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TASK

TO MASTER THESIS

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2. To analyze the practice of management system of a modern state university in the People's Republic of China.

3. To develop the recommendations for optimizing management system of a modern state university in the People's Republic of China.

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№	Stages of work
1	Approval of the thesis content
2	Preparation of the thesis' first section
3	Completion of the first section according to the supervisor recommendations. Writing the thesis' second section
4	Completing of the second section according to the supervisor recommendations. Preparation of a report for a scientific conference with a presentation of the main results of the thesis.
5	Writing of the introduction, conclusions of the thesis. Making references list
6	Submission of the thesis to the Department of Innovative Pedagogy, Educational Transformations and Leadership

5. Date of assignment issue "26" June 2025 year

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INTRODUCTION

The governance of higher education institutions has become one of the most intensively discussed issues in the field of educational management and policy studies. In recent decades, global trends such as massification, internationalization, marketization, and accountability reforms have transformed how universities are organized, financed, and supervised. In the People's Republic of China (PRC), these transformations have been particularly complex, as they have occurred within the broader context of an evolving socialist market economy and a political system characterized by centralized authority and the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC). As a result, the governance system of Chinese state universities represents a distinctive hybrid structure that combines traditional state control with elements of institutional autonomy and managerial reform.

Understanding the governance of state universities in China requires an analysis of the interplay between multiple layers of authority: the central government, local governments, the Communist Party, university administrations, academic communities, and external stakeholders. The higher education system in the PRC operates under a highly institutionalized legal and regulatory framework that has been continually revised since the 1980s, reflecting the country's rapid socio-economic development and the state's shifting expectations of universities. Governance reform has become a central policy agenda since the mid-1990s, with initiatives such as the 211 Project, the 985 Project, and, more recently, the Double First-Class University Plan, all designed to enhance global competitiveness and innovation capacity while maintaining strong state supervision.

The aim of the study is to explore the theoretical aspects of establishing the management system of a state university in the People's Republic of China and the practical implementation of this system.

To achieve this aim, it is necessary to accomplish **the following tasks**:

1. Describe the regulatory framework of higher education Governance in China.
2. Define key concepts of the study.
3. Characterize the state of research on the governance of state universities in the PRC in the scientific literature.
4. Analyze the practical experience of managing universities in the PRC.
5. Develop methodological recommendations for improving the management activities of tutors in modern universities of the PRC.

Object of the research: the process of managing a modern state university in the PRC.

Subject of the research: the theory and practice of managing a modern state university in the PRC.

To address the defined tasks, the following research methods are applied: analysis of scientific literature and regulatory documents related to the research problem; generalization, systematization, and classification of experience regarding the implementation of management in modern state universities in the PRC.

Scientific novelty of the research results lies in the generalization and systematization of scholars' theoretical ideas and the practical realization of the state university management system in the PRC.

Practical significance of the research results lies in the possibility of applying the theoretical ideas and developed methodological recommendations for improving the management system of state universities in the PRC.

SECTION 1 GOVERNANCE OF STATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE PRC AS A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

1.1 Regulatory Framework for Higher Education Governance in China

The regulatory framework of higher education governance in the People's Republic of China has evolved through a series of legal, institutional, and administrative reforms aimed at balancing state control with institutional autonomy. Governance in this context refers not only to the formal legal arrangements but also to the operational mechanisms through which universities exercise decision-making authority under state supervision. This section outlines the main legal foundations, administrative structures, and recent reform initiatives that together define how higher education governance functions in China.

1.1.1 Legal Foundations of Higher Education Governance

The governance of higher education in China is primarily regulated by the Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China (1998, amended 2018), the Education Law (2015 revision), and a series of ministerial regulations issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE). These legal instruments establish the principle that higher education serves both national development goals and the socialist orientation of the state. According to Article 3 of the Higher Education Law, universities are required to "implement the educational policy of the state, serve socialist modernization, and be oriented to the needs of economic and social development." The law simultaneously recognizes that higher education institutions have the "right to

conduct teaching and research independently and to manage their internal affairs in accordance with the law, ”reflecting a conditional form of institutional autonomy (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The Higher Education Law also delineates the responsibilities of the MOE, provincial governments, and universities. The MOE holds the authority to design national policies, approve the establishment or merger of universities, and oversee quality assurance systems. Provincial and local education departments are responsible for implementing national policies, managing subordinate institutions, and providing funding. Universities themselves are granted the authority to design curricula, manage finances, and recruit personnel—within the boundaries established by state regulations and Party oversight.

1.1.2 Administrative Hierarchy and Party Leadership

A defining feature of higher education governance in China is the dual leadership structure that exists within universities: the university president (校长) heads the administrative hierarchy, while the Communist Party Committee (党委) exercises political and strategic leadership. The Constitution of the Communist Party of China stipulates that “the Party exercises overall leadership over all undertakings in China, ”and this principle extends to all public universities. The Party committee within each university is responsible for major policy directions, cadre management, ideological work, and ensuring that academic and administrative activities align with Party principles (Yang&Welch, 2012).

In practice, this dual structure creates a balance—sometimes a tension—between political supervision and professional management. While the president manages daily operations, academic programs, and external partnerships, the Party secretary often holds higher political authority and can influence or determine decisions on senior appointments and strategic planning. This arrangement reflects the Chinese state's commitment to ensuring that universities remain ideologically aligned while allowing managerial flexibility in academic and administrative matters.

1.1.3 State Planning and Resource Allocation

Since the 1990s, the Chinese government has implemented several large-scale initiatives to enhance the quality and competitiveness of higher education. The Project 211 (initiated in 1995) aimed to strengthen about 100 universities to meet the needs of the 21st century. The Project 985 (1998) focused on building world-class universities, initially designating institutions such as Peking University and Tsinghua University. These programs centralized funding to elite institutions while encouraging differentiation within the higher education system (Cai, 2013). More recently, the Double First-Class University Plan (2015) replaced the earlier projects, signaling a new phase in governance reform characterized by both performance-based evaluation and greater local discretion (Li & Yang, 2020).

Financial governance is a central element of this framework. Universities receive a combination of state appropriations, competitive research funds, tuition fees, and income from social services and partnerships. The state determines funding levels through a mix of formula-based budgeting and project-based grants. This arrangement

fosters both dependence and competition:while universities remain accountable to government agencies,they must also demonstrate performance in research and innovation to secure funding.Such mechanisms reflect the state’s strategy of “steering at a distance, ”a governance model that retains macro-control while delegating operational responsibility (Mok, 2000; Liu, 2022).

1.1.4 Accountability, Evaluation, and Quality Assurance

Accountability mechanisms in Chinese higher education are designed to ensure compliance with national goals and maintain quality standards.The Ministry of Education and provincial authorities regularly conduct evaluations, audits, and inspections.The Undergraduate Teaching Evaluation Program (initiated in 2003 and updated in 2019) and the Academic Discipline Evaluation System are key instruments used to assess institutional performance. Additionally,accreditation and ranking systems — both domestic and international — have increased the emphasis on measurable outcomes and quality assurance (Shen&Li, 2021).

However, these accountability structures are embedded within the political context of Party supervision. Universities are not only evaluated on academic excellence but also on political and ideological criteria, such as adherence to “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. ”As a result, Chinese higher education governance incorporates both managerial accountability (performance, efficiency, quality) and political accountability (loyalty, ideology, social stability). This dual accountability structure differentiates China’s

governance model from Western systems and introduces unique management challenges for university leaders.

1.2 Definition of the Key Concepts of the Study

A rigorous scientific analysis of university governance requires conceptual clarity. The term “governance,” although widely used, is inherently multidimensional and context-dependent. Within educational management, it encompasses the formal and informal structures, processes, and relationships through which universities are directed, coordinated, and held accountable. This section defines the key concepts central to the present study, providing a theoretical and operational foundation for the analysis of Chinese state universities.

