

# *Construction and Application of Competency Model for College Counselors in the New Era*

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**Abstract:** In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education and student support services, the role of college counselors has become increasingly pivotal. The complexities of modern society, coupled with diverse student needs and challenges, necessitate a reevaluation and enhancement of the competency model for college counselors to better serve students in the new era. Under the context of the new era, the ideological and political work in colleges and universities faces new challenges, with significant changes in directions, tasks, and requirements. As the backbone of this work, college counselors, confronted with new tasks and environments, should serve as staunch supporters of the party's governance, educators of student beliefs, guides for professional growth and development, and role models for the integrated development of faculty and students. Furthermore, counselors should grasp the new era's background, aim at the forefront of professional development, set good examples, comprehensively strengthen their own ideological and political qualities, professional abilities, and recognize the crucial role of nurturing with love to enhance their professional competence.

## 1. Introduction

College counselors are not only responsible for educating students but also for overseeing their daily lives and management. Thus, the competence of counselors plays a crucial role in the enhancement and growth of college students' abilities. Particularly in the context of the new era, external environmental changes significantly impact students' cognitive development, behavioral habits, and ideological beliefs. Based on these objective changes, there is a continuous demand for elevating the competency of college counselors. In this new period, the various abilities of counselors are no longer sufficient to meet students' developmental needs, let alone drive their progress. Therefore, enhancing the competency of college counselors in the context of the new era becomes imperative to improve counselors' work capability.

## 2. Role Positioning of Competency for College Counselors

### 2.1 Counselors as Workers in Student Ideological and Political Education

Educating students on ideological and political matters stands as the primary task for college

counselors, constituting their fundamental work. Especially in the new era, counselors must primarily act as workers guiding students' ideological and political education, continuously enhancing students' ideological and moral qualities. Looking at the current educational entities involved in ideological and political education in universities, besides the ideological and political departments and teachers, counselors are also involved. Moreover, counselors spend the most time with students and have a clear understanding of their psychological states. Thus, they often achieve better educational outcomes when engaging in ideological and political education. Additionally, counselors possess innate advantages enabling them to actively lead students in organizing team-building activities and party-building activities, effectively demonstrating their leadership role. College counselors play a critical role in students' ideological and political education. They are not just academic mentors but also guides in shaping students' correct values and sense of social responsibility through leading by example and verbal communication. Simultaneously, serving as supporters of mental health and emotional well-being, counselors pay attention to students' psychological states and provide counseling and support. In terms of academic guidance and personal development, counselors assist students in planning their academic path, resolving difficulties, and encouraging the exploration of individual potential. In social practice and cultural education, they organize activities to encourage student participation, fostering practical skills and comprehensive qualities<sup>[1]</sup>.

## **2.2 Counselors as Guides for Students' Comprehensive Development**

Apart from engaging in students' ideological and political education, college counselors also play a significant role in assisting students' comprehensive development. In today's highly competitive society, lacking strong competitiveness will inevitably lead to being marginalized. Hence, students in such a society inevitably harbor strong desires for personal growth. Counselors, leveraging this psychology, actively guide students in achieving comprehensive development. As facilitators, counselors should utilize their own experiences and knowledge to guide students, assisting them in planning their career development based on their strengths. Additionally, counselors should actively introduce current employment trends to students, helping them establish early career perspectives. Encouraging students to actively participate in clubs and academic competitions allows them to enhance their competitiveness while exercising and laying a solid foundation for their future entry into society. College counselors play a crucial guiding role in students' comprehensive development. They are not only academic mentors but also guides and supporters in students' growth paths. Through academic guidance and planning, personal development, and career advice, counselors lead students in exploring their potential and formulating growth plans. Furthermore, they focus on students' mental health, provide emotional support, and become pillars in students' lives. Through organizing social practices and nurturing comprehensive qualities, counselors guide students to grow a sense of social responsibility and expand their abilities<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **2.3 Counselors as Guardians for Students' Healthy Growth**

As guardians for students' healthy growth, college counselors aim to foster students' health in both psychological and physical aspects. To promote students' healthy growth, counselors need to provide assistance in physical and mental health. Firstly, regarding physical health, counselors actively guide students to engage in regular physical exercise. In addition to basic physical education classes, counselors encourage students to participate in sports to enhance physical fitness. Regarding students' psychological aspects, counselors first understand individual student situations and then take appropriate measures to address their diverse issues. When providing psychological education, counselors emphasize a multi-perspective and comprehensive approach to help students

genuinely resolve psychological issues. Moreover, they actively engage in communication with students to resolve conflicts and avoid friction among students. College counselors play a vital role as guardians in students' healthy growth. Besides focusing on academic development, counselors prioritize students' psychological well-being, emotional needs, and lifestyle habits. Through providing mental health support, emotional care, guidance on interpersonal relationships, they become significant supporters in students' lives. Simultaneously, counselors emphasize cultivating students' healthy lifestyle habits, self-management abilities, and provide safety education and crisis prevention to ensure students' comprehensive growth in a safe and healthy environment.

