For immediate release

Grand Opening of Korean Language and Culture Class at UTSA

The East Asia Institute (EAI) will offer a Korean language and culture class at the University of Texas at San Antonio in collaboration with the Houston Korean Education Center. The class is made available through a generous grant from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea. The grand opening is scheduled for February 21st, 2012.

“It is very exciting to see Korean being offered at UTSA,” said Dr. Jung Soo Park, Director of the Houston Korean Education Center, “Korean is listed as one of the critical languages by the U.S. Department of State. It is important to learn the Korean language and culture not only because South Korea plays a significant role in Asia’s political and economic stability, but also because Korea is an essential trading partner for Texas.”

Through EAI’s Kimchi Festival that took place in October 2011 at UTSA, surveys were sent out to gauge interest in learning the Korean language. Due to an overwhelming positive response EAI has decided to offer a non-credit beginning-level Korean language and culture class at UTSA’s main campus. The 10-week course will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. between February 21st-May 4th. “The East Asia Institute is pleased to announce that Dr. Deukhee Gong, Director of the Korean American Cultural Center of San Antonio has been appointed to teach the class,” said Mimi Yu, Associate Director of the EAI, “Dr. Gong will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to this position.”

“Speaking more than one language is always a plus in life, especially when it comes to business and travel,” said Julius Gribou, Executive Vice Provost and Senior International Officer, “Offering Korean at UTSA will add a new dimension to global education here on campus. I hope this new initiative will encourage more UTSA faculty and students to engage in educational, cultural, and research exchange programs with Korea from this point on.”
Korea is ranked 11th in the world economy and is an important trading partner for Texas. It is also Asia’s third largest economy. Korea has a rich and ancient culture, quite distinct from those of Japan and China, and people who have visited Korea have been impressed by its historical and artistic interest.

The UTSA East Asia Institute’s mission is to promote appreciation and understanding of East Asian societies and cultures both on campus and in the community through research, outreach, networking, education, student/faculty exchange, and business development and cooperation. The East Asia Institute organizes seminars, workshops, lectures, conferences, film festivals, visual art exhibition as well as bringing in performing art groups from China, Japan, Korea, and other Asian nations. It also encourages faculty research collaborations both with UTSA and with participating East Asian university researchers.

The Houston Korean Education Center strives to raise understanding of Korean culture and language to overseas Koreans as well as the American public. It offers support, training, and materials to those seeking the same goal. The Houston Korean Education Center also helps English speakers travel to Korea through recruitment into the TaLK scholarship (Teach and Learn in Korean) and EPIK fellowship (English Program in Korea) programs.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea’s vision is to build on the fields of education, science, and technology to create a strong future for Korea. It seeks to improve the education system and emphasize research through colleges and research institutions. Through these efforts, The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology hopes to create more jobs and opportunities for scientists and engineers.

For more information regarding EAI’s Korean language and culture class, please contact the East Asia Institute at 210.458.4943, eai@utsa.edu, or see the EAI’s homepage at http://www.utsa.edu/eai.