



“The Seolguk Exchange Festival has the potential to strengthen KHU’s identity and highlight its dual-campus system as a single academic community.”

A banner for the 3rd Seolguk Exchange Festival

Photo: Seoul Campus V.O.U.

Seolguk Exchange Festival Aims for “One Kyung Hee,” but Low Turnout Limits Its Reach

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When thinking of representative university festivals, events such as the Yonsei–Korea University Match or Akaraka, the annual cheerleading festival hosted by Yonsei University, often come to mind. These events go beyond mere entertainment; they serve as symbolic occasions that reinforce campus identity and shared memories. The Seolguk Exchange Festival was designed to fulfill a similar role. However, it has yet to demonstrate the same level of impact, hindered by limited participation stemming from budget constraints and the physical distance between campuses. With these challenges in mind, now is a timely moment to consider how the festival’s potential can be realized by addressing these practical obstacles.

A Festival Designed for Students to Participate, Not Just Watch

The Seolguk Exchange Festival is a joint event that brings together student clubs from both campuses. To foster both

competition and cultural exchange, the festival features a wide range of activities, including sports matches, dance and singing performances, and interactive booths. First launched in 2023, the event reached its third edition in 2025.

The Global General Student Club Association (GSCA) explained the festival’s purpose: “Unlike the annual Kyung Hee University (KHU) festival, which treats students primarily as an audience, the Seolguk Exchange Festival is designed to be a participatory event where students can compete and create performances themselves.” In contrast to the University’s festivals that often feature celebrity performances, limiting student involvement, the GSCA said that Seolguk spotlights student-led performances and competitions.

Organizers also describe Seolguk as an identity-building event. The Seoul GSCA said it most clearly embodies KHU’s slogan, “One Kyung Hee,” as it is the only exchange event within the University, rather than a rivalry between institutions, distinguishing it from events such as the Yonsei–Korea University Match.

The festival is also able to contribute to the long-standing task of addressing perceptions of campus dualization. The Global GSCA explained, “Through participation by club members, the festival aims to promote active interaction not only among clubs from both campuses but also among the broader student population.” It added that sustained exchange of this kind could play a positive role in overcoming perceptions of separation between the campuses.

A Festival for Clubs Only? Limited Participation from General Students

Despite the festival’s goals, many students do not participate. The Global GSCA acknowledged this challenge, noting that promotion is the biggest challenge in turning Seolguk into a representative annual festival. “This year, we put considerable effort into promotion, including inviting a well-known MC to raise visibility,” it said. “Even so, it felt like only students involved in clubs recognized the event.”

Former Global Campus cheerleading captain Cho Sung-joo echoed this view. “Aside from the cheerleading team, I was not very aware of other club activities,” he said. “If I were a non-club student, I think I would not have been particularly interested in the Seolguk Exchange Festival.”

Cho Min-gyu, head of the Seolguk Exchange Festival Task Force, shared that interest often depends on personal connections. Many matches feel like “my friend’s game,” meaning students are more likely to attend when they know a participant. While acknowledging the significance of events such as the Lion Match hosted by the College of Physical Education, he expressed regret that participation in inter-campus exchange events like Seolguk remains limited.

The Seoul GSCA also reflected on past experiences, stating, “At many events, such as the Seolguk Exchange Festival or club fairs, audiences tend to consist mainly of club members or their acquaintances.” It added, “Cases in which students who are not involved in

any clubs voluntarily attend club performances are rare.”

Budget Limits What Organizers Can Promote

Organizers also pointed to funding as a structural constraint. The Seoul GSCA explained that the festival is not fully funded by the Student Support Center. “A portion of the budget comes from university funds, but the majority is covered by the student association fees from both the Seoul and Global campuses.”

The Global GSCA said that “promotion and budget are inseparable.” It noted that the promotion and design team had to abandon plans to create promotional goods due to financial constraints. While acknowledging the difficulties posed by budget limitation, the GSCA did not believe that financial restrictions decisively undermined the overall planning of the festival.

By contrast, student organizers cited “Lion Matches” as an event with stronger institutional backing. Lee Han-na, former vice president of the College of Physical Education student association, said that the event received extensive support from the college, alumni associations, and the Office of External Development. “Because the event was seen as one that could foster student unity, faculty members, administrative staff, and alumni all provided generous support,” she said, adding that such backing enabled relatively stable operations and high participation.

Physical Distance as a Barrier to Exchange

To fully realize the original purpose of the Seolguk Ex-

change Festival, overcoming the physical distance between the two campuses has also emerged as a key challenge. The Global GSCA explained that “executive members from the GSCAs repeatedly traveled between campuses under tight schedules, relying on transportation such as the Seolguk shuttle buses to manage the event.” It also said staffing was difficult during Global Campus sports matches because venues were spread out and staff must track match results in real time.

Cho Min-gyu also described the same problem from an operations standpoint: Sports competitions are held at the Global Campus, while performance-related events take place at the Seoul Campus. He added that the team is reviewing ways to reduce the burden, including issuing attendance cooperation notices and chartering Seolguk shuttle buses to support inter-campus transportation.

These problems have affected sustainability. The Seolguk Joint Cheer Festival, first held in 2023, did not continue after its second year. Cho Sung-joo explained that while training during vacations was manageable, traveling between campuses during the semester created physical strain and fatigue.

What Would Make Seolguk Feel Like a “University-wide” Festival?

The Seolguk Exchange Festival has the potential to strengthen KHU’s identity and highlight its dual-campus system as a single academic community. Yet that potential remains largely unrealized. Financial limitations and the physical distance between campuses continue to restrict participation. Expanding the festival’s reach will require stronger promotion beyond club members, consistent institutional backing, and a practical transportation plan to ease the cost and burden of travel between the campuses.

If supported with strategic planning and sustained resources, Seolguk could become a step toward the vision of “One Kyung Hee.”