### **3. Problems with the Competence of College Counselors in the New Era**

#### **3.1 Lack of Strong Leadership Skills**

In the context of the new era, college counselors commonly face challenges due to insufficient leadership skills. This issue arises primarily from ambiguous role definitions, complex job responsibilities, inadequate institutional environments, and insufficient personal qualities and capabilities. To address this, measures can include providing specialized leadership training, optimizing incentive mechanisms, establishing mentor exchange platforms, and timely adjustments to adapt work content to the demands of the new era and students' needs. These steps help counselors enhance their leadership skills to better adapt to and guide students' growth and development. The competence of college counselors in the new era often reveals weaknesses in leadership. The factors influencing counselors' leadership primarily stem from the development of their profession, which has struggled to achieve substantial progress. Particularly in practical school work, counselors often assume diverse roles, bearing varying rights and obligations. Hence, college counselors hold a pivotal role, not only guiding students in ideological education but also managing their lives. They must harmonize relations with students, establish a certain authority, and within these role transitions, their leadership gradually diminishes.

#### **3.2 Insufficient Accurate Cognition Among Counselors**

In the new era, college counselors frequently lack accurate cognitive awareness. This is evident in their unclear role positioning, narrow understanding of responsibilities, inadequate perception of new challenges, and a lack of recognition of professional images. Addressing this issue requires enhancing role-awareness training, expanding the scope of duties, regularly updating knowledge and skills, establishing communication platforms, and strengthening student feedback and assessment. Given the professional characteristics of college counselors, many lack proper understanding of their profession, with some even regarding the counselor's role as that of a student's caretaker. Due to the nature of their work, many perceive the entry threshold for counseling jobs as low, lacking professionalism. Some view counseling work as mere student management or administrative tasks, resembling a "jack-of-all-trades" compared to professional teachers. Consequently, many college counselors fail to invest their full efforts into relevant work, using counseling as a stepping stone for potential future developments<sup>[3]</sup>.

#### **3.3 Lack of Innovation Among College Counselors in the New Era**

In the new era, college counselors commonly lack innovation. This primarily manifests in constraints from traditional educational concepts, inadequate technological application abilities, insufficient innovation cultivation, and unfavorable evaluation mechanisms. To address this issue, it is recommended to provide professional training and learning opportunities, encourage innovative

practices and interdisciplinary collaboration, promote technological applications, establish innovation platforms and networks, and incentivize counselors to explore new teaching methods. These steps aim to foster innovation awareness and capabilities among counselors to better adapt to the development and challenges of education in the new era.

In China, college counselors hold a dual identity as educators and administrators. Presently, most counselors come from humanities and social science backgrounds, with few from natural science and engineering fields. However, counselors are tasked with ideological and political education for students alongside their management responsibilities. This requires counselors to possess knowledge from multiple disciplines such as Marxist theory, political science, psychology, management, education, and sociology. However, the limitations of their academic backgrounds may confine them in their work, resulting in a lack of innovation and restricted work efficiency.

### **3.4 Lack of Strong Implementation Among College Counselors in the New Era**

In the new era, college counselors commonly lack strong implementation capabilities. This originates from difficulties in concentrating on diverse responsibilities, institutional constraints within schools, and inadequate personal management abilities. To address this issue, measures can include clarifying work responsibilities and tasks, enhancing management and execution capabilities, optimizing institutional environments, rational task allocation, time management, and establishing supportive and incentive mechanisms. Managing a team demands strong execution capabilities from its managers. If conflicts arise within the team and the manager lacks proper management and execution abilities, it affects the cohesion and development of the team. Enhancing counselors' execution capabilities requires them to embody a practical and dedicated spirit, along with perseverance in their work. However, present college counselors often lack such qualities, resulting in insufficient execution capabilities.

## **4. Strategy for Enhancing College Counselors' Competence in the New Era**

### **4.1 Leveraging Counselors' Leadership Roles to Enhance Their Leadership Abilities**

To enhance the leadership abilities of college counselors, emphasis must be placed on leveraging their leadership roles. Firstly, focusing on elevating counselors' reputation will lead to higher self-demands and increased confidence in handling situations. Secondly, improving decision-making skills is crucial, given the complex nature of counselors' tasks. Lastly, enhancing control is imperative—having command over the overall scenario, classes, and circumstances will gradually boost counselors' leadership capabilities<sup>[4]</sup>.

