

# Portraits of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Chinese Universities: In the Move to Mass Higher Education

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# Three Research Questions

1. How will the move to mass higher education affect the diversity of the system, and what will be the consequences for equity of access and provision?
2. How will the move to mass higher education stimulate civil society and the emergence of forms of democracy shaped by Chinese civilization?
3. What kinds of cultural resources will China's universities bring into the global community, as China becomes a major world power?

# Research Methodology

- Policy study - interviews with officials and scholars, at national and regional levels
- Survey of 2400 students in 12 case universities
- Case studies of 12 universities selected by type and region

# Selection of Case Universities

- By geography - representing all of China's major regions
- By curricular focus - comprehensive, education-related, S&T, Agric & Forestry
- By type - 9 public, 7 of which are top national elite, 2 second-tier elite
- 3 private, much lower level but long-term promise
- Remarkable diversity in face of growing homogeneity globally

# Map - Location of Case Universities



# Major findings on Policy

- A delayed decision, but seen as essential with Asian financial crisis of 1997
- A fundamental restructuring that gave greater autonomy at institutional and provincial level
- Based on major research efforts and scholarly input - scholars & officials involved
- A fundamental shift in financing to greater student and family inputs - students freed from job assignments but problems of employment - more critical of government

# Major Findings of Student Survey

- Expanded access greatly welcome by students and families
- Inequities of participation sharpened - by family background and region -much greater but much less equal access
- A strong embrace of civic responsibility, but much greater civic participation by those from high SES backgrounds

# Case Studies

Base Data on student enrollments, finance, faculty, research

- Interviews with leaders, focus group meetings with Faculty and Students
- Collection of key documents - Mission statements, Curricular changes, research policy, projects and funding
- Identification of significant campus space - to get a holistic sense of ethos



# Campus Photos

- Often a different space was chosen by students, faculty and leaders
- There were lively debates at some focus group meetings
- We photographed these spaces to capture the ethos or core values of each university & sometimes the stories
- Six universities – Beida, ECNU, HUST, Xiada, NWAUFU, Yanbian (NE)

# Peking University

- Unnamed Lake - historical piece of campus, going back to when it was a Christian university (Yenching)
- New Library Building
- West Gate - reflecting Beida's long history
- Langren Gardens - homes of famous scholars on campus

# Unnamed Lake - Beida





# New Library Building





# West Gate





# Langren Gardens





# Langren Gardens



# Icon of Cultural Leadership

- Mission - leading culture - (alongside forming talent, advancing knowledge and serving society) - process of re-development
- Governance -university charter and national political reform
- Curricular change - preserving the foundations and innovating in appropriate areas (medicine, engineering, IT) - new professional degrees



# Views of Faculty and Students

- Faculty - very independent & critical, also aware of their responsibility to students and the public, in the nation and East Asia
- Students - part of a world community that will channel China's culture in a responsive way
- Core tension between classical garden culture and support for dynamic changes in the capital, the nation and the world

# East China Normal University

- The Arts and History Building
- The Science Quadrangle
- The Liwa River
- The Yingtao River on the new suburban campus

# The Arts and History Building



# The Science Quadrangle



# The Liwa River





# New Campus & Yingtao River



# Education in the Lead

- Debates over being “comprehensive”
- Decision to give high profile to education on urban campus & cooperate with ENS Paris
- Merged in ECE & Special Ed with support from Shanghai government
- 5 education colleges and language/international programs on urban campus