1.2.1 Governance

Governance in higher education refers to the system of rules, relationships, and processes through which authority is exercised, decisions are made, and performance is monitored in universities (Clark, 1983; Marginson & Considine, 2000). It includes both external governance — the relationship between the state and universities — and internal governance, referring to the distribution of power among institutional bodies such as the university council, the president, faculty committees, and Party organizations.

Scholars have proposed various frameworks to understand university governance. Clark (1983) identified the “triangle of coordination,” balancing the influences of state authority, the academic oligarchy, and the market. Later research

has expanded this to include students, enterprises, and global rankings as additional actors (de Boer & File, 2009; Bleiklie & Kogan, 2007). In the Chinese context, governance embodies an additional dimension: the political-ideological leadership of the Communist Party, which shapes both policy directions and institutional behavior (Yang & Welch, 2012).

In this study, governance is defined as the dynamic configuration of formal authority, informal influence, and accountability mechanisms through which universities in China are managed and controlled under the guidance of state policy and Party leadership. This operational definition acknowledges the hybrid nature of Chinese governance — neither purely bureaucratic nor fully autonomous, but a blend of hierarchical steering and delegated managerial discretion.

1.2.2 Institutional Autonomy

Institutional autonomy is a central concept in higher education studies and one of the most debated dimensions of governance. The European University Association (2017) defines autonomy as “the degree to which universities are free to decide on their internal organization and management, financial and human resources, academic programs, and external relations”.

In the Chinese context, autonomy is conditional and delegated. Universities are authorized to make decisions in academic and administrative matters but within boundaries set by national laws and policies. For example, universities can propose new degree programs, but these must be approved by the Ministry of Education or

provincial departments. Similarly, universities can manage finances but must follow public-sector accounting standards and budgetary oversight.

Several scholars describe this arrangement as “state-supervised autonomy” (Mok, 2005; Liu, 2022) or “embedded autonomy” (Cai, 2013). The concept captures how universities operate with significant managerial discretion yet remain structurally subordinate to the state. In practice, autonomy in Chinese universities varies depending on their administrative affiliation (central vs. provincial), mission (comprehensive vs. specialized), and performance level (elite vs. ordinary institutions).

This study adopts a functional definition of autonomy:

Autonomy is the institution’s capacity to make and implement decisions in academic, financial, and organizational matters without direct external intervention, subject to the legal, political, and policy framework established by the state.

This conceptualization recognizes autonomy not as an absolute right but as a negotiated space within which university leaders manage their institutions while maintaining compliance with state objectives.

1.2.3 Accountability

Accountability in higher education refers to the mechanisms through which universities are expected to justify their decisions, use of resources, and performance outcomes to stakeholders (Bovens, 2007; Huisman&Currie, 2004). Traditionally, accountability systems in Western higher education rely on legal, financial, and performance reporting to external bodies. In China, however, accountability extends beyond administrative compliance to include political and ideological accountability.

There are three major forms of accountability relevant to Chinese higher education governance:

Administrative accountability, which requires universities to comply with directives from the Ministry of Education, local governments, and funding agencies.

Financial accountability, involving audits, evaluations, and performance-based funding tied to measurable indicators.

Political-ideological accountability, which obliges universities to uphold Party leadership, ideological education, and social stability (Zhou&Li, 2021).

In this study,accountability is understood as the obligation of universities and their leaders to demonstrate compliance with political, administrative, and professional expectations, and to be answerable for the outcomes of their educational, research, and social functions.

This definition underscores that in China, accountability mechanisms function simultaneously as tools of quality assurance and instruments of political governance.

1.2.4 State University

The concept of a“state university ”in the Chinese context refers to a higher education institution that is publicly funded, legally owned by the state, and directly accountable to government authorities. These universities are not autonomous corporations but public service institutions (shiye danwei) under the dual supervision of administrative and Party organs.

Most Chinese state universities are administered either by the Ministry of Education or by provincial governments, though some are co-administered by multiple

bodies (known as the “co-sponsorship system”). For example, Tsinghua University and Peking University are directly affiliated with the MOE, while provincial universities such as Zhejiang Normal University fall under the jurisdiction of provincial authorities.

The state university, therefore, is both an educational institution and a component of the public administration system. It serves as an instrument of national policy, implementing strategic priorities such as talent cultivation, innovation, and ideological education (Li, 2020). From an educational management perspective, state universities operate under public accountability, constrained by political imperatives but expected to compete globally in research and innovation.

Hence, for this study:

A state university is a higher education institution publicly funded, state-owned, and subject to Party and governmental supervision, which functions as both a site of knowledge production and an agent of national policy.

1.2.5 Academic Leadership

Academic leadership refers to the processes and practices through which educational and research activities within universities are guided and coordinated. In Western literature, it often denotes collegial leadership exercised by deans, department chairs, and academic committees (Bryman, 2007).

In Chinese universities, however, academic leadership operates within a dual governance structure — combining administrative hierarchies and Party leadership. The university president provides executive and managerial leadership, while the Party

secretary provides ideological and strategic leadership. This duality shapes academic decision-making and organizational culture.

Recent studies (e.g., Han&Xu, 2020) suggest that successful academic leaders in China must balance two roles: promoting academic excellence and maintaining political conformity. Thus, leadership effectiveness is defined not solely by academic performance but also by the ability to align institutional goals with state ideology.

For this study,academic leadership is defined as the process by which university leaders mobilize human, intellectual, and organizational resources to achieve institutional objectives within the framework of Party supervision and state policy.

1.2.6 Stakeholders in Higher Education Governance

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who affect or are affected by university governance decisions. According to Freeman (1984), stakeholder theory in management identifies the need to balance the interests of diverse groups. In higher education governance, stakeholders include not only internal actors — faculty, students, and administrators — but also external entities such as the government, industry partners, alumni, and local communities.

In China, the state and the Party are dominant stakeholders,given their authority over funding, personnel, and strategic direction. However, globalization and marketization have expanded the stakeholder environment to include international partners, private enterprises, and accreditation agencies (Mok, 2016). Managing these complex relationships is an essential task of educational management and strategic governance.

Thus, the stakeholder framework in Chinese higher education is characterized by asymmetrical power distribution, with the state retaining ultimate authority. For this study:

Stakeholders in university governance are defined as all actors — internal or external — who have a legitimate interest in the decisions and outcomes of the institution, with the state and Party playing the central coordinating roles.

1.2.7 Governance as a Scientific Problem

Conceptualizing governance as a scientific problem in educational management means recognizing that it is not merely a practical or administrative issue but a complex object of systematic inquiry. It involves questions about the distribution of authority, the logic of decision-making, the mechanisms of accountability, and the interaction between institutional and political environments.

From a theoretical standpoint, governance studies in education draw upon multiple disciplines — public administration, organizational theory, and political science. In the Chinese case, this interdisciplinarity is essential because the governance of state universities simultaneously reflects bureaucratic control, professional norms, and ideological leadership (Marginson, 2016).

Therefore, in this research, the governance of state universities in the PRC is treated as a multidimensional scientific problem encompassing:

The structural configuration of power among state, Party, and university actors;

The institutionalization of managerial practices under state supervision; and

The theoretical challenge of reconciling autonomy, accountability, and political control in educational management.

1.3 The State of Research on the Governance of State Universities in the PRC in Scientific Literature

The study of higher education governance in China has developed rapidly since the 1990s, paralleling the country's broader transformation from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy. Over the past three decades, Chinese and international scholars have produced a growing body of literature examining how universities are managed, funded, and evaluated under the dual influence of state control and global competition. This section provides a critical review of that scholarship, identifying the main theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and gaps that define the current state of research.

