

With SNU

Seoul National University Magazine vol 01. 2006 09



A Study in the Unexpected

Seoul is Full of Contrasts



Seoul
Area 605.41km²
Population 10,287,847



- Duck behind Deoksugung Palace to stroll down the same cobblestones that turn-of-the-century Russian noblemen and braid-swinging high school girls once trod. Above, a hundred gingko trees unfurl, where in winter, vendors sell roasted chestnuts. Walk a few minutes more, and suddenly you are in the midst of noisy throngs of 2002 World Cup fans, Togolese, French, Korean.
- In the art and antiques neighborhood of Insadong, traditional taffy vendors clack their scissors to entice passersby to taste a sweet piece of nostalgia. You escape from a summer thunderstorm by ducking inside a shop to sip pale green tea and browse handmade accessories with sassy sayings, suitable for tongue-in-cheek teenagers.
- Head out for a midnight shopping spree in the Dongdaemun district. Designer eyeglasses, the latest fashions, or just the biggest pile of striped socks you've ever seen - this sleepless shopping mecca is well-suited for nocturnal students who can stumble out of the stores and then whisk down the stairs to a moon-lit Cheonggacheon Stream. Walk underneath centuries-old bridges, alongside a quick-flowing brook where palace residents used to frolic.
- The iconic image of Seoul may be the curled eaves of 700-year-old Namdaemun Gate, surrounded in a swirl of Seoul traffic. Or maybe since the 2002 World Cup shared with Japan, Gwanghwamun Plaza swollen with ecstatic soccer fans dressed every centimeter in red. Or the newly restored Cheonggacheon, an urban oasis of ducks and native reeds tucked in between skyscrapers. Or a young woman in stiletto sandals and designer jeans, walking hand in hand with her grandmother in the jewel tones of traditional hanbok dress. Seoul is a study in unexpected contrasts. Five thousand years of Korean history cresting in a combination of nature and the urban, the ancient and the impossibly trendy.



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Message from the President

Greetings. I am pleased to announce the launch of *With SNU* intended to introduce the soul of Seoul National University to the world.

Since our foundation in 1946, SNU has been the leading institution of higher education in Korea, recognized for its excellence and commitment in teaching and research. Many of our colleges and laboratories have earned global recognition. Now we are striving to become even better--to join the ranks of the world's top universities in producing global leaders who can work toward the benefit of humanity.

On the eve of our 60th anniversary, SNU is poised to embrace diversity and globalization more than ever. SNU offers a number of joint degree programs in conjunction with prestigious universities around the globe. In addition, International Summer School, to be held in 2007, will be of unprecedented depth and scale. Currently there are more than 1,500 students and visiting scholars from over 100 countries on our campus exchanging diverse ideas that are both academic and cultural.

SNU also makes a wealth of invaluable resources available to the global community. Its Gyujanggak Archives, housing a collection of Korean national treasures, serves as a library and research center for Korean studies. The university is home to two nationally acclaimed museums as well, the Museum of Art and the SNU Museum, both of which add to the cultural vibrancy of our campus.

I hope that you will find *With SNU* enjoyable as well as informative. It is also my fervent wish that one day you will have the opportunity to visit SNU to experience the unique academic and cultural life that our wonderful campus has to offer. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jang-Moo Lee
President



From the Start of a New Nation



The university's first administration building back in 1946 on the original Dongsung campus

Koreans have always maintained their faith in the power of education, even through colonial occupation and war during the tumultuous first half of the 20th century. Thus in 1946, just months after Korea regained its independence, Seoul National University was established as the first piece of the educational foundation for the new nation.

Seoul National University began with nine colleges, just one graduate school, and an enviably high faculty-student ratio (491 professors to 4,500 students). After a few short years, the campus had to be abandoned at the start of the Korean War in 1950, as civilians fled south to escape the frontlines. But the passion of the professors and students sustained the school through the war, with classes held outside refugee camps.

Thanks to this "education fever," Seoul National University has grown remarkably in the past six decades. Now comprising 16 colleges and associated graduate schools, 6 professional graduate schools, and 65 research institutes, the SNU community has expanded to nearly 37,000 students and 1,928 faculty members. And the founders' vision of the role of an educated public has come to fruition: from CEOs to musicians, to politicians and professors, thousands of SNU alumni are at the forefront of every sector in Korean society.

To Leadership Without Borders



Since our foundation, SNU has been the academic pinnacle in Korea. But resting on our laurels is not our style, and the globalized flow of people and ideas has opened up new possibilities. As our faculty members and students hop on planes and go abroad on exchange programs, hundreds of scholars and professors from a United Nations roster of countries are arriving at our iconic main gate. Currently, nearly one fifth of our professors are abroad in thirteen countries on teaching or research fellowships, imbibing new ideas and ensuring the continued growth of scholarship on their return.

"What is the purpose of a borderless education?" Aristotle wrote of two types of intellectual virtues, wisdom and its application in the real world. A school committed to the ideal of phronesis educates students to think about why we learn and how to act. Sometimes in the haste to acquire as much knowledge as possible, we neglect to consider how we can use our knowledge to serve and to lead in the global community. Theory comes alive in practice, a healthy campus culture fires up youths' passion for change. No training institute for isolated intellectuals or stubborn scholars, SNU cultivates a new generation who will serve not only Korea but the world. World class. Worldwide. We believe in the power of an SNU education.



Seong-Heui Kim | Professor of Oriental Painting

As the last remnants of Hurricane Ewinia, rain has been falling all day. I glance over at the window through the pale fluorescent light of my office.

Fog rises from between the dips and valleys of the Gwanak mountain range, continuing to thicken until the mountain peaks disappear.

Scenes like this are everyday occurrences on Gwanak Mountain, not just the fog but the leaves that change color first than lower down on the mountain, or the weather (which had been fine at the back gate to the campus) that suddenly produces scattered snowflakes.

