

# The Argus

Since 1954

No. 540 MARCH 14, 2024

## Ongoing Debate between Teachers' Rights and Students' Rights

Call for Measures  
to Protect Teachers' Rights

Advocates for  
Repeal of the Student  
Human Rights Ordinance

Need for True Education:  
Balancing Rights and Obligations

# Coexistence Matters

## The Argus

ESTABLISHED 1954

Published monthly except on school holidays by and for the students of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, The Argus, the campus English magazine, pursues the highest standard of campus journalism and academism.

- *President and Publisher* ..... Prof. Park Jeong-Woon
- *Executive Editor* ..... Prof. Lee Herim
- *Copy Readers* ..... Prof. Merrilee Brinegar  
Prof. Joseph R. Vincent  
Prof. Chris Kobylinski
- *Editor-in-Chief* ..... Kim Su-yeon (IS-4)
- *Staff Reporters* ..... Kim Yi-eun (E-3)  
Lee Seeun (M-2)  
Cho Subin (SL-2)  
Joo Heejin (ELLT-2)
- *Editorial Consultants* ..... Lee Jue-hyun (IEL-4)  
Cho Eun (LCS-3)
- *Illustrator* ..... Choi Soohyeon

107, Imun-ro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul, Korea  
(Postal Code 02450)

Tel: (02) 2173-2508 Fax: 2173-2509

81, Oedae-ro, Mohyeon-eup, Cheoin-gu Yongin, Gyeonggi  
Province, Korea

(Postal Code 17035) Tel: (031) 330-4113

Printed by HONG DESIGN | Tel: 464-5167 Fax: 464-5168

Last summer, another tragic incident occurred in a South Korean elementary school, sparking intense debate over the erosion of teachers' authority. A woman in her twenties, serving as a first-grade homeroom teacher, tragically took her own life in a storage room. As it was known that she had been suffering from complaints made by parents of a student in her class, the police began an investigation. However, the police terminated the investigation shortly after, citing no suspicion of bullying by parents, though this decision remains controversial. Following the incident, the Teacher's Union mobilized for the restoration of teachers' rights, a sentiment echoed by the press, which called for solutions. Consequently, an amended Teachers' Status Act is set to take effect, on March 28, 2024, while the Korean Elementary School Teachers' Union is still calling for reinvestigation into her death.

One notable aspect is that the Student Human Rights Ordinance has been singled out as a contributing factor to the decline in teachers' rights by the Korean government and the ruling party. This shift in focus has led to a contentious debate over whether to abolish the ordinance with politicians divided on the matter. They have argued that students' rights have been "excessively improved" while suppressing teachers' rights. The spectacle of a group of members of South Chungcheong Provincial Council enthusiastically advocating for abolition contrasts with a lone superintendent of education picketing in front of Gwanghwamun Gate in Seoul.

The ongoing conflicts over the ordinance arose from the stakeholders using the issue for their political interests without understanding the essence of the educational environment. The school community is a complex network, akin to a patchwork in its nature. It comprises principals, education offices, teachers, parents, and students, each with their own interests and influences. The decline in teachers' rights over the years is attributable to a multitude of complex factors involving all these actors.

To foster coexistence in a school community, it is essential to respect the rights of all parties involved, recognizing that all rights are relative. Instances of teachers infringing upon students' rights through educational abuse, or vice versa, must be addressed and restrained accordingly. To achieve balance, it is necessary to adjust the extent of each right rather than eliminating one or the other. The relationship between teachers and students is not a simple dichotomy, nor is it a zero-sum game or an adversarial one. It is not necessary for the two to cancel each other out, and protecting one side does not entail attacking the other. Mutual understanding is crucial, as relationships enforced solely by law tend to be rigid. We must stop dividing, as it has never led our society to a good place. ☹

By Kim Su-yeon  
Editor-in-Chief

김수연



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>> After the suicide of a teacher at an elementary school in July 2023, South Korean society became aware of the need for the protection of teachers' rights. Some claim that the decline of teachers' rights is due to the excessive expansion of students' rights and view the Student Human Rights Ordinance and teachers' rights as a zero-sum game, calling for the abolition of the ordinance. If teachers' rights and students' rights are not balanced and guaranteed, it is difficult for education to function properly. To facilitate a quality education, it is important to safeguard the rights of all community members and enhance the educational environment. Let's examine what should be done to develop genuine education for every member of the school community.