1.3.1 Early Studies: Centralization and State Control (1980s–1990s)

The earliest analyses of Chinese higher education governance emerged during the reform era of the 1980s and 1990s, when the state began to decentralize certain administrative functions while maintaining political control. Researchers during this period primarily adopted a policy and institutional perspective, focusing on the role of the state as the dominant actor in higher education.

For example, Hayhoe (1996) and Pepper (1990) described China's higher education system as a "planned bureaucratic model," characterized by rigid state planning, limited institutional autonomy, and ideological supervision. Studies

highlighted how reforms such as the Decision on the Reform of the Educational Structure (1985) introduced partial decentralization by transferring authority to provincial governments and universities, yet preserved strong Party oversight.

Chinese scholars such as Gu (1992) and Chen (1998) analyzed the evolving relationship between the Ministry of Education and universities, emphasizing the persistence of administrative hierarchy and the slow emergence of institutional decision-making capacity. At this stage, governance was largely equated with state administration, and the concept of “university autonomy” had not yet entered mainstream academic discourse.

1.3.2 The Rise of Governance Discourse(2000s)

The early 2000s marked a conceptual shift from “management” to “governance,” reflecting international trends in higher education reform. Following the global diffusion of New Public Management (NPM) principles, scholars began to analyze how Chinese universities incorporated managerial practices, performance evaluations, and accountability mechanisms (Mok, 2005; Yang, 2008).

Governance was increasingly understood as a multi-actor process, involving interactions among the state, market, and academic communities. Mok (2005) introduced the idea of “state-supervised autonomy,” suggesting that the Chinese state adopted a strategy of steering at a distance — delegating operational responsibilities while maintaining strategic control.

Other scholars, such as Li (2009) and Liu and Wang (2010), examined the impact of fiscal reforms and project-based funding mechanisms (e.g., Project 211, Project

985) on university behavior. They observed that competition for government resources encouraged institutional differentiation and stimulated organizational innovation, but also deepened inequalities between elite and non-elite universities.

Internationally, researchers such as Marginson (2011) and Altbach (2009) situated China within global governance debates, noting that its hybrid system — combining market incentives and political control — challenged the Western dichotomy between state control and academic freedom.

Overall, this period witnessed the consolidation of governance as a key analytical concept in Chinese higher education studies, shifting focus from purely administrative analysis to institutional and systemic dynamics.

1.3.3 Governance Reforms and Institutional Autonomy (2010s)

By the 2010s, the literature began to reflect the growing complexity of Chinese higher education governance. The introduction of the Double First-Class Initiative (2015) intensified scholarly attention to institutional autonomy, quality assurance, and global competitiveness.

Empirical studies conducted during this period revealed a paradox of autonomy and control. On one hand, universities were encouraged to innovate, internationalize, and compete globally. On the other hand, political supervision and ideological education were strengthened (Li&Yang, 2020; Yang&Welch, 2012).

A significant body of Chinese scholarship (e.g., Zhou, 2016; Wu&Li, 2018) explored internal governance mechanisms, such as the functioning of academic councils, Party committees, and leadership structures. These studies showed that,

although universities had gained managerial discretion in financial and academic affairs, key decisions — particularly those involving senior appointments and strategic planning — remained under Party control.

Meanwhile, Western scholars increasingly employed comparative governance frameworks. For instance, Marginson (2016) compared China's "centralized coordination model" with the Anglo-American "network governance model," arguing that Chinese universities exhibit a form of "bureaucratic entrepreneurialism," where autonomy exists within politically defined boundaries.

Methodologically, this decade saw the rise of case studies, policy analyses, and survey-based research, reflecting a diversification of approaches. Topics such as performance evaluation (Shen&Li, 2021), quality assurance (Zha, 2017), and university – industry collaboration (Chen&Xu, 2019) became central to empirical inquiry.

1.3.4 Emerging Themes in the 2020s

Recent scholarship has expanded the scope of inquiry, linking governance to issues of digital transformation, internationalization, and social responsibility. The Outline of China's Education Modernization 2035 (2019) and the Education Digitalization Strategy 2.0 (2022) have prompted new debates about how governance frameworks can support innovation while maintaining ideological guidance.

Several emerging research directions can be identified:

Digital and data-driven governance—Studies such as Zhang (2022) and Liu (2023) explore how big data, performance analytics, and online management systems are reshaping university decision-making and accountability structures.

Sustainability and social responsibility – Research increasingly links governance with the “third mission” of universities — social engagement and sustainable development (Fang&Yang, 2021).

Internationalization and global partnerships – Scholars examine how universities navigate the tension between global collaboration and political sensitivity, particularly amid growing geopolitical competition (Huang, 2021).

Party leadership and ideological governance – Following the 2018 amendments to the Higher Education Law, studies emphasize the institutionalization of Party committees as core governance organs (Li&Liu, 2022).

These new directions reflect the dynamic and evolving character of Chinese higher education governance, highlighting both adaptation and continuity within the system.

1.3.5 Theoretical Approaches in the Literature

Three dominant theoretical frameworks have shaped research on university governance in China:

New Public Management (NPM)

Many studies apply NPM principles to analyze the shift from bureaucratic to managerial governance. Authors such as Mok (2005) and de Boer (2009) argue that

performance-based funding, accountability systems, and market-oriented reforms have encouraged efficiency but risk undermining collegial governance traditions.

Neo-institutionalism

Neo-institutional theories emphasize how global norms (such as quality assurance, accreditation, and world-class university rankings) influence organizational structures (Meyer&Rowan, 2006). Scholars like Yang (2019) use this framework to show how Chinese universities adopt global practices while maintaining local political legitimacy.

Political economy and state theory

A growing body of literature views governance as a manifestation of the political economy of Chinese socialism. Marginson (2016) and Li&Yang (2020) describe China's model as "state-steered capitalism in higher education," combining centralized planning with competitive funding. This framework highlights the state's dual role as regulator and investor.

While each framework provides valuable insights, few studies integrate them comprehensively. Most analyses remain either policy-descriptive or institution-specific, lacking a unified theoretical synthesis that explains how governance mechanisms evolve across political, economic, and organizational dimensions.

1.3.6 Methodological Trends and Gaps

Methodologically, research on higher education governance in China has diversified but remains uneven. Early works relied heavily on qualitative policy

analysis and historical narrative. More recent studies incorporate mixed methods — surveys, interviews, and statistical analyses — to capture institutional diversity.

However, three major gaps persist in the literature

Limited comparative perspective – Few studies systematically compare governance across regions, types of universities, or international contexts.

Under-theorization of internal governance – While much research focuses on state–university relations, internal decision-making structures (academic councils, department governance) remain underexplored.

Insufficient longitudinal data – Most studies provide snapshots rather than longitudinal analyses of governance reform outcomes.

Additionally, research has paid limited attention to educational management practices at the micro-level — how leaders, faculty, and administrators experience and interpret governance reforms. Understanding these dynamics requires combining policy analysis with organizational behavior and leadership studies.

1.3.7 Summary of the Literature Review

The academic literature on the governance of Chinese state universities reveals a trajectory from state administration to managerial governance and now toward digitally integrated, politically embedded systems. While the concept of governance has gained analytical sophistication, significant theoretical and empirical challenges remain.

Overall, four major patterns emerge:

Continuity of state authority – Despite reforms, the state and Party retain decisive influence over governance.

Conditional autonomy – Universities enjoy operational discretion but within politically defined limits.

Hybridization of models – Governance combines bureaucratic, managerial, and collegial features.

Dynamic adaptation – Universities continuously adapt governance structures to balance global competitiveness and ideological compliance.

This literature review underscores the complexity of governance as both an educational management and political phenomenon. It also highlights the need for integrated theoretical frameworks that capture the interaction between policy design, institutional behavior, and leadership practice.

