

# The Social Responsibility of Universities in the New Period

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## **Abstract**

*The profound changes in the politics, economy and culture of the world have shaped the connotation of universities' social responsibility in the new period. Therefore, universities need to keep pace with the times to undertake the due social obligations of the new period.*

**Key words:** new period; university; social responsibility

## **1. Simple introduction of social responsibility**

Social responsibilities refer to obligations or missions that a citizen or an organization are supposed to undertake in the social life. Eric Ashby, a British educator, evaluates American higher education that the contribution which American has made in the world's history of higher education is "removing the wall of the University campus". American scholar Paul L. Dressel pointed out "the university has not only gained the support and established authority from the society, but also must meet the demands of the society and undertake the social responsibility. And its educational programs must be adopted to the social requirements." With the development of the society, the functions of universities are becoming abundant, which not only impart knowledge and cultivate talents, but also do scientific research and pursuit for truth. Besides, the university should walk out of the "ivory tower", and provide service to the society directly.

Since 21<sup>st</sup> century, the human society has already entered the new times of globalization and information. The profound changes in the politics, economy and culture of the world have shaped the connotation of universities' social responsibility. At the same time, the status and missions of universities have qualitative changes in the development of human society. And through their own influence, universities guide people to act, understand and reflect on the problems in the society, country and the global. With the development of the times, universities need to advance with the times, stress on their own initiative and innovation, promote reforming reality and making history actively, and undertake the due social obligations of the new period.

## **2. The main social responsibilities of the university in the new period**

### **2.1 The responsibility of fostering talents**

Since its birth, the university takes training talents as its essential task and talent cultivation is the fundamental and primary task of school to get through first. The university has the responsibility to cultivate his students with public morality, social responsibility, cultural value and survivability, and make them to be the talents who adapt to the needs of social economic development.

### **2.2 The responsibility of knowledge innovation.**

In present times, the development of science and technology becomes the main driving force of social economic development. And the knowledge update faster and faster. With the advent of the epoch of intellectual economy, university is given the important role of innovation engine. There is no doubt that university should be an important force of national innovation system which can enrich, renew and develop the human civilization through the academic achievements in scientific research.

### **2.3 The responsibility of serving society.**

University should contribute to the social reform and continuous improvement in the role of “Tank of Think”, and develop prospective, strategic, practical and reserved policy research according to the decision-making demands of the government. In addition, university should put forward high-level, constructive, and practical policy suggestions. Also, it should accept consulting missions from society’s delegation, undertake all kinds of consulting projects, carry out assessment of the third parties, and provide intelligence services.

### **2.4 The responsibility of leading in culture development**

Education devotes to heritage, accumulation and development of culture by talent training. The essence of college education is just as well to carry out activities of culture transmission and pass on excellent culture as to fulfill the great responsibility of culture development. For the purpose of exploration, pursuit, defending and dissemination of truth and knowledge, colleges continually choose, pass on and even create knowledge. Meanwhile, due to the guidance and demonstration of advanced concepts and scientific ideas, universities affect social citizens directly or indirectly, improve and enhance the qualities of citizens, guide social values and standardize social behaviors.

### **2.5 The responsibility of international communication**

Under globalization of the economy, integration of the science and technology, and the melting of cultural exchange, universities should integrate with the international higher education system actively, and construct the bridge for multicultural communication and integration positively, increase exchanges of international education and academic research, promote dialogues of civilizations, and develop talents with international views, cross-cultural competence, and international cooperation ability. In the meanwhile, colleges should promote peace around the world and provide solutions for the furtherance of world peace but not the ones that create conflicts and intensify the contradictions.

### **3. The strategies for universities to fulfill the social responsibility**

#### **3.1 Cultivate college students' sense of social responsibility**

To stimulate the local, national and international development in society and economy, universities should cultivate graduates with social leadership and sense of social responsibility through passing on professional knowledge in college. The core of social responsibility includes five aspects: research projects that are beneficial to the society, graduates who are full of sense of social responsibility, the interaction with communities, the process of forming responsibility and the sustainable environment. And each aspect should emphasize on the element of social obligation. Except the implementation of social duty in academic research, college students should also practice social responsibility and serve the society personally and earnestly.

#### **3.2 Provide the high quality educational resources to society**

Internet technology pulls close the distance between person and person and makes high quality educational resources share across different regions. Universities are the gathering places of high quality educational resources, and provide the high quality educational resources to society is also a responsibility which needs the international outlook and broad mind from the educators of universities. Nowadays, many famous universities of the world like Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Harvard University and the Stanford University launched open course channels to the world, which is a concrete embodiment of providing high quality educational resources to society.

#### **3.3 Fulfilling the social responsibilities with the local conditions**

No matter what kinds of universities that want to perform their functions and fulfill their social responsibilities effectively, they all have to combine with their own traditions, characteristics, advantages, social resources and economic and social needs. Besides, universities should also take some appropriate and powerful measures and strategies, and bear the social responsibilities with local conditions.

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