

Research on Implementation Status and Optimization Strategy of University Budget Management Integration

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Abstract: With the development of the connotation of higher education and the reform of fiscal and taxation system, the integration of university budget and performance management has become a key task. This study reviews the evolution of policies related to the integration of budget and performance management in China from 2018 to 2023, and clarifies its important position in deepening the reform of the budget system and promoting the modernization of the national governance system. Focus on the field of colleges and universities, in-depth analysis of existing problems: budget performance targets are not effectively linked, lack of foresight and continuity, such as teaching equipment procurement, teaching staff construction and other project goals short-sighted; Performance budget implementation monitoring is not in place, focusing on the progress of fund implementation, ignoring other performance objectives, and the adjustment is not synchronized; The performance budget evaluation system is not perfect, the evaluation content is not fully covered, the index is not perfect, and the management system is missing; Lack of digitalization of performance budget management, more exploration of single business, lack of application system throughout the whole process, poor integration of business and finance. In view of the problems, the optimization strategy is put forward: strengthen the management of performance objectives, understand its complexity, deal with multiple relations, improve management measures, and ensure that the budgeting has objectives; Promote performance monitoring management, clearly correlate with budget execution, set up key points according to the project logic model, build information system and responsibility system, and ensure that budget execution is monitored; Deepen the management of performance evaluation, implement "expanding areas and increasing points", introduce third parties, improve the index system, build databases and information systems, push re-evaluation, and strengthen the evaluation of budget completion; Improve performance digital management, improve the quality of evaluation results, establish a "combination of evaluation and use" mechanism, expand disclosure, combine with government assessment, and promote feedback and application of results. Through a series of measures, this study helps universities to solve the dilemma of budget management, improve the efficiency of resource allocation, and achieve high-quality development.

1. Introduction

The integration of university budget and performance management is an important measure for the connotation development of higher education, an internal requirement for deepening the reform of fiscal and taxation system and improving the budget management system, and a necessary and practical way to build the capacity of higher education governance system. From the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council on the Full Implementation of Budget Performance Management in 2018, the reform goal of the integration of budget and performance management was first proposed, to the Implementation Plan of the integration System of Financial Core Business in 2019, the integration of national budget and performance management was officially launched. By 2020, the integration of budget and Performance Management (Trial) and the Technical Standard for Integrated Budget and Performance Management System V1.0 will be implemented from the dimensions of business norms and technical standards. By 2023, the whole process of the "Budget and Performance Management Integration Standard V2.0" is deeply integrated to promote the integration of budget and performance management, and the implementation of the integration of budget and performance management has become the key content of further deepening the reform of the budget system, and has become an important driving force to promote the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity. Based on this, through in-depth analysis of the implementation status of the integration of budget and performance management in colleges and universities, this study comprehensively sorted out the existing problems, deeply analyzed the causes of the problems, and actively explored how to optimize the integration of budget and performance management. The main research contents include the integration mode of university budget and performance and the integrated management mode[1]. It includes the following three aspects: First, it analyzes the problems and causes of the integration of university budget and performance management from multiple perspectives; The second is to analyze the optimization measures of the integration of budget and performance management by means of questionnaire and expert interview. The third is to put forward the feasibility of deepening the integration of university budget and performance management.

2. Problems existing in the integration of university budget performance management

2.1. Budget performance targets are not effectively linked, lacking foresight and continuity

The establishment of reasonable performance budget objectives is the starting point and foundation of performance budget management, and is an important basis and basis for the construction of project library, the preparation of department budget, the implementation of performance monitoring and performance evaluation[2]. The Decision of The State Council on Deepening the reform of the budget Management System proposes: implementing medium-term financial planning management, promoting departments to prepare three-year rolling plans, strengthening project library management, and improving the project budget review mechanism. According to the requirements, colleges and universities gradually improve the construction of project libraries and prepare performance targets for the mid-term planning of departmental budgets, but they are not effectively connected with the development plans of colleges and universities, resulting in the lack of connection and clarity of performance budget targets. It is mainly manifested in the following three aspects: First, the lack of performance management concept is more serious. The fund use departments in colleges and universities cannot fully understand the significance of performance objectives, and regard the preparation of performance objectives as a simple task of budget declaration, and there are some phenomena such as "preparation for the sake of preparation"