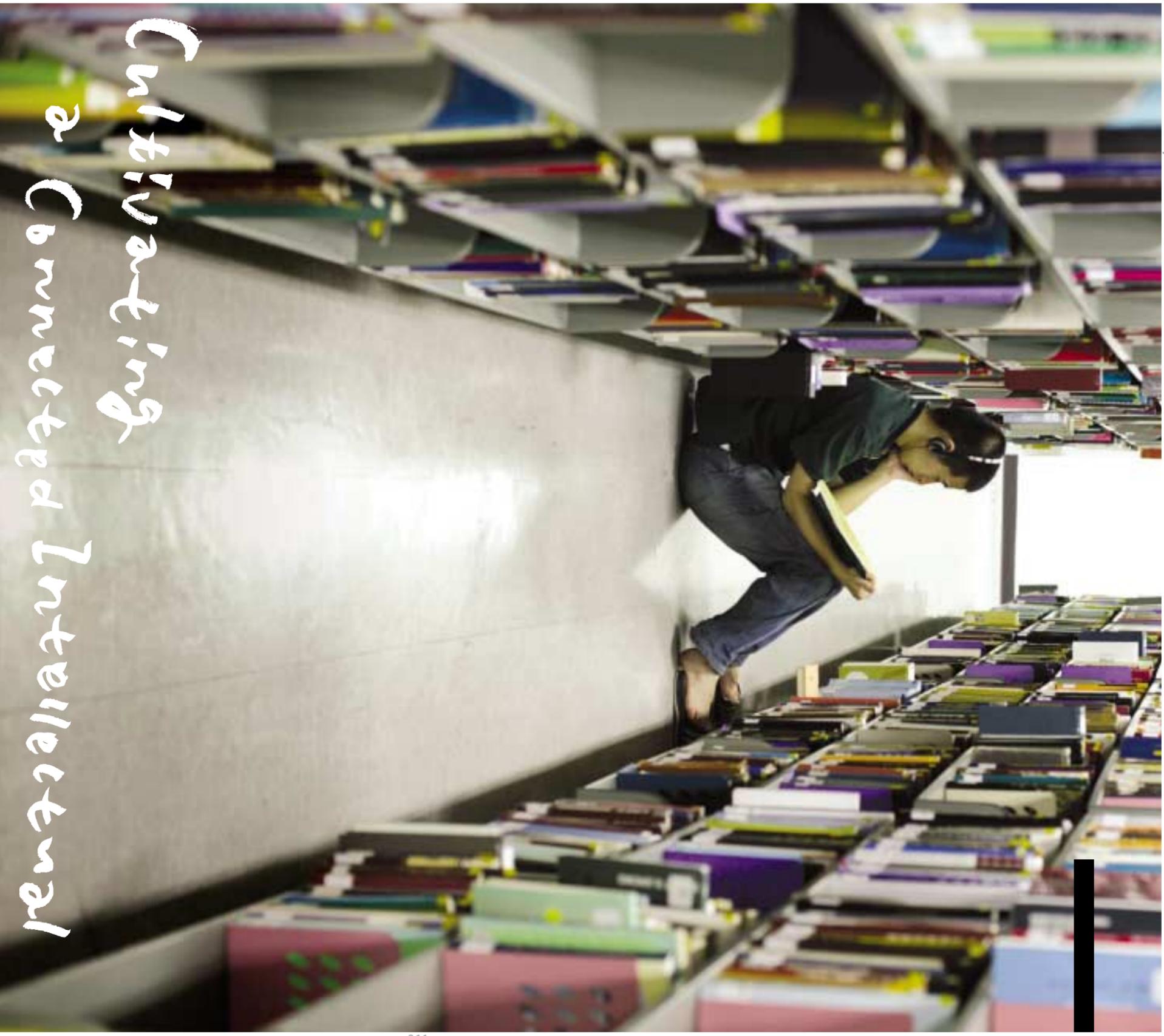
Or because the campus tends to be a few degrees lower in temperature than the city, people find themselves wearing winter coats well into the middle of spring and cherry blossoms come into full bloom late in the season; it is possible to see them here longer than anywhere else in Seoul.

Mountain, number 56-1, the Seoul National University campus is located within Gwanak Mountain and is Gwanak Mountain. We study within an atmosphere of heavenly nature, but all too often we forget this fact: We spend our days bustling about in buildings and under artificial lighting. There is no room in our hearts for nature. However, when we look up, we realize that we're simply in the arms of Mother Nature.

It's been about three decades since SNU relocated to the Gwanak campus. Since the move, an unfathomably large number of buildings have been built, and the construction work is constant and neverending. However, we aren't suffocated by all these artificial elements because we are located within Gwanak Mountain. The construction cranes and the concrete are not overwhelming because we see with our eyes the grandeur of Gwanak Mountain, hear with our ears the sounds of nature, and breathe into our lungs the crisp, fresh air. Even if, sometimes, these everyday affairs escape our notice.

After letting my mind wander for a while, I glance back at the window. I discover that unawares, the fog has slowly cleared and a beautiful landscape revealing the elegant mountain peaks has been hung on my window.





Joon Koo Lee | Professor of Economics

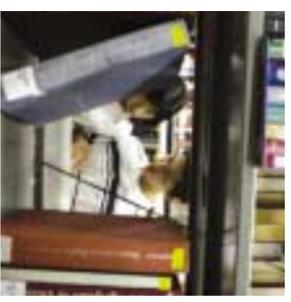
A classroom in which active debates are taking place, an office with its light on well into the late hours of the night, a conference room in which scholars from all around the world are gathered together - we can see the bright light of intellect burning everywhere on our campus. This light draws young people from all over the world. Who would dare to disagree, when this place is called the "temple of intellect?"

