2026 Oct. 30th Fri.

Letter from the Editor : After Chuseok

Vol. 195

Chuseok is already over. For many students, it was probably a short break from the usual university routine. Some went back home and spent time with their families. Some met old friends, ate too much food, and caught up on sleep. Others may have stayed near campus because going home was too far,, or simply not part of their plans. Whatever we did, the holiday is now behind us. The campus is getting busy again, and it feels like we have quickly returned to our usual lives. Classes, assignments, club activities, part-time jobs, and exams are waiting for us.

Personally, I always find this part of the semester a little strange. Before Chuseok, I spend my days thinking about how much I need a break. But once the holiday is over, I sometimes feel like it ended too quickly. Suddenly, I am back on campus, looking at my calendar and wondering where all the time went. Maybe that is why holidays are valuable. They give us a chance to stop, even if only for a few days.

University life can be surprisingly repetitive. We wake up, go to class, meet people, work on assignments, and go home. Then we do it again the next day. When we are busy, it is easy to focus only on what is directly in front of us. We worry about the next deadline or the next exam without thinking much about what we are doing or why we are doing it. Chuseok can interrupt that routine.

For students who returned home, the holiday may have been a reminder of a life outside university. Sitting at the family dinner table, talking with parents, or meeting relatives can feel very different from spending time with friends on campus. Even simple conversations can make us realize how much has changed since we entered university.

At the same time, not everyone has the same experience of Chuseok. For some students, the holiday is something they look forward to every year. For others, going home may not be easy. Some students live far away from their families, while international students may spend the holiday in Korea without their families at all. There are also students who have to work during the holiday or stay on campus to study.

I think this is something worth remembering when we talk about holidays. There is no single way to experience Chuseok.

We often talk about Chuseok as a time for family and gratitude. Those ideas are still meaningful, but they can mean different things to different people. For one person, family might mean a crowded dinner table. For another, it might mean a phone call with someone far away. For someone else, it might mean spending time with close friends who have become their family away from home.

In that sense, perhaps the most important part of Chuseok is not exactly what we do, but who we make time for. As students, we are often told to make good use of our time. We are encouraged to build our careers, improve our grades, gain experience, and prepare for the future. These things are important, of course. But sometimes, we become so focused on preparing for the future that we forget to pay attention to the people and moments around us. A holiday does not solve that problem. A few days away from school will not suddenly make us less busy or less worried about the future. Still, it can give us a small reminder. Maybe we should call someone we have not spoken to in a while. Maybe we should have lunch with a friend instead of eating quickly between classes. Maybe we should take a walk around campus without thinking about our next assignment. These things may not look productive on paper, but they can make our everyday lives feel a little less mechanical.

This is also something we think about as a campus newspaper. A university is more than its classrooms and lecture halls. It is made up of thousands of people, each with their own experiences and concerns. Some stories are easy to notice, while others are happening quietly around us. As a student newspaper, we want to pay attention to both.

Our readers may not agree with every story we publish, and they do not have to. What matters is that we have a space where different experiences can be shared and discussed. Sometimes, reading about someone else's life can make us notice something about our own. Now that Chuseok is over, we are going back to our normal schedules. There will be more assignments, more meetings, and probably more nights spent wondering why we started everything at the last minute.

But perhaps we can return to campus with a slightly different mindset. We do not need to completely change our lives after a holiday. We do not need to become more productive or suddenly have everything figured out. It may be enough to remember that there is more to university life than the next deadline. So, as you begin the second half of the semester, take some time to look around.

Talk to someone you normally pass without saying hello. Read something outside your major. Ask a friend how they are doing and actually listen to the answer. And when you need a break, try not to feel guilty about taking one. Chuseok may be over, but the feeling of slowing down does not have to disappear with it. The semester continues. So do we. Let's take it one day at a time.

2026 Oct. 30th Fri.

Beyond the Classroom: Exploring Chosun University's Extracurricular Programs

Vol. 195

University life is not only about attending lectures, completing assignments, and preparing for exams. At Chosun University, students can take part in a wide range of extracurricular programs designed to help them develop skills and explore interests outside the classroom. These programs are offered through THE 조아, the university's integrated student support system. The platform allows students to search for and apply to extracurricular programs in areas such as leadership, self-management, communication, collaboration, creative problem-solving, civic awareness, and information analysis. For students who are unsure about what to do beyond their regular classes, these programs can be a useful starting point.