and "achievable" indicators instead of performance objectives. For example, in some teaching equipment procurement projects, the purchase of a certain number of equipment is simply set, without in-depth consideration of the specific role and long-term impact of these equipment on the improvement of teaching quality, resulting in the arbitrary preparation of performance objectives, which fails to reflect the medium and long-term strategic planning of the business. Secondly, there are defects in the budgeting methods of colleges and universities. The budget preparation of colleges and universities is mainly annual budget, which fails to realize effective rolling in combination with medium and long-term strategic goals, and the continuity of performance goal preparation is poor[3]. For example, for the construction of a school's teaching staff, the annual budget may only focus on the number of teachers recruited in the current year, without making long-term planning and continuous funding arrangements based on the discipline development and talent training needs of the school in the next few years. As a result, the goal of teaching staff construction is difficult to achieve continuously. Finally, the short-sightedness of performance targets also creates a series of problems. The short-sightedness of performance targets makes budget adjustment matters lag behind, resulting in unscientific and imprecise budgets. Take campus information construction as an example, because the performance goal only focuses on the short-term hardware equipment update, while ignoring the long-term software upgrade and system maintenance needs, when it is necessary to adjust, it often leads to waste of resources and inefficiency. To sum up, the lack of effective alignment of budget performance objectives, the lack of foresight and continuity seriously restricts the effective implementation of the integration of budget performance management in colleges and universities, and affects the reasonable allocation and long-term development of college resources.

2.2. Performance budget implementation monitoring is not in place, lack of timeliness and flexibility

Budget execution management is the key link of budget implementation, and it is the embodiment of the concrete implementation of the strategic goals of colleges and universities. At present, the focus of performance budget management in colleges and universities is on the "performance evaluation" link, and the implementation of performance budget has not been effectively monitored and tracked. This is mainly reflected in the following two aspects: On the one hand, in the implementation and monitoring of performance budget, universities often focus on the progress of fund implementation, and the monitoring of the implementation of other performance objectives of the project is seriously insufficient. For example, in discipline construction projects, only attention is paid to whether the funds are spent according to the scheduled schedule, while the realization of other key performance objectives such as discipline team building and scientific research achievements transformation is ignored. As a result, the implementation of performance objectives cannot be reflected in a timely and comprehensive manner, and it is easy to cause deviation between budget implementation and performance objectives, resulting in the phenomenon of "high implementation progress and low use efficiency". On the other hand, in the process of budget implementation, universities will adjust the use and amount of funds according to the development of the business, but the adjustment of performance goals is not synchronized with the adjustment[4]. For example, due to the expansion of the school enrollment scale, it is necessary to increase the capital investment in the procurement of teaching facilities. However, the corresponding performance objectives, such as the utilization rate of facilities and the improvement effect on teaching quality, cannot be adjusted and clarified in a timely manner, thus affecting the accuracy and fairness of performance evaluation, violating the "performance-oriented" concept in the process of budget management, and making performance budget management mere formality.

To sum up, the implementation and monitoring of performance budget are not in place, lack of timeliness and flexibility, which seriously affects the effect of budget performance management in colleges and universities, hinders the reasonable allocation and efficient use of resources in colleges and universities, and is not conducive to the realization of strategic goals in colleges and universities.

