

***The Challenge of Including
Korea Studies:
An Administrator's Perspective***
Jonathan H. Wolff
University of Pittsburgh

Since 1988, the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) has repeatedly been designated an Undergraduate National Resource Center for East Asian Studies by the U.S. Department of Education. This designation as one of the top East Asia programs in the country, based on a triennial competitive proposal process, is a testament to the strong commitment of the University to Asian studies and its extensive China and Japan studies programs. Enhancing the study of Korea, however, remains a real challenge.

While China studies and Japan studies at Pitt can each boast about a dozen faculty specialists with a full complement of courses in social sciences, humanities and language for China and Japan, there have been no full-time faculty with Korea-focused teaching and only limited Korea-focused research. Also, while the Korean language has been taught through the intermediate level at Pitt for almost twenty years, it has remained on the margins, both in funding and administratively, offered through the Language Acquisition Institute of the Linguistics Department, rather than the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures.

As an administrator in the University's Asian Studies Program, the challenge has been to enhance instruction and research on Korea in the face of limited discretionary funds and constraints on faculty expansion. My own professional focus has been on Japan, but with three years in Korea with the Peace Corps, I have been encouraged to reacquaint myself sufficiently with Korea so I might teach about it as well as to promote the study of Korea among the faculty.

There has been intermittent faculty resistance to what is sometimes perceived as a possible "dilution" of funding and focus. Our approach has been to try to interest our East Asia specialists in enhancing the Korean component of their current offerings. To that end we have had a number of workshops for faculty featuring presentations on Korea from specialists from other institutions. At these workshops faculty learn more about Korea as well as current research and materials that might be incorporated into their own teaching. Among those who have addressed the faculty have been David McCann, (literature, Harvard), James Palais, (history, U of Washington) Roger Janelli, (anthropology, Indiana), John Lie (sociology, Illinois) and Choong Soon Kim (anthropology, Tennessee).

In conversation with some Korea specialists, I have encountered reluctance on the part of some to participate in

a process leading to instruction on Korea by China or Japan scholars. While I appreciate the concern, the alternative is to ignore Korea completely or rely on an even less well-informed faculty.

To further encourage the inclusion of Korea in teaching, research grants were offered to faculty to support the purchase of Korea-related course materials as well as student assistant time to do research and help collect materials needed to add or expand Korea components of existing courses. Funds have also been made available for Korean language tutoring for faculty. This has resulted in an expansion of instruction on Korea in religion, history, political science and art history courses. We are currently exploring the possibility of cross-listing our Korean language courses with the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures to enhance the visibility of the courses, to regularize student perceptions of the courses as well provide professional inclusion for the instructor.

External grants have been used to encourage faculty to add Korea to research that might otherwise take them in a different direction. For those seeking more basic information there are a number of web sites with general information about Korea as well as organizations such as the Korea Foundation and the Korean Research Foundation that support Korean studies. For non-Korea specialists the Northeast Asia Council (NEAC) of the Association for Asian Studies offers some support in "Projects that Enhance Korean Studies Teaching" and "Grants to Teachers for Instructional Materials" (see *Asian Studies Newsletter*, Spring Issue, 2000, p. 49).

To be sure, the University of Pittsburgh has benefited from U.S. Department of Education grants, grants from alumni and a small endowment established by two fundraising concerts. This endowment has allowed expanded Korean language instruction and supported Korean cultural events on campus. The University has also received library support from the Korea Research Foundation, the Korea Foundation and the National Assembly Library. The Korean Cultural Service in Washington has provided materials on Korea including videos and a number of publications.

There has also been an attempt to raise the awareness of Korea on campus through concerts involving local student musicians as well as larger-scale performances supported by the Korea Society and the Korea Foundation. The Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI) has also cooperated in enhancing awareness of Korea in the community beyond security issues through its participation in programs on campus and its "Korean Caravan," which brought Korean government and business leaders to a broader local audience.

There is clearly much that remains to be done to bring Korea more fully into the classroom at the University of Pittsburgh. However, there has been an incremental change in attitude and increased inclusion of Korea in the curriculum over time. The continuing task is to pique the interest of the faculty and students about Korea and to find funding to make expanded teaching and research on Korea possible. We are

always hopeful for the serendipitous departmental decision that will bring a true Korea specialist to the university. Regardless, teaching about Korea at the University will continue to be a challenge for some time to come.

RESOURCES ON KOREA

Korea Economic Institute of America (KEI)
1101 Vermont Avenue, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20005-3521
(202) 371-0690
Peter Beck: Director of Research/Academic Affairs

The Korea Society
950 Third Avenue (at 57th Street), 8th Floor
New York, NY 10022
212-759-7525
212-759-7530 (FAX)
korea.ny@koreasociety.org
www.koreasociety.org

Korean Information Service
Korea Window
www.kois.go.kr/

Korea Foundation
www.kf.or.kr/english/

Korea Research Foundation
www.krf.or.kr/html/english.html
www.krf.or.kr/html/inter_korea4.html

Korean Embassy in the United States
www.mofat.go.kr/en_usa.htm

Korean Cultural Service
information_usa@mofat.go.kr
TEL (202)797-6343~7 FAX (202)387-0413

Northeast Asia Council (NEAC) of the Association for Asian Studies
NEAC Korea Grants
Association for Asian Studies, Inc.
1021 East Huron Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 USA
(734) 665-2490
www.aasianst.org/grants/grants.htm#NEAC-KOREAN

The Council on East Asian Libraries
Committee on Korean Materials
Internet Resources
www.usc.edu/isd/locations/ssh/korean/kmc/subjguides.html

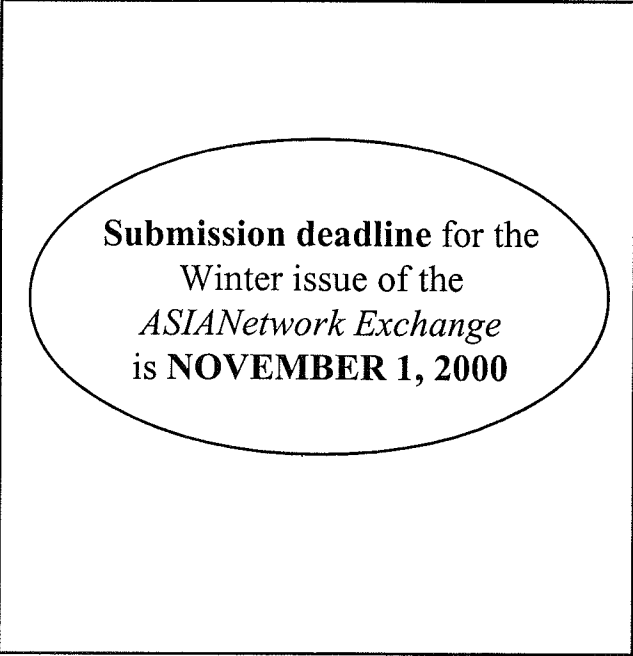
US Library of Congress
South Korea – A Country Study
lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/krtoc.html

Samsung SDS Co.,Ltd. & Samsung Foundation of Culture
KOREA INSIGHTS
The Korean Culture and Arts on the Internet
www.korea.insights.co.kr/english/

Korean Central News Agency of DPRK
News from Korean Central News Agency of DPRK
www.kcna.co.jp/

US Library of Congress
North Korea–A Country Study
lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/kptoc.html

United States Energy Information Administration
www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/nkorea.html



**Submission deadline for the
Winter issue of the
ASIANetwork Exchange
is **NOVEMBER 1, 2000****