Conclusion of Section 1

This chapter has established the foundation for analyzing the governance of state universities in the PRC as a scientific problem in educational management. It has reviewed the legal framework, defined key concepts, and summarized major research findings and gaps.

The review demonstrates that Chinese university governance is not static but a dynamic system shaped by evolving state policies, Party leadership, and global trends. It combines hierarchical control, managerial innovation, and academic professionalism within a unique political context.

For subsequent chapters, this conceptual groundwork enables a focused investigation into how governance structures affect institutional performance, leadership effectiveness, and educational outcomes in China's state universities.

SECTION 2 PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF MANAGING PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE PRC

2.1 Analysis of the Practical Experience of Managing Universities in the PRC

2.1.1 Overview of the Governance System of Public Universities in China

The governance system of public universities in the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the result of a long historical process shaped by political, economic, and social development. Understanding this system requires tracing its evolution from the early years of the PRC, through reform and opening-up, to the present era of educational modernization. The current governance model — characterized by the principle of “Party leadership, president responsibility” — is not simply an administrative arrangement; it reflects the interaction between political authority and educational autonomy within China’s unique societal context.

In the early period following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, higher education management was highly centralized. Universities operated under direct government control, and academic activities closely aligned with national industrial and political needs. During this period, the governance structure drew heavily from the Soviet model, emphasizing top-down planning, discipline specialization, and ideological education. Although this structure ensured rapid development in certain technical fields, it also constrained academic diversity and institutional autonomy.

The reform era beginning in the late 1970s brought transformative changes. With economic modernization and the increasing demand for skilled human capital,

the Chinese government gradually shifted toward decentralizing certain administrative functions while maintaining overarching political leadership. Universities were encouraged to expand academic programs, establish international collaborations, and pursue scientific research aligned with national priorities. This shift laid the foundation for the hybrid governance model seen today, blending centralized oversight with localized institutional autonomy.

By the 1990s and early 2000s, landmark policies such as “Project 211” and “Project 985” further strengthened the strategic role of universities. Institutions received greater discretion over internal governance, personnel management, and financial planning. However, political leadership—embodied by the university’s Party Committee—remained central in guiding institutional direction and ensuring alignment with national development strategies.

Today’s governance model reflects a dual emphasis on **political leadership** and **professional administrative management**. The Party Committee provides strategic direction, ideological guidance, and oversight of major decisions, while the university president and administrative teams manage daily operations, academic development, and resource allocation. This system aims to balance stability, accountability, and innovation. Although it has contributed to rapid institutional development, scholars note that it can sometimes result in overlapping authority and decision-making inefficiencies, prompting continuous reform and optimization.

2.1.2 Administrative Hierarchy and Organizational Structure in Chinese Universities

The administrative hierarchy and organizational structure of public universities in the PRC constitute a multilayered system designed to ensure the effective implementation of national policies, the coordination of academic and administrative activities, and the sustainable development of higher education institutions. This structure reflects a unique blend of political oversight, bureaucratic organization, and academic decentralization that has evolved over several decades.

(1) The Macro-Level Structure: Party Committee and University Administration

At the core of the organizational structure is the relationship between the **University Party Committee** and the **university administrative leadership**, typically led by the president. The Party Committee is responsible for defining the university's political direction, supervising ideological work, and making strategic decisions regarding major personnel appointments, institutional reforms, and long-term development planning. The president, on the other hand, oversees practical administrative and academic operations, including faculty recruitment, curriculum development, financial management, and external collaboration.

This dual structure — often referred to as “*the system of Party Committee leadership and president accountability*” — ensures that political stability and educational mission remain aligned. In practice, the Party Committee Secretary often holds significant influence, especially in key decisions such as selection of senior administrators, major construction projects, and international partnerships.

Meanwhile, vice presidents and deans manage specific sectors such as research, student affairs, international cooperation, and academic planning. This hierarchical yet collaborative system facilitates top-level control while allowing operational specialization.

(2) Middle-Level Governance: Schools, Colleges, and Departments

Below the central leadership, Chinese universities typically adopt a **college-based management system**, where distinct faculties or schools enjoy a certain degree of internal autonomy. Each school or college operates under the leadership of a dean, supported by a Party Secretary at the school level, academic committees, and administrative offices. This arrangement mirrors the central structure at a smaller scale, ensuring ideological guidance, academic organization, and administrative support are integrated.

Schools are responsible for designing academic programs, organizing teaching schedules, managing faculty performance, and overseeing departmental research. They also handle student affairs within the faculty, often in cooperation with the university-level Student Affairs Office. This middle-level structure is essential for connecting university policies with grassroots implementation.

One of the notable developments in recent years is the empowerment of schools under the policy of “**streamlining administration and delegating power**” (放管服). This reform encourages decentralized decision-making, allowing schools to manage their budgets, hire specialized staff, and carry out discipline construction more independently. However, the extent of decentralization varies significantly among universities depending on their size, history, and administrative culture.

(3) Grassroots-Level Organizations: Departments, Research Centers, and Administrative Offices

At the grassroots level, **academic departments** carry out teaching, curriculum implementation, student mentorship, and daily academic affairs. Departments are the frontline of university operations, directly responsible for ensuring teaching quality, evaluating student performance, and supporting research activities.

Administrative offices at the university level — such as the Academic Affairs Office, Personnel Office, Finance Office, Graduate School, and International Cooperation Office — play a crucial coordinating role. They establish policies, maintain standards, and allocate resources based on the university's strategic objectives. Their work requires close interaction with academic units to ensure that administrative processes support academic goals effectively.

(4) Coordination Challenges within the Organizational Hierarchy

While this hierarchical structure provides clear lines of authority, it can also create challenges. For example:

- **Overlapping responsibilities** may arise between university- and school-level administrative units, leading to inefficiencies or duplicated efforts.
- **Decision-making processes** can be prolonged due to multiple approval layers, especially for major academic or financial initiatives.
- **Communication bottlenecks** sometimes occur between top leadership and frontline faculty, limiting the feedback loop necessary for institutional improvement.

- **Tension between political and academic objectives** may emerge, particularly in areas requiring rapid innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, or international engagement.

Addressing these challenges requires ongoing governance reforms, enhanced transparency, and more effective mechanisms for cross-level coordination.

2.1.3 Strategic Planning and Institutional Development in Chinese Universities

Strategic planning has become a central component of university governance in China, driven by the increasing need to align higher education with national development goals, global competition, and local economic demands. Chinese universities increasingly adopt systematic long-term planning processes, integrating academic objectives, research agendas, talent development strategies, and resource allocation frameworks.

(1) National Strategies as Drivers of University Development

One of the most distinctive features of strategic planning in Chinese universities is its strong connection to national policies. Major national initiatives — such as **Project 211**, **Project 985**, and the ongoing **Double First-Class Initiative** — serve as powerful catalysts for institutional transformation. These initiatives encourage universities to improve disciplinary strength, cultivate high-quality talent, pursue advanced scientific research, and enhance international visibility.

Universities respond to national priorities by designing multi-year development plans that integrate goals for faculty recruitment, research funding acquisition,

infrastructure construction, and global collaboration. As a result, strategic planning is not merely an internal administrative exercise but a coordinated response to external expectations and performance evaluations.

(2) Performance-Based Management and Accountability Systems

Performance-based management has become a defining feature of institutional development across Chinese universities. These systems involve the establishment of measurable indicators in areas such as:

- teaching quality,
- research output,
- funding acquisition,
- social service contributions,
- international cooperation, and
- governance effectiveness.

At the faculty and department levels, annual evaluations often determine salary bonuses, promotions, and resource allocation. While this incentivizes productivity, it can also generate competition and pressure, particularly in research-intensive institutions. Critics argue that quantitative indicators may overshadow qualitative academic contributions, potentially affecting academic freedom and creativity.

