

Wen-Je Ko Discusses New Perspectives on Urban Governance

Campus focus

On May 11th, the Student Association of Department of Public Administration organized a lecture in room B712, featuring former Mayor of Taipei City, Dr. Wen-Je Ko, as the keynote speaker. The topic of the lecture was "Urban Governance: New Political Culture," where he shared his personal journey from being a surgeon to entering politics, as well as his future aspirations and plans. The event drew nearly 250 participants. Prior to becoming the Mayor of Taipei City, Dr. Ko 's sole profession was a surgeon specialized in acute and critical care at National Taiwan University Hospital. He mentioned, "My governing style is deeply influenced by the culture of surgery," emphasizing pragmatism, outcome-oriented decision-making, precision and speed, scientific statistics, treating people as if they were family, and having the endurance to overcome hardships."

He pointed out that when dealing with a patient's head trauma and the need for a craniotomy, how to inform the family of the harsh reality. He said, "If we don't perform the surgery, the patient will definitely die. But even if we do perform the surgery, they might end up in a vegetative state." He also mentioned the importance of assessing the family's financial capability. The cost of an ECMO surgery is NT\$110,000, and the equipment costs 100,000. Once it is installed, it requires at least NT\$30,000 per day. Many details need to be carefully considered at all times. For example, if the handwashing procedure after using the restroom is not done properly, the patient's mortality rate starts at 50%. And if there is a misinterpretation of the preoperative X-ray, the operating room does not give the doctor a second chance.

"What diseases should be treated? What diseases should not?" For many years as a surgeon, Dr. Ko has constantly faced the dilemma of making difficult decisions. His answer is that there is no right or wrong in medicine, and that "doctors are human, not gods." The most important thing is to have good intentions and do one's best. He also carries the surgical spirit of

"learning from failures, replicating and promoting successes, and making adjustments according to the environment" into the political arena. He encouraged everyone by saying, "Your worldview determines your actions." When it came to team building, Dr. Ko expressed that rather than considering himself as a political leader, he prefers to be a "cultural evangelist." He likened corporate culture to a worldview, stating that "corporate culture determines the actions of a company." Therefore, he established "integrity and honesty," "openness and sharing," "innovation and excellence," and "team collaboration" as the core values of his team. He emphasized that "team collaboration without integrity and honesty is called a complicit structure."

When discussing his personal political goals, Dr. Ko stated that he will continue to make efforts to establish a society that does the "right" things. He observed that "no one is doing the right things while the wrong things keep happening." In fact, there is no consensus on what is "right" or "wrong." He expects himself to embody the spirit of persistence, known as the "Ko P spirit," and to lead by setting an example, influencing his team to serve the people and foster innovation. His approach is to "refrain from doing the wrong things and wholeheartedly focus on doing the right things."

During the sharing session, Ti-Hsuan Chu, a freshman from the Public Administration Department talked about how the speech subverted her preconceptions about surgeons. She realized that doctors are just ordinary people who often struggle with the inevitability of death, and all they can do is "do their best to save lives." She was particularly impressed by the statement, "There is nothing more difficult and agonizing than informing family members of a patient's death." She also learned the importance of looking forward and not regretting, even in the face of no way out. She emphasized the courage to "Just do it!" Cha-Yu Yeh, a freshman from the Public Administration Department understood the significance of persistence. "Giving up on something only takes a few minutes, but persisting in doing the right thing is a long-term battle." She admired Dr. Ko's perseverance and principles in overcoming inertia and

difficulties.





