

# Intervention and Reflection on Academic Disengagement Following National Scholarship Rejection: A One-Stop Community Case

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## Abstract

The National Scholarship selection represents a pivotal context for frontline counselors to enact the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education in Chinese higher vocational colleges. This study presents a representative case in which a high-achieving student developed academic disengagement after failing to obtain the scholarship, driven by a narrow interpretation of the comprehensive assessment criteria. Operating within the One-Stop Student Community model, the counselor implemented through three phases (immediate psychological intervention, targeted capacity building, and consolidation of holistic development). The intervention redirected the student's academic behaviors and facilitated measurable growth. The case underscores that effective student affairs practice requires strengthened developmental foresight: policy dissemination, emotional scaffolding, and developmental guidance must be proactively integrated throughout the student lifecycle. Leveraging community-based resources to construct multi-tiered support systems enables counselors to resolve developmental crises and foster students' all-round growth.

## Keywords

One-Stop Student Community, National Scholarship, Academic Disengagement, Cognitive Bias, Holistic Development

## 1. Introduction

The National Scholarship is to test the administrative skills of counselors and, at the same time, to exercise a practical form of cultivating virtue through education. The counselor can help the students grow in all aspects as well, so discipline and

attendance supervision should not be their only concerns. Counselors should improve the planning of development, give more attention to changes in students' lives, observe any behavioural problems, and handle them in time. If students are lost or have been underperforming, the counselor needs to determine why and assist the student in meeting their basic needs. Counselors can be empathetic listeners and strategic guides who create a supportive atmosphere to enhance the intrinsic motivation of students and help them develop all-around, rather than providing immediate answers [1].

The current account is based on a single-case descriptive record. The results of the behaviour were recorded in a combination of counselor's notes and grades, and volunteer-hour logs were verified over a twelve-week observation period to ensure that the changes reported could be supported by observable, recorded data rather than anecdotal memory.

## 2. Case Background

Xiao Qian is a nursing student who joined the School of Nursing in 2023. Since admission, she has been a top student in her class for the past two semesters without any grades of failure or disciplinary issues. She was one of the typical "hard-working high achievers" in her class. Applications for the National Scholarship opened in October. After confirming that her grades met the conditions for selection and were in the top 10% of the class, Xiao Qian applied. She did not make the list for the college-level preliminary examination because her overall score in the comprehensive evaluation was relatively low. After the results were released, Xiao Qian looked at the evaluation rubric and saw that she had scored almost no points in the two weighted sections of competitive awards and social practice. Feeling that her hard work in school had not been acknowledged, she was angry about this. As a result, she showed reduced participation in class, failed to hand in her homework on time, and missed a major quiz for a core nursing course. (It was not a general mental illness problem for the student. A rapid risk assessment found no sleep disturbance, social withdrawal or self-harm ideation. The extent of the change in behaviour was limited to selective disengagement from studies and regular attendance at life-skills classes. There was no referral for counselling or psychiatric consultation; therefore, it is more likely that the problem was situational adjustment rather than clinical psychopathology.)

## 3. Case Formulation

This case is a typical case of evaluation-induced academic disengagement. The student's withdrawal behavior was triggered by non-selection for the National Scholarship rather than by academic incapacity or general mental health disorder.

## 4. Key Issues

### 4.1. Cognitive Bias in Interpreting Assessment Criteria

Xiao Qian had a narrow, grade-oriented understanding of the National Scholar-

ship's spirit of "all-around development in virtue and talent". She too highly valued academic honours and underestimated all-round abilities, so she believed that top grades were sufficient for selection.

#### **4.2. Limited Frustration Tolerance and Emotion Regulation**

Rejection caused a strong sense of failure and injustice. She could not regulate her own emotions well and thus passively avoided her studies, leading to disinterest in learning.

#### **4.3. Information Asymmetry Regarding the Assessment Framework**

Xiao Qian was not aware of the weight given to, or how to obtain, extracurricular awards and social practice. Therefore, she was unaware of the demands from the institution and could not meet them.

### **5. Intervention Strategies and Implementation Measures**

#### **5.1. Phase I: Psychological First Response and Cognitive Restructuring**

##### **5.1.1. Timely Outreach and Emotional Containment**

Due to the behaviour of withdrawal, the counselor promptly organised a private talk. A non-judgmental, private setting allowed Xiao Qian to speak freely about her frustration and confusion. The counselor has consistently offered emotional support to Xiao Qian, acknowledged both the strengths and shortcomings of Xiao Qian with compassion, and thus made her feel heard, valued and respected.

##### **5.1.2. Rule Clarification and Cognitive Reframing**

To minimise the damage, the counselor systematically explained the entire evaluation system of the National Scholarship. Based on the profiles of the previous winners, she presented the value of all-round development. Xiao Qian was led out of the mindset of grade-restriction and encouraged to expand her developmental portfolio to include ideological literacy, academic excellence, innovative practice, social responsibility, and all-around abilities. Specific deficiencies in the competition-participation and social-practice areas were identified as actionable priorities.

#### **5.2. Phase II: Resource Linkage and Competence Building**

##### **5.2.1. Targeted Resource Matching**

Based on Xiao Qian's disciplinary background and interests, the counselor helped her find an academic mentor and supported her in joining a discipline-specific competition team for applied research projects. At the same time, the counselor collected relevant academic contest information and promptly informed students so they could form a team to participate.

##### **5.2.2. Structured Check-Ins and Adaptive Guidance**

A fixed-schedule weekly meeting was introduced to discuss the progress of re-

search and competition work. Promptly offer practical advice for the problems, observe any changes in behaviour and attitude, and adjust the support plan flexibly. At the same time, the counselor would also reduce the pressure of work and keep stress levels down.

