

Door opened to Chinese students

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Taiwan's colleges and graduate schools will begin accepting Chinese students next spring after the legislature yesterday approved amendments recognizing Chinese certificates and allowing Chinese students to study in Taiwan.

Following rounds of negotiation, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caucuses reached consensus by agreeing to write into law that Taiwan will not recognize Chinese certificates in medicine-related areas and that Chinese students will be prohibited from enrolling in departments that deal with national security matters such as national defense, sensitive agricultural technology, aviation, satellite technology and hydrological subjects.

Chinese students will also be barred by law from taking civil service exams and obtaining professional licenses.

Not written into law, but attached as a resolution, was a ban on Chinese students working part-time during their studies.

However, the DPP caucus failed to attach other proposed resolutions to the acts, including one asking Chinese students to pay double the tuition of Taiwanese students.

Under the amended acts, the number of Chinese students admitted by universities in the initial stage of the program cannot exceed 1 percent of the total enrollment. This equals about 2,000 students nationwide.

Taiwan will recognize educational credentials from 41 selected Chinese universities, with the exception of medicine-related certificates. The regulation cannot be applied retroactively.

The DPP had previously demanded that a set of restrictive measures — dubbed the “three limits and six noes” — be included in the law amendments.

The “three limits” refer to restrictions on the number of Chinese universities that the government plans to recognize, the total number of Chinese college students who can enter Taiwan to study and a limit on the types of Chinese diplomas that will be accredited in Taiwan.

The “six noes” would ban Chinese students from receiving scholarships or professional licenses, keep them from working or staying in Taiwan upon graduation, ban them from receiving extra points on examinations and prevent them from taking the civil service examinations.

KMT Legislator Wu Yu-sheng (吳育昇) hailed the passage of the amendments, saying the move represented the nation's confidence in its democratic system and that it would create a chance “to transform Chinese students.”

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DPP Legislator Kuan Bi-ling (關碧玲), on the other hand, offered an apology to the public on the legislative floor for her caucus being unable to block the policy and impose other measures on Chinese students to better protect the interests of Taiwanese students.

DPP caucus whip Ker Chien-ming (柯建銘) said his caucus was satisfied, in general, with the compromise, as the rest of the restrictions outlined in the “three limits and six noes” would be carried out in the form of an executive order by the Ministry of Education.

“From a legal perspective, Chinese students will not be able to come to Taiwan to work ... We just want to make this very clear,” Ker said. “If [they] come to Taiwan to study, [they] should be studying.”

Kuan said the details were needed to ensure that Chinese students did not take away employment opportunities from Taiwanese.

“It’s simply too big of an issue to ignore and it’s going to have a huge impact on our students unless it is regulated,” she said.

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