Finding a Direction

One of the biggest concerns for university students is deciding what they want to do after graduation. This can be especially difficult for first-year students, who may have entered university without a clear career plan. Chosun University offers programs that focus specifically on career planning. One example is the CSU Career Planner, a program developed by the university's One-Stop Student Counseling Center. The program uses a career and university-life planning workbook developed for Chosun University students, along with one-on-one consulting with professional counselors. The 2026 program was aimed at first-year students and was designed to help them plan their university life and career in a more systematic way.

Programs such as CSU Career Planner show that career preparation does not necessarily have to begin with searching for a job. For students in their first year, simply understanding their interests and thinking about what they want from university can be an important first step. Another career-related program available through THE조아 is "Career Is Good." The program includes activities related to identifying career values, exploring decision-making styles, and developing a more reasonable approach to career decisions. Students can also receive a participation certificate, and the university has offered additional benefits for students who complete multiple types of the program.

Building Skills Through Practice

Not all extracurricular programs are about career counseling. Some allow students to develop practical skills through projects and activities. The THE 조아 platform organizes programs according to several core competencies. These include creative problem-solving, communication, collaboration, self-management, civic awareness, and information analysis. Recent programs listed on the university's system include an AI Software Competition, a research skills development program for undergraduate students, a criminal law practical program, and a pharmacy portfolio program. The subjects are quite different, but they share one idea: students can learn by doing rather than only listening to lectures.

For example, a competition or research program can require students to work with others, solve problems, and produce an actual result. These experiences can be different from regular coursework, where students often focus on exams and assignments. This type of learning may also help students understand what they enjoy. A student who joins a research program may discover an interest in research that they had not considered before. Another student may realize that they prefer teamwork or practical projects to traditional classroom learning.

Learning With Other Students

Some programs also provide opportunities for students to interact with classmates, seniors, professors, and other members of the university community. One example is a mentor-mentee program connected to a visit to the Gwangju Biennale. The program combines a cultural experience with opportunities for students from different levels to participate together. The program is connected to competencies such as information analysis, civic awareness, and creative problem-solving.

These programs can be meaningful because university life can sometimes become limited to students' own majors and friend groups. Activities outside regular classes provide an opportunity to meet people with different experiences and interests. For international students, these opportunities can also be a way to become more familiar with campus life and interact with Korean students outside the classroom.

Taking Care of Student Well-Being

Academic and career development are important, but university life also involves stress, relationships, and personal concerns. Chosun University's One-Stop Student Counseling Center provides counseling, psychological testing, and extracurricular programs for students dealing with issues such as emotional difficulties, academic problems, relationships, and career concerns. Both enrolled and students on leave can use the center's services free of charge. The center also operates group counseling programs. These programs bring together students with similar concerns and allow them to explore their problems through interaction with other participants under the guidance of a professional counselor. Topics include interpersonal relationships, personal growth, social anxiety, and career exploration. The programs are offered by semester and are announced through the counseling center, the university's general notices, and THE조아.

The university is also currently offering programs related to stress management and peer support. The counseling center's recent notices include a mindfulness-based stress management program and mentoring programs for students facing different academic or university-life situations. These programs suggest that extracurricular activities are not only about adding something to a résumé. They can also be about helping students manage the challenges that come with university life.

More Than a Line on a Résumé

There is sometimes a tendency for students to view extracurricular activities mainly as something that can be included in a résumé. Of course, some programs can provide useful experiences for future employment. But their value does not have to end there. A student who participates in a team project may become more comfortable

communicating with others. Someone who joins a career program may discover an interest they had not considered before. Another student may participate in counseling and gain a better understanding of their own concerns. The university's extracurricular system reflects this broad approach. THE조아 does not focus on just one type of activity. Instead, it brings together programs covering different areas of student development. This also means that students do not have to choose programs only according to their major.

A student studying engineering might be interested in a communication program. A humanities student might try a data-related activity. A first-year student might start with a career-planning program, while a senior might look for a practical program related to employment. The important thing is finding something that fits the student's current needs.

Where to Start

With so many different programs, the hardest part may simply be knowing where to begin. THE조아 provides a central place where students can search for extracurricular programs and check available opportunities. Students can also view their own extracurricular activities through the system.

For students who are new to extracurricular activities, starting with one program may be enough. There is no need to participate in everything. Instead, students can ask themselves what they currently need.

Do you need help deciding on a career? A career-planning program may be useful. Do you want to develop practical skills? A project, competition, or research program could be a better choice. Are you having difficulties with relationships, stress, or university life? The One-Stop Student Counseling Center offers programs and services that address these areas. University education does not end when a class finishes.

