

Minister calls on Kuan to come clean

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Minister of Education Pan Wen-chung answers questions yesterday at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei.

Photo: Fang Pin-chao, Taipei Times

Minister of Education Pan Wen-chung (潘文忠) yesterday called on National Taiwan University (NTU) president-elect Kuan Chung-ming (管中闵) to respond to allegations that he had illegally worked in China, saying that Kuan's appointment would not be approved if a government task force found the allegation to be true.

Kuan was elected the university's president on Jan. 5 and has since been accused of conflict of interest, plagiarism and having illegally taught in China.

He was originally scheduled to take office on Feb. 1.

The Ministry of Education will not approve Kuan's appointment if he were found to have illegally worked in China, Pan told a meeting of the legislature's Education and Culture Committee.

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According to the Act of Governing the Appointment of Educators (師範法), public university professors cannot hold part-time positions at institutions in China, he said.

On March 16, the ministry received reports that Kuan had illegally worked in China on 28 occasions, Pan said.

“No one knows better about what happened than professor Kuan himself, but he has not said anything to help clarify things. The ministry therefore had to put in extra effort to form an interministerial task force to investigate the allegations,” he said, adding that the task force is expected to reach a conclusion later this month.

The minister urged Kuan to follow the example set by Minister of the Interior Yeh Jiunn-rong (顏世武), who faced similar allegations.

“Just as Minister Yeh has explained the situation as soon as an allegation surfaced, it is important that the accused help clarify things. It is their right and obligation to do so,” he said.

The education ministry welcomes Kuan to provide information about the allegations, he added.

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) member Yu Shu-hui (余淑惠) on Tuesday accused Yeh of having taught illegally at Zhejiang University’s Guanhua Law School from Dec.19, 2011, to Jan. 15, 2012, while he was a professor at NTU.

Yu, who is running for a Taipei City Council seat, posted on Facebook a screenshot of the university’s Web site showing Yeh as a lecturer for a course.

Yeh denied having illegally taught in China, saying he did not receive payment for the lectures and that the course’s instructor was the law school’s then-vice president Zhu Xinli (朱新立).

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It was the only time he lectured in China, he said, adding that he has given speeches on several other occasions.

Asked whether there is a double standard in the way the education ministry handled Kuan's and Yeh's cases, Pan said he was not defending Yeh.

The ministry's Department of Personnel found that Yeh's explanation matches NTU's attendance and business trip records, he said.

However, the Chinese-language United Daily News yesterday alleged that Yeh had also taught at Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in China's Hubei Province.

The report, which included a screenshot of the university's Environmental and Resources Law Institute Web site listing Yeh as one of its "academics," increased calls for investigations into Yeh's career history.

The interior ministry yesterday reiterated that Yeh had only given lectures at the Zhejiang institute and said the latest screenshot does not prove that he was a lecturer at the Hubei institution.

Yeh is a renowned academic and has given many talks around the world, the ministry said, adding that the institutions might list his name on their Web sites to promote talks or other academic events.

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