

TKU PRESIDENT ALONG WITH OTHER 26 HEADS OF UNIVERSITIES SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT

Tamkang University (TKU) President Chang Horng-jinh and 26 heads or ex-heads of universities around Taiwan issued a joint statement on May 8, 2003, pointing out that facing SARS, we need a strong and powerful commanding center. They stressed that the government should unify together to provide complete information so as to jointly fight against this ever-found epidemic.

After the outbreak of SARS, more and more university campuses, faculties and students were affected. This indicates that the epidemic hasn't been controlled. However, the government agencies didn't show their unity to comfort civilians. Therefore, we (27 heads of universities) issued a joint statement with the aim of awakening the government to set a better management system to resolve SARS.

Chang said that though SARS is terrible, some government agencies are still wrangling among one another, trying to punish someone, which will cause low confidence of people towards the government. He believed that though the epidemic is severe, the policy chaos would cause more panic and make the society to pay more cost. For instance, Chang said that a SARS suspect was found on TKU campus several days ago, in addition to halting the class which the suspect attended, panic is inevitably threatening students of other departments and graduate institutes. Though the suspect has been proved not to be a SARS suspect but merely flu later, school authorities have already suffered a lot.

They submitted seven concrete suggestions. They are as follows: the

Central Government Anti-SARS Operation Center should be commanded by the premier or vice premier; the committee should be a cross- ministry organization with close contact among one another; the committee must be composed of the central and local government representatives; the committee members have to be 24-hour on duty to answer any questions about SARS; it is necessary to set up a computerized network to inform SARS situation to the Central Government and vice versa; SARS management information system has to be set up to inform the public after analyzing the epidemic situation.

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