In the new era, uplifting the leadership abilities of college counselors to maximize their leadership roles is of paramount importance. To achieve this goal, several strategies can be implemented. Offer specialized leadership training courses and tailored development plans to enhance counselors' leadership skills. Establish mentorship teams and platforms for sharing experiences to facilitate learning and exchange. Furthermore, schools should reinforce training in management and decision-making abilities, enabling counselors to actively participate in the decision-making process. Develop incentive mechanisms in sync with the current era to motivate exceptional performance and continuously update training content to meet the evolving needs of students.

### **4.2 Leveraging Counselors' Identities to Strengthen Their Professional Awareness**

In the contemporary landscape, college counselors often express feelings of being overwhelmed

and unrecognized in their work, indicating inadequate recognition of their identities and roles. Through multiple role enactments, counselors can effectively enhance their adaptability and thereby augment their capabilities and value. Therefore, in the new era, counselors should comprehend the responsibilities associated with each role in their specific tasks to heighten their vocational affirmation, ultimately making counseling an indispensable part of higher education.

In the new era, enhancing the competency of college counselors requires leveraging their identities and reinforcing their professional awareness. Educational institutions should implement tailored professional development sessions for counselors, enhancing their comprehension of their pivotal role and duties in students' development. Schools must create comprehensive developmental strategies that cover academic, psychological, and social training to raise the professional benchmarks of counselors. Furthermore, institutions should promote counselors' engagement in seminars and exchanges within their field to augment their comprehension of student requirements, thereby enabling them to identify developmental concerns more effectively and provide better support. Moreover, schools should institute mentorship programs to facilitate experienced counselors in guiding newcomers, fostering the transfer of knowledge and strengthening their understanding and commitment within the profession.

#### **4.3 Breaking the Traditional Domains of Counselors, Harnessing their Innovation Skills**

To enhance the competence of college counselors in the new era, it's crucial to elevate their innovation skills and apply innovative thinking and capabilities across all aspects of their work. To achieve this, counselors must first break away from the limitations of traditional work and free themselves from professional constraints. They can accomplish this by analyzing the demands of their work, exploring novel solutions through practical experience, and embracing fresh perspectives. Continual learning is crucial in the current era; counselors should enrich their knowledge base to broaden their approach to problem-solving. Diversifying knowledge contributes to cultivating innovative thinking, so counselors should prioritize learning, proactive engagement, and less imitation in their work<sup>[5]</sup>.

Encouraging interdisciplinary learning and communication is pivotal; providing opportunities for counselors to engage in various subjects and fields broadens their perspectives, stimulating innovative thinking. Establishing platforms for innovative practice supports counselors in initiating innovative projects, courses, or activities, encouraging the exploration of new methods and technologies while fostering problem-solving skills. Promoting team collaboration and communication by establishing interdisciplinary cooperation models among counselors enhances collective cooperation, stimulating an atmosphere of innovation. Finally, by reinforcing innovative education and training that emphasizes the cultivation of innovative thinking and entrepreneurial skills, counselors are better equipped to foster an innovative mindset.

#### **4.4 Coordinating Diverse Role Transitions, Enhancing Counselors' Practical Skills**

Considering the diverse and complex nature of counselors' work, developing strong execution skills is essential to enable counselors to adeptly handle the challenges associated with various roles. Elevating counselors' execution skills necessitates enhancing their practical capabilities, focusing on specific work directions without engaging in futile debates with others but rather focusing on their work. In the work process, counselors should meticulously plan, exclude distractions, and ensure effective implementation, thereby avoiding mere rhetoric. This approach can substantially elevate counselors' practical skills and execution abilities.

Strengthening training and guidance for role transitions ensures that counselors can effectively coordinate and efficiently switch between roles, from academic mentors to psychological supporters

and social guides. Emphasizing practical skill development through participation in actual projects, student activity organization, and other methods hones counselors' operational capabilities, enabling them to exhibit outstanding practical skills across various roles. Emphasizing comprehensive skill enhancement through training and lectures fortifies counselors' leadership, communication, problem-solving, and other multifaceted abilities. This prepares counselors to better adapt and meet the diverse demands of different roles, providing comprehensive support and guidance to students.

## 5. Conclusion

To enhance the competence of college counselors in the new era, it's essential for universities to continually elevate their counselors' competence, reinforcing their identities as ideological and political educators, comprehensive development guides for students, and supportive friends in students' physical and mental growth. Empowering counselors with robust competence fosters continual advancement in higher education institutions, highlighting their intrinsic value and making them exceptional counselors who can both adapt to and drive the evolving times.

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