

IN THE SPOTLIGHT 焦点
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES OF UNIVERSITIES
IN THE “ERA OF FRAGILITY”
“脆弱时代”的大学国际交流



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How do you perceive the international collaborative environment in which universities find themselves today?

How do we define this day and age you and I are living in? What kind of label should we put on it? Some from the perspective of technology say it is the information age; some based on the forms of the industry say it is the age of the fourth industrial revolution; still, others view it from the point of economic activities and say it is the age of globalization, and then there are those who say it is the age of multipolarity from a political standpoint. In my opinion, from the perspective of the overarching interests of mankind, the present era is one of “fragility”, where barbarism is hidden in the guise of civilization and danger lurks beneath the appearance of prosperity.

The fragility of this era is related to the advancement of technology and the proliferation of information. The internet is a hub of people from across the globe, fraught with emotional expressions, amplifying the disconnect across demographics, accentuating the mistrust and hostility between countries, and leaving the world more anxious and fragmented. Online sentiment wields tremendous power, and opinion can be contagious and potentially sway government decisions. And yet some politicians deliberately take advantage of the internet to inflame public sentiment for their own gain. One of the consequences of this is that it exacerbates social rifts, worsens international relations and makes the world more fragile.

Over the past two years, the Covid pandemic has filled the world with more disagreement, fear, grievance and anxiety, all of which can be highly destructive emotions. We must acknowledge that today is a fragile time, a time of insidious danger.

您如何看待如今大学所处的国际合作环境？

当今时代是一个什么样的时代？应该给它赋予一个什么样的标签？有人从技术的角度说这是个信息时代，有人从工业形态的角度说，这是第四次工业革命时代，有人从经济活动的角度说，这是全球化时代，有人从政治的角度说，这是多极化时代。这些说法都有道理。我觉得，从人类整体利益的角度看，当今时代是一个“脆弱”的时代，是一个在文明的外表下潜藏着野蛮，在安全的外表下潜伏着危险的时代。

这个时代的脆弱与技术的发达和信息泛滥有关。网络媒体上聚集着海量的人群，而充斥其间的情绪化表达加剧了社会中不同人群之间的撕裂，也加剧了不同国家之间的猜疑和敌意，使这个世界显得更加焦虑，更加碎片化。网络舆论的力量是巨大的，网络上情绪化的舆论是可以传染的，甚至可以左右政府的决策。而有些政治家还故意利用网络来煽动民众的情绪，达到自己的目的，这样做的后果之一一是加剧了社会的撕裂，恶化了国际关系，使世界变得更加脆弱。

这两年，突如其来新冠疫情让世界产生了更多的分歧、恐惧、怨气和焦虑，这些情绪都是极具破坏力的。我们必须承认，今天的时代是一个脆弱的时代，一个潜伏着危险的时代。

How should universities contribute to world peace and development in the face of such a fragile context?

We should enhance humanity's kindness and wisdom. Only if human beings exhibit more kindness and wisdom can the world become a more resilient and safer place. While all people living in this era have a responsibility, those influential organizations, groups and individuals in this world shoulder an even greater role, including governments, businesses and cultural and educational institutions. Among them, educational institutions, especially universities, should play a fundamental, pivotal and strategic role.

Universities have traditionally been the pinnacle of civilization and reason, thus should take the initiative to assume more social and international responsibilities, and there should be more international exchanges between universities. This is the calling for universities in response to this fragile era we live in.

在这样脆弱的时代背景下，大学应如何促进世界的和平与发展？

我们需要提升人类自身的仁慈之心与智慧水平。只有人类多一份仁慈与智慧，世界才会变得坚韧与安全。非但生活在这个时代的所有人都有责任，这个世界上有影响力的组织、团体和个人，包括政府、企业和文化教育机构等，都扮演更大的角色。其中，教育机构特别是大学应该对人类自身素质的提升发挥基础性、先导性、战略性的作用。

大学是人类文化和理性的高地，大学应该主动承担更多的社会责任和国际责任，大学之间应该多一些国际交流。这是我们所处的这个时代对大学的呼唤。

What responsibility should universities take in promoting international exchange?

