

TKU' S PRESIDENT CHANG SUPPORTS A REVISED PENSION SCHEME FOR PRIVATE UNIVERSITY FACULTY AT THE NATIO

As the Chairman of the Private University Association, President Chang Horng-jinh appealed to the government on behalf of all private universities to revise its pension scheme on private educational institutions at the National University Presidents Conference held on 13 and 14 of this month (Feb.). The Ministry of Education (MOE), in response to his request of equal treatment, has promised to set up a project team to research on the possibility of meeting such a request.

President Chang presided over the opening ceremony of the conference and one of the small group discussion sessions. On both occasions, he pointed out that a retired professor from a national university collects double the pension than that of his or her counterpart from a private university. This fact has made private universities difficult in recruiting and retaining outstanding teachers, thus, unable to raise their academic as well research quality. He believes that an equal pension scheme will level the playing field between national and private universities so that they can compete fairly, which in turn, will benefit the overall competitiveness of all universities in Taiwan. His proposal won the endorsement of all universities present at the conference.

He pointed out that the current pension scheme for national universities consists of 35 percent of private contribution from the teachers, 32.5 percent comes from the university, whereas the rest of contribution (32.5 percent) comes from the government. It will take only an extra NT\$ 0.7 billion (\$700,000,000) from the government each year to make the pension scheme of private universities reach that same standard. President Chang emphasized that the students of all private universities account for 68 percent of the total university students in Taiwan, so the importance of

private institution cannot be underestimated. Thus, the government should not neglect the benefits given to them.

Furthermore, several presidents from both national and private universities also raised the issue of raising tuition. Universities were requested to stabilize tuition by MOE four years ago; however, as the salary of the staff and faculty has risen over the years, not raising the tuition has put many universities in an awkward position financially. They believe that if tuition stays at present level, the quality of teaching can no longer be guaranteed. Huang Jong-tsun, the Minister of MOE, on the other hand, who was present at the conference, was vague on this issue. This issue was not elevated at all by the decision passed by the Legislative Yuan some time ago to reduce funding to universities so President Chang calls for Legislative Yuan to re-evaluate its decision.

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