

Deputy minister coy about heading caucus
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It is not every day that the opposition asks a member of the government to lead a joint caucus.

So when Deputy Higher Education Minister Saifuddin Abdullah was recently invited to head a bipartisan parliamentary caucus to look into student participation in politics, he was caught in a bind.

Saifuddin, also an Umno supreme council member, is still coy about accepting the invitation.

"It is not a question of whether there is a caucus or who leads the caucus. But the general consensus is that the conversation on whether (university) students should participate in politics should still continue," he said when contacted.

"All I want is for the conversation to carry on," he said, refusing to confirm if such talks are already taking place.

However, several sources have said both sides are already talking over the matter.

It was previously reported that PKR's Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar had called for him to lead the caucus, saying that Pakatan is willing to work with him if the common goal can be attained.

At the PAS pemuda talks in parliament on 010709, Nasrudin Hassan at the same time, PAS Youth chief Nasrudin Hassan Al-Tantawi (right) had extended an invitation to Saifuddin to "discuss" the necessity of student participation in politics.

The issue was prompted by the government's announcement that teachers will be allowed to be involved in politics.

Saifuddin had then suggested that the privilege be extended to tertiary students.

"The time is right for us to review our position, and to seriously think of the possibility of allowing university students to become members of political parties," he had said.

However, Higher Education Minister Mohamed Khaled Nordin then said the cabinet had shot down the proposal.

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