

NTU president-elect accused of fraud

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National Taiwan University president-elect Kuan Chung-ming speaks in Taipei on Jan. 7.

Photo: Wang Yi-sung, Taipei Times

National Taiwan University (NTU) president-elect Kuan Chung-ming (關其昌) has been accused of plagiarizing a student's paper in a conference paper he coauthored with National Chi Nan University professor Chen Chien-liang (陳建良), Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Chang Liao Wan-chien (張良莞) told a news conference in Taipei yesterday.

The paper, entitled “An Empirical Study of the Effect of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement on Exports” was presented at a conference held by the Academia Sinica Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences and the NTU Department of Economics on May 6 last year and published in its conference documents.

“The paper contains many sentences and charts that are almost identical to those in a thesis titled ‘The Impact of ECFA Early Harvest on Taiwan’s Export to China: Analysis by Difference-In-Differences Model,’ written by Chen’s student in July 2016,” he said, adding that Chen was the student’s thesis adviser.

While the student cited the working paper of “An Empirical Study of the Effect of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement on Exports” several times in her thesis, Chang noted 15 uncited sentences and charts with a high degree of similarity to those in the published paper.

The paper does not cite the student’s thesis, but does have a short note thanking the student for providing a chart and a list.

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As an example, a sentence in the student's thesis reads: "The government should use the empirical evidence as the basis for communicating with different sectors and analyze the data to help with future planning of industry policies," which is almost identical to the sentence in the published paper: "The government should use the empirical evidence as the basis for communicating with different sectors and use the data as the basis for planning future trade and industry policies," Chang said.

The two papers use the same methodology, theme and conclusion, Chang added.

"It appears that Kuan and Chen might have written their paper based on the master's student's thesis," he said. "If the student had plagiarized their paper, why would Chen allow her to graduate?"

Kuan owes the public an explanation and NTU, Academia Sinica and the Ministry of Education should investigate the matter, he said.

According to a Chinese-language United Daily News report, Chen said that the student cited his working paper in her thesis and that Chang got it "the wrong way round."

Chen is in Myanmar on a business trip and is to return to Taiwan on Tuesday.

Earlier this month, several academics and politicians expressed concerns over a possible conflict of interest in the NTU president election after several media outlets reported that Kuan was an independent director of Taiwan Mobile Co (台電) and that company vice chairman Richard Tsai (蔡啟芳) was a member of the university's presidential election committee.

NTU said the election complied with the university's regulations, but the ministry, which is in the process of reviewing Kuan's appointment, has requested NTU clarify issues regarding the alleged conflict of interest and plagiarism.

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As there are very few laws and regulations governing universities, it is difficult to correct their mistakes, DPP Legislator Su Chiao-hui (蘇巧慧) said, adding that the ministry should address the issue.

To prevent similar controversies, the government must have regulations and universities must be disciplined and have better election regulations, she added.

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