SDGs as the Core Pillars of University Governance: The Case of Soochow University

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Higher Education Taking Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals:
Perspectives from Europe and Asia

CONTENTS

1. Who we are
2. Our mission vs SDGs
3. Taking action at home
4. Future perspectives
Soochow University was founded in 1900 by American missionaries

Some Facts about Soochow University

- Public university
- Key university in national plans such as
  - “Project 211” (112/2914 universities in China)
  - “2011 Plan” (14/2914 universities in China)
  - “Double First Class University Plan”
Suzhou: A historic city: established 2,500 years age

A well-developed city: GDP ranking # 7 among 334 Chinese cities.

A cultural city where 1/3 of Chinese Masters came from in Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1910).

Some Facts about Suzhou
Population: 13 million
Area: 8488 km²
GDP: 254 billion USD
Location: 75 km northwest of Shanghai

- Well-known for its lakes, canals and rivers. 42% area of the city is covered by water
- Praised as "Venice of the East" or "Venice of China"
Suzhou is a piece of double-sided embroidery

Side A — A Traditional Chinese City

Side B — A Modern City
The first university taking a western-style education system in China.

Charter of Incorporation secured by the State of Tennessee

First President
D. L. Anderson

Second President
John W. Cline

Third President
W. B. Nance
• The first university issuing a journal in China (1906)
• The first university offering Anglo-American law courses in China (1915)
• The first university granting a master’s degree in China (1917)
### Students in 26 Schools & 2 Residential Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Student</td>
<td>27095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>16968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student</td>
<td>3250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Students</td>
<td>12381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,694</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staff & Faculty**
- Total: 5353
- Full-time faculty: 2707
- Professors: 2646
A comprehensive university: 12 out of 13 categories (MOE of China)

Except Military Science

Science  Engineering  Medicine  Agriculture  Literature  History

Philosophy  Art  Administration  Economy  Education  Law
Disciplines Rankings

11 Top 1% Disciplines in the Global Disciplines Rankings ESI

Material Science
Chemistry
Clinical Medicine
Physics
Engineering
Biology & Biochemistry
Pharmacology & Toxicology
Neuroscience & Behavioral Science
Immunology
Mathematics

Material Science and Chemistry were ranked among the top 1%.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lists</th>
<th>Soochow University</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE Asia-Pacific University Rankings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mainland/Asia-Pacific</td>
<td>17/—</td>
<td>16/86</td>
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<tr>
<td>US News Best Global Universities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mainland/World</td>
<td>32/511</td>
<td>21/409</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mainland/World</td>
<td>28-32/401-500</td>
<td>13/201-300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment of Chinese Universities by China Academy of Management Science</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature Index</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mainland/World</td>
<td>12/97</td>
<td>9/46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature: World’s most innovative universities &amp; institutions</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1/3/173</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Science Indicators (ESI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mainland/World</td>
<td>28/-</td>
<td>19/404</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE University Impact Rankings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Mainland/World</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1/101-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

No. 192 in 2013 at highest rising speed worldwide.
Located in Suzhou, our mission is to become a place for learning, discovery, innovation, expression, and service.

**Education**
Fostering quality and successful people for the society

**Research**
Providing solutions to challenges & power for future development

**Service**
Granting sharable service to all human-beings

**Culture**
Connecting people from different background and different cultures
Our Mission vs SDGs
A well match
Taking action at home:
Three examples at Soochow University

Quality Education
- Equal opportunity
- High quality

Research development
- Innovative research
- Entrepreneurial character

Social Service
- Public healthcare
- Normal education
Fostering quality people is the intrinsic nature of universities.

High quality education can help to achieve SDGs via continuously providing high quality talents.

