

Control Yuan votes to impeach Kuan

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Control Yuan members, left to right, Tsai Chung-yi, Chen Shih-meng and Wang Yu-ling talk to the media after the Control Yuan passed a motion to impeach National Taiwan University president Kuan Chung-ming yesterday.

Photo: CNA

The Control Yuan yesterday voted seven to four to impeach National Taiwan University (NTU) president Kuan Chung-ming (譚邦明) for allegedly breaching the Civil Servant Work Act (公務員服務法) by writing opinion pieces for the Chinese-language Next Magazine (下一期) while serving as minister without portfolio.

Control Yuan members Chen Shih-meng (陳世萌), Tien Chiu-chin (田秋堉), Fang Wan-fu (方萬富), Lin Sheng-fong (林盛豐), Walis Perin, Peter Chang (張其成) and Yang Fang-wan (楊芳萬) voted for the impeachment, while members Wang Mei-yu (王美玉), Liu Te-hsun (劉德勳), Chang Jen-hsiang (張建興) and Chiang Ming-tsang (蔣經堂) voted against it.

An investigation into Kuan's allegedly illegal work was launched by Control Yuan members Wang Yu-ling (王渝玲) and Tsai Chung-yi (蔡忠義) in April last year.

The case is to be forwarded to the Public Functionary Disciplinary Sanction Commission.

According to a statement that Next Magazine submitted to the Control Yuan, while Kuan was a professor at NTU, he made a verbal agreement with the magazine that he would write opinion pieces in return for NT\$50,000 (US\$1,622) per month or NT\$650,000 per year, Wang Yu-ling said yesterday at a news conference in Taipei, adding that the payments totaled NT\$650,000 per year, because Kuan received an additional NT\$25,000 every six months.

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However, Kuan's relationship with Next Magazine continued from 2010 to 2016, which was after his invitation to join the Cabinet as minister without portfolio, she said.

Kuan continued to regularly submit opinion pieces to the magazine anonymously while serving in the Cabinet from February 2012 to February 2015, during which time he was paid NT\$1.9 million, she said.

By doing so, he breached Article 14 of the act, which prohibits civil servants from taking on outside work, she said.

Civil servants are allowed to submit articles to publications, but they can only do so occasionally, Tsai said.

Kuan said in a document submitted to the Control Yuan that he only wrote for Next Magazine at the magazine's invitation and that he had never held any position at the magazine.

The Ministry of Civil Service in 2010 ruled that providing the media with information related to a position was only legal for a civil servant when the work was unpaid, Wang Yu-ling said.

Asked to comment yesterday, Kuan said that he would explain his position after reading the Control Yuan's decision, adding that he had not yet been officially notified.

He said he would consult with his lawyers and confirm if they had submitted his statement to the Control Yuan.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education Pan Wen-chung (潘文忠) said the ministry respects the Control Yuan's decision.

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“The case is in a preliminary stage and the ministry will not act on it until the decision passes a second review at the Public Functionary Disciplinary Sanction Commission,” he said.

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