# An enhanced Normal University

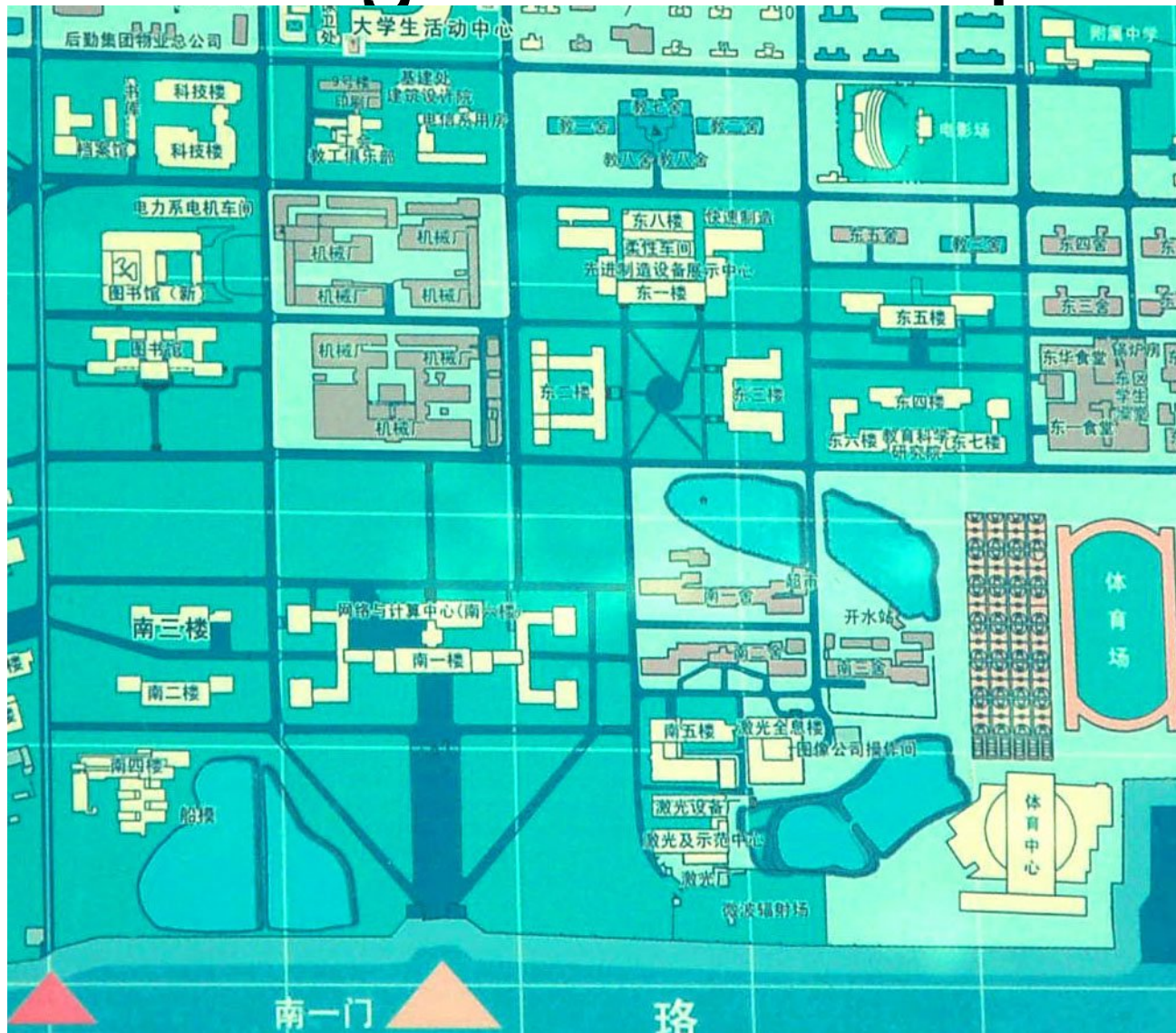
- Meng Xiancheng college
- Research orientation towards interdisciplinary integration and applications to education
- Last (39th) to enter 98/5 - faculty saw this as crucial
- Students - a strong sense of identity and of being respected & listened to



# Huazhong University of Science & Technology

- The Double Horseshoe - an engineer's campus
- The South Building
- The outdoor theatre
- Optics Valley

# The Engineer's Campus



# The South (Nanyi) Building





# The Outdoor Theatre





# The National Optics Lab



# A Microcosm of New China

- Pride in establishment in 1952 - had led each phase of change - especially after Cultural Revolution - mergers of 1990s
- “Creativity as the basic spirit” and “bearing responsibility for action”
- “immerse yourself in learning” (xue zai Huazhong) - successful 2nd tier colleges
- An industry leader-integration of liberal arts & engineering - Huawei, Optics valley