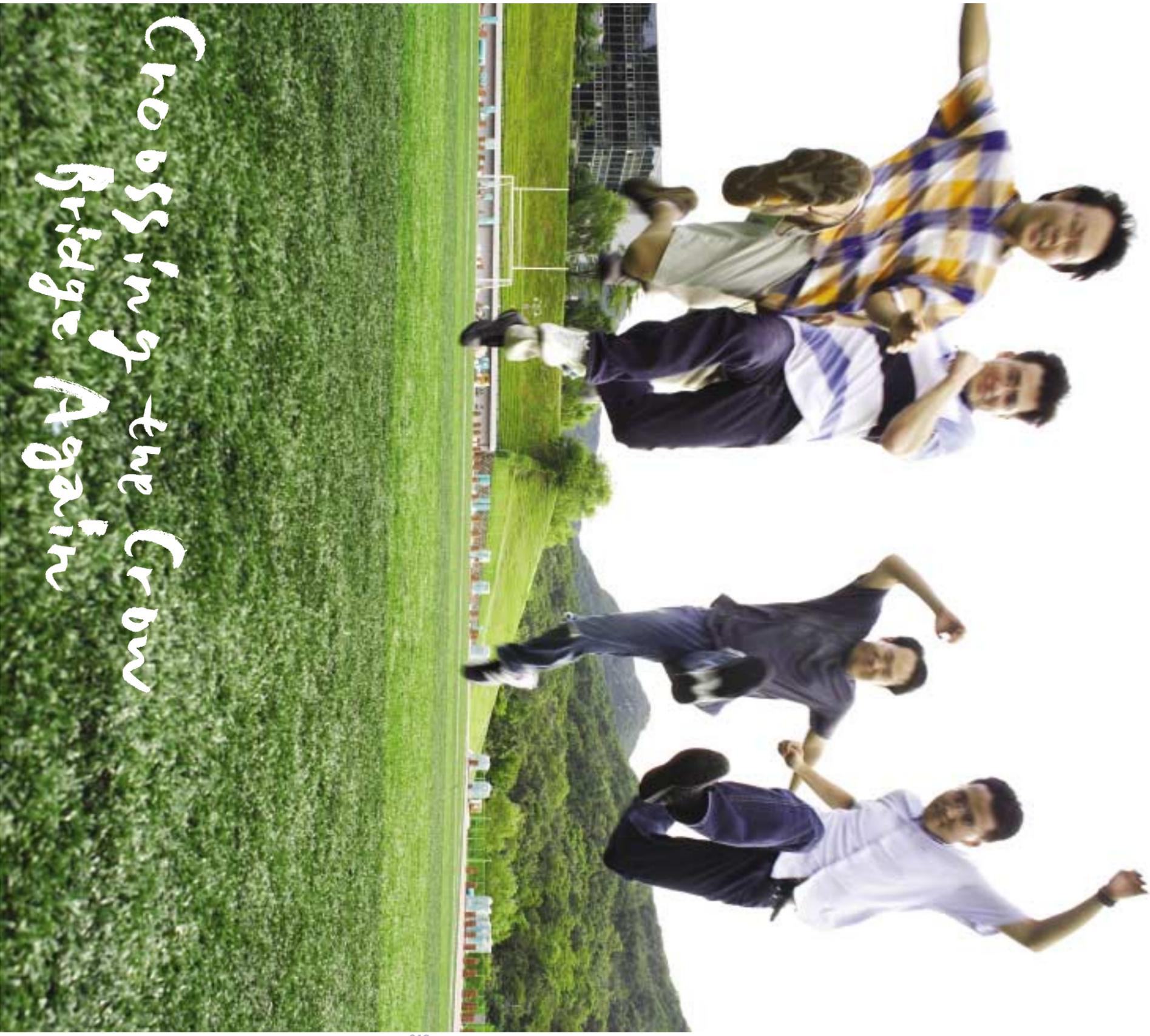
No matter how well a tree has grown, it cannot be good timber unless it is trimmed well. Likewise, no matter how brilliant we may be when we are born, we cannot become good intellectuals unless we make the effort to be cultivated and educated. We, members of SNU, embrace this process.

There is no such thing as a "finished" intelligence. Everyone must keep developing their intelligence through continuous effort. In this respect, even professors are not free from this responsibility. Mutual cooperation is imperative in the process of intellectual development. Knowledge can be a joy in itself. The process of pursuing the truth can, in itself, give meaning to life. However, this meaning becomes greater when we act from our knowledge. Only when we act upon our intellect, can we be said to be true intellectuals. At SNU, we have always emphasized this "intellect in action."

One cannot become a true intellectual with just a cool head alone, a warm heart is also essential. Those who do not care what happens to the people around them do not have the right to be called true intellectuals. At SNU, we strive to be true intellectuals who combine knowledge with goodness.

The continuing history of our university is the history of intellect. Over the years, many intellectuals and thinkers who have led our society have passed through the gates of SNU. And right at this very moment on campus, brilliant students who aspire to be the leaders of the next generation are cultivating and honing their intellectual potential. This tradition of shining intellect will continue on and the torch of intellect that we have set aflame will burn brighter than ever as the years go on.





Hyonjin Kim | Professor of English Literature

Jaha-yeon has never been so beautiful. Memories are dripping copiously from the lush canopy of maples and oaks, tingeing in olive green the pond below, which the rain has just ceased to assail. I walk down the steps and stop at the end of the wooden deck. Down here, the scent of summer is fuller and thicker, and the world around looks soothingly unfamiliar. The sky, framed by leafy branches, hangs low and immediate, over which the voices of some students come closer and then fade away. The season is still young in this July afternoon, but it is the memory of an old summer that dazzles me now.

When I close my eyes, the Crow Bridge (Ojak-kyo) appears right in front of me--the unsightly concrete arch was called as such when it was still there. With it, a small pine hill rises over a tall zelkova tree to my right, where the cafeteria building now stands. We used to call it the Literature Zone--again when it was still there. I stroll down the Zone and cross the Crow Bridge once again. As I plant my foot on it, the landscape dissolves instantly into the ever-receding waves of years on both sides. Where the bridge ends, I turn left and walk a dozen steps or so along the wall of a classroom. Then I turn again, this time to the right, to enter the passageway going through Building One, which marks the southern frontier of the College of Humanities. Beyond the passageway, there unfolds a world deceptively close yet sadly inaccessible, where I always wish to return in vain.

I see the profile of the bleak library building--even bleaker than now--looming over the glistening Acropolis Plaza crowded with students. I hear my friends laughing and sighing. I hear them shouting too, while I glean one by one redeemable fragments of my youth and dreams. Up in the air the lyrics of an old fighting song stream like a banner: "Free of love and glory, free of names, we'll march together until the day we die. So was our passionate vow." Since then, we all have changed, leaving our green smiles captured behind in some dusty photos, "forever panting, and forever young." Among those smiles there is one that I can never see again. Jaha-yeon was beautiful then, but it is all the more poignantly beautiful now, for it is here too that I saw that smile for the last time.

Jaha-yeon should be even more beautiful, though. To avoid the fate of a pond on the other side of campus, which has been long since filled up and forgotten, the landmark we love, as well as our passion and dreams, should be beautiful forever. The bridge is not important, after all, since the meaning of crossing it has always been symbolical. What is important is the pond itself--not only the pond as we see and feel it here, but the pond, or rather fountain, of passion in our mind where raw youth is melted and then erupts into the skies. I wish it remained the same; I wish it were hot, fluid, and fresh for all of us "until the day we die."





Building a Better Scientist at the College of Natural Sciences



Transforming People

Natural science majors at Seoul National University take a certain pride in their developing nerdiness. A short nap across a classroom desk will prompt a student to ponder the science behind the fluorescent lights glaring down on his face. The student body president jokes that once she has a child, a little-kid question like, "Why is the ocean blue?" will trigger a 16-part explanation.

Students relish how the rigors of training and logic free them from some of the Confucian hierarchies embedded in Korean society. Distinctions between senior and junior do not hinder anyone, and though respect for elders is a given, rational argument takes precedence over automatic deference, even when someone is years ahead of you in school.

As every week brings another test and lab experiment, students are constantly studying. Despite the workload, however, natural science majors are quite human. The college's soccer team is a perennial powerhouse, while others eye the basketball courts being paved next to the red brick research lab going up across the street. Even professors join in the semiannual Sports Day, and then take the undergrads out afterwards for barbecue and karaoke.