Quality Education
- Equal opportunity
- High quality
Taking action at home: Quality Education Equal opportunity

- Students from poverty area: No less than 7% of freshmen each year
- Free tuition, living stipend
- Customized courses upon request: foreign language, Mandarin, Computer science, etc.
- Gender equality for all disciplines
Taking action at home: Quality Education

High quality

- New disciplines adapt to social development: New Energy, Big data, Artificial intelligence, New materials, New medicine, etc.
- New evaluation system: teaching-oriented, research-oriented, internationalization, etc.
- Synergy between: research and teaching, online and offline teaching, domestic and international education

College of Nano Science & Technology

Innovative pioneer of higher education in China

Researchers at the Institute of Functional Nano & Soft Materials (FUNSOM) at Soochow University are leading the way at the forefront of interdisciplinary disciplines. The institute is located at Soochow University in Suzhou, China — a city that has a long reputation for being a paragon on Earth. Since its foundation in 2001, FUNSOM has focused on scientific research and application development in interdisciplinary fields including electronics, new energy, environment, and biomedicine. All principal investigators at FUNSOM obtained their degrees from or have had extensive experience working at world-leading universities overseas. To date, FUNSOM has been awarded 284 competitive research grants from various levels, with a total research fund of over US$51 million. FUNSOM researchers have published over 2000 Science Citation Index papers, most of which were published in high-impact journals such as Science, Nature Communications, Advanced Materials, Journal of the American Chemistry Society, Angewandte Chemie International Edition and Nano Letters. In addition, one work was selected as one of the top ten scientific progress of China in 2023. Thanks to the innovative strategy of FUNSOM, Soochow University is in the top ten most improved universities in the world in terms of the weighted fractional count of Nature Index (increased dramatically from 36th in 2012 to 20th in 2015).

College of Nano Science & Technology

FUNSOM at Soochow University was jointly established by Soochow University, Suzhou Industrial Park and the University of Manitoba in Canada. It is regarded as a leader in promoting internationalization of undergraduate education in China. In 2015, FUNSOM was selected as one of the 17 National Pilot Colleges by the Ministry of Education.

Collaborative Innovation Center of Suzhou Nano Science and Technology (NANO-CIC) The Collaborative Innovation Center of Suzhou Nano Science and Technology (NANO-CIC) is a collaborative innovation center established under the National 11th Five-Year Plan Program. Its ultimate goal is to become an innovative leader to promote the research development and diverse applications of nanoscience and nanotechnology, and to make China a global leader in the area.
Our Quality Education can facilitate several SDGs, such as:

- Equal opportunity
- High quality
Leading scientists and high-quality education enable us to make great innovative research.

Suzhou city grants us the nature of entrepreneurial character.

Research development:
- Innovative research
- Entrepreneurial character
Taking action at home: Research development Leading innovative research

- Innovative research can provide the solutions to address current challenges
- Innovative research grant us the power for future development
- Leading disciplines: Hematology, Nanotechnology, Immunology, Materials science, Chemistry, Textile, Radiology, Mathematics, Optoelectronics, etc.
Taking action at home: Research development
Entrepreneurial character

Leading innovative research can enhance the innovation of companies.

- Incubated ~ 500 startup companies
- 4 listed companies in Shanghai stock exchange
- ~8 billion USD revenue
Our Research Development can help achieve several SDGs, such as:

- Innovative research
- Entrepreneurial character
Social service is the obligation of comprehensive universities

Social service is the intrinsic function of public universities

Social Service
- Public healthcare
- Normal education
Taking action at home: Social Service

Public Healthcare

- Established and developed 17 affiliated hospitals
- Annual outpatient cases: 20 million
- A Children hospital for children
- We make Suzhou Ranked #1 in healthcare in all 300 non-capital cities
- Nursing school: Top school in China
Taking action at home: Social Service

Normal Education

• Normal school for qualified teachers in fundamental disciplines: mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, etc.
• Encouraging students working in remote, rural, or poverty area after graduation
• Benefits for them: free tuition, more scholarships, advanced pedagogy, back to our university for a master degree in education (2-3 years).
• A new normal school will be launched this year.
Our Social Service can facilitate several SDGs, such as:

- Public healthcare
- Normal education
Conclusion

Our Action at Home can match well with all SDGs

- Quality Education
- Research Development
- Social Service

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals
Future Perspectives

Sustainable Development Goals

01. SDGs are global goals
02. SDGs are the goals of human beings
03. SDGs are the obligation of universities
04. SDGs are the core pillars of university governance
THANK YOU