First, the university is the pinnacle of culture, a force for upward and virtue-oriented mobility, and it is one of the university's duties to inherit, study and develop human culture and promote intercultural exchanges. The greatness of the university lies, first of all, in her lofty realm and her mission to promote the progress of humanity. The fundamental mission of the university is to cultivate outstanding talents, and through them promote the progress of society, and even the progress of human civilization. The university has a wide range of disciplines, introduces different cultures, and creates a relaxed atmosphere that embraces the individuality and innovation of students, as well as scholars with different perspectives and personalities. As a result, people with different positions and cultural backgrounds can be able to communicate freely within and among universities.

Second, the university is a tower of reason that represents an incessant quest for the ultimate truth, and it is the inherent style of the university to seek to understand and transform the world objectively and rationally. Universities must undertake scientific research. And the basic requirement of scientific research is rationality and objectivity—there is no place for hustling, arrogance or prejudice. In today's world, because of the advancement of information technology, the international exchange takes place with a much broader scope and higher frequency than ever before. But the quality of exchange is debatable, and the process can be fraught with suspicion, misunderstanding, and even hostility. Compared with the

complexities of the reality of society, the ivory tower can be a place of relative peace and quiet that transcends conventional values and ideas, with objectivity and fairness relatively intact, so it is easier for communication universities to achieve mutual understanding.

大学在促进国际交流方面应该承担什么样的责任？

第一，大学是文化的高地，是一种向上向善的力量，传承、研究并发展人类文化，促进不同文化间的交流，是大学的本职工作之一。大学之大，首先在于她的境界高远，以促进人类进步为己任。大学最基本的使命是培养优秀的人才，通过优秀的人才去推动社会的进步，乃至推动人类文明的进步。大学要培养优秀的人才，就需要设置众多的学科，介绍不同的文化，营造宽松的氛围，包容学生的个性和创新，包容和接纳不同观点和个性的学者。因此，在大学之中和大学之间，不同立场、不同文化背景的人应该都可以好好交流，好好说话。

第二，大学是理性的高地，是一种求真求实的力量，以客观、理性的态度去认识世界、改造世界是大学的风格。大学要做科研，科研的基本要求是理性客观，科研拒绝忽悠，拒绝傲慢，拒绝偏见。当今世界，由于信息技术的进步，国际之间的交流比以往任何时期都更广泛而迅速，但是，交流的质量有待商榷，过程中也会伴有猜疑、误解甚至是敌意。与复杂的社会现实相比，象牙塔里的大学相对安静超脱，跨越传统价值与认知，客观性与公正性相对较高，因此大学之间的交流比较容易做到相互理解。

What challenges does the University face in terms of international cooperation?

Judging by the reality of international exchanges among universities, it should be said that there is a good foundation. But there remains room for improvement in both breadth and depth. At present, exchanges between Chinese and European universities are primarily carried out in the form of joint training of students, a few visiting scholars from the Chinese side, and sometimes international conferences or academic forums are organized jointly by some institutions. At the level of university administrators, exchanges between the two sides have achieved some success. In the decade or so before the pandemic, the National Academy of Education Administration (NAEA) had organized multiple groups of university leaders to carry out extended in-depth visits, exchange programs and study tours in Europe, America and beyond, and the Chinese parties learned a great deal from the experience. Another highlight is the China-EU LEAD and LEAD2 project which has been running for six years. Under the LEAD project and LEAD2 project, academic leaders from universities in China and multiple European countries engaged in joint study tours and seminars, as well as joint publications. As part of LEAD2 project, the NAEA also organized a joint program for university administrators from China and Europe with great success. But in general these efforts have unfortunately been rare.

In our view, there are two issues of greater prominence in the international exchanges between Chinese and European universities. Firstly, the high-level exchange is rare. The exchange between high-level experts and scholars as well as university

administrators is limited, and insufficient in both frequency and duration. Secondly, the process has not been adequately interactive. It is either one-directional opening or preaching that lacks meaningful dialogue; or unilateral brain-picking by the Chinese side, while their European counterparts end up with still inadequate observations and understanding of Chinese universities and Chinese culture.