Some of the most useful experiences can happen outside the lecture hall, when students try something unfamiliar, meet people from different backgrounds, or take time to think about what they actually want.

At Chosun University, the extracurricular programs available through THE조아 offer students a chance to do exactly that. The next step may be as simple as logging in, looking through the list, and finding one program that catches your attention.

2026 Oct. 30th Fri.

Is Esports a Sport?

Vol. 195

A soccer player runs across a field. An esports player sits in front of a screen. O ne relies on powerful legs and full-body movement; the other spends hours mak ing tiny, precise movements with a mou se and keyboard. Yet both train for com petition, follow strict rules, and compet e under heavy pressure. So why is one a utomatically called a sport while the oth er still has to prove itself?

This question is no longer limited to ga ming communities. Esports has develop ed into an organized competitive system with professional teams, coaches, tourn aments, rankings, and international audi ences. Unlike casual gaming, profession al esports requires players to practice sp ecific skills, analyze opponents, and buil d complex strategies.

Depending on the game, players need fast reaction times, sharp hand-eye coor dination, strategic thinking, clear comm unication, and split-second decision-ma king. The competition takes place throu gh a screen, but the preparation behind it is anything but casual.

Its growing status is clear at major inter national events. Esports was introduced as a demonstration sport at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta-Palembang and became an official medal event at the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023. It remains an official medal event at the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, featuring 11 events including League of Legends, PUBG Mobile, Street Fighter 6, and Tekken 8.

What was once seen mostly as entertainment is now part of official international sports institutions.

However, official recognition does not end the debate. If anything, it makes the question even more interesting: what actually makes something a sport in the first place?

The strongest argument against esports is physicality. Traditional sports are usually defined by visible physical performance. Soccer players sprint, swimmers push through water, and basketball players jump, change direction, and fight for position. In esports, most visible movement is limited to the hands, fingers, and eyes. A player can compete for hours without running across a field or lifting anything heavy. For those who believe significant

physical exertion is a requirement, this is a fundamental difference.

But that argument leads to another question: how much physical movement is actually required to qualify as a sport?

The debate is not really about whether esports players use their bodies. They do. Their hands must move with speed and precision, their eyes constantly process information, and their brains make decisions in fractions of a second.

Professional players repeat the same skills thousands of times, review their matches, and prepare specifically for each opponent. Their training does not look like a soccer player's training, but that does not mean it isn't training.

A 2016 study by sports researchers Seth E. Jenny and his colleagues examined this exact issue. Instead of simply deciding whether esports was a sport, they compared esports with established characteristics of traditional sports, such as competition, skill, organization, physicality, popularity, and institutionalization. Their work shows why the debate is not as simple as "sports involve movement, but esports do not." Esports clearly shares many features with traditional sports, even though physicality remains the most debated point.

There is also a historical reason to question a fixed definition of sport. Shinobu Akimoto, a sports historian at Kobe University, has studied how new forms of sport emerged in 19th-century England. He compares that period of change to the rise of esports today. His work suggests that sports have never had one permanent form; their rules, organizations, and cultural meanings have always evolved over time.

This does not mean esports and traditional sports are exactly the same. They are not.

Esports players face different physical strains and health concerns, and their training focuses on skills that may be less obvious to spectators. But perhaps that

difference is what makes the debate worth having. If every sport had to look the same, there would be no reason to discuss where new forms of competition fit.

Perhaps the better question is not whether esports looks like traditional sports, but whether sports must always look the way they do today.

An esports player may sit behind a desk instead of running across a field, but that does not make their training, competition, or pressure imaginary. The form of training may be different, but the dedication behind it is the same.

The screen may have changed. The competition has not.

2026 Oct. 30th Fri.

More Than a Meal: The Story Behind Korea's Chuseok Foods

Vol. 195

From Songpyeon to Jeon, Traditional Foods Carry the Flavors, Memories, and Stories of Korea's Harvest Festival

When autumn arrives in Korea, the streets become cooler, the leaves slowly begin to change color, and families start preparing for one of the country's biggest traditional holidays: Chuseok. For many Koreans, Chuseok is a time to return to their hometowns, meet relatives, take a break from their busy routines, and share a meal with their families.

Chuseok is often introduced to people outside Korea as the Korean harvest festival. It takes place on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar and is traditionally associated with the autumn harvest. The holiday has long been connected to gratitude for the year's crops and to spending time with family.

