

# The University Life

KYUNG HEE UNIVERSITY

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## March By-elections: A Turning Point for KHU

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In March, by-elections including those for the General Student Association (GSA) will be held on both campuses. The elections take place after both campus GSAs shifted to an Emergency Response Committee (ERC) system, following the absence of registered candidates and the invalidation of results due to fraudulent proxy voting. As such, the upcoming election will be a potential turning point for student self-governance at Kyung Hee University (KHU).

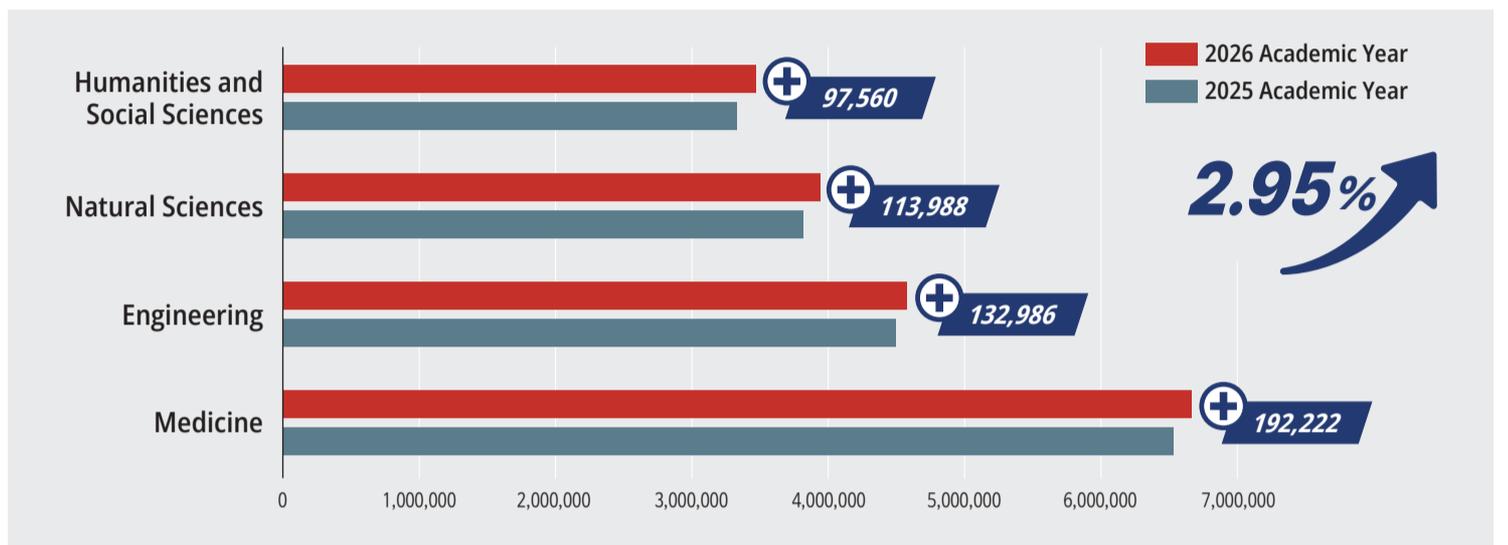
### Global Campus Election Schedule Set

At the Global Campus, candidate nominations and registration will take place from March 10 to 11. The official campaign period is scheduled from March 13 to 23, followed by voting from March 24 to 26.

### Seoul Campus Awaits Details

Although the election schedule for the Seoul Campus has yet to be finalized, the by-election is expected to take place within March. KHU's three campus media outlets—*The University Life*, *V.O.U.* and *Dae-hak Jubo*—will jointly host a public candidate hearing. The debate and vote-count will be livestreamed via V.O.U.'s YouTube channel. The 2025 Seoul Campus by-election drew limited attention, as only a single candidate ticket registered. At the time, the required 50% voter turnout for vote counting was not reached by the initial deadline, resulting in an extension of the voting period.

The 2026 by-elections will test whether student engagement and trust can be restored after months under the ERC system.



Overview of tuition increases by academic division within the University

## KHU Increases Tuition by 2.95%, Marks Second Year of Hikes

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After breaking a 16-year tuition freeze since 2009 last year, KHU entered its second consecutive year of tuition hikes. Following a 5.1 percent increase in the 2025 academic year, the University raised tuition by an additional 2.95 percent for the 2026 academic year. The decision was finalized on January 20 at a Tuition Deliberation Committee meeting. University officials said the increases are linked to inflation and intended to shift campus finances from a maintenance-focused structure to an investment-oriented one.

### Where Will the Increased Tuition Go?

After years of financial restraint under a prolonged tuition freeze, the University said the newly secured revenue will strengthen its educational and research foundations. Kim Young-jin from the budget team of the Office of Planning & Coordination stated that the additional funds will improve aging infrastructure, expand faculty and staff recruitment, and en-

After two consecutive years of tuition increases, the University announced plans to shift from maintenance to investment.

hance student and research support programs. "The goal is not expansion for its own sake, but restoring essential educational conditions constrained for years," Kim said.

The University is recruiting professors across nine colleges on both campuses, aiming to secure approximately 1,450 full-time faculty. In addition, it plans to hire administrative staff in areas such as fundraising strategy, educational program planning, and specialized administration to reinforce institutional capacity. Kim emphasized that improving educational quality requires not only academic personnel but also professional administrative support.

Infrastructure improvement is another focus. Renovations will prioritize safety-related

upgrades to aging facilities. The Central Library is scheduled for remodeling to create spaces that support career exploration and small-group study. Other projects include restroom renovations in the Central Library and Students Center on both campuses, replacement of heating and cooling systems, rooftop waterproofing, structural reinforcements following safety inspections, and electrical capacity expansion.

KHU also plans to introduce an AI competency enhancement platform and a digital open badge system to promote student engagement and skills development. Research funding for faculty members will be expanded. According to Kim, the investment is aimed less at expansion and more at restoring and modernizing facilities that have deteriorated during the long tuition freeze.

### Budget Transparency and Future Tuition Plans

As tuition increases continue for a second consecutive year, student concerns over financial transparency and long-term affordability have grown. In response, Kim stated that budgeting and spending are conducted

in accordance with relevant laws. The budget is reviewed by KHU Council and the Tuition Deliberation Committee, and annual financial reports are publicly disclosed on the University's website. KHU's finances are also subject to external audits.

However, University officials acknowledged that the volume and complexity of budget data make it difficult to present information easily to students. "We recognize the need to communicate financial information more clearly," Kim said. "The University will continue financial briefings to enhance transparency."

The University indicated that future tuition hikes may be unavoidable. It noted that annual increases would likely remain within the legally permitted range, generally tied to inflation. Kim explained that after 16 years of frozen or reduced tuition, shifting from a maintenance-focused model to an investment-driven structure will take time. KHU also plans to diversify revenue by expanding donations and securing government-funded projects to reduce reliance on tuition.

After two consecutive years of tuition increases, the University announced plans to shift from maintenance to investment. It aims to strengthen infrastructure, faculty recruitment, and student support. Whether the transition succeeds will depend on how effectively the University translates financial adjustments into meaningful academic improvement.