

Pro-M student group irked over caretaker exco
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By Abdul Rahim Sabri

The anti-establishment Pro-Mahasiswa (Pro-M) student group expressed disappointment with the Universiti Malaya Students Affairs Departments's selection and appointment of a caretaker student council without consulting the students.

NONE "Why are they so eager to appoint (the caretaker council) without taking heed of the students?" asked former student council secretary Hawari Zakaria (right) at a press conference today.

The decision to appoint the caretaker council was made by the university after it decided not to go ahead with campus polls, despite the student council's term having expired in February this year.

The university announced that it will only hold campus polls in September this year.

Hawari, who is a member of the Pro-M faction, also questioned the composition of the 11-member caretaker body which he said comprised of nine members from the pro-establishment Penggerak Mahasiswa faction and only two from Pro-M.

In the last campus elections, Pro-M won 24 out of the 41 seats contested, while Penggerak only won 17.

"If the appointment of the student council was made according to the wishes of the students, why does the selection of the caretaker council not reflect this?" asked Hawari.

He stressed that the voice and viewpoints of students must be given due regard in all matters pertaining to students' interests and administration.

"They cannot just be puppets and yes-men that bow down to the university administration," blasted Hawari.

Based on a letter appointing the members of the caretaker council, their mandate is to "handle the day-to-day duties pertaining to the administration of the UM Student Council and other related tasks assigned to them by the university".

The university announced the formation of the caretaker council yesterday.

Malaysia Bangkit chairperson Mohd Syahid Mohd Zaini Also present at the press conference was former UM Student Council president Mohd Syahid Mohd Zaini (left) and national Pro-M chairperson Mohd Taufik Abdul and former candidate Kevin Lee.

Mohd Syahid also criticised the unilateral move by the university administration.

"If it was discussed (with the students) it would have turned out better," he argued.

UM is not the only campus where the campus elections are currently being postponed. It is understood that other campuses nationwide may also face the same conundrum, with caretaker executive councils put in place in the interim.

Anti-establishment student groups have expressed worry that the move may be a precursor to prepare for

the general election by using the pro-establishment 'caretakers' to influence the university students towards pro-establishment tendencies.

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