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# From Faculty and Staff Needs to Institutional Commitment: A Trade Union Pathway for Ideological and Political Education: A Practice-Oriented Framework for Jiangsu University

**Haojie Geng***

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang 212013, China

****Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.***

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**Abstract:** This article starts from a practical contradiction in university trade union work: faculty and staff expect services that answer concrete problems, whereas ideological and political education (IPE) is often organized as a separate activity. Taking the Jiangsu University trade union research proposal as its institutional setting, the study asks how one service encounter might also become a credible educational encounter without turning welfare into a reward for expressed attitudes. Relevant work on trade union innovation is read alongside research on organizational support, procedural justice, commitment, and engagement. The resulting argument is that practical assistance matters educationally only when recognition, fair procedure, contextual interpretation, and opportunities for voluntary action are joined in the same process. The article converts this argument into a needs-service-education loop: listen at three speeds, interpret needs through four local lenses, design a service-value pair, provide services at three levels, and return evidence to the next planning cycle. The proposed design draws on the university's network of 39 secondary trade unions and 25 faculty cultural and sports associations. It also identifies ethical limits concerning data minimization, equal access, and personnel evaluation. No completed survey result or causal effect is claimed; the framework instead defines what a later pilot should test and what evidence would be insufficient.

**Keywords:** Faculty and staff needs; University trade unions; Precision services; Ideological and political education; Organizational identification

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## 1. Introduction

University trade unions rarely meet faculty and staff in an abstract setting. They meet a new lecturer who is learning how to teach while building a research record, a mid-career teacher balancing several forms of care, a laboratory technician seeking recognition for technical work, or a recently recruited scholar trying

to understand unfamiliar rules. These encounters are practical, but they are not educationally neutral. The speed of the response, the fairness of the process, and the way an explanation is offered all convey what an institution values. Liu and Qiu locate the quality of IPE in the coordination of its content, method, carrier, and evaluation rather than in the multiplication of activities [1]. Wang argues more specifically that staff IPE belongs within the work of university trade unions [2]. Research on precision services under Party-building leadership has begun to describe the organizational side of this task [3], and changes in faculty and staff needs have already been linked to innovation in service methods [4]. What remains less clear is the middle of the process. A service may solve a problem, yet problem resolution alone does not show that a participant has developed institutional identification, understood a shared value, or acted differently in a professional role.

The Jiangsu University project proposal offers a useful setting in which to examine that missing middle. Its original concern is the movement from broad, supply-led activities to services that respond to the different circumstances of staff during the university's Double First-Class development. The proposal also records an unusually dense organizational base: 39 secondary trade unions and 25 faculty cultural and sports associations. These units can hear weak signals that an annual university-wide survey may miss, but they can also reproduce routine programs if listening is not linked to decisions. This article therefore does not present invented survey findings. It develops a practice model from the proposal and the literature and addresses three questions: when can a service experience support IPE; how should a need be translated into a service and an educational objective; and what evidence permits a modest claim of improvement? The answer separates three outcomes that are often collapsed: the practical problem solved, the relationship with the institution, and the action taken in teaching, research, management, or service. Methodologically, the article is an analytic reconstruction rather than a report of completed fieldwork. It compares the proposal's planned procedures with concepts in the cited literature, identifies where an inference would otherwise be too strong, and translates the remaining logic into decisions that a university trade union could document. This approach is appropriate at the design stage because it makes assumptions visible before respondents or administrative records are used to test them.

## 2. Why a service encounter can become an educational encounter

### 2.1. Recognition before persuasion

The first task is recognition. A request for mentoring, health support, legal advice, childcare information, or workload coordination usually contains both a practical issue and an interpretation of whether the organization notices that issue. Perceived organizational support research describes how employees form a general belief about whether their contribution is valued and their well-being is taken seriously [5]. In a trade union setting, this belief is shaped by small procedural facts: whether someone receives an answer, whether the answer arrives when it can still help, and whether an unsuccessful request is explained rather than silently closed. Recognition gives later educational dialogue a relational basis. It is not a purchase of agreement. Staff should not have to demonstrate a preferred attitude to obtain an ordinary service, and a critical comment should not reduce eligibility. Where resources are scarce, priority may reasonably reflect urgency, likely harm from delay, breadth of benefit, and feasibility. The rule should be visible, consistently applied, and open to review. Otherwise, a helpful project can still weaken trust by creating unexplained exceptions.

