

# Press Release

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한국대학교육협의회  
Korean Council for University Education

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## 2025 KCUE General Meeting

- The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) held its regular General Meeting on Wednesday, January 22 at the Westin Chosun Seoul in Jung-gu, Seoul.
- The meeting was attended by the presidents of 136 of the 197 four-year universities in Korea to discuss and vote on the 2024 performance and accounting reports and the 2025 business plans and budget.
- Park Sang-Gue, Chairman of KCUE, said: "We experienced many ups and downs last year, including the medical school admission quota and the introduction of a Self-Directed Major Selection system, in addition to existing issues such as university finances and the plummeting school-age population." He also said: "I

would like to express my deep gratitude to the presidents who have provided their keen insights to help universities navigate through these challenges and have facilitated communication with KCUE." And he added: "For a future-oriented higher education, KCUE has sought to secure a higher education budget that is above the OECD average, successfully establish the RISE system, build a university-local government cooperation system, and pursue regulatory reform to enhance the autonomy of universities and diversify their revenue sources. To this end, we listened to the councils of university presidents, representing different types, regions, and functional areas, as well as the presidents of many member universities. Based on this input, we were able to make policy and legislative proposals in cooperation with the government and the National Assembly."

- At the General Meeting, KCUE organized a separate session to discuss the current issues in higher education, where the results of the activities of the University-Regional Innovation Task Force and the results of the study on higher education development and medium- to long-term financial plan were reported. Renowned external speakers were invited for the afternoon session. Dr. Jaeho Yeom, President of Taejae University and Vice Chairman of the Presidential

Committee on Artificial Intelligence, gave a lecture on the future of higher education in the age of AI. And Ju Hyeong-hwan, Vice Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Aging Society and Population Policy, spoke about policies to respond to the low birth rate and aging society and ways to cooperate with universities. These presentations were followed by a question and answer session.

- The final session of the General Meeting was a dialogue with Lee Joo-ho, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, to discuss current issues facing public and private universities and make policy suggestions.
  
- Attachment: Opening Remarks by KCUE Chairman Park Sang-Gue

**<Attachment> Opening Remarks by KCUE Chairman Park Sang-Gue for the 2025 General Meeting**

## **Opening Remarks**

Dear Presidents of Member Universities,

The New Year has arrived. I would like to thank you all for your strong support and encouragement in the past year and wish you all the best in the New Year.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the presidents and distinguished guests present here today. My special thanks go to Vice Chairmen Jung Sungtaek, Byun Chang-Hoon and Kwak Ho-sang, as well as all the executives and staff of KCUE for their dedicated service throughout the year.

I assumed the position of the 28th Chairman of KCUE in March last year with a firm determination to dedicate myself to addressing the real-world problems and future tasks facing universities. We experienced many ups and downs last year, including the medical school admission quota and the introduction of a self-directed major selection system, in addition to existing issues such as university finances and the plummeting school-age population. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the presidents who have provided their keen insights to help universities navigate through these challenges and have facilitated communication with KCUE.

For a future-oriented higher education, KCUE has sought to secure a higher education budget that is above the OECD average, successfully

establish the RISE system, build a university–local government cooperation system, and pursue regulatory reform to enhance the autonomy of universities and diversify their revenue sources. To this end, we listened to the councils of university presidents, representing different types, regions, and functional areas, as well as the presidents of many member universities. Based on this input, we were able to make policy and legislative proposals in cooperation with the government and the National Assembly.

First, despite the government's fiscal austerity and challenging economic conditions at home and abroad, the special account for higher and lifelong education support was increased from KRW 15.5 trillion in 2024 to KRW 16.4 trillion in 2025, and KRW 2 trillion was allocated to support the RISE system and glocal university programs.

The leadership has repeatedly urged the Ministry of Education, the National Education Commission, and the National Assembly to provide financial support for higher education at the level of developed countries in order to foster globally competitive universities. As a result, the government–wide higher education financing committee established last December has adopted as its agenda the extension of the sunset of the special account for higher and lifelong education support and the expansion of per capita public higher education spending to the level comparable to the OECD average. I would like to thank the executives and presidents of the member universities for their commitment to the discussions with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and for accompanying me on my visit to the National Assembly.

Second, in order to successfully establish the RISE system to address the vicious cycle of regional extinction and local university crisis, which is one of the major challenges facing our society, and to transform local universities into regional innovation hubs, we need to establish a collaborative governance system between universities and local governments. To this end, we organized the university–regional innovation task force, composed of university presidents. The task force's proposals have been incorporated into the Ministry of Education's guidelines and other regulations. They were also reflected in the operating regulations of the RISE system of the Ministry of Education and local governments.

Third, we supported universities' efforts to attract international students and continued to reform international student policies to strengthen the international competitiveness of Korean universities. We helped improve the government's international student policies, including Study Korea 300K, the International Education Quality Assurance System, and the international student visa policy, as well as easing regulations that hindered the recruitment of international students. These efforts will help Korean universities position themselves as a more competitive higher education option for students around the world.

Esteemed presidents,

Universities are not just institutions that convey knowledge. They are key players in driving social change and fostering creative talent. In this era of change and challenge, we must work with our member

universities to open up the future of higher education.

KCUE will continue to work closely with universities to address the real-world issues facing Korean universities and fulfill its role as a council of universities for the development of future-oriented higher education.

I regret that I have not had more opportunities to meet and discuss with the presidents of member universities during my first year as Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and respect to all the presidents and staff of the universities for their dedicated efforts to move their universities forward in these challenging times.

Finally, I would like to thank the Secretary General of KCUE and all the staff for their hard work in preparing for today's General Meeting. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the distinguished guests. I wish everyone good health and happiness in the New Year. Thank you.

January 22, 2025

Park Sang-Gue

Chairman

Korean Council for University Education