

Research on the Collaborative Governance Model Between the Student Union and School Administrative Departments

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Received: 15 December 2025; **Accepted:** 23 January 2026; **Published:** 23 February 2026

Abstract:

The college student union is a bridge connecting the student community and school management institutions, playing an irreplaceable role in promoting the modernization of campus governance. Based on the theory of collaborative governance, this article analyzes the mechanism barriers and unclear role positioning in the interaction process between university student unions and school management departments. The paper explores effective ways for the two to collaborate in governance from three dimensions: organizational structure, operational mechanism, and guarantee system. The goal is to build a new campus governance pattern with clear rights and responsibilities, smooth communication, and joint construction and sharing, improve the level of university management services, and promote the growth and development of students.

Keywords:

University Student Union, School Management Department, Collaborative Governance, Campus Governance

1. Introduction

With the continuous deepening of higher education reform, the modernization of the governance system and governance capacity of universities has become the main goal of the development of higher education in the new era. Students are one of the important subjects in universities, and their willingness and ability to participate will have an impact on the effectiveness of campus governance. As a mass organization for students' self-education, self-management, self-service, and self-monitoring, the student union is an important way for students to participate in campus governance. The school management department plays a leading role in overall planning, organizational coordination, and supervision and management of campus governance. The collaborative governance between the student union and the school management department is essentially a process of forming a governance synergy through resource sharing, complementary advantages, and shared responsibilities based on a common campus governance goal. However, in practice, there are problems of poor

communication and insufficient collaboration between some university student unions and management departments, which hinders the full play of the bridging role of student unions and makes it difficult for the decision-making of school management departments to fully meet the needs of students. Therefore, studying the collaborative governance model between student unions and school management departments has significant theoretical and practical significance for improving the governance structure and enhancing governance efficiency of universities.

2. Overview of Collaborative Governance Theory and Its Applicability in Campus Governance of Universities

2.1. The core connotation of collaborative governance theory

The theory of collaborative governance is a fusion of collaborative learning and governance theory, which holds that multiple subjects rely on common goals, achieve resource integration and complementary advantages through equal consultation and interactive cooperation, and thus achieve the goal of maximizing governance efficiency. The core connotation mainly includes the following aspects:

One is the participation of multiple subjects, and collaborative governance breaks the governance model of a single subject, advocating that various subjects such as the government, market, and social organizations participate in the governance process together, and that each subject has equal status and discourse power in governance. [1]

The second is the mechanism of equal consultation. The core of collaborative governance is consultation, where all parties reach consensus on governance goals, plans, and allocation of rights and responsibilities through communication, dialogue, negotiation, and other means to avoid governance failure caused by conflicts of interest between parties.

The third is resource sharing and complementary advantages. The resources and advantages possessed by each governance entity are different. Collaborative governance is the integration of human, material, financial, information and other resources of each entity to achieve complementary advantages and improve overall governance capabilities.

2.2. The applicability of collaborative governance theory in campus governance of universities

Campus governance in universities is a complex and systematic project that involves various entities such as school management departments, teachers, students, parents, etc. There are complex interests and interactive relationships among these entities. The theory of collaborative governance has given new perspectives and methodologies to campus governance in universities, and its applicability is manifested in the following aspects:

Firstly, the diverse subject characteristics of campus governance in universities are consistent with the requirements of collaborative governance theory. The university management department, student union, faculty representative assembly, student clubs, etc. are all the main bodies of campus governance, with different interests and demands, as well as different governance resources. The school management department has the power to formulate policies and allocate resources, and the student union has a better understanding of students' actual needs and pain points in campus

life. Collaborative governance combines the strengths of various entities to form a synergy.

Secondly, the consistency of goals in campus governance in universities lays the foundation for collaborative governance. Whether it is the school management or the student union, the ultimate goal is to create a good campus environment, promote the comprehensive development of students, and improve the quality and reputation of higher education. Due to the consistency of goals, various entities can cooperate and collaborate with each other in the governance process, and there will be no phenomenon of going their own way.[2]

Finally, the theory of collaborative governance can solve some practical problems in campus governance in universities. At present, there are phenomena such as the detachment of decision-making from student needs in some university management departments and the lack of support for student union work. The principle of equal consultation and resource sharing emphasized by collaborative governance theory can effectively break through barriers between subjects, achieve information flow, and improve the scientific and targeted nature of governance decisions.