One of the most important parts of Chuseok is food. During the holiday, Korean tables are often filled with colorful dishes, including rice cakes, fried vegetables, meat, noodles, fruit, and traditional drinks. Some foods are prepared for ancestral ceremonies, while others are simply enjoyed together as a family.

However, Chuseok food is not only about what is placed on the table. Behind each dish are traditions, memories, and changes that reflect Korean society. Looking at Chuseok through food provides a glimpse into how Korean families have celebrated the holiday in the past and how they celebrate it today.

What Is Chuseok?

Chuseok is one of the most important traditional holidays in Korea, along with Seollal, the Korean Lunar New Year. It is sometimes compared to Thanksgiving because both holidays are associated with harvests, family gatherings, and gratitude.

During Chuseok, many Koreans traditionally visit their hometowns and spend time with their extended families. In the past, this often meant traveling long distances by train, bus, or car. Today, the holiday can still create significant travel demand as people move between cities to visit their families.

The holiday also has a connection to the agricultural history of Korea. Before modern transportation, supermarkets, and global food distribution, the harvest season was an especially important time of year. A successful harvest meant that families had enough food to prepare for the coming winter.

For this reason, Chuseok was not simply a holiday for eating. It was a time to appreciate what had been produced during the year and to share it with family members.

Although Korean society has changed significantly, this idea of gratitude continues to be reflected in Chuseok food.

Songpyeon: The Food Most Closely Associated with Chuseok

If there is one food that immediately reminds many Koreans of Chuseok, it is songpyeon.

Songpyeon is a traditional Korean rice cake made from rice flour. The dough is shaped into small half-moon forms and filled with ingredients such as sesame seeds, beans, chestnuts, or other sweet fillings. The rice cakes are then steamed, traditionally over pine needles.

Another food strongly associated with Korean holidays is jeon. Jeon refers to a variety of foods made by coating ingredients with flour and egg before frying them in a pan. There are many different types of jeon. Some contain vegetables, while others use seafood, meat, tofu, or mushrooms.

Popular varieties include vegetable jeon, fish jeon, meatball-shaped jeon, and green onion pancakes. After the ceremony, family members may share the prepared food together.

This creates an interesting connection between food and memory. A dish prepared for a ceremony can later become part of a family meal, connecting remembrance with everyday family life.

Chuseok Food Is Different From Family to Family. Although certain foods are widely associated with Chuseok, there is no single “correct” Chuseok meal. Food traditions can vary across different regions of Korea.

The Long Journey Home

Food is only one part of the Chuseok experience. Another major part is traveling home.

For university students and young workers living away from their hometowns, Chuseok can be one of the few times each year when the entire family gathers.

Some students may travel several hours by bus or train. Others may drive with their families. Airports and transportation stations can become especially busy around the holiday period.

The journey itself can become part of the memory. People may remember stopping at a highway rest area, eating snacks during a long drive, or waiting at a crowded train station. Children may fall asleep in the back seat while adults continue talking.

After arriving home, the smell of food being prepared in the kitchen can immediately create a sense of familiarity. For people who live away from their families, this feeling can be particularly meaningful.

Chuseok food is more than a meal. It is a taste of family, a taste of tradition, and a taste of memories passed from one generation to the next.

2026 Oct. 30th Fri.

Why Is It So Hard to Make Friends at University?

Vol. 195

University is often described as a time when we meet new people, make lifelong friends, and create memories we will remember after graduation. We see it in movies, hear it from older students, and expect it when we enter university. But the reality can be quite different. There are thousands of people on campus, yet many students find it difficult to make close friends. We attend lectures surrounded by other students, pass familiar faces in the hallway, and see the same people in the library or cafeteria. Still, we may spend most of the day without having a meaningful conversation.

This is something both Korean and international students can understand, although they may experience it for different reasons. For Korean students, the transition from high school to university can be a bigger change than expected. In high school, students spend most of the day with the same classmates. Even if they are not close, seeing the same people every day naturally creates familiarity. University is different. Students have different schedules, different classes, and different groups of friends. Someone sitting next to you in one lecture might never be in another class with you. Even students in the same major may only meet a few times a week.

Meeting people is easy. Becoming close to them is much harder. International students can face an additional challenge: language. Many international students come to Korea hoping to experience Korean culture and meet local students. Some study Korean before arriving and are excited to use it in everyday life. But knowing basic Korean does not always mean being comfortable in university social situations.

