

Higher Education Reform in Korea: its strategy & perspective

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Simple Statistics on Korean Higher Education (See table 1)

- (1) Massive System: 62 percent of 18-21 age cohort population is enrolled in higher education institutions (44 percent in 4-year universities).
- (2) From 2003, total number of high school graduates is smaller than college admission quota. → Survival game begins from small private universities, located far from Seoul, less customized curricula institutions.
- (3) Korean Universities are now in 'structural adjustment'

Ministry of Education(MOE) at risk?

- (1) Three Presidential Candidates equivocally say "MOE should be reformed"
 - A. "Central power of MOE in primary and secondary education should be handed over local education authorities"
 - B. "Universities should be autonomous from the control of MOE"
 - C. "Policy-making function in education should be transferred to newly established National Commission on Educational Policy"
 - D. → Then, MOE for what?
- (2) Challenge from Economic Sector
 - A. Recent change from MOE to MOEHRD challenged the economic sector ("HRD is not the matter of government authority")
 - B. "Supply-side Mismatch" issue: "Schools and universities failed to provide adequate workforce to economic sector, MOE should be responsible for it."
- (3) Challenge from the Civil Sector
 - A. General distrust: "government failure in education policies threatens the stability of ordinary citizens."
 - B. Discontent on education policies, esp. college admission and national test system.

Current Key Issues

- (1) Professorship quality control
 - A. Strict academic achievement evaluation (only SCI or equivalent Journals are counted)
 - B. Class evaluation by the students
 - C. From Tenure system to contract system
- (2) University governance:
 - A. National Universities: direct control or autonomy? (presidents by direct election or by the board of rep.?!/ Independent finance system or under MOE account system? Etc.
 - B. Private Universities: Interlink between Financial support AND university evaluation.
- (3) Admission Control Issues:
 - A. Dual policy in controlling admission quota: No more enrolment increase in Seoul metropolitan area / allow self-autonomy to the local private universities according to their educational capability
 - B. National scholastic achievement examination for the college entrance: One and only test by the MOE. More elective courses in the exam. No written test by the universities, only oral interview is permitted.
 - C. Restructuring admission unit: From selecting by the unit of small departments to 'university college' or mid-level faculties. ("More choice to the students" vs "disciplines with less market value die")

New Trends Considered

Knowledge Economy changes the nature of universities:

- (1) More and more corporate R&D institutes outrun the universities in knowledge production → Universities are no more the center of knowledge production and distribution.
- (2) The percentage of employment after graduation is decisive for recruiting better students in most universities → customized curriculum designed for the need of industry prevails.
- (3) Procedural knowledge is more preferred by the corporate employers than propositional knowledge → general education is substituted with practical education, e. g. Foreign language, computer skill, communication skill, managerial skill, etc.

Lifelong Learning Paradigm changes the universities

- (1) Universities are re-presented as a locus of continuing education as well as initial education
- (2) Universities are becoming the center of local regions.
- (3) Non-credit extension programs are provided to the local residents.
- (4) Recurrent education is customized and provided to the graduates (A/S concept)

Non-Traditional Universities are emerging

- (1) Cyber Universities – accredited universities providing lectures only through internet / Residential Universities open cyber university as a “branch” (e. g. Kyunghee University – Kyunghee Cyber University, Korea University – Korea Digital University, etc.)
- (2) Traditional and Cyber Universities are partially cooperate in curriculum – residential university students can transfer credits from cyber universities.
- (3) Corporate Universities – located within the boundary of companies that endow baccalaureate and/or associate degrees
- (4) Credit Bank Systems – Earns baccalaureate degree without attending universities.
- (5) Etc.

Global Challenge and Regional Partnership

- (1) “World Comprehensive Research University” syndrome
- (2) Small private universities make co-working with Western universities for survival (Joint degree conferment).
- (3) Global Partnership with World Leading Universities (MIT-KAIST etc.) Asian Cooperative Unity Blocks evolved (e. g. Seoul National Univ. – Tokyo Univ. – Beijing Univ. – Hanoi Univ. Alliance) or Asia-Pacific Unity (e. g. Asia Pacific Rim Universities (34 top research-oriented APRU universities meet each year. SNU, Tokyo U. Kyoto U. Waseda U. Beijing U. NSU, UCLA, UCB, USC Washington U. etc.)

(Table 1) Number of Higher Education Institutions, Students & Faculty Members in 2002

Type		Number of Institutions	Number of Students	Number of Full-Time Faculty	
2 or 3-Yr Junior Vocational College	Public	16	38,845	717	
	Private	143	924,284	11,439	
	Total	159	963,129	12,156	
4-Yr	College & University	Public	26	387,299	11,632
		Private	137	1,384,439	32,545
		Total	163	1,771,738	44,177
	Industrial University	Public	8	85,956	1,296
		Private	11	101,084	1,247
		Total	19	187,040	2,543
	Teacher's University	Public	11	23,259	721
		Private	0	0	0
		Total	11	23,259	721
	Air & Correspondence University	Public	1	367,305	112
		Private	0	0	0
		Total	1	367,305	112
2 to 4-Yr Miscellaneous Institution	Public	0	0	0	
	Private	5	2,109	41	
	Total	5	2,109	41	
Graduate School	Public	0(164)	80,585	0	
	Private	18(781)	182,282	179	
	Total	18(945) ¹⁾	262,867	179 ²⁾	
All Types	Public	62(226)	983,249	14,478	
	Private	314(1,095)	2,594,198	45,451	
	Total	376(1,321) ¹⁾	3,577,447	59,929	