## 2.2. Fair process and institutional identification

Recognition opens a door; fair interaction determines whether it stays open. The group engagement model connects procedural justice with social identity and cooperative behavior [6]. This is directly relevant to trade union programs because consultation, selection, referral, and feedback are moments in which staff judge their standing in the group. Organizational commitment theory also warns against treating all forms of attachment as the same: affective commitment is conceptually different from remaining because of cost or obligation [7]. A popular benefit can therefore raise satisfaction without deepening identification. To avoid that category error, the present study uses a four-link account: a need is answered; the interaction supports affective recognition; the participant interprets a relevant value; and a later professional action provides possible evidence of internalization. Each link can fail. For example, a mentoring program may be efficient but feel opaque if mentors are allocated without explanation. It may be fair and welcoming but still leave educational responsibility implicit. It may generate thoughtful discussion without changing any practice. Designers should therefore name the intended link in advance and allow participants to question the value claim. Reflection is more credible when it follows a shared task rather than when a prepared speech precedes it. Any invitation to continued action should remain voluntary.

## 2.3. Linking personal development with the university mission

A needs-oriented approach should not force every private concern into the language of institutional strategy. It should show, where a real connection exists, how individual development and the university mission depend on one another. He and Li treat trade union innovation as a multidimensional matter involving organization, service, rights protection, and operational capacity [8]. That view supports three connected service lines for Jiangsu University. The professional-growth line includes mentoring, teaching exchange, research support, and career consultation. The rights-and-well-being line includes representation, legal guidance, health, and work-family support. The cultural-cohesion line uses university history, model-worker experience, sports, arts, and public service to build relationships across units. The 39 secondary unions are close to everyday workplaces; the 25 associations can create participation across school boundaries; functional departments control many of the resources needed to resolve a case. The trade union's distinctive role is to connect these locations, protect staff voice, and keep the handover visible. Educational coherence comes from a shared purpose and an accountable process, not from attaching an IPE label to every event.

# 3. Translating the project proposal into an operating model

The proposal identifies three practical tensions. Needs change faster than a static annual survey; requests for tailored services exceed available money, space, and staff time; and the "soft" value of belonging is difficult to relate responsibly to the "hard" work of teaching, research, and administration. These tensions cannot be solved by adding a digital form alone. They require a sequence of decisions in which each output becomes the input for the next. Figure 1 presents that sequence as a loop rather than a campaign. Listening produces a prioritized need, interpretation produces a service-value pair, allocation produces a delivery plan, and evaluation produces a reason to retain, revise, or stop the program. The loop also reveals where responsibility has been lost. If a request is recorded but has no owner, the failure lies between listening and allocation. If an activity is delivered but its educational purpose cannot be described in relation to the activity, the failure lies in design. If only satisfied participants are asked for feedback, the evidence stage has been narrowed

before analysis begins. The model consequently treats interruption as useful information. A broken link is not hidden inside an overall activity score; it becomes a question for the next cycle. This feature matters for a university setting in which the same program may work differently across disciplines, career stages, and local organizational cultures.

## 3.1. Three speeds for listening, four lenses for interpretation

The project proposal combines three speeds of listening: a regular comprehensive survey, a quarterly inquiry focused on a current issue, and a short pulse check when conditions change quickly. Staff congress proposals, consultation records, activity records, and reports from secondary unions can be read alongside these surveys. The empirical phase proposed for the project includes at least 500 questionnaires and 55 interviews: 20 early-career teachers, 15 mid-career backbone teachers, 10 senior professors, and 10 secondary-union chairs. These are planned sources, not results reported in this article. Their value lies in comparison. A need can be examined through four lenses: career stage; disciplinary setting across science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, and the humanities; job type, including teaching-research, management-service, and laboratory-technical posts; and recruitment route, including locally developed and internationally recruited staff. The lenses should reveal barriers, not freeze people into profiles. Participation in optional fields must be voluntary, small categories should be aggregated in reports, and sensitive welfare or family information should be separated from personnel systems. The usable output is not a permanent personal score but a time-stamped needs pool with urgency, reach, responsible unit, resource demand, and a date for review.