Crossing Boundaries

Nonetheless, Korean work habits are notorious. Austrian Ph.D. student Hannelore Waska laughs as she remembers the looks of dismay on her fellow students when their advisor told them to go home even if he was still puttering about in the lab. Leave early? Still, even hardcore students squeeze in an hour of online gaming during a late night work session.

Waska discovered SNU last year, through a U.S. website announcement for a graduate fellowship that combined her previous training in chemical oceanography with biogeochemistry, an unusual interdisciplinary opportunity. After a semester of regular presentations of research findings and department-wide field trips to the seashore to collect samples, Waska feels welcome in the SNU community.

Transforming the School

An independent international committee recently ranked the College of Natural Sciences in the top twenty-five worldwide. The top-notch professors and students impressed the evaluators. But the committee pointed out that the infrastructure did not yet match the energy and the ambition of the people - such as freshly hired Professor Jwa-Min Nam, already recognized for his work in nanotech medical biosensors by the 2006 Victor LaMer Award of the American Chemical Society.

The college has already begun stepping up, from the new research center to new methods of evaluating professors. Dean Se-jung Oh emphasizes, "The goal is to cultivate the top scientists in their fields." Though endowment fundraising is in its infancy, Dean Oh is confident that the college can bring in 10 million dollars in seed money to fund state-of-the-art lab facilities, and support the research of new professors.

Investing in People

Information technology has driven the global technology boom, and the legions of wireless gadget fiends running around Korea are inescapable proof. But the College is also preparing for the next wave of technology by investing in people capable of meeting such challenges. Fourth year student Jungrim Woo says that out of her classmates, nearly all hope to become research scientists after further training. "Because it's fun," she smiles.

In the hopes of transforming vague interest in the sciences into career choices, SNU joined forces with other top universities to launch a hands-on program that provides teenagers with a deeper encounter with the sciences. The college also holds a winter camp for elementary school kids - some families drive four hours round trip for a three-hour lecture! With this focus on the long term, the College of Natural Sciences strives to keep its beloved halls filled with the passionate nerdiness of students and professors alike.



(clockwise from top left)
Jong-ho Kim, SNU
Yohei Tsutsumi, Hitotsubashi Univ.
Min-young Kim, SNU
Maribel Saucedo, ITESM Univ.



First Time
in Korea?
Never Fear,
the OIA is
Here!

For the rapidly growing number of international scholars and students at SNU, the Office of International Affairs (OIA) can coordinate every step of their Seoul sojourn. From academic exchange agreements to social events, the OIA is creating linkages between the local and the global academic community.

Living abroad is an adventure. You ask for directions to the subway, only to find the stranger on the street has decided hailing you a cab, bundling you into the back, and then paying the driver is the best way for you to get to the station. You're standing in line at the bank, only to discover you can't read the application form. You don't know how to order in delivery for dinner, or which bus terminal gets you to the ski slopes, or where to find cilantro in Korea. Luckily for Maribel Saucedo, an exchange student from Mexico, OIA arranged a student buddy to help her navigate those questions.

"I'm so fortunate to have met Min-young," says Maribel. Not limited to language or shopping lessons, Maribel and her buddy Min-young Kim have also taken weekend trips out of town together, cementing a cross Pacific friendship.

The OIA's mission to assist the university's international programs comes to life in cross-cultural events between Korean and international counterparts. The OIA may be best known on campus for its extremely popular wine and cheese party that kicks off each semester. The informal venue creates an opportunity for international and Korean students and faculty to mingle and make new acquaintances, as well as enjoy the free-flowing wine. Last year, the office also launched the Buddy Program and the Culture /History Excursion for international students to more deeply engage with Korean culture and society. In many universities, buddy programs pair newbies with upperclassmen who can provide advice and help freshmen adjust to campus life. The OIA's ingenious approach establishes a two-way connection, where the Korean students have just as much to learn from their recently arrived buddies.

SNU upperclassman Jong-ho Kim, who volunteered to be a buddy this year, emphasizes that the experience was not just him helping his partner, Yohei Tsutsumi, but a mutual exchange in which he gained as much if not more. "My Japanese improved with Yohei's help, and I also made international friends at other OIA gatherings. I'm proud to say that I became a true global citizen."

The fully outfitted OIA center, completed this July





First developed in 1969, the Korean Language & Culture Program has been providing students from places as far-flung as Finland and Malaysia with a comprehensive Korean language education. Skilled linguists lead instruction and use an array of instructional methods tailored to individual students' strengths and weaknesses, including writing labs for students preparing for Korean universities and one-on-one private tutoring to perfect pronunciation.

In addition to the 20-hour-a-week intensive courses and the evening "survival" Korean classes, the program offers students a selection of cultural programs to complement their language training. If fencing and judo builds friendships between the international language students and their regular SNU teammates, other classes in traditional dance and Hanja (Chinese characters) can also open up cultural understanding. We visited two of the most popular of these classes, taekwondo and Korean traditional calligraphy.

Elizabeth EunHee Jung (U.S.A., calligraphy): "I had been curious about Korean calligraphy, so this has been a really good opportunity to pick up the brush and learn. Overall, it's been fantastic to finally get a formal Korean language education."

Florendo Joseph Peter (Philippines, Taekwondo): "Since I used to do martial arts back in the Philippines, Taekwondo was a natural decision. My time here has gone by so quickly - these programs definitely helped me become completely immersed in the language and culture."

Culture Can be the Key to a Language

Take up Taekwondo or Take up the Calligraphy Brush?

Foreign language mastery is the goal at SNU's Language Education Institute, but what 'foreign' is, depends on the student. Koreans practice Cyrillic or Chinese, while an Indonesian studies for a teaching certificate in Korean as a Foreign Language. Most international students, however, are still in the process of learning Korean.

No Education Will Be Lost in Translation Here

While Chinese might soon give English a run for its money as the global economic language, English remains the international language of learning. At SNU, professors, Korean and international alike, teach in the academic lingua franca. For Korean students, moving from the required textbook fluency to passionate in-class discussions prepares them for careers on a multinational stage. For international students, classes conducted in English result in lively debates and access to the minds of their classmates.

Professors Without Borders

Professor Daniel Milton Norris' "Principles of Accounting" class begins with a routine "Hello, good afternoon." As the class continues, Dr. Norris writes his examples on the whiteboard using dollar signs, lightheartedly telling students to convert his figures to whatever currency they prefer.