2.3. Performance budget evaluation system is not sound, lack of guidance and comparability

Performance budget evaluation is based on the input and use of budget funds, and mainly focuses on the realization of performance objectives. In recent years, although China's performance evaluation work has been steadily promoted, there are still some problems such as the performance evaluation system is not perfect. It is mainly reflected in the following three aspects: First, the content of performance evaluation fails to achieve full coverage. Colleges and universities implement performance management comprehensively, and its object should cover both financial funds and self-raised funds. However, at present, colleges and universities generally only carry out budget performance evaluation on financial funds, and most colleges and universities do not include self-raised funds into the scope of performance evaluation. For example, in the school's scientific research funds, strict performance evaluation is carried out on the scientific research projects supported by financial grants, while there is no corresponding evaluation mechanism for the scientific research funds self-raised by teachers through enterprise cooperation and other channels, which makes it difficult to accurately measure the benefit of the use of these funds. Secondly, there are many imperfections in the performance evaluation index[5]. Colleges and universities have not established performance evaluation indicators according to different funds and project types according to time and local conditions, and some fund use departments and project management departments do not fill in or fill in the three-level evaluation indicators in the process of performance evaluation. At the same time, each university is not based on a unified performance evaluation index, but its own index, its own system, not horizontal comparability. Taking campus culture construction projects as an example, some universities take the number of participants as the main evaluation index, while others focus on the effect of creating cultural atmosphere. The lack of unified standards makes it impossible to compare the evaluation results among different universities effectively. Third, the performance budget management system needs to be improved. The system of accountability of performance reward and public disclosure of performance information in colleges and universities has not been widely applied, and has a weak impact on the budgeting of the next year. For example, there is a lack of effective incentive measures for departments with good budget implementation and a strict accountability mechanism for departments with poor budget implementation, resulting in insufficient emphasis on budget performance by departments. At the same time, the lack of public disclosure of performance information also leads to the lack of sufficient reference basis for budget preparation. To sum up, the performance budget evaluation system is not perfect and lacks guidance and comparability, which seriously affects the scientificity and effectiveness of budget performance management in colleges and universities and restricts the high-quality development of colleges and universities.

2.4. Performance budget management is not digitalized enough, lack of coordination and integration

Gao Zhili pointed out through research that information technology is the technical guarantee for the implementation of performance budgeting, and the systematic, scientific and effective management process of performance budgeting can be comprehensively improved by improving the information system. At present, although many colleges and universities have made many

achievements in actively exploring the practical application of information technology in budget management[6], such as building budget project declaration and management platform, asset procurement and management platform, contract management platform, etc., the collaborative integration of overall information application still needs to be improved. It mainly shows the following two aspects: On the one hand, the current effective exploration is mostly limited to a single business, the lack of application system that can run through all aspects of budget management and achieve effective connection. For example, in the budget declaration link, there is a special project declaration platform, but the platform and the subsequent budget implementation monitoring, performance evaluation and other links of the system failed to achieve seamless connection, affecting the flow of information in the budget management process, easy to cause the management process disjointed and information blind spots. On the other hand, there are obvious deviations in the existing financial information construction, which attaches great importance to accounting, but ignores the performance-oriented budget management process, and lacks the deep integration of business and finance. The weak foundation of performance budget management makes it difficult for performance budget to advance in depth. For example, the financial system only pays attention to the record of revenue and expenditure, but fails to fully integrate with the performance data of business activities such as teaching and research, which makes the budget decision-making lack of scientific basis. It is precisely because of the above problems in the budget performance management of colleges and universities that it has become an important task at this stage to optimize the process of budget management, improve the management mode of budget performance focusing on performance evaluation, and promote the management mechanism covering the whole process of budget preparation, implementation and supervision. Performance as the main line of the design process, the use of "performance factors" to create a "joint force" in each stage of budget management, improve the budget preparation with objectives, budget implementation with monitoring, budget completion with evaluation, evaluation results with feedback, feedback results with application of performance budget management mechanism. To sum up, the lack of digitalization of performance budget management and the lack of synergy and integration seriously restricts the efficiency improvement and scientific development of budget management in colleges and universities, and hinders the reasonable allocation of resources and the effective achievement of strategic goals in colleges and universities.

3. Optimization strategy of university budget performance management integration

3.1. Strengthen the management of performance objectives and achieve the objectives of budgeting

The management of budget performance objectives is the "starting point" of the whole process of budget performance management, and it is also the foundation and starting line on which budget performance management develops. In the optimization strategy of integrated budget performance management in colleges and universities, strengthening performance objective management has a crucial position, which is not only the starting point of budget performance management, but also basic and complicated, we need to fully understand its inherent law and nature. First of all, performance objective management has significant complexity. First, the description of performance objectives is fuzzy. Compared with the private sector, some objectives of the public sector, including universities, are more abstract and difficult to be clearly defined, and the expression of statutory functions is also more general, resulting in difficult to accurately transform performance objectives, which can only be elaborated through subjective qualitative descriptions. In the absence of objective and quantitative effect indicators, workload or output indicators are often replaced, or even "intermediate result" indicators instead of "final result" indicators. Second, the