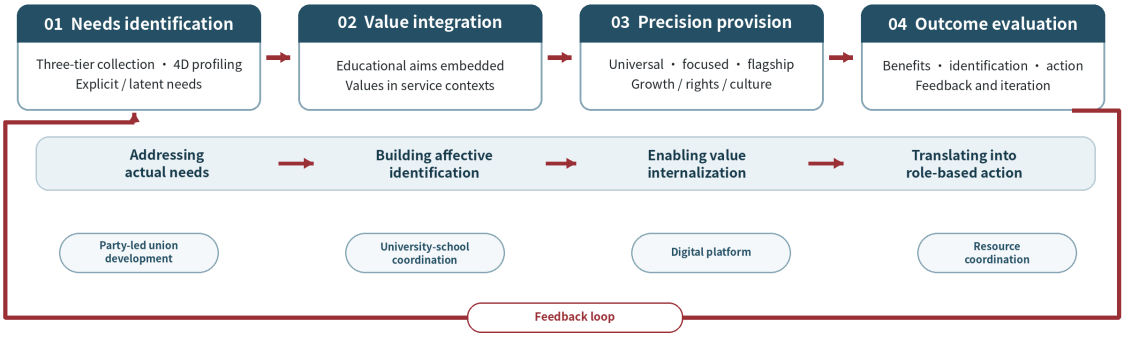



**Figure 1.** A needs-service-education loop for the Jiangsu University project setting.

## 3.2. Designing a service-value pair

A request becomes actionable only after two design questions are answered together: what practical change is sought, and what educational meaning is genuinely present in the way that change is pursued? A concise project sheet can record the target group, the problem, the service carrier, the value objective, the lead unit, and the evidence expected. For an early-career teacher, the practical aim might be stronger lesson design. Peer observation and joint planning create a setting in which responsibility to students can be discussed through actual teaching choices. For a newly recruited scholar, the immediate need may be to navigate policies and build working relationships. A guided introduction to university history, followed by a cross-disciplinary problem session, can connect orientation with institutional memory and collaboration. For management, service, or laboratory staff, a skills workshop paired with democratic consultation can make previously invisible contributions discussable. The value objective should be narrow enough to affect the

activity design. “Strengthen IPE” is too broad; “make the relationship between fair laboratory support and responsible talent cultivation explicit” can be observed and questioned. The sheet should also state what would count as a null result, limiting the temptation to redescribe every completed event as a success. The proposed pairing can be checked before launch by asking three people unfamiliar with the design to describe the practical aim and the value connection in their own words. If they can identify only a slogan or only a benefit, the pair requires revision. This small pretest is inexpensive and often reveals a gap that a polished event plan conceals.

### 3.3 Allocating limited resources without sacrificing equity

Precision does not mean providing a different premium service to every individual. It means using a common floor and varying intensity where the need justifies it. The proposal’s three-level arrangement is useful here. Universal provision keeps policy consultation, basic health support, legal assistance, and open cultural participation accessible. Focused provision addresses a need shared by a defined group, such as early-career mentoring, support during a period of concentrated workload, or work-family coordination. Flagship provision concentrates resources in a program with a clear Jiangsu University identity, such as a model-worker forum linked to a teaching innovation community or a cross-school public-service project. A flagship should grow out of repeated needs rather than the desire for visibility. Allocation decisions can be recorded against four considerations: urgency, equity, expected usefulness, and the availability of an appropriate provider. Cross-unit cases require a short service charter naming the lead unit, supporting units, response standard, handover record, and closure date. Local unions may test small programs, but a successful pilot should be adapted rather than copied, because the need that justified it may not exist in another school.

## 4. Closing the loop through evidence and feedback

Closing the loop means that feedback changes a later decision. A post-event questionnaire stored in an archive is not closure. The responsible unit should compare the promised service with the service actually delivered, examine who was reached and who was absent, and decide what will happen next. The trade union can maintain a brief decision record for each focused or flagship program: retain it unchanged, revise a named component, suspend it pending better evidence, or end it. That decision then returns to the needs pool and the annual action list. Staff should receive a short account of what was heard and what changed. This visible consequence is important because consultation without a traceable response teaches the opposite of participation. The same rule applies when a request cannot be met. An explanation of institutional boundaries and an available review path preserve more trust than an indefinite promise. Feedback is therefore not the last administrative step; it is the point at which a service encounter becomes organizational memory.

