

China Development Forum 2021

China on a New Journey of Modernisation

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Parallel Session - Venue VI

Vocational Training: A New Start

Moderator

Fang Jin, Secretary General, CDRF

Speakers

Lu Xin, President of China Vocational and Technical Education Association; former Vice Minister of the Ministry of Education

Huang Wei, Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Russian Academy of Sciences

Angela A. Chao, Chairman & CEO, Foremost Group

Wang Fuming, Academician, Chinese Academy of Engineering; Vice President, China Vocational and Technical Education Association

Wei Qing, Chief Technology Officer, Microsoft China

Simon Bartley, former President of WorldSkills

Key points

- President Xi Jinping stresses that China should focus on high-quality economic development during its 14th Five-Year Plan period, including the development of a high-quality education system and enhancing the adaptability of vocational education.
- Vocational education is ushering in an intelligent age. Based on the principles of advanced research and prospective deployment, China will achieve integrated design, from secondary vocational education, higher vocational education and undergraduate education, to specialized Master's education, while meeting the need for emerging talent in AI, big data and cloud computing, with the aim of developing workers and successors able to adapt to high-quality development in the intelligent, digital and green age.

- The future will be a physical space that needs to be augmented by digital capabilities, but should also be people-oriented. There is a need to focus more on developing engineers by fostering a culture that values practical experience and problem-solving.

Synopsis

Vocational education has provided technical talent to support the implementation of the "Made in China" and "Created in China" strategies, and been of huge significance in advancing China's high-quality development. President Xi Jinping has said China should focus on high-quality economic development during its 14th Five-Year Plan period, including developing a high-quality education system and enhancing the adaptability of vocational education. To adapt to high-quality development, Lu Xin believes vocational education should focus on six areas: supporting independent scientific development; sustaining modern industrial system construction; forming a new development pattern; promoting the Digital China initiative; advancing rural revitalization; and expediting green development.

China has the world's largest vocational education system. With more than 11,500 vocational schools, the country can produce 10 million technical professionals every year. To achieve high-quality development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, China should consider the talent needs of high-quality development while studying its higher education structure. In an age of mass higher education, the penetration rate of vocational education will be raised from 52.9% to about 70%.

Vocational education is ushering in an intelligent age. Based on the principles of advanced research and prospective deployment, China will achieve integrated design, from secondary vocational education, higher vocational education and undergraduate education, to specialized Master's education, while meeting the emerging talent needs of AI, big data and cloud computing, so as to develop workers and successors who can adapt to high-quality development in the intelligent, digital and green age.

However, China's vocational education still faces three challenges as it seeks to integrate industry, education and science: a mismatch between practical engineering practices and talent cultivation, a deep-rooted prejudice against application-oriented talent, and the inability of university teachers to adapt to improve their practical education capabilities. To address these challenges, China can integrate university and enterprise resources, adopt an approach based on multi-entity collaboration and varied forms of investment, create a new pattern featuring education-research integration and university-enterprise cooperation, break the boundaries between industry and education disciplines, gather high-quality resources, and develop a

sharing platform to achieve comprehensive opening-up. For example, Bestdr Infrastructure Hospital (international branch) has introduced a sharing model that provides detection in the field, diagnosis in the cloud, experts across the world, and immediately available services.

Although "vocation" means jobs and careers, vocational education is the same as other areas of education, providing talent supply to workplaces. In the digital age, it is necessary to assist vocational education with digital technologies. Digital technologies have become the focus of attention, yet digital thinking is still being ignored by many people. The future is a physical space that needs to be augmented by digital capabilities, but at the same time should be people-oriented. China needs to focus more on the cultivation of engineers, by fostering a culture that values practical skills and problem-solving. As the world changes, vocational education will enter a new chapter.

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