Students use slang, shortened expressions, jokes, and words that are rarely found in textbooks. Group chats can be especially difficult to follow. Even when an international student understands every individual word, they may still be unsure about what is actually expected of them.

Korean students can also feel uncomfortable in these situations. A student may want to speak with an international classmate but worry about making mistakes in English. They may think, “My English is not good enough,” and decide not to start a conversation. The international student may be thinking the same thing from the other side. This creates an interesting situation where two people may both want to become friends but neither wants to make the first move.

Language is not the only barrier. Different social expectations can also create misunderstandings. For example, when a Korean student says, “Let's have lunch sometime,” they may not necessarily mean that a specific plan has been made. An international student might understand it as a direct invitation and wait for the person to suggest a date. Neither person is wrong. They simply understand the situation differently.

Social media can make university relationships even more complicated. Students today are constantly connected through messaging apps and social media. We can see where our classmates are eating, who they are meeting, and what they did over the weekend. It seems like this should make staying connected easier. But online connection does not always lead to real closeness.

Sometimes, social media can actually make loneliness more noticeable. When we see photos of classmates traveling, going to parties, or spending time together, it can seem like everyone else has already found their group. What we do not see are the people behind those photos sitting alone in their rooms or eating lunch by themselves. Many students probably feel lonely sometimes, but few people openly talk about it.

Another reason making friends is difficult is simply that students are busy. University life is no longer only about attending classes. Students have assignments, presentations, club activities, internships, part-time jobs, and career preparation. International students may also have to deal with visas, language difficulties, and adjusting to life in a new country. When students are this busy, friendship can start to feel like another responsibility. You need to find a time when both people are available. You need to decide where to meet. You need to send the first message. If plans are canceled, you need to make another one. It can feel easier to stay with the people you already know. This is one reason why repeated contact matters. Friendships often develop simply because people continue to see each other. Clubs, student organizations, sports teams, and volunteer activities can provide these opportunities. They give students a reason to meet regularly and something to talk about.

However, joining an activity does not automatically solve the problem. Some students join clubs hoping to meet new people but find that everyone already has their own friends. International students may also struggle if most activities are conducted only in Korean. This is where universities can make a difference. If a university wants to become more international, simply bringing more international students to campus is not enough. Students need opportunities to interact naturally.

Language exchange programs can help, but they should not be the only option. Sports, volunteer work, cultural events, academic projects, and student organizations can also bring people together. Most importantly, international students should not feel like temporary guests on campus. They are students, just like everyone else, and should have opportunities to participate in university life on equal terms. Students also have a role to play.

Korean students sometimes assume that international students will approach them first because they are interested in Korea. International students may expect Korean students to take the first step because they are more familiar with the campus. Neither assumption is particularly useful. Someone has to start. The first conversation does not have to be impressive. It can begin with something simple: “Have you started the assignment?” “Do you know where this classroom is?” or “Do you want to get lunch after class?”

For international students, speaking a little Korean can help open a conversation. It does not have to be perfect. Korean students should also not be afraid to use English just because they are worried about making mistakes.

In fact, mistakes can sometimes make conversations easier. They show that both people are making an effort. We also tend to expect friendships to happen immediately. If we meet someone once and do not immediately feel close to them, we may assume that we have nothing in common. But most friendships do not begin that way.

They develop through small, repeated moments. You sit next to someone several times. You have lunch together. You complain about the same assignment. You exchange messages about class. Slowly, talking becomes more natural.

Not everyone we meet will become a close friend, and that is perfectly normal. Some people will remain classmates. Others may become friends for one semester and then gradually drift apart. The important thing is having the opportunity to connect. University is one of the few places where people from different cities, countries, and backgrounds meet every day. That diversity is valuable, but it does not automatically create relationships. We have to make the first move.

For Korean students, that might mean talking to an international student instead of assuming they already have enough friends. For international students, it might mean taking the chance to join a Korean-speaking activity or asking a Korean classmate to have lunch. Neither side needs to completely change who they are. We simply need to be willing to experience a little awkwardness.

The first conversation might be uncomfortable. There may be language mistakes or moments when neither person knows what to say. That is part of the process. Friendship is rarely about finding someone who understands everything about us immediately. More often, it is about spending enough time with someone that understanding develops naturally.

University life moves faster than we expect. A semester passes, then another, and suddenly graduation is not very far away. There may be people we wish we had talked to but never did. So perhaps the easiest thing we can do is start small. Say hello to the person sitting next to you. Ask a classmate to have lunch. Join a club even if you do not know anyone there. If someone speaks to you in imperfect Korean or English, give them time to finish. We do not need hundreds of friends. But in a university filled with people from different backgrounds, it would be a shame to spend four years surrounded by people without ever getting to know them.