setting of performance goals is uncertain. Performance targets are usually set based on the assumption of normal progress; however, changes in external conditions and circumstances can create uncertainty about results. This uncertainty makes it easy for the department to increase the budget or reduce the target when setting the performance target. Third, the orientation of performance goals is multiple. Many public expenditure targets of colleges and universities are diversified, especially in projects related to people's livelihood, such as student financial assistance and campus facility improvement. Performance targets should not only promote the improvement of people's livelihood, but also ensure social stability, which contains contents of different dimensions and levels, and the target orientation inevitably conflicts. Fourth, the influencing factors of performance goals are complex. Performance objectives are the result of the joint action of many factors, budget is not the only influencing factor, but also closely related to related management systems and measures, and sometimes it is difficult to measure the proportion of budget in it. Secondly, in strengthening the management of performance objectives, it is necessary to correctly handle several relationships. First, the relationship between performance objectives and departmental functions. When compiling performance objectives, the responsibilities and planning of the department should be fully considered to ensure that they match the functions of the department, business output and department budget, while maintaining the development of performance objectives, resolving the contradiction between the low target of the project undertaking unit and the advanced development plan of the school, and reflecting the diversity of objectives. The second is the relationship between long-term goals and short-term goals. Budget performance management should avoid short-termism and link up the budget and performance target information of multiple years. It should not only adapt to the development plan of the department and match the financial growth, but also reflect the annual work priorities and tasks. Especially for the multi-year projects, it should pay attention to the organic connection of long-term and short-term goals. Third, the relationship between different project objectives. When designing and reviewing performance objectives, it is necessary to make overall plans to avoid differences or conflicts between performance objectives between projects. Fourth, the relationship between performance objectives and budget refinement. On the basis of the annual budget, the fund target is clearly defined and detailed use plans are formulated, and the budget is accurately prepared to make the budget more detailed. Fifth, the relationship between standardization and differentiation. According to the characteristics of the department and industry, subdivide the project categories, and refine the performance target declaration form in accordance with the principle of "seeking common ground while reserving differences" to achieve the combination of standardization and differentiation. Finally, to further improve the management of performance objectives is an important part of budget performance management. First, clarify the management positioning of performance objectives. Universities accurately define the subject, object, content and result of performance objective management, solve the problem of "who will manage, what to manage, how to manage and how to use", effectively combine performance objective management with budget fund arrangement, project implementation and management, and form a good goal-oriented mechanism. The second is to gradually expand the scope of management by objectives. On the one hand, universities expand the coverage of performance objectives from project expenditure to overall departmental expenditure, from expenditure level to transfer payment, and from department to overall government level. On the other hand, in order to achieve target coverage to the "first line", universities expand management links, establish financial fund budget performance appraisal system, and strengthen the pre-examination of performance targets. The third is to promote the integration of performance objectives with the overall plan of the department (unit). All departments shall scientifically calculate the fund needs according to the overall requirements of the school and the development plan, and prepare the budget performance plan. Before the preparation

of the budget, the overall business development plan should be provided, the strategic objectives should be decomposed into annual objectives, and the integration of departmental performance objectives and work plans should be promoted to realize the effective allocation of funds. The fourth is to achieve the combination of performance objectives and specific functions of the department. The financial department shall review the unit performance objectives according to relevant policies and expenditure directions, including the relevance of departmental functions, the feasibility of measures, the scientific nature of indicators, and the rationality of funds. The fifth is to connect the performance objectives with the indicator system. Universities should ensure that performance objectives are directly related to performance indicators, ensure that indicators can accurately reflect the degree of achievement of performance objectives, and pay attention to the effectiveness of indicators to avoid excessive management costs. In short, by fully understanding the complexity of performance objective management, handling the relevant relations well, and improving the management measures, we can strengthen the performance objective management of colleges and universities, make the budget preparation have clear, scientific and reasonable objectives, and promote the optimization of the integration of budget performance management of colleges and universities.