Though all of his students at the School of Business Administration are native Koreans, the cultural gap is nowhere near the size of the Pacific and often as tiny as a few strokes of pen separating \$ from ₩. His sense of humor puts the students at ease, even when a photographer is stalking around the room. "He tells me to be natural, but it's hard not to be awkward with a lens in your face!" The syllabus states full participation is expected and discourages in-class distraction - the ubiquitous multimedia mobile phones is the primary culprit - but class flows smoothly without the need for enforcement. His students listen eagerly and raise their hands to interrupt with questions.

Though students often bemoan their imperfect English, most students have exceptionally high competency. Thick textbooks published in English are the norm, even in a subject like accounting where the jargon can be nearly impenetrable to a native speaker.

When asked about how difficult Professor Norris' classes are

compared to those taught in Korean, Sooduck Chung comments: "It's different but that's what makes it interesting. Being able to attend lectures by professors from abroad gives us broader perspectives." Most SNU departments host foreign lecturers and the popular courses fill to capacity within minutes of the start of the class registration period.

Multinational Students

"International Negotiation Simulation Game" is one of these hot ticket classes. Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) Professor Dukgeun Ahn's reputation as a thoughtful teacher and the chance to combine the concepts of international commerce with hands-on simulations of the negotiations have students scrambling for chairs in the packed classroom. Professor Ahn is glad of the interest and says, "International trade and a global perspective has really become a requirement for business in general."

The semester begins with real simulation games that demonstrate the usefulness of cooperation in negotiations. Students stubbornly holding firm to one position were stymied, while more flexible students found win-win solutions. Later, the class delves into case studies, from gambling between Antigua & Barbados and the United States to a frozen chicken dispute between the European Union and Brazil. Using actual WTO appeals, students apply the negotiations theories learned in lecture to real-life cases. Today's presenting team includes one European student and three Koreans. The diverse backgrounds create a panoply of perspectives: students argue about China and the WTO, the economic speed bumps in the formation of the European Union, or the South Korea-Chile FTA from insider and outsider positions. As Korean student Mingyung Yoon emphasizes, "Each presentation demands weeks of non-stop research and all-nighters, but there's a valuable understanding that comes through deep familiarity."

Professor Norris' "Principles of Accounting" class



Students from the "International Negotiation Simulation Game" class



"It's unusual to live in one of the biggest cities in the world and be almost in wilderness," notes Seoul National University Professor Bob McKay. The wide windows of his office nearly touch the leafy base of Mt. Gwanak while another corner is overgrown with computing clusters climbing up the wall like electronic ivy. On his door are photos of the campus in full bloom, the forsythia and azalea fireworks and then the cherry blossom finale. He smiles. "It's a magical time on campus."

For an Australian computer scientist who built his own home in the countryside, the unexpected conjunction of nature and a chance to establish his own research laboratory proved irresistible. Professor McKay prefers collaborative work, so along with a few SNU grad students, he has set up the Structural Complexity Lab within the Computer Science department, with offsite members in China, Japan, Vietnam, and Australia. For the professor, "the most interesting research is in the meeting of different disciplines." He has access to the dedicated minds at SNU - joint seminars with other labs, staff meetings that lead to cross-pollination of ideas and a Pacific Rim network.

His first visit to SNU was as a guest lecturer, by invitation from the head of the Biointelligence lab, Professor Byoung-Tak Zhang. "In many ways," he acknowledges, "what I'm doing now in the lab is a continuation of his work from the 1980s, while he has moved onto bio computation." When the opportunity to teach came, Professor McKay was glad to return to SNU. "I didn't know anything really about Korean culture, and assumed that it would be halfway between Chinese and Japanese culture, but of course, I now realize that that's not the case," he admits with a chuckle. The professor discovered early on that other professors and students were also at their research until close to dawn. "The level of enthusiasm and commitment is really incredible," he marvels.

The highly driven students accustomed to 100's find his grading tough, but he wants to leave room for his students to outshine him. "90% is the level I expect from myself," he says. "That way the very best students can differentiate themselves." Next semester, Professor McKay will teach a research-oriented seminar, much more advanced and open-ended than any class he's taught before.

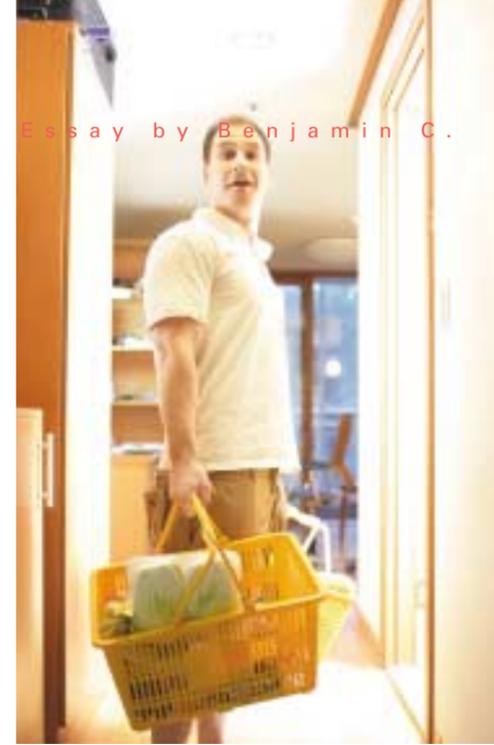
Except for an unfulfilled craving for Vegemite spread, he's readily adapted to the red pepper idiosyncrasies of Korean cuisine. One stroll through campus, he stumbled upon an outdoor café nestled underneath spreading pine trees and pointed at some dishes to try off the short menu. Another SNU professor sitting nearby introduced himself, worried that Professor McKay had unwittingly ordered blood sausage. But Professor McKay insists he enjoyed the meal thoroughly. "If you don't know what you're ordering, you get to try even more! Besides, I'm of Scottish background!"

42 Open Mini PC Tangos

From the Wilds of Australia to a Korean Metropolis: A Computer Scientist, Professor Bob McKay Creates an Asia-Pacific Network.



Essay by Benjamin C.



Home Away from Home

Korea is known as the land of the Morning Calm. Indeed, it is a place to wake up to. From dusk till dawn, my day starts with a trip to our department's laboratories and offices. And it usually ends back in my room after a session at the gym.

My apartment sits at the side of this university's mountain and towers above most of the surroundings from the eighth floor. Seoul, like most other first world cities, is filled with lots of people and with that, is normally noisy. My apartment, which was arranged by the university when I got here, is one like many reserved for post graduate and doctorate students. Of those, most are further reserved for international students and researchers so finding a place to stay if you've come from abroad is not difficult at SNU. The apartment itself escapes most of the heated action of the busy day in downtown Seoul. Instead, it is hugged by mountain-side trees and is often refreshed by the breeze that blows down it. The mornings are therefore, quite good.