Sometimes, making a friend starts with a very simple question: “Do you want to have lunch together?” It may take only a few seconds to ask. But sometimes, that is enough to change an ordinary day.

2026 Oct. 30th Fri.

The Cost of Being a Student : When Campus Life Gets More Expensive

Vol. 195

Being a university student has always been expensive. There are tuition fees, textbooks, transportation, meals, and all the small costs that seem insignificant until they add up. Recently, however, many students have started to pay closer attention to how much they spend just to get through an ordinary day.

For a student in Korea, a typical day might begin with a bus or subway ride to campus, followed by a quick meal between classes and a coffee while studying. Maybe there is a team project that requires meeting at a café. Maybe an assignment requires a new book or some printing. None of these expenses seem particularly serious on their own. But by the end of the month, they can become a surprisingly large part of a student's budget.

This is something both Korean and international students can understand, even though their situations may be different. For Korean students, rising everyday expenses can mean eating out less often, spending less time at cafés, or taking on a part-time job. Students who live away from home may face an even bigger challenge because rent and utilities take up a significant portion of their monthly budget.

International students have their own difficulties. In addition to everyday expenses, they may have to think about airfare, visa-related costs, insurance, and the higher cost of living that can come with moving to a new country. Students who do not speak Korean fluently may also find it harder to compare prices or find affordable options. Even something as simple as eating lunch can become a financial decision.

University students are often told to enjoy their youth. We are encouraged to travel, join clubs, meet new people, and make memories before graduation. But it can be difficult to enjoy these experiences when we are constantly calculating how much they will cost.

A meal with friends is not just a meal. It can mean transportation, drinks, and perhaps another café afterward. A simple weekend outing can also become expensive. As a result, some students have become more careful about when and where they spend money. Convenience stores can replace restaurants. Homemade coffee can replace café drinks. Walking can replace short subway or bus rides. These choices may sound small, but they reflect a larger change in how students think about university life.

There is also a social side to the issue. Money can be an uncomfortable topic among friends. Students may not want to admit that they cannot afford to join a particular dinner or trip. They may make an excuse instead of saying that the cost is too high. For international students, this can sometimes be even more complicated. A student may not be familiar with the prices in Korea or may feel pressure to participate in social activities in order to make friends. Saying no can feel difficult when you are still trying to find your place in a new environment.

This does not mean that students have stopped wanting to socialize. In fact, many students are looking for cheaper ways to spend time together.

A walk around campus can be just as enjoyable as sitting in an expensive café. Eating at a university cafeteria can become a social activity rather than simply a cheap alternative. Studying together in a library costs nothing. Perhaps this is one positive change that can come from having less money to spend. Students may start to think more creatively about what actually makes an experience valuable.

At the same time, we should be careful not to romanticize financial difficulties. There is a difference between choosing a cheaper meal and having to skip a meal because you cannot afford it. There is a difference between taking a part-time job for experience and working long hours because you need the money to pay your living expenses. Students are often expected to balance studying, working, socializing, and preparing for their future at the same time. Financial pressure can make that balance even harder.

For universities, this raises some important questions. How affordable are campus meals? Are there enough low-cost spaces for students to study and meet? Are financial support programs easy for students to find and apply for? And do international students have access to the same information about these resources? These questions matter because the cost of university life affects more than students' wallets. It can affect how much time they have to study, how often they can participate in campus activities, and even how connected they feel to university life.

A student who has to work several evenings a week may have fewer opportunities to join a club. A student worried about rent may find it difficult to concentrate on an assignment. A student who cannot afford frequent social activities may gradually feel left out.

None of this means that universities can solve every financial problem students face. The cost of living is influenced by much larger economic conditions. But universities can still make campus life a little more accessible. Students can also help each other. Sometimes, that simply means choosing a cheaper restaurant when making plans. It means not assuming everyone can afford the same things. It means being comfortable when someone says, “That is a little expensive for me.” These small choices can make campus life more welcoming.

Ultimately, being a university student should not mean having to choose between studying and being able to afford everyday life. Korean and international students may come from different backgrounds, speak different languages, and have different financial situations. But the feeling of checking your bank account after a long week is probably more universal than we think.

University is supposed to be a time for learning, meeting people, and preparing for the future. It should not feel like every ordinary day comes with a price tag that students have to worry about.