(3) Resource Allocation and Strategic Investments

Chinese universities increasingly adopt strategic resource allocation models to support key disciplines, research platforms, and talent recruitment. Common strategies include:

- establishing high-level research laboratories and innovation centers,

- supporting interdisciplinary research clusters,
- investing in digital campus infrastructure,
- recruiting top-tier scholars through talent programs such as “Changjiang Scholars” and “Thousand Talents Plan,”
- forming partnerships with government agencies and private enterprises.

These investments aim to enhance the university’s competitive advantage and contribute to national scientific and technological progress. However, disparities between well-funded elite universities and regional institutions also reflect ongoing challenges in achieving balanced national higher education development.

(4) Challenges in Strategic Planning Implementation

Despite significant progress, universities face several obstacles in implementing strategic plans:

- **Misalignment between long-term objectives and short-term administrative tasks**
- **Limited flexibility due to bureaucratic constraints**
- **Insufficient stakeholder engagement**, particularly from frontline faculty
- **Overemphasis on quantitative targets** at the expense of academic diversity
- **Competition for limited high-quality resources**, such as top researchers and research funding

These challenges highlight the need for improved planning methodologies, greater participation from academic communities, and enhanced coordination between government and university leaders.

2.1.4 Quality Assurance and Teaching Management Practices

Quality assurance in higher education is a core aspect of university governance in the PRC, shaping both teaching standards and the long-term competitiveness of institutions. Over the past decades, China has developed a comprehensive quality assurance system that integrates government supervision, university-level management, and discipline-based self-improvement. The result is a multilayered framework that aims to enhance teaching effectiveness, ensure academic integrity, and align educational outcomes with national needs.

(1) National-Level Teaching Quality Assurance Mechanisms

At the national level, the Ministry of Education (MOE) plays a central role in establishing and enforcing quality assurance policies. The MOE's evaluation framework includes multiple instruments:

- **Undergraduate Education Evaluation System**（本科教学合格评估、审核评估）

This system evaluates faculty qualifications, curriculum structure, teaching resources, student development, and administrative support. The evaluation cycle ensures that universities maintain basic quality standards and continuously improve teaching management.

- **Professional Accreditation Systems**

Especially prominent in engineering, medicine, and business, accreditation helps align Chinese university programs with global standards. For example, the **Engineering Education Accreditation** system ensures compliance with international Washington Accord criteria.

- **Teaching Resource Monitoring Platforms**

National databases collect information on teacher allocation, course quality, lab facilities, and student learning outcomes, enabling real-time supervision and policy adjustments.

These national systems provide strong institutional oversight, helping maintain consistency in teaching quality across diverse regions and institutions.

(2) University-Level Teaching Quality Monitoring Systems

Universities themselves also employ comprehensive quality monitoring mechanisms that function on a continuous basis. These systems often include:

- **Teaching Supervision Committees**

Experienced faculty observe classes, evaluate teaching plans, and provide feedback to instructors.

- **Teaching Inspections and Peer Review Mechanisms**

Curriculum syllabi, teaching materials, and assessment methods undergo regular review to ensure alignment with the university's academic standards.

- **Student Feedback and Course Evaluation**

Surveys allow students to evaluate teaching effectiveness, course content, and instructional methods. Increasingly, universities use digital systems to analyze aggregate student feedback and identify areas for improvement.

- **Internal Teaching Awards and Incentives**

Model courses, outstanding instructors, and innovative teaching programs receive recognition and financial support, encouraging broader adoption of effective pedagogical practices.

University-level quality assurance has gradually shifted from a punitive, evaluation-centered model to one emphasizing **continuous improvement, developmental feedback, and data-driven analysis.**

(3) Teaching Reform and Innovation Practices

To meet the demands of digital transformation, economic modernization, and global competition, Chinese universities have introduced a variety of teaching innovations:

- **Blended learning and online-offline hybrid classrooms**
- **Micro-courses, MOOCs, and digital learning platforms**
- **Outcome-Based Education (OBE)** in engineering and science disciplines
- **Problem-based learning** in medical and social science programs
- **Project-based and inquiry-based learning** to foster creativity and critical

thinking

These innovations enhance student engagement and promote more interactive learning environments. Universities also experiment with **learning analytics**, using big data to track student performance and personalize teaching strategies.

(4) Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Despite improvements, several challenges remain:

- Unequal teaching resources between elite and regional universities
- Faculty's heavy administrative workload, which limits their teaching

innovation

- Overemphasis on exam-oriented evaluation rather than competency

development

- Lack of comprehensive training for young instructors
- Relatively slow adaptability among some traditional departments

Therefore, the continuous enhancement of teaching quality requires more flexible management systems, increased investment in instructor development, and deeper integration of modern educational technologies.

2.1.5 Scientific Research Management and Innovation Mechanisms

Scientific research represents a vital pillar of university development in the PRC. Over recent decades, research management systems have undergone significant transformation as universities seek to improve research productivity, enhance international competitiveness, and contribute to national scientific and technological advancement. The governance of scientific research in Chinese universities now includes structured administrative oversight, performance-based funding models, and a growing emphasis on innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration.

(1) The Role of National Research Programs in University Research Management

China's national research programs—such as the former “Project 973,” “Project 863,” and current National Key R&D Programs—play a strategic role in shaping university research priorities. Universities align research agendas with national policies addressing areas such as:

- artificial intelligence,
- biotechnology,
- new materials,

- environmental sustainability,
- advanced manufacturing,
- national security and defense technology.

These programs provide substantial financial support and set performance expectations that influence institutional planning, talent recruitment, and infrastructure development.

(2) Internal Research Administration Systems

University research management departments typically include:

- **Research Administration Office（科研处）**
- **Science and Technology Development Department**
- **Humanities and Social Science Research Office**
- **Laboratory and Equipment Management Office**

Their responsibilities include organizing research funding applications, coordinating interdisciplinary projects, managing research ethics, overseeing laboratory construction, and tracking research output.

To enhance efficiency, many universities implement **digital research management platforms** that:

- store researcher profiles,
- record project progress,
- monitor fund usage,
- track publications and patents,
- analyze long-term research performance trends.

These platforms help improve transparency and accountability while reducing bureaucratic burdens.

(3) Research Evaluation and Incentive Systems

Research evaluation in Chinese universities increasingly adopts a performance-based approach, focusing on indicators such as:

- publication quality (especially in SCI/SSCI-indexed journals),
- citation counts,
- research grants obtained,
- patents and technological applications,
- social service and policy contributions.

Many universities implement reward systems that offer salary bonuses, promotion opportunities, and research funding to high-performing scholars. Additionally, talent programs — such as the “Changjiang Scholars Program” and “Excellent Young Scholars Program”—attract top researchers and support the development of emerging academic leaders.

(4) Innovation Mechanisms and Interdisciplinary Research

Innovation is encouraged through the creation of interdisciplinary research platforms such as:

- key laboratories at national and provincial levels,
 - joint research centers with enterprises,
 - interdisciplinary research institutes focusing on AI, big data, life sciences,
- etc.

Universities work to break down traditional disciplinary barriers by promoting flexible organizational structures, cross-college cooperation, and interdisciplinary project funding. These initiatives aim to foster collaboration and generate impactful scientific discoveries.

(5) Research Integrity and Ethical Management

With the expansion of research activities, Chinese universities increasingly emphasize:

- academic ethics training,
- research misconduct investigation procedures,
- data management standards,
- transparency in fund allocation.

Research integrity offices help ensure responsible conduct in research, safeguarding both institutional reputation and scholarly standards.

(6) Challenges in Research Management

Key challenges include:

- excessive reliance on quantitative indicators
- the pressure to “publish or perish”
- limited support for humanities and social sciences compared to STEM fields
- uneven distribution of research resources between elite and non-elite universities
- administrative workload that distracts faculty from research activities

Addressing these issues requires balanced incentive systems, targeted support for diverse disciplines, and a shift toward long-term, quality-centered research evaluation models.