The main campus boasts fine scenery too along with the grand looking buildings, especially by my labs. The route to my labs has a field next to it which was once a golf course. It is now a school park that opens its lawns to the public. Coupled with the rolling hills, the newly built stone benches that sit alongside ponds, which used to be barren sand bunkers, contrast well with the towering building. The school is a good mix of ample nature and modern infrastructure.

When my day ends, it ends at the gym. The gym is located just a few hundred metres uphill from my apartment. It's a new building so everything looks spick and span. On weekends or holidays I sometimes play soccer with my friends at a high school field we borrow for a day. Most government properties, like school fields, are made public to those who wish to use them, so arranging activities like sports days isn't very difficult.

When dawn gradually closes the curtains of the day, so do I. I sit on my bed and switch on the television to watch the films that show. When my eyes get tired, I sleep, and so ends the day of one Benjamin Schafer, to start the next day in the land of the Morning Calm.

Benjamin Carrion Schafer was born in 1975 in Spain. He has a doctorate in Electrical Engineering and is currently in Korea as a Post Doctorate researcher at Seoul National University's Department of Electrical Engineering. He explains the small things that make up a day in his new life in a foreign country and school.

The Best of Both Worlds

If the university is any guide, the increasing number and popularity of joint and interdisciplinary courses are a harbinger of our borderless world.

When the Ivory Tower Meets the Board Room You walk into what looks like an internet café or computer game room. There are no rows of students facing the professor here, everyone is sitting side by side at their own computer-equipped desk.

This course “Creative Research Training” is designed to boost students’ creativity and ability to conceive and complete digital media projects. As the class is hands-on, a team from the immensely popular Korean blogging site Cyworld joins in as a resource. “Today let’s figure out how to incorporate new trends,” announces one staffer, “What problems might arise?” After a thorough investigation and user testing, each team of four presents an interactive simulation of their solution.

While the Department of Communications spearheads this interdisciplinary series, nine other colleges from Business



• Professor Joong Seek Lee’s “Creative Research Training” class

• Professor Sungook Hong’s “Philosophy of Science” class

Administration to Fine Arts are also on board. Cyworld employee and SNU grad Um Gi Hoon is thrilled, “This is truly

effective learning.”

When the Walls Between Departments are Torn Down

In the next classroom, a student is wrapping up her presentation on the link between Protestant pietism and science, “Thus Merton argues that Puritan values helped develop early experimental science.” Says Professor Sungook Hong, “We felt the gap between the humanities and science had grown too wide. In that sense, classes on the history and philosophy of science are a key bridge across the divide.”

Many of the 14 graduate students in the seminar are science or engineering majors who spend most of their time holed up in laboratories and hunched over machines. They admit that they may not be as familiar with concepts like “society” and “religion,” but feel strongly that the course provides a much needed context for their lab experiments. Interdisciplinary programs have been trendy for some time now, but in this classroom, the earnest debates are proof of their value.

Two Professors in Just One Seminar?

The conventional Korean university classroom set up - one professor lecturing many students - underwent a radical makeover this spring. With the help of funding from the Ministry of Education, the College of Humanities embarked on an “Educational Reformation” to connect students more deeply as partners and participants in small classes. After surviving the grueling high stakes testing of high school and the college admissions process, students are ravenous for discussion-centered learning and the Humanities professors are happy to oblige.

East Meets West: Gods and Goddesses Come Together for a Reunion In a cozy seminar room, ten students are listening eagerly to not one, but two professors. In their joint class, “The Dialogue of Mythologies of the East and the West,” Professors Hyunsoul Cho and Chulhyun Bae engage in a lively dialogue on Eastern and Western mythologies, their respective specialties. Students, immersed in the discussion on the convergences in

origin myths, toss out questions and comments across the worn table. “We’ve had a fruitful semester,” says Professor Bae enthusiastically. “By looking at one topic from two diverse perspectives, we

• Professor Chulhyun Bae and Hyunsoul Cho lead their seminar

• Students from the “Reading the Judeo-Christian Bible in Hebrew” class



can come to a significant recognition of the differences as well as similarities between East and West.”

Has Anyone Seen My Hebrew Version of the Bible?

In addition to helping develop the ambitious small seminar program, Professor Bae also teaches another course, “Reading the Judeo-Christian Bible in Hebrew.” The small size of the class vastly improves the teacher-student interaction, essential for any ambitious syllabus. Sungkook Park, a religious studies major says, “It makes me proud that I read the Bible in its original language. I don’t think that I could’ve had the chance to do so elsewhere. I also learned so much from our discussions with the professor, insights I couldn’t have gained from just a lecture.” The program continues next academic year, and the planning committee will improve the course curricula by incorporating student feedback. From the looks of it though, the main demand is for more seminars!



Large Expectations at the Nano Systems Institute

● Nano Technology is one of the hottest fields in the applied sciences
Potentially life-changing technology in stunningly small packages



Director Young June Park of the Nano Systems Institute

Starting up in a New Field of Very Small Technologies

The buildings that house SNU's NANO Systems Institute (NSI) sit high atop the side of Mt. Gwanak, gazing down upon the rest of the campus. With vast steel exoskeletons and gleaming glass panes, the very macro-sized buildings may be monumental but they are home to a research team that works on some of the smallest technologies possible.

