

Can liberal arts thrive in China? One college suggests they can

Despite holding its own at Peking University, Yuanpei College still encounters resistance to its approach, professor says

July 21, 2022

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As a new president takes the helm at Peking University (PKU), its liberal arts college is arguably on the frontlines of change since its establishment.

From its humble beginnings in 2001 as a small, experimental programme within China's leading institution, Yuanpei College today is, by many measures, a resounding success. It has grown into a fully-fledged liberal arts school with more than 1,200 students, drawing the cream of the crop from applicants to its parent institution.

"Yuanpei has become the most popular college in PKU. Every year we have the best students from the whole country. PKU and Tsinghua have best students, but we have



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...with competition among Chinese graduates higher than in many people's eyes. With many of the value-added liberal arts courses, however, the appeal has been

...of the president of PKU, who from his background of education, decided to want to go to the liberal arts. He studied law, knew how to understand that liberal arts is important, and many of his own students, even his said that he so said.

...over the past few years, on rigorous exam preparation in which he has to go to universities to study in newly formed professional fields, and he is still a good student.

Moving within to study, which is a very good environment, and a very good environment.

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...the college doesn't have its own professors, a decision that still sometimes puts it in tension with the broader faculty at PKU, some of whom see Yuanpei students as lacking an commitment to a discipline and competing for limited resources with students inside their own departments.

"This gave us a lot of challenges in the beginning because students and professors from other departments didn't want students from Yuanpei," Professor Sun said.

"Since then, the students' performance in their classes has helped shift the dial, convincing reluctant professors "that a student not picking any major in beginning and who could change major without any restriction could perform even better than those students who study professional knowledge from the beginning", said Professor Sun.

He credits

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...could not just borrow the

"We wanted to put students together to give them a public space so they could hang out, talk to each other, develop their many hobbies. We want to explore a style of university

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