

2004 American Education Spring Fair – Korea Post-Fair Report

American International Education Foundation's 2004 Spring American Education Fair in Korea took place this March in Seoul at COEX. Included in this post-Fair report are our Korean recruitment market update, details about the Spring Fair venue, attendance statistics, seminar topics, news about our student tracking system, and the schedule for AIEF's 2004 Fall Fair in Seoul. AIEF is grateful for your participation and looks forward to your continued support of our future events.

Korean Market Update

According to the "Open Doors" report, the number of Korean students studying in the United States was 51,519 in 2003, representing a 5% increase from 2002. Statistics show that approximately 39% of Korean students in the United States are studying at undergraduate level, 47% are enrolled in graduate programs, and 11 % are listed as non-degree or ESL students. According to Fulbright Commission, the number of Korean students taking the TOEFL exam showed a 25 percent increase in 2003.

Totaling over 154,000 students studying abroad, Korea currently ranks third, after India and China, among countries sending students to the United States. Besides the United States, other popular places for Korean students to study are Canada, Japan, Australia, and China. Recently, the U.K., Germany, and France have also launched aggressive recruitment campaigns in Korea.

A recent survey of Korean students planning to study in the United States revealed a strong interest in pursuing degrees in business and engineering. Other popular fields were computer science, information technology, the social sciences, the arts, agriculture, communications and journalism, biological sciences, and health care services. Promising educational sub-sectors include Intensive English Language Training, Vocational Training, Accounting, Art and Music Schools, Summer Camps, and Elementary and Secondary Schools.

2004 Korea Spring Fair Dates, Venue, and Results

On the weekend of March 13th and 14th, the American International Education Foundation's 2004 Spring American Education Fair in Korea was held at COEX in Seoul. AIEF coordinated the American Pavilion within the Korea Student Fair, which is traditionally the best-attended student recruitment event in Korea. Unexpectedly, fair attendance was noticeably slower this spring. Local sources indicated that attendance was impacted by the political discord resulting from the impeachment of Korea's president a few days prior to the event and related student protests. Total attendance to the American Pavilion was estimated to be 1,650. Approximately 829 Korean students registered in AIEF's database, and this information will soon be forwarded to all of the American Pavilion participants.

Orientation Program

A pre-Fair orientation was held at the Oakwood Premier Hotel on the morning of March 13th. Conducted by Stephen Smith, director of AIEF's Washington Office, the orientation included a review of the Korea recruitment market, current and projected market trends, and practical information about the COEX venue and onsite services. As part of the orientation, Mr. Scott Walker, consular officer from the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, addressed the U.S. education delegation regarding student visa issues in Korea.

Fair Highlights

Reserved only for official U.S. school representatives, the American Pavilion was located at the central section of the Korea Student Fair exhibition area. At the AIEF booth, our staff directed student traffic and offered free onsite counseling. In addition, representatives of the U.S. embassy and the Fulbright office in Korea were on hand at their respective booths throughout the event to answer questions posed by the public.

For no additional cost, AIEF arranged for interpreters from Korean colleges and universities to translate for each of the participating American schools; this customary service is always a highly rated feature of our events, as the student interpreters assist tremendously in bridging the language and culture gaps that sometimes arise. Korean-language signs were also provided at every booth to introduce the essential facts about each institution. In conjunction with the fair, AIEF offered informative seminars for Korean students, and several schools also conducted individual sessions to introduce their institutions to prospective students.

To help Korean students learn about the location of U.S. schools, AIEF printed color U.S. maps that were distributed free of charge to the American Pavilion's visitors. Many U.S. schools representatives found this to be very useful for them to point out where their institutions are situated geographically.

At the invitation of AIEF, Mr. Scott Walker and Mr. Gary Childs, U.S. Embassy consular officers, spoke at special sessions for students that focused on U.S. security and student visa issues.

Student Information System

As a service to Korean students, AIEF offered online pre-Fair registration to the exhibition's visitors. Students who visited the American Pavilion were encouraged to register their educational goals and contact information in AIEF's post-Fair student information system.

Fair Banquet

On the evening of Saturday, March 13th, AIEF and KTF (Korea Trade Fair) co-hosted a banquet for the U.S. school representatives at a traditional Korean restaurant located near COEX. The dinner featured traditional Korean barbecue and other popular local dishes. Representing KTF, Mr. Lee warmly welcomed the U.S. education delegation and wished everyone success at the fair.

2004 Fall Fair in Seoul

AIEF has already set the dates for the 2004 Fall American Education Fair in Seoul. Scheduled from September 18-19, the event will again be held at COEX. U.S. schools are encouraged to contact the American International Education Foundation to register early in order to reserve booth space for this always-popular event.

Online registration is available at:

http://www.aief-usa.org/services/signup_fair.htm. For more information, please view the flyer at: <http://www.aief-usa.org/eposter/fall04flyer.htm> or call the AIEF office in California at 626-965-1995.