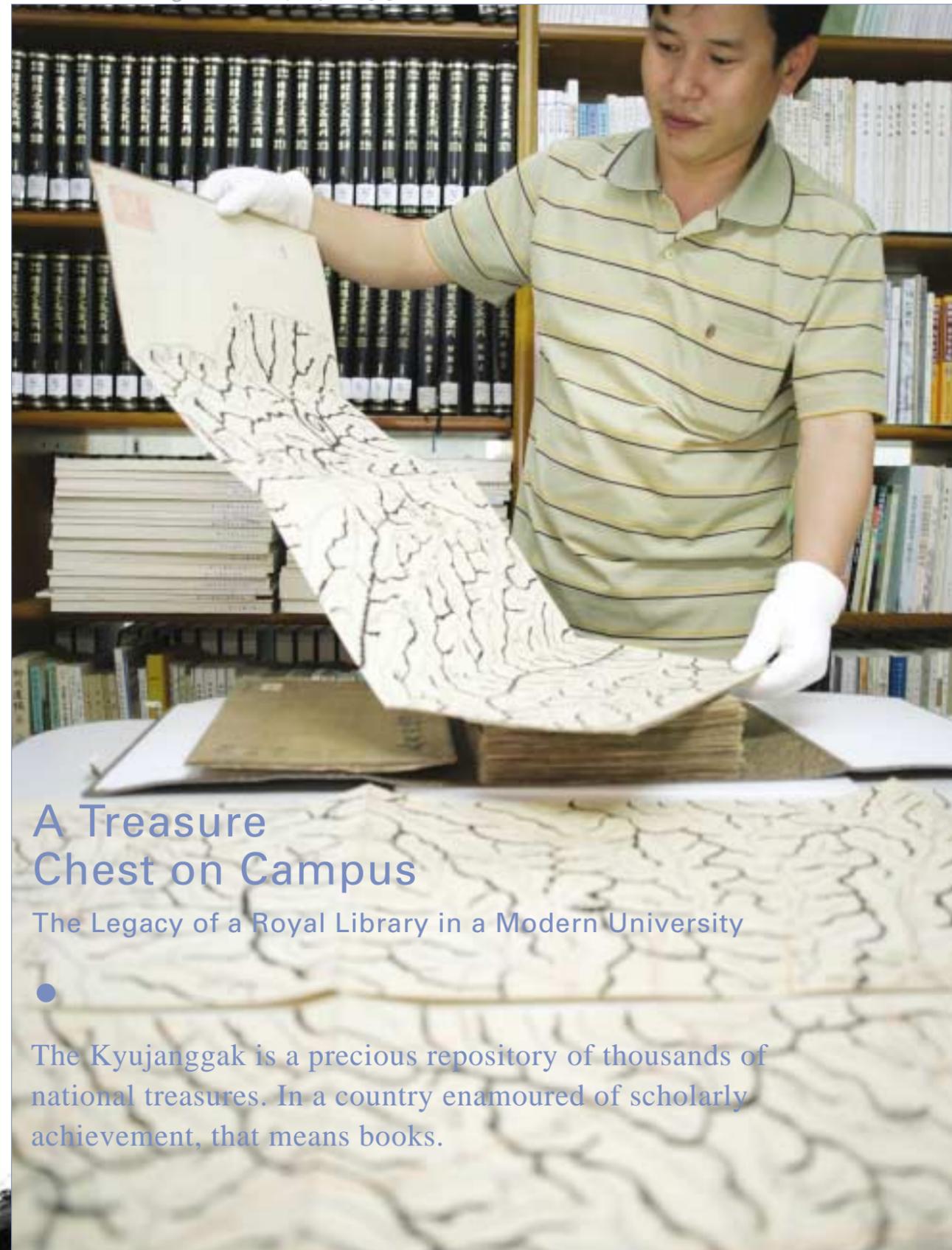
The NSI is a well-supported initiative that has garnered attention from the Korean government's Ministry of Science and Technology and the non-profit Korea Science and Engineering Foundation. As the Institute's director, Professor Young Jun Park states, "this is a very objective oriented interdisciplinary research center." Nanophysics, nanochemistry, nanomaterials, and nanobiology are all topics under research, but the end goal is to "generate deliverable technology". Projects currently pursued at the Institute include high-speed screening and the integration of semiconductors with nanotech. To a layman, nanotech may seem like the plot devices of science fiction films, but the fantasy of futuristic miniature robots comes to life in the shape of DNA-attached nanoparticles that treat damaged cells. Park becomes animated as he explains the basic principle of nanotech. "The smallest a material can go without losing its essential properties is in the nano range. So once we understand the properties - physical, chemical, biological, we can actually control it."

As the size of a semiconductor crystal shrinks, the larger the imagery emitted becomes. These are called quantum dots and can be used in a myriad of ways, in solar cells or even game consoles. NSI was the first institute in Korea to mass produce quantum dots in a cost efficient manner, and distributed them free of charge to research labs across the nation. The goal is to accelerate research, and sharing the fruits of their labor is one way the Institute has demonstrated its commitment.

Over 20 university professors and 100 graduate students come together in collaboration at the Institute. "There are not many research centers in Korea that have this kind of collection of people," says Park. His team has Chemistry, Physics and Electrical Engineering professors, and while cooperation across such diverse backgrounds can be challenging, ultimately the variety of the input is a key asset.

In addition, as the numerical majority at the Institute, students take on the huge responsibility of running the machines, in essence, conducting the experiments under guidance of their professors. Unlike some graduate programs, the students claim much of the credit when the papers are published.

Established only two years ago, the hunger to discover new and practical technologies is unmistakable at the Institute. If majesty of nanotech lies in the miniature, the members of the Institute know that expectations are large and are determined to match those ambitions.



A Treasure Chest on Campus

The Legacy of a Royal Library in a Modern University

The Kyujanggak is a precious repository of thousands of national treasures. In a country enamoured of scholarly achievement, that means books.

A royal library was first established as early as the mid-fifteenth century, but the 25-year-old King Jeongjo would radically transform the quiet archives in 1776 at the start of his reign. What had been just a convenient compendia of Joseon Dynasty monarchs became an powerhouse institution of “cultural governance” to foster scholarship for the ages, and a priceless resource. Literally “the building of the kings’ writings,” the Kyujanggak is now housed in a traditional tile-roofed structure on the SNU campus, holding within its walls a far-ranging and unparalleled collection of Korean and East Asian history and literature.

Preserving Korean Heritage in the 21st century
The Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies has continued to evolve from its beginnings as the royal library, while maintaining the ambitious spirit of its eighteenth century founder. This spring, the Kyujanggak hosted a week-long international symposium that underscored its role within Korean studies and Asian studies as a whole. In the past it played a key role in the development of Korean identity and culture, and the Institute continues to function as a center with a wide range of activities including preservation, exhibition, and publication. Publications of the Kyujanggak’s holdings and its highly regarded academic journal have been major contributions to the field of Korean Studies. But what once was the preserve of only the royal scholars, the Kyujanggak has now thrown open its doors. In any given day, the Institute receives a few dozen visitors, varying from the general public who might wander through the extensive exhibition halls to scholars who request access to the archives.

The Daedong yeojido Fan Club

Though scholars may make the pilgrimage to sit with brittle manuscripts, the superstar of the Kyujanggak is the Daedong yeojido. Drawn by pioneering cartographer Jeong-ho Kim in 1861, the Daedong yeojido, or the Grand Map of Korea, is renowned today for its accuracy, immense size, and for its unique material.

The map consists of 22 sets of engraved wood blocks, which when placed together form a two-meter-long picturesque version of the Korean peninsula. The Daedong yeojido features more than 18,000 place names and geographical features, an astounding increase from previous maps, and is considered to be as accurate as maps created employing modern surveying techniques. Contemporary scholars not only praise the geographer for his surprising accuracy, but for his foresight in choosing to carve the map as wood blocks. Instead of the laborious hours required to copy a drawn map, the map’s reproduction took mere moments instead.

