



Korean Class Grand Opening Reception: (From left) Daniel Han; Dr. Dan Gelo, Dean, College of Liberal and Fine Arts, UTSA; Mrs. BJ Yang, Dr. Jai Yang, President, Korean American Association of San Antonio; Shahrzad Dowlatshahi, Chief of Protocol and Acting Director for the International Relations Office, City of San Antonio; Julius Gribou, Executive Vice Provost and Senior International Officer, UTSA; Mimi Yu, Associate Director, East Asia Institute, UTSA; Dr. Jung Soo Park, Director of the Houston Korean Education Center; Dr. John Frederick, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, UTSA

On the evening of Tuesday, February 21, 2012 the East Asia Institute (EAI) hosted the grand opening of the Korean Culture and Language class. The event was organized in collaboration with the Houston Korean Education Center. This course was made possible through a generous grant given by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea. Over 70 people attended the grand opening.

The Grand Opening was held in the first floor foyer of UTSA's Main Building. Students as well as invited guests were able to enjoy traditional Korean cuisine; kimchi, a fermented dish made with vegetables and a variety seasonings. Various styles of this famous Korean dish were available. Napa Cabbage Kimchi,

Seasoned Squash Kimchi, Seasoned Cucumber Kimchi, and Radish Kimchi were all offered with a side of rice. Those who attended were invited to try as many of the dishes as they liked.

Shortly after the start of the reception, Mimi Yu, Associate Director of the East Asia Institute gave the opening remarks, not only in English, but in Korean as well. "We are glad to be adding Korean to UTSA," Yu declared. "Even though it is currently offered as a non-credit course, we hope that it will gain enough momentum to be eventually added to the course catalogue."

She then introduced Julius Gribou, Executive Vice Provost and Senior International Officer, who in turn

gave welcoming remarks on behalf of UTSA. "I was surprised by the amount of interest the students showed in the class," said Gribou, "We thought a class of 30 would be sufficient, but the demand exceeded our expectation and we were pleased to add a second class to accommodate all of the students that would like to enroll in the class."

Shahzad Dowlatshahi, Chief of Protocol and Acting Director for the International Relations Office of the City of San Antonio, was the next to speak. "Having an institution like UTSA teach Korean is an important first step for communication," professed Dowlatshahi, "especially since with have over 8,000 people in the city of San Antonio who are Korean."

UTSA is indebted to Dr. Jung Soo Park, Director of the Houston Korean Education Center, who was the driving force to make this Korean Language and Culture Class possible. "Hangul, the Korean Language, is so easy for anyone to learn," Dr. Park informed, "Learning not only Korean, but other languages as well, will open up more windows of opportunities for interacting with the world. We are extremely pleased to be able to team up with UTSA in offering the Korean language class and we look forward to working with UTSA on recruiting more students into the Teach and Learn in Korea (TaLK) and



Dr. Park discusses the TaLK and EPIK Programs with the Korean class

English Program in Korea (EPIK) programs." In addition, Dr. Park also donated a set of six textbooks to all students and many reference books and dictionaries to EAI.

After the reception the students were ushered downstairs to a classroom decorated with Korean posters, which would serve as one the locations for the first class of the 10-week program. Upon arriving Dr. Jung Soo Park took a few moments to introduce the students to TaLK and EPIK programs. Both programs



(From left): Dr. Park donates textbooks to the Korean Language and Culture class; EAI office staff prepares food to be served at the reception.



From top left: Dr. Deukhee Gong, Director of Korean American Cultural Center of San Antonio; Ms. Jin Ah Castillo, UTSA ESL instructor and Korean teacher; the first day of the Korean class, an eager student body willing to participate

invite native speakers of English from seven different countries to teach English to Korean students in rural areas in Korea.

As a special treat for the first day of class, both Korean professors Dr. Deukhee Gong, Director of Korean American Cultural Center of San Antonio, and Ms. Jin Ah Castillo, also a UTSA ESL instructor combined their classes and team-taught the first lesson. They covered basic greetings such as hello and good-bye in addition to basic self-introduction. Even though it was only the first lesson, the students had a lot of fun learning and communicating in Korean. As the class ended and the students were leaving, remarks such as “That was fun” and “I cannot wait for Thursday” could be heard.

UTSA’s East Asia Institute is proud to be part of this new initiative and help promote appreciation and understanding of Korea, its society, language and culture in southern Texas. Korea is ranked as one of the top 10 economy powers in the world and is Asia’s third largest economy. Furthermore, Korea is one of Texas’ largest trading partners. In addition, the Korean language is listed as one of the high priority military intelligence languages by the U.S. Department of State as the tension keeps rising between North and South Korea. With this new Korean class the East Asia Institute hopes to help cultivate new global leaders and Korea experts in the San Antonio area.



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