### 4.1. What the evaluation can and cannot establish

Evaluation should begin with a modest claim. Process evidence asks whether staff could access the program, whether the response arrived on time, whether selection and referral were understood, and whether the service matched the stated need. Direct-outcome evidence asks whether the practical difficulty was resolved or reduced. Educational evidence asks about trust, professional identification, understanding of the relevant value, and later role-based action. Feng and Zhang’s work on IPE quality evaluation supports the construction of a structured indicator system rather than reliance on one convenient measure [9]. Saks’s research on

employee engagement is also useful because it keeps cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions in view [10]. For a mentoring pilot, evidence might combine the same short questionnaire before and after participation, interviews with mentors and participants, lesson-planning records, and an account of people who sought but could not access the program. A change in average score should be read alongside workload, role, and policy changes. Favorable quotations can explain a pattern but cannot replace the full distribution of responses. Nor can attendance demonstrate value internalization. The proposed survey and interview design could describe associations and identify mechanisms; without a comparison strategy and adequate follow-up, it cannot establish that a union service caused improved teaching or innovation output. A defensible report should therefore state the sample reached, missing data, alternative explanations, and the duration of any observed change. Negative and null findings belong in the feedback memo because they often show which link in the loop needs redesign. Measurement quality also requires attention. Short scales should use the same wording across waves, while interview prompts should invite disconfirming experiences rather than request success stories. When several indicators are combined, the scoring rule and any threshold should be set before outcomes are examined. Administrative records may confirm response time or attendance, but they cannot by themselves establish trust or value understanding. Conversely, self-reports can capture interpretation but remain vulnerable to courtesy bias and selective participation. Using the two sources together narrows uncertainty without pretending to remove it. Where the pilot is small, reporting individual trajectories and reasons for attrition may be more informative than presenting a statistically unstable average.

## 5. Conditions for implementation at Jiangsu University

The model needs a light but explicit governance structure. At university level, the trade union should maintain the needs pool, publish common service standards, coordinate cross-unit cases, and support evaluation. Secondary unions should listen locally, verify interpretations with staff, run bounded pilots, and report access barriers as well as successful participation. Functional departments retain their formal authority over personnel, finance, facilities, research, and logistics; the union coordinates but does not substitute for them. An annual action list can give every project seven fields: need, target group, service-value pair, budget, lead unit, deadline, and evidence plan. A quarterly review should examine delayed handovers, repeated requests, complaints, groups not reached, and records due for deletion. Staff running programs need practical skills in interviewing, facilitation, IPE design, referral, and basic data interpretation. Digital support should be deliberately limited. Identifiable data require role-based access and a retention period; health, family, and welfare records must not enter individual performance appraisal. Staff needs a way to correct a record or question an allocation decision. Finally, evaluation is for improving programs and coordination, not for ranking people by presumed ideological attitude. These limits are not external constraints on the model. They protect the candor and trust on which the model depends.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The central argument of this article is deliberately conditional. Needs-responsive trade union work can support faculty-and-staff IPE when a concrete service, a fair process, a relevant value, and an opportunity for voluntary professional action are experienced as one coherent sequence. Remove any part of that sequence and the educational claim becomes weaker. This formulation contributes to existing discussion in two ways.

It explains why satisfaction is a necessary but insufficient outcome, and it gives a local union network a set of decisions that can be implemented and evaluated. For Jiangsu University, the 39 secondary unions and 25 associations provide reach, while the three-speed listening system and three-level service portfolio provide structure. The study remains a conceptual reconstruction of a project proposal, not a completed impact evaluation. The next step is to implement a bounded pilot, document departures from the design, compare reached and unreached groups, and follow selected outcomes over time. Such evidence may show that some service contexts support identification while others only solve a practical problem. That would not invalidate the model; it would make its boundaries clearer and allow service-based IPE to develop through evidence rather than assertion. Comparative work should eventually examine whether the model travels beyond one institution. Useful cases would differ in disciplinary composition, union capacity, and reliance on centralized or school-level services. Such comparison could reveal which parts of the loop are general and which depend on Jiangsu University's organizational network. It would also help distinguish a genuinely educational mechanism from the temporary goodwill created by a new or unusually well-funded program.

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## Disclosure statement

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