3.2. Promote performance monitoring and management, and reflect the monitoring of budget implementation

Budget performance monitoring management is the "extension point" of the whole process of budget performance management, and it is also a good guarantee for the smooth operation of budget performance management. In the optimization strategy of university budget performance management integration, the promotion of performance monitoring management is the key link to ensure the effective supervision and control of budget execution process. However, at present, due to the lag of practice and the lack of theory, the performance monitoring management is relatively weak in the whole process of budget performance management, and needs to be strengthened. First of all, the relationship between performance monitoring and budget implementation should be clarified. The existing budget implementation system pays more attention to the progress of the execution of funds, the direction of use and the legal compliance of expenditures, while the performance monitoring focuses on monitoring the performance operation to ensure the realization of the established performance objectives. Secondly, based on the project logic model, the design of key points of performance monitoring is strengthened. Furthermore, we should strengthen the collection and analysis of data information and establish a strong performance operation information system. Performance monitoring should be based on the possession and analysis of a large amount of information, and should be based on the era of "big data" to strengthen the system integration of information. Finally, based on the establishment of the responsibility system, an effective operating mechanism for performance monitoring is formed. The department is not only responsible for improving the performance of budget implementation, but also responsible for performance monitoring. The financial department should strengthen guidance, urge the budget department to improve the budget implementation system, improve the measures and means of performance monitoring, strengthen the performance management of budget implementation, and strengthen the monitoring and information feedback of performance operation. The budget department shall promote the tracking and supervision of the performance operation, do a good job in the performance operation analysis and the identification and judgment of the completion of the performance target, use the performance operation monitoring information to correct and adjust the deviation, strengthen the department's final account management, improve the tracking, analysis, feedback and reporting mechanism, and improve the response system.

3.3. We will deepen the management of performance evaluation and strengthen the evaluation of budget completion

Performance evaluation is not only the "focus" of the whole process budget performance management, but also the key and central link of the whole process budget performance management, which is in the core position. First, the implementation of the "expanding area and increasing points" project to promote the full coverage of performance evaluation and key breakthroughs. Colleges and universities have expanded the scope and scale of performance evaluation, increased the number of departments and projects that carry out performance evaluation, and increased the proportion of evaluation funds to achieve full bloom. The second is to increase the cultivation and introduction of the third-party evaluation force, and improve the diversified evaluation management pattern. We will build a diversified system that combines self-evaluation by budget departments, key evaluation by financial departments, and evaluation by third-party intermediaries to make it more scientific and credible. With the deepening of the work, we should gradually turn to the introduction of the third-party evaluation force, and increase its proportion and work intensity. Third, colleges and universities improve the performance appraisal index system and consolidate the foundation of performance appraisal management. When promoting the construction, the principle of simplicity and practicality should be highlighted, and effective indicators should be formed around the validity and reliability standards to enhance internal and external effectiveness, so that it can truly reflect the impact and establish a scientific foundation. The fourth is to strengthen the construction of performance management database and develop an information system matching performance evaluation. Performance evaluation is highly technical and requires high business level, which requires strong data analysis and processing ability. Therefore, we should establish a complete basic database and information system, establish an information exchange and communication mechanism, combine performance evaluation with e-government, and use information network technology to establish a related performance information system. According to actual needs, colleges and universities should improve data collection methods and do a good job in database construction, including collection and collation of standard values, evaluation weight research, basic database supporting, information system construction, etc., to provide technical support for performance evaluation.

4. Conclusion

This study focuses on the integration of university budget management, analyzes the current situation and problems, and explores the optimization path. At present, there are some problems in the budget performance management of colleges and universities, such as poor connection of performance objectives, inadequate implementation and monitoring, imperfect evaluation system, and insufficient digitalization, which restrict the development of colleges and universities and rational allocation of resources. To this end, the optimization strategy is put forward: strengthen the management of performance objectives, clarify complex characteristics, deal with multiple relations, improve management measures, and make the budgeting have goals; Promote performance monitoring and management, clearly correlate with budget implementation, set up key points according to the model, build information systems and responsibility systems, and ensure that budget implementation is monitored; Deepen the management of performance evaluation, implement "expanding areas and increasing points", introduce third parties, improve the index system, build databases and information systems, push re-evaluation, and strengthen the evaluation of budget completion; Improve performance digital management, improve the quality of evaluation results, establish a "evaluation and use" mechanism, expand disclosure, and combine with government assessment to ensure feedback and application of results. In summary, through a series

of measures, colleges and universities are expected to solve the dilemma of college budget management, improve management efficiency, and help colleges and universities develop in high quality.

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