

PREFACE

University in Turmoil is the most comprehensive study written to date about a Chinese work-unit (*danwei*). Through considerably rich detail, it portrays the life and times of Shenzhen University (SZU), an institution built in the first years of China's economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping. Focusing on administration and finances at the university, it peeks into a world that has been left largely unexplored. Along with the author's companion study, *Educational Disengagement: Undermining Academic Quality at a Chinese University*, it provides a look into the day-to-day operation of a *danwei*, with such attention to detail that it is unique among scholarship in China studies.

The first chapter looks at the university's founding and environment. SZU is very much the product of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, whose government oversees the running of the university. This chapter looks at the process of leadership selection and the visions held for the university by its initial leaders (*lingdao*).

Chapter Two explores the execution of this vision by Luo Zhengqi, the university's first Party secretary and *de facto* principal. To understand why SZU was established as it was is to understand the man who put his personal stamp on the university. In Luo Zhengqi's personal story lay elements that were to influence his vision in creating the school. Luo designed SZU in ways that radically deviated from mainstream Chinese *danwei*. Teachers and students were largely left to manage themselves. No separate Communist Party (CCP, or Party for short) mechanism was set up; instead, the Party was fully integrated into the university's administration. Luo was removed from office in July 1989, a departure resulting not from his political views as much as from the fact he lacked strong ties (*guanxi* or social relationships) with upper level *lingdao*.

The next chapter discusses the post-Tiananmen leadership which either stopped or delayed many of Luo's reforms. During this period the university's administration and CCP were in constant struggle. At the same time, the university was consumed by a rectification campaign that went into its every nook and cranny. During this period, SZU's reputation began to plummet. Politics took charge; students and teachers began to disengage from education.

Chapter Four looks at the next administration (1993-1996), under the leadership of Cai Delin. Again, the university experienced changes in focus as some of Luo's reforms were reinstated. All in all, political maneuvering and *guanxi* became increasingly important: disengagement by ordinary teachers continued. Cai's tenure was characterized by a high level of corruption. The university's reputation fell further.

In presenting a picture of university budgets and finances, the next chapter explores an area that has rarely been publicly examined for any *danwei*. Financial information in China is often not transparent, but sifting through a wealth of internal publications has released enough data so that a clear picture of SZU's economy emerges. The university operated several budgets: the Education Fund budget funded by the municipality; the Supplemental Budget that included tuition and fees; and the School Fund (income from SZU-run enterprises and out-of-plan courses). Over its history, SZU has received in excess of US \$150-million in funding, and the chapter looks at where this money went.

The role of the Communist Party at Shenzhen University, the subject of Chapter Six, is instructive not because the case provides a typical picture of Chinese *danwei* or even of Chinese universities, but rather because of its uniqueness. Luo Zhengqi set up a political system that fully integrated the CCP into the running of the university, something consistent with Maoist philosophy. When the events of June 1989 caught Luo without sufficient upper-level political support, he was fired. The political system Luo had created was dependent on his leadership. The case of SZU shows that the university's reform system was person-dependent. It illustrates the importance of the individual university *lingdao*.

Chapter Seven looks at governance at SZU, which greatly changed over the university's history. Under Luo teachers and students were self-governing. The post-Tiananmen leaders took away this autonomy. Under Cai Delin, relationships became more important than formal administrative structure.

The next chapter examines the university's sagging reputation, as measured by declining scores of entering freshmen/women, high faculty turnover, and unfavorable press coverage. It offers a scholarly exploration of corruption in the university, building a theory that indicates the importance of *guanxi* and the cellular nature of the university administration.

The concluding chapter brings together the themes of the book: the importance of individual leadership, relationships (*guanxi*) and reputation. A postscript updates the manuscript, the bulk of which was written in 1997.

This study has been prepared for multiple audiences. Sinologists will appreciate a solid scholarly investigation, using inductive techniques, that relies on six years of participant-observation research and the digestion of over a million characters of *neibu* (internal) documents. Educationalists—not just those interested in Chinese higher education—will be attracted to a study that details the inner workings of a Chinese university. The general reader who is not an educator or China expert will appreciate a narrative work that tells a story and presents China (*Zhongguo* or Middle Kingdom) on a very human basis.

Many people helped and guided me during my research. Dozens of my former students and colleagues at Shenzhen University shared with me both information and opinion. Without their assistance this study would not exist. Indeed, He Daokuan, in facilitating my transition from teaching to research, inspired my writing this volume. Scholars outside China helped in less direct ways. Stan Rosen, Lynn White, Christopher Friedrichs, David Goodman, Cheng Kai-ming, Anita Chan, Paul Morris, Xiao Jin, Bob Adamson, Chris Reardon and Robert Leestamper offered encouragement and insights on various parts of my manuscript. Help was also provided by Jean Hung and the staff of the Universities Service Centre, Chinese University of Hong Kong. I am indebted to Jack Deeney, who dipped into precious time afforded by retirement and made invaluable comments through an editor's eye. Also helpful were Sun Donghai, who drew the maps, and Wongsong of Adocomputer (adom@public.szonline.net) who helped with desktop publishing and designed the book's cover.

Despite all the help I received, any errors, of course, are mine alone. Comments on this volume are welcome. I can be reached by electronic mail at: agelasto@hotmail.com.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAO	Academic Affairs Office
A/V	Audio Visual Center
BBR	big bad record, severe negative disciplinary note
Beida	Beijing University (Peking University)
BR	bad record, negative disciplinary notation
CAD	computer-aided design
CHC	Confucian-heritage cultures
CCP/CPC	Chinese Communist Party
CYL	Communist Youth League
ESL	English as a Second Language
FAO	Foreign Affairs Office
<i>FBIS</i>	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FLD	Foreign Language Department
FTE	full-time equivalent
GPA	grade point average
IFT	International Finance and Trade Department
MIS	management information system
MOE	Ministry of Education
PE	Physical Education Department
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSB	Public Security Bureau
SAO	Student Affairs Office
SC	Student Council
SEdC	State Education Commission
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
Shenda	Shenzhen University
SO	(SZU) Security Office
SSDC	Student Self-Disciplinary Committee
SU	Student Union
SZU	Shenzhen University/ <i>Shenzhen daxue</i>

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