

No meddling in autonomy: Wu

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Minister of Education Wu Maw-kuen speaks to reporters in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

The Ministry of Education has not undermined university autonomy and Kuan Chung-ming (關仲明) is not qualified to be National Taiwan University (NTU) president, because he has breached academic principles of integrity, Minister of Education Wu Maw-kuen (吳茂昆) said yesterday.

“We have never interfered with university autonomy,” Wu said in response to reporters’ questions as he arrived at a promotional event for an education exhibition at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914創意園) in Taipei.

The election of a university president is not an actual election, but a selection process in which a school’s election committee tries to find the most suitable person, Wu said.

“A president must meet certain standards, but there is plenty of evidence suggesting that National Taiwan University’s selection process was flawed and that there were breaches of academic integrity,” he said.

That several candidates who were interested in the position alongside Kuan were refusing to run again confirms that the selection process was problematic, Wu said.

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“There is no real democracy when it comes to academic issues. The selection of a president is about university autonomy,” Wu said when asked if the ministry might have failed to uphold democratic values by vetoing the university’s election committee’s decision.

His comments came two days after the ministry announced that the university would have to elect a new president, citing a conflict of interest in the election process and Kuan’s breaches of academic integrity.

Regulations bar public-school teachers from holding part-time positions at for-profit organizations unless there is partnership between the school and the organization, and the agreement is approved by the school, but Kuan started working at Taiwan Mobile as an independent director, auditing election committee and salary committee members months before the university approved his application and established a partnership with the company, the ministry said in a statement on Friday.

Kuan also failed to disclose the directorship before the election in January to avoid accusations of a conflict of interest, as Taiwan Mobile vice chairman Richard Tsai (蔡其昌) was a member of the school’s president election committee, the ministry said.

Kuan posted on Facebook on Saturday that the ministry had “trampled on university autonomy.”

“If I give up fighting, all the efforts that people have invested to protect university autonomy before me would be wasted, and more people would choose not to speak up out of fear,” he said.

His fight with the ministry had never been about being the school’s president, he said.

“We must win back university autonomy and National Taiwan University will be stronger because of that,” he said.

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In related news, questions were raised about an event on Saturday that saw a number of the university's students tie yellow ribbons on a campus bell tower to show their support for Kuan.

An Internet user on the Professional Technology Temple (PTT) — the nation's largest academic online bulletin board — yesterday said the ribbon-tying event had been organized by lawyer Chang Cheng-hao (張正豪), a New Party member.

The netizen shared a screen grab of Chang's Facebook post advertising the event.

The netizen said they began suspecting that political parties were involved after he saw Blue Sky Action Alliance convener Wu Chih-chang (吳智昌) at the event.

"Those who are not from the university should stop making waves on PTT. This forum is politically neutral," the netizen added.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2018/04/30](#)