### **5.3. Phase III: Peer Empowerment and Institutional Learning**

#### **5.3.1. Peer Modeling and Experience Sharing**

The previous National Scholarship recipients were invited to have a one-on-one talk with Xiao Qian and shared practical strategies for research participation, competition preparation and other aspects of life. Thus, she has been more eager to learn and participate. Xiao Qian was also part of a cooperative learning system, with small study groups and academic salons, and regularly interacted with other students to learn and socialize.

#### **5.3.2. Scaling the Intervention: From Case to Community**

Xiao Qian's case was not an exception, and it served as a teaching opportunity for all the students. A college-wide briefing session was held to introduce the criteria for scholarship evaluation, and then a student-led sharing session took place. This initiative has established an all-around development model for the cohort and promoted a norm of balanced growth. Thus, the counselor transformed a single student's crisis into a group learning opportunity for the One-Stop Student Community.

## **6. Outcomes and Impact**

### **6.1. Individual Transformation**

Xiao Qian gradually moved from resentment over the rejection to reflection. She proactively contacted her counselor to discuss the specifics of the comprehensive test and, at this time, was no longer solely focused on grades. She wanted to learn about the reasons for the combination of academic excellence and extracurricular activities, and she no longer believed that only receiving the National Scholarship was good enough. Her concept of effort expanded, and in her own words, "Even participating in volunteer service seriously is meaningful". Behaviourally, Disengagement declined. In the following weeks, Xiao Qian had achieved perfect attendance and placed among the top 60 students in all sections of a core course quiz. She voluntarily joined two college-level volunteer projects and completed 12 service hours (2 hours over baseline). Collaboration with peers increased, indicating renewed social confidence. By the end of the semester, she had developed a self-directed plan that combined academic consolidation with one practical activity per month and shown a strong ability for balanced development.

### **6.2. Institutional Optimization**

The college has modified the onboarding system for all students. Interpretation of the overall assessment rubric was officially introduced at the freshmen's orienta-

tion, and an illustrated guide book with clear scoring rules and real-life examples was distributed. To reduce the participation threshold for academically-oriented students, a “student-friendly practice menu” was released last semester, offering low-intensity choices such as weekend-shift volunteer posts and online academic support roles. Out of the 235 students who registered, 193 participated in two or more activities and had an average service time of 6.5 hours per person. The total participation rate was 82%, and relatively speaking, it was high; thus, the model appeared to align well with the priorities of students [2].

## **7. Reflections and Implications for Student Affairs Practice**

Scholarship and financial aid administration should be a continuous process, not an occasional administrative act. The counselor should address the entire cycle of the preliminary test and guidance openly, provide extra help after class, and continue to inform the students. Procedural integrity (openness, fairness, impartiality) builds institutional credibility, but individual trust is won through responsive human contact [3].

### **7.1. Emotion Regulation Must Be Purpose-Built**

Xiao Qian’s first reaction was resentment due to a sense of unfairness, and she had achieved good grades in school. The counselor’s first move was therefore not disciplinary, but supportive: acknowledge the client’s efforts, affirm self-worth and regulate emotions. Only then was the general assessment rubric introduced in detail, and specific deficiencies in competition and practice records were shown by comparison. Thus, there was no longer a feeling of frustration.

Together, the counselor and she developed an individualised growth plan to correct her deficiencies and expand her world. Therefore, the first need for practice is to have both an early-warning sense and precise intervention ability. When the students feel that their frustrations have been acknowledged and dealt with in an actual way, they will start to see the counselor more favourably. The three foundations for good student support are accessibility, predictability and competence.

### **7.2. Representative Role Models Must Match Award Purposes**

Scholarship programmes have different goals, and therefore their representatives do too. The National Scholarship should be for students who excel academically and participate in all areas of school life. The National Encouragement Scholarship helps students from poor families who are diligent and honest in their studies but unable to afford tuition. General comprehensive scholarships focus more on a student’s academic performance [4]. Counselors need to match the selection results with the different purposes of these awards. It is not to create a few winners, but to show many different ways of success. Only when the selected students meet the intended criteria do they serve as genuine examples. Strategic promotion on multiple platforms can then have peers adapt their own development according to these differentiated models, rather than following a single “grades-above-all” template.

### 7.3. Policy Communication Must Be Timely and Accessible

Scholarship and aid notices must be spread promptly through several simultaneous channels, such as class message groups, official social media platforms, physical notice boards, and thematic class meetings, so that no student fails to apply due to late information. Be sure that the rules are clear and promptly communicate them. In advance, set out the standards, required documents and procedures, have students prepare the necessary materials, and prevent failure due to omission or false information. At all times, the spirit of openness, fairness and impartiality should be upheld in all links to build institutions that inspire trust among students.

## 8. Case Summary

If students are not aware of the whole-school assessment system, they will face a competitive disadvantage at the school level. Structured intervention included emotional validation, rubric clarification and personalised planning; therefore, the student rebuilt her cognitive system and resumed active participation in the class and extracurriculars. At the same time, the institution has strengthened the all-around assessment system and introduced policy literacy earlier in students' lives. In addition to the above case, the college will also improve its evaluation system and make the dissemination of policies more open and accurate. Such structural adjustments strengthen the institutional system for Four-Sphere Education in the One-Stop Student Community and provide a transferable reference for integrated student affairs practice [5].

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Wang Lijun and Guo Shijie; investigation, Wang Lijun; resources, Wang Lijun; data curation, Guo Shijie; writing—original draft preparation, Wang Lijun; writing—review and editing, Wang Lijun; supervision, Guo Shijie; project administration, Guo Shijie. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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