2.1.6 Internationalization and Global Engagement

Internationalization has become a defining dimension of university development in the PRC, reflecting China's growing global influence and its ambition to cultivate internationally competitive institutions. Over the past two decades, Chinese universities have expanded global partnerships, increased participation in international academic networks, and implemented diverse international education strategies. The practical experience of internationalization reveals both significant achievements and complex management challenges.

(1) International Collaboration Models in Chinese Universities

Chinese universities adopt multiple forms of international cooperation, including:

- **Joint education programs and joint-degree programs**

These programs allow Chinese and foreign institutions to co-develop curricula and provide dual degrees, attracting students seeking global experiences without leaving China.

- **Joint universities**, such as NYU Shanghai, Duke Kunshan University, and the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.

These institutions operate under unique governance structures, integrating international academic standards with Chinese regulatory frameworks.

- **International research collaboration**, including joint laboratories, research centers, and global innovation networks.

These partnerships enhance China's participation in cutting-edge scientific research and facilitate the exchange of expertise.

- **Faculty exchange programs**, enabling Chinese scholars to engage in international sabbaticals, visiting appointments, and collaborative research abroad.

- **Student exchange and mobility programs**, which foster cross-cultural understanding and prepare graduates for global careers.

These models diversify the pathways through which Chinese universities engage with the world, supporting both academic and institutional development.

(2) Development of International Student Services

The number of international students in China has increased significantly. Universities have established specialized administrative units responsible for:

- admissions and visa services,
- academic advising and course registration,
- Chinese language education,
- cultural integration activities,
- international student housing management.

While progress is notable, challenges persist, such as language barriers, cultural differences, and the need for more tailored support services.

(3) Global Ranking and Competitiveness Strategies

To enhance global visibility, universities have:

- increased publication in international journals,

- strengthened participation in global academic ranking systems,
- expanded English-medium degree programs,
- recruited internationally recognized scholars.

Although rankings provide useful benchmarks, an excessive focus on metrics may distort research priorities and undermine long-term academic goals.

(4) Challenges in Internationalization Management

Despite achievements, universities face several issues:

- **Regulatory constraints** that limit governance flexibility in joint programs
- **Insufficient intercultural management skills** among administrative staff
- **Variability in English-language proficiency** among faculty and students
- **Need for more internationalized curricula** in non-English programs
- **Competition from global universities** for top talent and research funding

Successful internationalization requires stronger institutional capacity, improved cross-cultural communication, and more adaptive administrative mechanisms.

2.1.7 Digital Transformation and Smart Campus Development

Digital transformation represents a major trend in the modernization of Chinese universities. Universities across the PRC have embraced advanced technologies—such as big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and Internet of Things (IoT)—to establish smart campuses that enhance management efficiency, teaching innovation, and student services.

(1) Digital Administration Platforms

Many universities have implemented integrated digital platforms covering:

- academic affairs management,
- financial and asset management,
- student information systems,
- research project management,
- personnel evaluation systems.

These platforms allow seamless data flow between departments, reducing reliance on paper documents, speeding approval processes, and enabling real-time monitoring of administrative operations.

(2) Smart Teaching and Learning Systems

The adoption of digital technologies in teaching is widespread:

- **Learning Management Systems (LMS)** support online learning, homework submission, and assessment.
- **Smart classrooms** integrate interactive screens, cloud storage, and data-capture systems to enhance teaching quality.
- **Learning analytics** provide detailed insights into student engagement, enabling instructors to tailor pedagogical strategies.
- **Online resource libraries**, including MOOCs and micro-lectures, expand access to learning materials.

These technologies promote more flexible and personalized learning environments.

(3) Smart Campus Infrastructure

To build comprehensive smart campuses, universities invest in:

- campus-wide high-speed Internet,
- digital ID cards and access control systems,
- cloud-based data centers,
- AI-powered security monitoring,
- mobile applications for campus services (facility booking, payment, navigation).

Such infrastructure enhances campus safety, operational efficiency, and user experience.

(4) Challenges of Digital Transformation

Despite its rapid progress, digital transformation faces obstacles:

- Unequal digital resources across regions and universities
- Faculty resistance to adopting new technologies
- Cybersecurity and data privacy concerns
- Limited integration among existing digital systems
- Need for professional IT staff with higher education domain knowledge

To address these challenges, universities require more investment, professional training, and long-term planning to ensure the sustainable development of smart campus ecosystems.

2.1.8 Student-Centered Management Practices

A shift toward student-centered management has become increasingly important in the governance of Chinese universities. This approach emphasizes the holistic development of students—not only their academic performance but also

psychological wellbeing, career readiness, social competence, and civic responsibility.

(1) Evolution of Student Affairs Management in China

Traditionally, student affairs focused heavily on discipline, dormitory management, and ideological education. Over time, however, universities have embraced more comprehensive models that include:

- mental health education,
- professional career planning,
- mentorship and advising systems,
- extracurricular activity development,
- support for disadvantaged students,
- crisis intervention mechanisms.

This shift reflects broader societal changes and the recognition that students need well-rounded support to succeed in modern environments.

(2) The Central Role of Tutors (辅导员制度)

Tutors play a crucial role in Chinese higher education:

- They provide academic advising and moral education.
- They facilitate communication between students and university departments.
- They manage student dormitories and daily affairs.
- They assist students in psychological and financial difficulties.
- They intervene during emergencies or crises.

The tutor system, distinctive to Chinese universities, acts as a bridge between university governance and student development, making tutors key to successful student-centered management.

(3) Mental Health and Psychological Support Systems

Mental health centers offer:

- psychological counseling,
- group intervention programs,
- crisis hotlines,
- psychological assessment services,
- mental health education courses.

The increasing prevalence of student mental health challenges has made these services indispensable, requiring universities to strengthen staffing, training, and intervention protocols.

(4) Career Development and Employment Guidance

Career centers provide:

- internship opportunities,
- employer networking events,
- career counseling,
- entrepreneurship training,
- employment outcome tracking.

Universities partner with industry to ensure that education aligns with labor market demands, helping students transition smoothly into employment.

(5) Student Autonomy and Governance Participation

Many universities promote student participation in governance through:

- student unions,
- academic committees,
- volunteer organizations,
- participatory budgeting for student activities.

These practices encourage responsibility, democratic participation, and self-management.

(6) Challenges in Student-Centered Governance

Key challenges include:

- high student–tutor ratios, limiting personalized support,
- increasing pressure on tutors to handle psychological crises,
- inconsistent quality of student services across departments,
- limited professional training for student affairs staff,
- the need to balance ideological education with personal development.

To overcome these challenges, universities must professionalize student affairs management, invest in staff development, and adopt evidence-based practices.

2.2 Methodological Recommendations for Improving the Managerial Activities of Tutors in Modern Universities of the PRC

Tutors — often referred to as *political counselors*, *academic advisors*, or *student affairs educators* — occupy a central and unique position in the governance system of Chinese universities. Their responsibilities extend far beyond administrative duties; they serve as educators, mentors, psychological supporters, and

liaisons between the university and its students. In the context of rapid higher education transformation, globalization, digitalization, and the growing diversity of student needs, the managerial activities of tutors require professionalization, structural improvement, and methodological innovation.

The following recommendations outline a comprehensive framework for enhancing tutor management practices, focusing on professional competency development, digital transformation, student-centered advising models, interdisciplinary collaboration, international perspectives, ethical regulations, and research-based improvement strategies. These recommendations reflect contemporary challenges faced by higher education institutions in the PRC and align with global best practices in student affairs management.