3. The Issue of Collaborative Governance Between the Student Union and the School Management Department

Although there has been some progress in the collaborative governance between university student unions and school management departments, there are still some urgent problems that need to be solved in practice, mainly manifested in the following aspects

3.1. Unclear role positioning and unclear boundaries of rights and responsibilities

Some universities have unclear positioning of the role of the student union, treating it as a “subsidiary institution” of the school management department rather than an equal collaborative governance entity. Under this positioning, the work of the student union is generally focused on completing tasks assigned by the school management department, lacking the initiative and autonomy to actively participate in governance. At the same time, the boundaries of power and responsibility between students and management departments are not clear, and there is a phenomenon of shirking responsibility when dealing with specific issues. In the approval of campus activities and the protection of student rights, there is a lack of clear division of responsibilities between the student union and the management department, resulting in low work efficiency and the inability to timely address students' demands.

3.2. The communication mechanism is not sound, and the flow of information is not smooth

Communication is an important part of collaborative governance, but the communication mechanism between some university student unions and management departments is not yet sound. On the one hand, the communication channels are relatively single, mainly using regular meetings, lacking normalized and diversified communication methods. In addition, there is a problem of "one-way" information transmission. The school management department transmits a lot of information to the student union, but the student union's feedback on student needs to the school management department is not given enough attention. Some other management departments have a bureaucratic style, ignoring the opinions and suggestions put

forward by the student union, resulting in the inability to form a closed loop of information feedback. [3]

3.3. Insufficient collaborative power and lack of effective incentive mechanisms

The collaborative governance between the student union and the school management department requires active participation from all parties, but currently some universities lack effective incentive mechanisms, resulting in insufficient collaborative motivation. Most of the members of the student union are part-time student cadres. Under the dual pressure of academic and work, the school mainly uses honors and commendations to motivate student union cadres, lacking substantial rewards and unable to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of student cadres to participate in collaborative governance. The staff of the school management department lack awareness of collaborative governance, believing that the participation of the student union will increase the workload and lack initiative and enthusiasm for collaborative governance work.

3.4. The guarantee system is incomplete and the support is insufficient

The effective operation of collaborative governance requires a sound guarantee system as support, but currently, the guarantee system of some universities is not yet perfect. In terms of institutional safeguards, there is a lack of specialized regulations to regulate the collaborative governance between the student union and management departments, resulting in a lack of institutional basis for collaborative work. From the perspective of resource guarantee, the lack of support from schools for student union funds, venues, etc. has affected the development of collaborative governance work in student unions. In terms of personnel security, some universities have not provided professional training for student union cadres, which has led to a need to improve their ability and level of participation in governance.

4. The Construction Path of Collaborative Governance Model Between Student Union and School Management Department

In response to the current problems in collaborative governance between student unions and school management departments, based on the core essence of collaborative governance theory, this article proposes a specific path to establish a collaborative governance model between the two from three aspects: organizational structure, operational mechanism, and guarantee system.

4.1. Optimize organizational structure and clarify boundaries of rights and responsibilities

Establishing a scientifically reasonable organizational structure is a prerequisite for achieving collaborative governance between the student union and the school management department. Universities should break the traditional "hierarchical" organizational structure, create a flat and networked collaborative governance organizational structure, and clarify the rights and responsibilities of each subject.

Firstly, establish a campus collaborative governance committee. The committee is led by the responsible leaders of the school, and its members include the heads of various functional departments of the school, members of the Student Union Presidium, student representatives, teacher representatives, etc. The Collaborative Governance Committee is the highest decision-making body for campus collaborative

governance, with the main task of coordinating and planning collaborative governance work, formulating collaborative governance rules and regulations, and coordinating the resolution of major issues encountered in the collaborative governance process.

Secondly, clarify the division of responsibilities among various entities. The school management department is the overall goal and policy framework maker of campus governance, and the supporter and supervisor of campus governance resources; The student union is the collector and organizer of opinions and suggestions on campus governance, the representative of campus governance, the participant in campus governance decision-making, and the implementer of campus governance work; Student representatives are the reflectors of the real needs of students and the supervisors of the implementation of campus governance work. Clarifying the boundaries of rights and responsibilities can avoid the phenomenon of buck passing and improve the efficiency of collaborative governance.

Finally, establish a two-level linkage mechanism between schools and colleges. The school student union and the college student union should communicate and collaborate with each other to form a working pattern of top-down linkage. As the grassroots organization closest to students, the student union of the college should timely collect the opinions and needs of students in the school and report them to the student union of the school; The student union of the school should summarize the opinions of student unions from various colleges and provide unified feedback to the collaborative governance committee to ensure the efficiency of information transmission.