# Views of Faculty & Students

- Students as ambassadors who will introduce Chinese culture to the world
- Experiences of reform and innovation - need to be explained to the world
- Mass higher education - has changed the meaning of being a student - especially important for rural students

# Xiamen University

- The Jiannan Auditorium (1950s)
- The Main Administration Building (in Fujian style)
- The Furong Buildings - campus residences
- The Main Teaching Building on the new campus



# The Jiannan Auditorium



# The Main Administration Building



# The Furong Residences





# Main Teaching Building on the new campus



# A Southeastern Outlook

- A comprehensive university, but very different in history and ethos from Beida
- Core vision to build on its own strengths  
-economics, chemistry, marine studies, higher education - reach out to other marine institutions for international solidarity
- Open to the world - new campus and second-tier college, local & global, strong support from the city - their own medical school

# Views of Faculty and Students

- Greater intellectual freedom and a less bureaucratic atmosphere than in the North
- Students - loved the freedom of the new campus in their first two years, closely linked to second-tier college students
- Close sense of connection to SE Asia & historical links

# Northwest University of Agriculture & Forestry S&T

- The No. 3 Teaching Building (1930s)
- The International Centre and Main Administration Building (21st century)
- The Historic Library (1950s)
- The 93 steps

# The No. 3 Teaching Building





# The Historic Library



# The International Centre and Main Administration Building





# 93 Steps



# An Agricultural Multiversity?

- Major merger of two universities and five research institutes at national & provincial level
- Mission - integration of production, learning and research - a food centre for the world - links to Wageningen in Holland & Cornell in the USA - high level international conference annually

# Views of Faculty and Students

- Ethos of honesty, austerity, courage and perseverance - rural students, 93 steps - experimentation to serve rural society - service also in Africa and Latin America
- Multiversity - a city of infinite variety - responding to demands for equity and inclusion
- Curricular integration around all dimensions of food, including food safety

# Yanbian University

- The Logo of Yanbian University
- The Main Administration Building (1950s)
- The new Teaching Building
- The Main Entrance Gate with the name written in Korean as well as Chinese



# Logo of Yanbian University



# Main Administration Building





# New Teaching Building





# Main Gate at Yanbian





# Building a Niche through a Multicultural Identity

- Commitment to multi-culturalism and bilingualism, with Korean identity
- Comprehensive but with a focus on teacher education
- Merger of four institutions, which had been separated out in the 1950s
- Gained access to 21/1 and support of Great West development funding

# Faculty and Student Views

- Regional importance of Six country talks - interest in international issues
- Value of Korean language for employment and study opportunities
- Idea of “awakening from the margins” - blending Korean and Chinese languages and cultures to reach out to the world

# An Emerging Chinese model of the university

- Preservation of diversity of institutional type - quite remarkable, given pressures of global ranking and dominant idea of global research university
- How has that been possible, and what kind of “unity in diversity” can be found in the Chinese model of the university?

# Reasons for Diversity

- National policy - forbade mergers for normal universities and discouraged them for agricultural universities
- Great West project and efforts to distribute resources more equitably
- Historical differences - especially Soviet legacy
- Increasing institutional autonomy and strategic leadership (HE Law of 1998)



# Core Characteristics of the Chinese Model - Knowledge

- Views of knowledge - integration of theory and practice, strong orientation towards inter-disciplinarity & moral purpose - from the Chinese tradition
- Thus - intellectual freedom may be a more fitting depiction of core value than academic freedom
- “conscience of the nation” (Beida)

# Core Characteristics of the Chinese Model - Governance

- Close connection to the state and its purposes - but not a linear subordination, rather an interactive role
- Autonomy - as self-mastery more than legally protected independence/self-governance
- 自主 rather than 自治
- Intellectuals - a sense of responsibility for society and nation (Zhu & HUST)

# Core Chinese Values

- Harmony but not conformity 和而不同
- Great Harmony as a global vision 大同
- Humane ( 仁 ) Talent vs Human Capital
- Unity of action & knowledge 行知