

Global Campus Election Results: Series of Non-candidate Constituencies Reveal Indifference Toward Student Self-Governance

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This year's Kyung Hee University Global Campus general election has concluded. Across a total of 46 constituencies, ranging from colleges to individual departments, competitions were held to select student representatives. However, in nearly 30% of the constituencies, elections were canceled due to the absence of registered candidates, revealing a low level of interest in student self-governance. This underscores the importance of greater interest and active participation in the student community.

As of November 28, voting in all constituencies had

officially ended. Within the 11 constituencies under the Central Election Management Committee, six candidates were elected. These constituencies included the College of Physical Education, College of Foreign Languages, College of Art & Design, College of Software Convergence, College of Life Sciences, College of Engineering, and the General Student Clubs Association. In each of these districts, the campaign headquarters—UNIT, us, Didim, Baekya, Chaeum, LOG, and Enter—ran uncontested and were elected respectively.

Constituencies under the College Election Management Committees also concluded voting according to the same schedule. Out of 35 constituencies, 26 campaign headquarters were elected.

The most striking aspect of

this year's Global Campus election was that nearly one-third of all constituencies failed to hold elections. Among the constituencies under the Central Election Management Committee, elections were not conducted in the General Student Association (GSA), the College of Electronics & Information, the College of Applied Sciences, and the College of International Studies due to the lack of registered candidates. As a result, the cancellation rate in these constituencies reached 36.36%.

Similar patterns were observed in constituencies under the College Election Management Committees, where nine constituencies recorded no candidates, resulting in a cancellation rate of 25%.

What further drew attention was the low voter turnout. According to the *Global Campus*

Election Rules, vote counting requires a voter turnout of at least 50%. Under the rules, each constituency is able to extend the voting period by two days in maximum. Although all constituencies with registered candidates eventually elected their representatives, some such as the College of Art & Design and the College of Engineering were nearly unable to fulfill the voter turnout rate and had to postpone the vote counting until November 28.

This suggests that student participation in self-governance activities was relatively low this year.

According to the *Global Campus GSA Bylaws*, constituencies in which no candidates were elected will be placed under an Emergency Response Committee (ERC). Under the rule, this committee will carry out the du-

ties of student representatives until March 2026, after which by-elections will be held to select new representatives. If the March by-elections also fail to select a representative, the ERC will continue to perform these duties until the end of the original student association term, as stipulated in the bylaw.

Through the Global Campus general election, a total of 31 candidates were elected as new student representatives. However, elections were canceled in nearly one-third of all constituencies due to the absence of registered candidates, clearly revealing the low level of interest in student self-governance. As many constituencies are expected to be operated under an ERC system, this is a moment that calls for more active participation from the student community.



The election booth for KHU general election

Reconsidering the Meaning of University Festivals

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Festivals are always a hot topic in university life—but not always for the right reasons. This semester's festival at Kyung Hee University (KHU) Seoul Campus was no exception. If anything, the star-studded celebrity lineup made the arguments more controversial.

Access, Crowds, and the Question of "Who Is It For?"

For many students, the lineup of celebrities performing at festivals has become the main way to judge the General Student Association (GSA). Other pledges and efforts of GSA often fade into the background,

while a few Instagram posts announcing singers and idols seem to define the GSA's entire year. The phrase "GSA only for festivals" now circulates casually among students, reflecting their growing indifference toward student governance. We have reached the point where it feels as if the GSA exists only to host one big concert.

The festival is also connected to the local community. In the past, KHU operated a "free zone" that allowed non-KHU visitors to enter the Amphitheater in the name of coexistence with the local community. However, problems soon emerged:

idol fans camping overnight, entrance wristbands being traded, and piles of trash left behind. As a result, the free zone was abolished from the Fall 2024 semester.

Even after that change, problems did not disappear. People still lined up overnight, trash remained a problem, and the resale price of KHU student IDs online soared. The GSA started to check student IDs more strictly

to block outsiders who pretended to be students, which resulted in entry delays. Many students could not enter even after the main performance started. A festival meant "for KHU students only" ended up

shutting out the very students it claimed to prioritize. We must ask: for whom is the festival really for?

From Daedongje to Idol Stages: How We Got Here

To answer that, it is worth looking back at the origins of university festivals. KHU is often considered the birthplace of the modern Korean university festival. In 1956, KHU's precursor, the Shinheung Military Academy, hosted its first event centered on student-driven programs such as theater, music, sports, and mock trials.

The term *Daedongje*, now widely used to refer to Korean university festivals, grew out of the student democracy movement in the 1980s. Meaning "great unity," it was first Korea University in 1984 to bridge the divisions between student groups. The idea soon spread to other campuses.

Rethinking What a Festival Should Do

Now, however, a name that once symbolized unity is often

treated like a brand for celebrity concerts. Going back to a celebrity-free festival is neither realistic nor necessary. Times change, and festivals evolve with them. However, large budgets, long planning hours, and huge volunteer efforts are invested into these events. At this point, we need to stop and ask: what is the essence of the festival that students so eagerly anticipate? If we are going to invest this much in it, shouldn't it offer more than just a chance to see celebrities up close?

Festivals are not merely concerts. They can be one of the few times when the campus feels like a shared space again. In an age when university life is increasingly individual, festivals can remind us that we belong to a community.

Recalling the original spirit of *Daedongje*, the festival can become an opportunity for Kyung Hee students and local residents to come together. Beyond the spectacle on stage, rediscovering the value of connection may give university festivals a more enduring meaning.

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