2.2.1 Redefining the Role of Tutors in Modern Universities

The complexity of student development in the 21st century requires tutors to assume multidimensional roles. Historically, tutors in Chinese universities were primarily responsible for ideological education, discipline maintenance, and daily administrative tasks. However, the evolving landscape of higher education necessitates a more comprehensive and professionally grounded role orientation.

(1) From Administrative Manager to Student Development Specialist

Modern tutors are expected to transition from transactional administrators to **experts in student development**. This shift requires embracing responsibilities such as:

- facilitating academic success,

- supporting psychological well-being,
- guiding social and emotional growth,
- mentoring career exploration,
- cultivating civic responsibility and values.

This evolution aligns tutors more closely with global models of student affairs professionals, emphasizing holistic development.

(2) Multifaceted Role Identity

Tutors now serve as:

- **Educators**, promoting moral, intellectual, and emotional development;
- **Managers**, ensuring order, compliance, and resource allocation;
- **Counselors**, addressing psychological, academic, and interpersonal challenges;
- **Service providers**, helping students access campus resources;
- **Crisis responders**, intervening in emergencies or high-risk situations;
- **Cultural mediators**, supporting international students and intercultural communication;
- **Connectors**, bridging communication between departments, faculty, students, and families.

These overlapping roles require well-structured training systems and methodological support.

(3) Alignment with Institutional Goals

Tutors play a critical role in implementing institutional missions and national education priorities. Their managerial activities must align with:

- the university's strategic development plan,
- the national agenda for talent cultivation,
- the ideological and political education framework,
- national policies related to student affairs.

A clear alignment helps ensure consistency, accountability, and effectiveness in student management.

2.2.2 Enhancing Professional Training Systems for Tutors

Professional competency is fundamental to improving tutor managerial activities. While many universities provide basic training, there remains a need for **systematic, multi-level, and sustainable** training mechanisms that match the complexity of modern student affairs.

(1) Pre-service Training Programs

Comprehensive pre-service training should include:

- educational psychology,
- higher education management theory,
- crisis intervention strategies,
- communication and counseling skills,
- cultural competence,
- legal knowledge and student rights,
- digital systems and data literacy.

A certification-based pre-service program would ensure that tutors possess essential competencies before assuming responsibilities.

(2) In-service Professional Development

Continuous learning is vital. Universities should establish:

- annual professional training workshops,
- mentorship systems pairing new tutors with experienced staff,
- specialized certificate programs in student affairs,
- opportunities to attend national and international conferences,
- cross-institutional exchange programs.

These initiatives help tutors remain updated on emerging trends in student management.

(3) Professional Standards and Evaluation Systems

Clear competency frameworks and standardized evaluation systems should be implemented to measure tutor performance in areas such as:

- communication and interpersonal skills,
- student guidance effectiveness,
- crisis management ability,
- documentation and case management,
- ethical compliance,
- participation in research and innovation.

Such systems promote professional accountability and continuous improvement.

(4) Exemplary Training Models

Leading universities in the PRC have developed specialized training bases and “Tutor Colleges,” providing structured curriculum, case-based learning, and practical

simulations. These models can be replicated across the country to elevate the professional status of tutors.

2.2.3 Developing Data-Driven Approaches to Student Management

Digital transformation has revolutionized the management of student affairs. Tutors must adopt data-driven strategies to accurately identify student needs, evaluate performance, predict risks, and design targeted interventions.

(1) Student Information Platforms and Learning Analytics

Universities increasingly utilize integrated digital systems that include:

- academic performance data,
- attendance records,
- psychological assessments,
- behavioral indicators,
- extracurricular engagement profiles.

Tutors can analyze these data to identify trends, intervene early with at-risk students, and design personalized support strategies.

(2) Early Warning and Risk Management Systems

Data-driven early warning systems enable tutors to:

- detect mental health concerns,
- flag academic underperformance,
- monitor attendance problems,
- identify financial difficulties,
- track behavioral changes.

Such systems improve proactive rather than reactive intervention.

(3) Ethical Use of Student Data

Data-driven management must adhere to principles of:

- privacy protection,
- informed consent,
- transparency,
- data minimization,
- restricted access.

Tutors must be trained to ethically interpret and use data, ensuring student trust.

(4) Digital Tools for Communication and Case Management

Digital advising platforms allow tutors to:

- maintain student development portfolios,
- track interaction histories,
- schedule appointments,
- document interventions,
- coordinate with academic and administrative units.

Digitalization enhances efficiency and reduces administrative burdens.

2.2.4 Creating Student-Centered Advising and Mentoring Models

A student-centered approach represents a fundamental shift in modern higher education management philosophy. In the context of Chinese universities, developing student-centered advising and mentoring models requires rethinking the role of tutors,

restructuring communication practices, and redesigning service systems to meet students' academic, emotional, social, and developmental needs. This paradigm aligns with contemporary global trends that emphasize personalized education, inclusiveness, and holistic development.

(1) Designing Personalized Guidance Plans

Student populations have become increasingly diverse in terms of socioeconomic background, personality, academic goals, and mental health conditions. Therefore, tutors should adopt personalized development plans that include:

- individualized academic advising roadmaps,
- career development goals and milestones,
- psychological well-being strategies,
- interpersonal skills development,
- personal values and life planning reflections.

Personalization enhances relevance, effectiveness, and motivation, helping students feel valued and understood.

(2) Building Meaningful Tutor–Student Relationships

A student-centered approach requires establishing trusting relationships. Tutors can cultivate rapport through:

- regular one-on-one meetings,
- open communication channels (office hours, online messaging),
- supportive and non-judgmental communication,
- proactive outreach to students facing challenges,

- respecting student autonomy and agency.

These practices help tutors better understand students' emotional states, academic pressures, and interpersonal needs, allowing for earlier and more effective interventions.

(3) Psychological Support and Crisis Prevention

Tutors play a frontline role in mental health management. To ensure student well-being, tutors should:

- maintain close cooperation with mental health centers,
- recognize early signs of distress,
- conduct structured assessments during peak stress periods (exams, internships),
- act as referral agents for professional counseling,
- organize mental health awareness activities.
- A student-centered psychological support system prioritizes prevention, early intervention, and integrated care.

(4) Enhancing Student Autonomy and Self-Management Capacity

Student-centered tutoring aims not only to provide services but also to cultivate students' abilities for:

- time management,
- academic self-regulation,
- emotional resilience,
- conflict resolution,
- independent decision-making.

Workshops, seminars, peer mentoring programs, and skill-building courses can effectively foster these competencies.

(5) Supporting Diverse Student Groups

Different student groups face unique challenges:

- first-generation university students,
- students from rural or low-income families,
- international students,
- students with disabilities,
- high-achieving students requiring enrichment,
- students struggling academically.

Tutors must adopt differentiated strategies to ensure inclusiveness and fairness.

This aligns with global movements for equity-oriented student support systems.

2.2.5 Strengthening Cross-Departmental Collaboration in Student Management

Student affairs management in a modern university is inherently interdisciplinary and requires a collaborative institutional ecosystem. The complexity of student needs—ranging from academic advising to mental health, financial support, career development, and crisis intervention—necessitates coordinated action across multiple units. Effective tutor management depends on the establishment of formalized, efficient mechanisms for cross-departmental collaboration.

(1) Building Integrated Student Affairs Networks

Tutors must work closely with various university units, including:

- Academic Affairs Office,
- Graduate School,
- Mental Health Counseling Center,
- Career Development Center,
- International Office,
- Finance and Logistics Departments,
- Security and Campus Safety Offices,

A collaborative network ensures that students receive comprehensive support rather than fragmented, inconsistent services.

(2) Establishing “One-Stop Student Service Centers”

Many Chinese universities have implemented **one-stop service centers**, integrating administrative functions such as:

- enrollment,
- financial aid,
- academic records,
- psychological consultation,
- career services.