4.2. Improve operational mechanisms and promote efficient collaboration

A sound operational mechanism is the foundation for collaborative governance between the student union and the school management department. Universities should establish negotiation and communication mechanisms, decision-making participation mechanisms, and supervision and feedback mechanisms to achieve efficient collaboration between the two.

4.2.1. Establish a normalized negotiation and communication mechanism

Broaden communication channels. In addition to holding regular meetings of the collaborative governance committee, it is also necessary to establish a communication platform that combines online and offline channels. Establishing online channels such as the principal's mailbox and functional department hotlines, allowing students to provide feedback at any time; Establish a reception day for functional departments, organize school management department staff to have face-to-face communication with students, and listen to their demands. The second is to establish a campus collaborative governance information sharing platform, using information technologies such as big data and cloud computing to establish a campus collaborative governance information sharing platform, uploading relevant policy documents, management dynamics, student union work progress, student opinions and suggestions to the platform for real-time sharing, breaking down information barriers. [4]

4.2.2. Establish a sound mechanism for student decision-making participation

Improve the student proposal system, further standardize the procedures for proposal collection, acceptance, review, and feedback, and make regulations on the

time limit for school management departments to accept proposals and the requirements for feedback. Feasible proposals should be implemented in a timely manner and the implementation status should be made public to students; For proposals that cannot be implemented temporarily, explain the reasons to students and strive for their understanding. The second is to invite representatives from the student union to participate in the formulation of rules and regulations. When formulating rules and regulations closely related to student interests, such as teaching management regulations, dormitory management methods, etc., student union representatives should be invited to participate throughout the process, fully listen to student opinions and suggestions, and ensure the scientificity and rationality of the rules and regulations.

4.2.3. Build a closed-loop supervision and feedback mechanism

Establish a supervision group. A supervision group composed of student union representatives and student representatives shall supervise the implementation of collaborative governance work. The supervision group has the right to review relevant documents and materials, and propose rectification opinions on problems in collaborative governance work. The second is to establish a sound feedback mechanism. The school management department should promptly provide feedback on the progress, existing problems, and rectification measures of collaborative governance work to the student union and student representatives. The student union should promptly provide feedback on students' evaluations and suggestions of collaborative governance work to the management department, forming a closed-loop management of raising problems, negotiating solutions, supervising implementation, and feedback evaluation.

4.3. Strengthen the security system and consolidate the foundation of collaboration

A sound guarantee system is the guarantee of joint governance between the student union and the school management department. Universities should strengthen the guarantee of collaborative governance from three aspects: institutional guarantee, resource guarantee, and personnel guarantee.

4.3.1. Strengthen institutional safeguards

Develop specialized campus collaborative governance measures, determine the goals, principles, content, processes, etc. of collaborative governance between the student union and school management departments, and provide institutional basis for collaborative governance work. At the same time, the collaborative governance work will be incorporated into the school performance evaluation system, and departments and individuals who have performed outstandingly in collaborative governance work will be commended and rewarded. Departments and individuals who have been perfunctory will be held accountable to ensure that collaborative governance work is implemented effectively.

4.3.2. Increase resource security

Increase funding investment. Schools should appropriately increase the budget of the student union to meet the funding needs of the student union to carry out collaborative governance work. And encourage the student union to use social sponsorship, school enterprise cooperation, and other channels to expand funding sources. The second is to provide venue support. Schools should provide fixed office

and activity spaces for student unions to ensure the normal operation of their daily work and activities. The third is to strengthen technical support, using information technology to provide technical services such as data analysis and public opinion monitoring to the student union, and improve the student union's ability to participate in governance.[5]

4.3.3. Strengthen personnel support

Strengthen the training of student union cadres, regularly organize them to participate in governance capacity training, invite school management department heads, experts and scholars to give lectures, covering various aspects such as policies and regulations, communication skills, organizational management, etc., to improve the comprehensive quality and ability of student union cadres to participate in governance. The second is to implement a mentorship system. Provide guidance teachers for student union cadres, who can be staff members of school management departments or professional teachers, to provide guidance and help student union cadres solve problems in their work.

5. Conclusions

The collaborative governance between students and school management departments is an important measure to promote the modernization of the governance system and capacity of universities, and an effective way to achieve campus co-construction, co-governance, and sharing. Building a collaborative governance model between the student union and school management departments requires universities to transform their governance concepts, break down barriers between entities, leverage the role of the student union as a bridge and link, and mobilize students' enthusiasm and initiative to participate in campus governance. At the same time, it also requires the joint efforts of various stakeholders such as school management departments, student unions, and students to form a governance synergy.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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