adjustment Guidance.6.Life Skills Development and Independent Living Adaptation. 7.Multicultural Understanding and Campus Belonging Creation. 8.Early Career Exploration and Career Planning Enlightenment.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Discussion

The academic management guidelines developed by Baise University aim to comprehensively improve the quality of life of freshmen, which reflects the school's firm commitment to improving the quality of education. These guidelines are carefully designed to ensure that the educational content can not only keep up with the times, but also be flexible to adapt to the changing social environment. Through continuous research, the guidelines ensure modernity and practicality, providing students with new directions for improving their quality of life. However, although these academic management guidelines have constructed a comprehensive and effective framework in theory, they may face a series of challenges in practice. The allocation of resources is the primary issue, because the implementation of these guidelines requires additional funding, facility updates, and human resource allocation, which may be a considerable burden for educational institutions with limited resources.In addition, the establishment of an effective evaluation and feedback mechanism is also key to the successful implementation of the guidelines, which requires time and resources to develop and maintain. These challenges require schools to give full consideration during the implementation process and take corresponding measures to overcome them to ensure that the guidelines can achieve their intended goals, thereby significantly improving educational outcomes and ultimately benefiting students. Although the negative correlation between curriculum disconnects and QOLL has been repeatedly confirmed (Li et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025), this study still yielded two unexpected results: ①the demand effect of rural students on "professional practice" is higher than that of urban students (d=0.52), which is contrary to the criticism of "overly structured" practice in elite universities (Kuh et al., 2021). This suggests that in resource scarce areas of universities, practical opportunities are a scarce capital, and rural students are more eager to obtain them; ②The effect of age on QOLL is not significant (F=1.87, p=0.135), which conflicts with the small trend of "lower investment as age increases" in Kuh's national sample. This may be due to the limited age range of this study (18-20 years old) or the homogenization of life experiences among new students in local universities, which weakens age sensitivity.

Research limitations include: cross-sectional design cannot infer causality; Homologous methods may exaggerate correlation; The third question on the scale showed a negative overall correlation in the pre-test, indicating ambiguity in the wording and not being revised before the formal investigation; The sample is limited to one local university, and extrapolation of conclusions should be cautious.Therefore, further research is needed in the future.Conduct a multi school cluster randomized controlled trial to test the causal effects of the manual; Using longitudinal tracking to differentiate between age, cohort, and practical effects;

Conclusions

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of the needs of improving the quality of life of freshmen at Baise University, and constructed the "Academic Management Guidelines for Improving the Quality of Life of Freshmen at Baise University" through expert review. In the process of building a guide to improve the quality of life, it can be seen from the questionnaire results that both students have obvious needs for key issues.For freshmen, there are several issues in terms of quality of life, and these deficiencies affect the quality of life of freshmen. First, freshmen generally need to improve their social skills so that they can communicate with others more effectively and integrate into collective life. The lack of social skills may cause freshmen to encounter obstacles in establishing interpersonal relationships, which in turn affects their mental health and social adaptability. Secondly, freshmen need to build and expand social networks, which is extremely important for their career development and personal growth. Without sufficient social networks, freshmen may miss opportunities for cooperation and learning, which will undoubtedly limit their career development. Then, freshmen are eager to enhance their professional skills through practical opportunities, which is crucial for their future employment and career development. Lack of practical opportunities may lead to insufficient development of freshmen's professional skills, which in turn affects their employment competitiveness. Finally, freshmen need guidance and resources to develop healthy eating and exercise habits, which is essential for their long-term health and well-being. If the cultivation of a healthy lifestyle is neglected, freshmen may face health problems, which will not only affect their physical health, but also have a negative impact on their learning and quality of life.In addition, the research findings also have actionable implications for academic managers and decision-makers. For the academic affairs departments of universities, incorporating the "course career relevance" into the evaluation indicators of training programs and embedding short-term real task modules in the freshmen stage can improve the professional identity and retention rate of rural students without increasing staffing; The student work system can integrate "mental health+data warning" into existing transaction processes, trigger mild risk signals through the academic affairs system backend, achieve intervention forward, and reduce the cost of dropping out in the later stage. School level decision-makers can incorporate the eight-unit management manual validated in this study into the annual teaching quality special fund application basis, using "retention rate improvement of 0.32 standard deviation" as the performance indicator, and strive for incremental funding from provincial finance; At the same time, utilizing the manual to open and share attributes, replicating and promoting within regional university alliances, and creating economies of scale. For provincial-level policy makers, the "quality of learning and life" indicator can be included in the evaluation plan of local undergraduate universities, guiding them to prioritize the allocation of resources to the key transition period of freshman year, and linking it with the performance of rural revitalization, so as to achieve educational equity and regional talent supply synchronously. By embedding research results into existing budget subjects and performance contracts, universities can complete a "low-cost high impact" institutional upgrade without waiting for large-scale infrastructure or new staffing, providing a replicable governance paradigm for similar universities in the western region and even across the country.

Suggestions

Strengthen social skills training.It is recommended that the college regularly hold social skills training activities to help freshmen improve their ability to communicate with others and promote their better integration into collective life.Expand professional practice opportunities.In order to improve the professional skills of freshmen, the college should establish cooperative relationships with enterprises, communities, etc., provide freshmen with more practical opportunities, so that they can apply theoretical knowledge to practical work.Pay attention to the cultivation of a healthy lifestyle.The college should attach importance to the health education of freshmen, and guide freshmen to form healthy living habits by offering healthy diet and exercise courses.Provide strategic support for teaching, evaluation and student management.In response to the pressure on teachers in teaching, evaluation and student management, the college should provide corresponding training and resource support to help teachers better cope with challenges and improve teaching quality.Establish a guidance mechanism for work-life balance.In order to help freshmen and teachers balance work and personal life, the college should establish a corresponding guidance mechanism to provide guidance on time management and stress regulation.

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