Scientific Honesty: Responsibility of University

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Tianjin University is one of the main research universities in China with 26,000 students and 2000 faculty. Its distinguished strength is in engineering education and research.

Tianjin University
Outline

- Tradition: Honesty in Chinese Education
- Challenge: Scientific dishonesty
- Efforts: from regulation to education

Tradition: Honesty in Chinese Education
• Honesty is considered as one of the most important principle of higher learning as stated by Confucius

- “大学之道，在明明德，在新民，在止于至善”。
- 若论其目，则格物，致知，诚意，正心，修身，属明明德。

• In modern higher education, honesty is also a fundamental requirement to teaching and learning.
The motto of Tianjin University:
- “Seeking the truth from fact”
- or “by practical and realistic”

This has become motto of many distinguished Chinese Universities.

Challenge: Scientific dishonesty
However, along with the fast growth of the market economy, universities have more and more merged into the commercial activities, misconduct of scientific research or scientific dishonesty has become an essential challenge.

In 2005, the “HAN-XIN” chipset of STJU was found being a fake and the event of cheating national funds was treated by the MOST. Dr. CHEN had been fired by the university.
• In 2005, Dr. LIU had been fired by Tsinghua University for his CV including papers by others and spurious working carrier.

• Similar case happened also in Shanghai, Tongji University’s dean of life science and technology had spurious papers in his CV and plagiarized research achievements from others. He had been fired by the University too.
• A very serious case happened in Zhejiang University recently. Dr. HE Haibo, his papers has been found plagiarizing, falsification, copying, duplicated submitting, etc.

• Some cases happened also in Tianjin University:
  – In 2007, we canceled a conferred Doctor degrees for plagiarizing in the degree thesis.
  – And, a conferred master degree had been canceled for serious duplicate publications.
In 2008, a faculty and his students have been punished for duplicated publications.

A few cases have been found dealing with un-proper auctorial naming, such as listed a “author” without any contribution for different reasons or some kind of privity.

Recently, we’re handling a case of duplicated publication with intended different auctorial naming.

Facing to these serious misconducts, Chinese universities have,

- given rigorous punish,
- made or modified their regulations against to the dishonesty,
- set up specific committee for scientific honesty.
• Tianjin University
  – Code of research ethic
  – Regulation for supervising of scientific ethic and investigating of scientific misconducts
  – Criterion of plagiarizing in academic publications
  – Academic codes for research students

• Peking University:
  – Codes of scientific ethic for faculty
  – Scheme of promoting scientific ethic …..
• Tsinghua University:
  – Codes for scientific ethic for faculty
  – Regulation for handling scientific misconducts
  – Principles of promoting scientific ethic
  – ……

• Shanghai Jiaotong University:
  – Regulation for academic behaviors
  – Rules of University’s council of scientific ethic
  – ……
• Zhejiang University:
  – Regulations of academic research for graduate students of engineering
  – ……

• Regulations of academic research for graduate students of humanity and social sciences

Code of Conduct -- Tsinghua University

- Honest and objective
- Seriousness – scientific and ethic proof
- Transparency and protection of intellectual right
- Proper citation
- Authorship and acknowledgement
- Penalty for multiple submission
- Peer review
- Conflict of interest
- Against human test
- Animal care and protection
- Obligate for protection of university honor
Chinese government attached a lot of importance to the scientific ethic

- Some principles of maintaining and promoting scientific ethics by MOE
- The guideline for handling scientific misconducts in higher education institutes

Efforts: from regulation to education
• Although the regulation become more and more strict, but the misconducts happen again and again.
• Although the misconducts are mainly dealt with research activities of graduate students as well as faculty, but the problems burgeon in undergraduate period.

• It is found, in the universities, a number of students have practiced fraud in examination for getting higher scores.
  - E.g. from 2006 to 2009, Tianjin University has punished 71 students for the misconducts in examinations by decapitation, probation, marking a mistake, admonition, etc.
• It is also found, that most students do not familiar with the requirements of scientific ethic and the regulation of university:

  – E.g. a student found a paper “was rather good” and translated into Chinese submitted to a journal with her own name, while she mentioned this to her classmate, who told her this violates the regulation, she had urgently withdrawn the paper.

• A new course has been introduced into regular curriculum in Tianjin University since this academic year, to conducting the education of scientific ethic for undergraduates.
• This is really a special course:
  – 4 years continuous “course”
  – 1 credit but play “key” role influencing the “total” assessment of the student
  – lectures + seminar discussion + surveying + practice + ……

Special arrangement
  – In 1st year, the first lecture should be given by the deans or department chairs, after the lecture, the newly unrolled students will sign a “self-statement of scientific honesty”.
  – In 2nd year, a series lectures are planed as “special topics of scientific honesty” along with case studies and student surveying.
  – In 3rd year, “professional ethic” will be introduced into the course of “employment instructions and professional ethic”.
  – In 4th year, probity relevant contents will be introduced.
Special form of study

• Differing from those theoretical and experimental courses, case study, seminar and surveying, etc., will be the main form of this course.

Archive of honesty

• Also, the “archive of honesty” will be established and will be as an important references for the total assessment of students.
Special assessment

The final score of this course will be made in the 7th semester, which will be not only according to the course works but taking the performance of him/her in terms of scientific honesty in the whole university period as a reference.

- excellent
- pass
- Not pass

Thanks!

April 2009, San Diego