Since its inception, the Kyujanggak has published and distributed key documents, and as a continuation of this, recently made the Daedong yeojido available not only on paper but in a digital version as well on the “e-kyujanggak” website. For over 230 years, the Kyujanggak has stayed committed to its original vision of “cultural governance and fostering talent.” By providing open resources and the opportunity for a worldwide network of scholars, the Institute maintains the spirit of scholarship and inquiry embraced by a young king centuries ago.



With a tradition-inspired roof and state-of-the-art archival technologies, the Kyujanggak



(left) The results of the international committee's evaluation of the College of Engineering announced at a press conference.
(right) The College of Natural Science's new research facilities, to be completed in October 2006.

Top Twenty or Top Ten: External Evaluations of the Colleges of Engineering and Natural Sciences Praise the Quality of People and Research

Sometimes an outside opinion helps when doing a little soul-searching. This year and last, Seoul National University benefitted from two comprehensive external reviews of two different schools, both of which lauded the colleges for some impressive achievements as well as giving a few gentle suggestions for future improvements.

Earlier this year, a two-month outside audit praised SNU's School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering for its competitiveness with the world's top ten "in terms of faculty productivity in scientific publications, graduate degrees produced, student

quality, and research/education facilities." We can't help but be pleased that other people have noticed that we've got some of the best people around - from 18-year-old first year undergrads to freshly hired researchers and hoary old professors. Electrical and biomedical engineering were singled out respectively for being number one for schools in countries with less than 100 million in population and for being number one in the Asia Pacific region. The assessors also concluded that the School of Engineering can be rated as comparable to the top schools in the U.K and the U.S.A in research performance and support.

Similarly, last year, a group of independent evaluators found SNU's School of Natural Sciences to be comparable to the top twenty American university departments. In particular, the review emphasized the impressive capabilities of young professors and undergraduates as well as giving high marks to teaching methodologies. A look at the number of SNU scholars cited in the Science Citation Index also resulted in a top twenty finish.



Early Acclaim for a Young Biologist's Research in RNA

Biology Professor Narry Kim's research team recently made a significant leap in the understanding of microRNA biology by identifying several key factors responsible for RNA silencing. In 2006, major scientific journals such as *Nature* and *Cell* featured the breakthrough and its contribution to the development of powerful gene control techniques and RNA-based drug discovery. Educated at Oxford with a focus in retroviruses, the professor was honored in 2004 with the Macrogen Young Scientist Award. Professor Kim is well known for her close collaboration with her students, honoring her students' dedication to science by expressing boundless confidence in Korea's human capital. She describes her own passion for science, "I was charmed by the simplicity of the principles underlying the complexity of life."



A Breakthrough for Hydrogen Fuel Technology

In the August 4th issue of *Physical Review Letters*, Professor Jisoon Ihm of the Department of Physics and Astronomy and his two teammates announced their breakthrough in finding a safe and stable form in which to store hydrogen. The authoritative journal published their article, "Combinatorial Search for Optimal Hydrogen-Storage Nanomaterials Based on Polymers," which has far-reaching implications for the budding hydrogen fuel industry. With oil reserves rapidly being depleted, hydrogen fuel cars have been under development in recent years but have struggled with affordability as the science had lagged behind need. Now, previous stumbling blocks such as the bulky size of uncompressed hydrogen and its volatility will no longer hinder research as Ihm's storage nanomaterials are a stable, normal temperature solution.



Scientist Proves Native Herb Has Antidiabetic Properties

A joint research team, including SNU Biology professor Jae Bum Kim and Australian scientists, has collaborated to find that a substance extracted from native Korean herbs has antidiabetic properties. Professor Kim's team conducted experiments on the component of barberry and coptis chinensis, used in traditional Asian medicine. The results were published in August by the American Diabetes Society, and point to berberine effecting significant improvement in glucose tolerance as well a reduction in body weight.



New Tools for a New Century of Medicine

The brand new field of digital biotechnology (DBT), informally dubbed "lab on a chip" science, has already proved fruitful for SNU scientists. A startup led by Professor Jun Geun Jang has developed new AIDS monitoring technology that can diagnosis and measure the level of infection by testing just two or three drops of blood. By looking at CDF stem cells, researchers can easily detect the virulence of the virus. If biotechnology is looking for the "goldmine" in a new cure, DBT focuses on creating the tools needed in the search.



Overcoming National Boundaries to a Truly International Geography

This July at the International Geographical Union conference in Italy, Professor Woo-ik Yu became the first geographer from a non-Western country to become secretary-general in the union's nearly 140-year history. The professor attributes his election to the resounding and difficult to repeat success of the 30th IG conference in Seoul in 2000. Moreover, due to his education in both France and Germany as well extensive research in the U.S., Professor Yu was uniquely positioned to help bridge country-centric tendencies and push geography beyond its previous Europe/American focus into a truly boundary-less discipline.

Statistical Facts

(as of August 1st, 2006)

Faculty (Unit: Number of Persons)

Status	Professor	Professor Emeritus	Part-time Instructor	Total
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Foreign Faculty (Unit: Number of Persons)

Country	USA	UK	France	Germany	Russia	Canada	Mexico	Spain	China	Australia	Japan	Others	Total
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Staff (Unit: Number of Persons)

Division	Special Government Officer	General Staff	Department Assistant	Total
	15	401	575	991

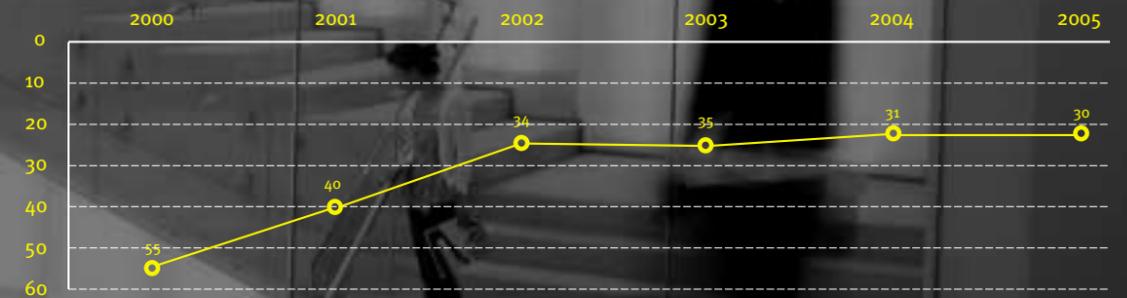
Students (Unit: Number of Persons)

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
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Foreign Students (Unit: Number of Persons)

	Bachelor	Master	Doctoral	Total
Foreigner	205	357	181	743
Overseas Korean	323	17	4	344

SNU's Yearly Ranking in the World by Number of SCI Publications





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