Such centers streamline procedures, reduce student burden, and allow tutors to focus on developmental guidance rather than administrative logistics.

(3) Coordinated Crisis Management Systems

For emergencies involving mental health crises, disciplinary issues, natural disasters, or campus safety events, universities must maintain coordinated protocols:

- a central crisis response team,

- 24/7 emergency communication channels,
- clear role definitions for tutors, security staff, counselors, and medical

personnel,

- training programs for tutors on emergency procedures,
- standardized documentation and post-crisis evaluation.

Cross-departmental cooperation enhances the university's capacity for rapid, effective response.

(4) Improving Data Sharing and Communication Mechanisms

Fragmented information can undermine student support. Universities should establish secure data-sharing mechanisms that enable tutors to access relevant information from:

- academic performance systems,
- psychological assessment records (shared ethically),
- campus behavior logs,
- financial aid status reports,
- dormitory management databases.

Data integration ensures timely interventions and reduces duplicative work.

(5) Collaborative Case Management

Complex student cases—such as chronic mental health issues, persistent academic failure, or financial hardship—require multi-departmental case conferences. Tutors should:

- coordinate meetings among stakeholders,
- present case histories,

- collaboratively design intervention plans,
- monitor implementation progress.

This approach ensures shared responsibility and professional input from multiple perspectives.

2.2.6 Applying International Perspectives in Tutor Management

As Chinese universities deepen their internationalization, tutors increasingly interact with global students, faculty, and educational partners. Integrating international perspectives into tutor management enhances service quality, supports intercultural exchange, and aligns Chinese student affairs practice with global standards.

(1) Understanding Global Models of Student Affairs

Tutors can benefit from studying international student affairs systems, such as:

- **the U.S. Student Affairs and Services (SAS) model**, which emphasizes holistic development and evidence-based intervention,
- **the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) model**, focusing on student mobility and intercultural competence,
- **the Australian higher education framework**, known for strong multicultural student support systems.

Comparing these models helps tutors adopt global best practices.

(2) Intercultural Communication Competence

Working with international students requires:

- cultural sensitivity and awareness,

- understanding of diverse communication styles,
- knowledge of global student expectations,
- ability to manage misunderstandings and cultural conflicts.

Tutors should receive targeted training to improve intercultural interaction skills.

(3) International Student Support Services

International students face unique challenges related to:

- language barriers,
- cultural adjustment,
- academic expectations,
- immigration regulations,
- housing and health insurance.

Tutors must collaborate with international offices to ensure tailored support services and culturally inclusive programming.

(4) Facilitating Outbound Mobility for Chinese Students

Tutors also play a role in helping Chinese students prepare for:

- exchange programs,
- overseas internships,
- international competitions,
- cross-border research projects.

Guidance includes cultural preparation, language support, and academic planning.

(5) Integrating International Competencies into Tutor Training

Professional development programs should incorporate modules on:

- global citizenship education,
- international student development theories,
- comparative higher education management,
- intercultural mentoring techniques.

This equips tutors to operate effectively in increasingly globalized university environments.

Conclusions to Section 2

Chapter Two has examined the practical aspects of managing public universities in the People's Republic of China, focusing on both institutional governance and the managerial activities of tutors, who serve as critical intermediaries between administrative structures and student development. The chapter demonstrated that contemporary university management in China is characterized by a combination of traditional administrative oversight, innovative teaching and research practices, digital transformation, international engagement, and increasingly student-centered approaches.

The analysis highlighted several key insights. First, while national policies and institutional frameworks provide a structured foundation for university governance, effective management requires flexible adaptation to diverse disciplinary needs, regional contexts, and student populations. Second, quality assurance in teaching, research management, and student affairs are interdependent, and improvements in

one domain often reinforce progress in others. Third, the professionalization of tutors is essential for bridging administrative objectives with individualized student support, particularly in addressing academic, psychological, and career development needs. Finally, the integration of data-driven approaches, cross-departmental collaboration, and international perspectives represents a critical pathway for enhancing managerial effectiveness and institutional resilience.

Building on these findings, the chapter offered methodological recommendations aimed at improving the managerial activities of tutors. These recommendations emphasize comprehensive training systems, student-centered mentoring models, ethical and professional standards, and the application of research-based and internationally informed strategies. By implementing these practices, universities can strengthen the alignment between institutional goals and student development outcomes, foster a supportive educational environment, and enhance the overall quality and competitiveness of higher education in the PRC.

In summary, the experiences, challenges, and recommendations discussed in this chapter provide both a reflective analysis of current practices and a forward-looking framework for advancing effective, professional, and sustainable university management in China.

CONCLUSIONS

The present thesis has examined the governance system of state universities in the People's Republic of China (PRC) from both theoretical and practical perspectives, highlighting the complex interplay between political authority, administrative management, institutional autonomy, and student-centered educational development. The findings demonstrate that the Chinese model of higher education governance represents a distinctive hybrid arrangement — one that integrates strong Party leadership and state supervision with gradual expansion of institutional discretion, performance-based management, and global engagement.

The analysis in Chapter One established that the regulatory foundations of Chinese higher education are deeply embedded in the country's political system and development priorities. The dual governance structure—characterized by Party Committee leadership and president accountability—continues to define institutional decision-making and strategic direction. Despite increasing managerial reforms and trends toward decentralization, the state remains the dominant actor in shaping policies, allocating resources, and evaluating academic performance. The literature review underscored that governance in China is not static but an evolving scientific problem that requires multidisciplinary inquiry, combining educational management, public administration, and political economy. Existing research reveals both progress in governance reform and persistent tensions between autonomy and control, efficiency and supervision, global aspirations and ideological obligations.

Building on this theoretical foundation, Chapter Two explored the practical dimensions of university governance, demonstrating how national strategies,

administrative hierarchies, teaching quality assurance systems, research management mechanisms, internationalization initiatives, and digital transformation collectively influence institutional functioning. Chinese universities have made significant strides in improving organizational efficiency, enhancing teaching quality, expanding research capacity, and embracing global collaboration. At the same time, challenges such as bureaucratic complexity, uneven resource distribution, pressure-driven evaluation systems, and the need for more professionalized student affairs management continue to shape the landscape of university governance.

A central contribution of the thesis is its focus on the managerial activities of tutors, who serve as essential intermediaries between institutional governance structures and student development. The study emphasized that modern tutors must evolve from administrative managers to holistic student development specialists capable of addressing academic, psychological, social, and career-related needs. The methodological recommendations offered—including enhanced professional training, data-driven student management, cross-departmental collaboration, and adoption of international best practices—highlight pathways to strengthen tutor effectiveness and align their work with the broader goals of educational modernization in China.

Overall, the research leads to several key conclusions:

1. **Chinese university governance operates as a hybrid and adaptive system**, balancing centralized political oversight with expanding managerial autonomy and accountability mechanisms.

2. **Institutional autonomy in China is conditional and negotiated**, shaped by legal frameworks, Party leadership, funding structures, and performance evaluations that collectively steer university behavior.

3. **Governance reforms have improved efficiency and competitiveness**, particularly through digitalization, internationalization, and strategic planning, but also introduced new pressures related to performance metrics and administrative workload.

4. **Tutors are indispensable actors in student-centered governance**, and their professional development is essential for addressing evolving student needs and ensuring effective implementation of institutional policies.

5. **Sustainable governance improvement requires integrating political imperatives with modern management principles**, fostering innovation while maintaining China's unique governance characteristics.

In conclusion, the governance of state universities in the PRC represents a dynamic, multifaceted system shaped by national priorities, institutional evolution, and global trends. By strengthening managerial capacities, enhancing student support mechanisms, and promoting balanced governance reforms, Chinese universities can continue to improve their quality, competitiveness, and contribution to national development. This thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of these processes and offers practical recommendations that support the ongoing modernization of higher education governance in China.

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