大学在国际合作方面面临着怎样的挑战？

从大学国际交流的现实来看，大学之间的国际交流有一定的基础。但无论广度还是深度，还有较大的提升空间。目前中国大学与欧洲大学之间，主要交流方式是联合培养学生、中方派出少数访问学者；有时候，一些机构也会联合举办国际会议或学术论坛等。在大学管理者层面，双方交流取得了一定成绩。在疫情之前的十几年中，国家教育行政学院曾组织多批大学领导赴欧洲和美洲等地开展较长时间的深度考察、交流、学习，中方收获十分明显。还有一个亮点，就是连续6年的中欧LEAD项目和LEAD2项目。LEAD项目和LEAD2项目组织了中国和欧洲多个国家的高校学术领导者一起考察、一起研讨、共同发表。作为LEAD2项目的一部分，国家教育行政学院还组织了中欧高校管理者联合研修班，这对于促进多方交流，起到了很好的作用。但总的来说这种项目太少了。

我们认为，中欧大学国际交流存在的比较突出的问题有两个：一是高端交流少。高水平专家学者以及大学管理者之间的交流有限，频率和时长都不足。二是交流的互动性不够。有些交流常常是双方自说自话，缺乏深度沟通；有些时候，主要是中方在单向地学习、取经，而反过来欧洲大学对中国大学和中国文化的观察和了解不够。

In your view, what should be done to strengthen international exchange and cooperation between universities in the post-COVID era?

Regarding this, we have two humble ideas:

Firstly, more students should be encouraged to venture beyond the border to study at universities in Europe or China. This is the foundation. International understanding lies fundamentally in cultural understanding, with a focus on people-to-people connections. It is a good idea that the EU is seeking to establish a number of European universities. The free movement of students between universities across the EU will both help facilitate learning and stimulate innovation, foster mutual understanding between countries, enhance the identity of European residents and the integration of European cultures. It may not be logistically feasible for Chinese and European universities to communicate as closely as European universities, but the two sides share great similarities, and more students should be encouraged to visit or study abroad.

Secondly, a mechanism for in-depth exchanges between scholars and administrators of Chinese and European universities shall be established. International communication between universities needs to focus on the dialogue between scholars and between administrators. When individuals in these roles are able to communicate freely, the exchanges between universities will naturally follow. It is worth noting that the exchange of ideas and culture is a slow process. It requires time and for one to be present to observe, feel and take it all in, as well as face-to-face in-depth communication. As for the specifics, is it possible to organize joint research groups to address the major concerns of the international community? Recently, the WHO invited 26 experts from around the world to launch renewed efforts to trace the origin of the Covid-19 virus. This practice may also prove inspiring for universities. We hope that in the future, universities in Europe and China will uncover a new path of exchange and collaboration.

"There has never been a time when it is more imperative than today for universities to strengthen international exchanges."

“在今天这样一个脆弱的时代，大学比以往任何时候都更加需要加强国际交流。”

您认为疫情之后应该如何加强大学之间的国际交流与合作？

关于这一点，我们有两个设想：

第一，应鼓励更多学生走出国门，到欧洲或到中国的大学学习与交流。这是基础。国际之间的理解根本上在于文化理解，重点在民心相通。现在欧盟正在建立若干欧洲大学，这是个好主意。学生在欧盟的大学之间自由流动，不仅有利于博采众长，激发创新，而且可以有力地促进国家之间的相互理解，促进欧洲居民的身份认同，促进欧洲文化的融合。中欧大学之间虽然不可能像欧洲大学那样密切，但双方存在着很大的互补性，应该鼓励更多的学生出国访学或留学。

第二，中欧大学的学者之间、管理者之间需要建立深度交流机制。大学之间的国际交流，需要把学者之间的交流以及管理者之间的交流作为重点。他们之间交流顺畅了，大学之间的交流自然就会开辟新的局面。思想的沟通、文化的交流是个慢功夫，需要时间，需要置身于现场进行自然的观察、感受和体会，也需要进行面对面的思想沟通和碰撞。

Do you have any other views or opinions on the relationship between universities and international cooperation?

There has never been a time when it is more imperative than today for universities to strengthen international exchanges, with the fate of humanity at stake, because it is the duty of universities, and because humanity seems to have no better option. We all need to be more aligned on the basis of goodwill and reason. And this is the unassailable mission of universities.

关于大学与国际合作的关系，您是否还有其他看法或观点？

在今天这样一个脆弱的时代，大学比以往任何时候都更加需要加强国际交流，因为这事关人类的命运，因为这是大学的责任，因为人类似乎没有其他更好的选择。人类需要在善意和理性的基础上凝聚更多共识。对此，大学责无旁贷。





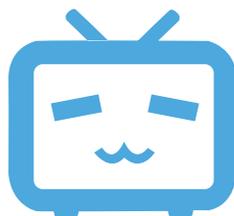
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