30% of Global Campus Student Constituencies Shifts to Emergency Response Committee

Indifference to student self-governance
Photo: *Weekly Chosun* (weekly.chosun.com)

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About one-third of Kyung Hee University's (KHU) Global Campus student representative units will begin the 2026 academic year without elected leaders after last November's general election produced no candidates in 13 of 46 constituencies. This was mainly caused by low student participation and insufficient institutional support from KHU. With the by-election scheduled for March, now is the time when efforts from both students and the school are needed.

One Month of Voting, but Many Races Never Started

The 2026 KHU Global Campus general election was held for about a month, from November 2 to November 28. According to the Global Campus *Election Rules (ER)*, students who wished to run for office had to register by November 12 and receive recommendations from at least one-tenth of the students in their constituency before they could campaign.

Voting began on November 24. Department-level units voted for two days, and larger units voted for three days. Ballots were counted only if turnout reached 50%. If that threshold was not met, the voting period could be extended up to November 28.

However, even after the election, no student representatives were chosen in roughly 30% of the constituencies. According to the Global Campus Central Election Management Committee, by the registration deadline on the 12th, 4 of the 11 constituencies under its jurisdiction—including the General Student Association (GSA), the College of Electronics & Information, the College of Applied Sciences, and the College of International Studies—had no candidates. The non-candidacy rate reached 36.4%.

In addition, nine additional constituencies overseen by college-level election committees also had no candidates, including Sports Medicine, Chinese Language & Literature, Fashion Design, Postmodern Music, Smart Farm Science, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial & Management System Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, and Environmental Science & Environmental Engineering, resulting in a 25% non-candidacy rate in that category.

As a result, out of 46 total constituencies, 13 did not hold elections due to the absence of registered candidates. This means roughly one-third of the Global Campus will enter the 2026 academic year without student representatives.

Whether the Emergency Response Committee (ERC) continues will be decided this March. Under the *ER*, if a unit's representative position is vacant, an ERC fills that role until March. A by-election to select candidates will then be held in March; if no student representative is elected even then, the ERC will carry out the duties for the remainder of the original term. In the end, whether student-elected representatives are appointed depends on student voting in the upcoming by-election.

Campaign Costs, and Uneven Support Between Campuses

Student leaders and organizers pointed to the cost of campaigning as one barrier to running. To run, candidates must promote themselves through multiple channels. Campaign teams typically use banners, leaflets and design materials, and some units produce uniforms for staff. Considering that the Core and Linkhu campaign teams in last year's Global Campus GSA election each had more than 100 members, it is clear that the election process demands a significant investment of time and resources.

However, support systems to offset these costs differ markedly between the Seoul and Global campuses. For the Seoul Campus GSA election, the candidates receive approximately 3,000,000 won in promotional funding. During the 2026 Seoul Campus election, the Know-How team spent 2,993,964 won, while the KHU:EST team spent 2,967,500 won on promotional activities, with funding provided through institutional support.

In contrast, the Global Campus offers no such financial assistance. Park Byung-jun, current chair of the Global Campus ERC and former GSA president, stated, "There is absolutely no financial support for running in elections on the Global Campus." This places the entire financial burden of campaigning solely on candidates.

Weak Student Engagement

Along with limited institutional support, low voter participation also appeared to shape outcomes. Most constituencies under the college-level election committees were only able to count votes after the voting period was extended. Under this election's rules, department-level constituencies voted for two days—November 24 to 25, and if turnout did not exceed 50%, voting could be switched to online and extended until November 28. However, only 8 of 33 constituencies (30.77%) met the 50% threshold to count ballots.

The next day, the cumulative countable rate rose to 69.23%, and it was not until November that all department-level constituencies became eligible for counting. Even with the shift to online voting and an extended voting period to boost participation, roughly one-third of constituencies still failed to meet the turnout requirement.

A similar pattern appeared in college-level elections. These constituencies had a three-day voting period—November 24 to 26, with the same counting criteria and online-extension mechanism as department-level elections. Yet, as of the scheduled counting day, the College of Engineering and the College of Art & Design student association elections did not reach the 50% turnout threshold and were only counted on November 28 after two additional days of extended voting.
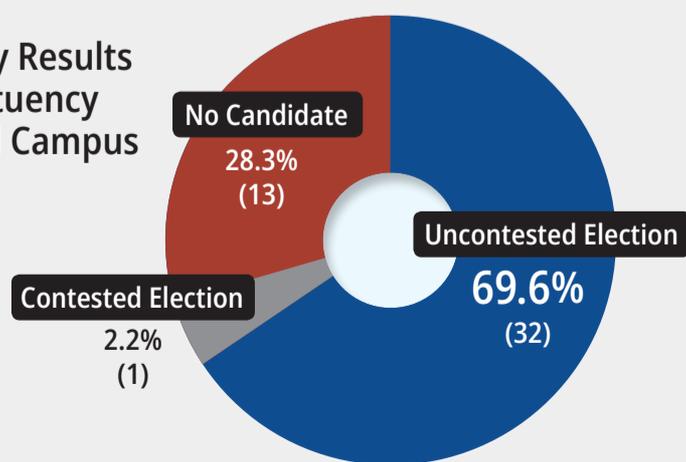
Overall, these low turnout suggests that student interest in representative elections has weakened. In this environment, it becomes harder to expect students to run for leadership positions or compete in elections.

Park said the ERC system should be treated as a warning sign. "ERC literally means our community is in an emergency. As the name suggests, students should recognize that the absence of a student representative is a problem we must overcome by showing greater interest and participation."

What Happens Next

A by-election is scheduled for March, and continuation of ERCs will depend on whether candidates register and whether students vote in enough numbers to meet turnout requirements. Recent election results suggest low student engagement and insufficient institutional support. It is time to call for greater student participation and stronger long-term systemic support from the University.

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Candidacy Results by Constituency for Global Campus Election

No Candidate
28.3%
(13)

Uncontested Election
69.6%
(32)

Contested Election
2.2%
(1)

Candidacy Results by Constituency for Global Campus Election