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## Elevator Installed for Students with Disabilities in Liberal Arts Building



▲ Office of Administration Support at the Global Campus reveals the design drawing of the elevator on Aug. 31, 2023.

The university has installed an elevator in the Liberal Arts Building of the Global Campus as part of its efforts to address the inconvenience that students with disabilities experience. All students are now allowed to use the elevator starting from the first semester of 2024 since the elevator installation work was completed on Dec. 31, 2023, following 140 days of construction.

In the past, many students complained of the inconvenience due to the lack of an elevator in the building as it is five stories, which causes trouble for students assigned to classes on its higher floors. The construction, which appeared to aim to alleviate students' inconvenience, was initiated as an alternative solution to the long-standing issue of insufficient facilities for students with disabilities at HUFs. While the building had ramps up to the second floor to facilitate the movement of students with disabilities, there was no proper way for them to access levels above the third floor. This issue had been repeatedly raised, but budget constraints prevented it from being solved until 2023.

Kang Ye-won, a sophomore studying Global Business and Technology, said, "Most of my classes were held on the 4th or 5th floor, so I ran out of energy walking up the stairs even before my classes started. Many of my friends also complained about the inconvenience of not having an elevator, so I thought the school took the installation into consideration and installed the elevator. I didn't realize that the main reason for the construction was for disabled students." To ensure the university's desirable development, it is essential to make the learning environment more user-friendly, where all students can enjoy a comfortable campus life. The elevator installation prompts students to contemplate strategies on how to create a campus where everyone is treated equally. 🇵🇸

**By Lee Seun**  
*yisuws@gmail.com*

## HUFS to Implement Microdegree Program on Pilot Basis

HUFS will begin the operation of a microdegree program on a pilot basis starting from the first semester of 2024. A microdegree is a modular curriculum that is separate from the degree program and requires a specified minimum number of credits across departments, majors, divisions, or disciplines.

The school received applications for the program from Feb. 1 through 7 for current undergraduate students with at least one semester undertaken. Students who wish to pursue a microdegree are allowed to choose up to three majors among those offered by departments or from Minerva College. However, some microdegrees are not available to all students, depending on who runs the microdegree. If the microdegree is offered by a single department other than Minerva College, students who are majoring, double-majoring or minoring in that department are not eligible to apply. Also, if there are more than two participating departments, students who have both a major and a double major/minor are not eligible to apply. If a student changes their major or double major/minor after applying for the microdegree and thus meets any of the previous ineligibility conditions, the application will be automatically canceled.

As the first semester of 2024 is a pilot period, students were only able to apply for microdegrees run by their home campus. In addition, for microdegrees with more than two participating departments that are jointly run by both campuses students can apply for a major but only take classes at their home campus. However, the university plans to allow students to take their microdegree classes at both campuses starting next semester.

Kwak Su-a, a junior studying Scandinavian Languages, said, “While it is good to be able to study a variety of fields, it is concerning that the microdegree program is not well publicized.” As the participating departments help students choose various majors, many students are turning their attention to the future operation of the program. 📧

**By Cho Subin**

*subincho2022@hufs.ac.kr*

## HUFS to Revise Admission Process for 2025 Freshmen

HUFS is modifying its admission system by introducing an “open admission system” as early as 2025. The move comes after the Ministry of Education announced that it will decide on additional budget support based on the implementation of a major-free admission system starting with the 2025 entrance examination.

An open admission, or an open enrollment, allows students to choose their majors after they are accepted by a university. This will be separated into a “major-free division,” which has no limitations in terms of choosing a major and a “wide-range major division,” such as the Asian Language Department, which allows students to delay choosing a major until after taking some courses.

President Park Jeong-Woon said in his New Year’s address in January that the university will introduce an open major division and recruitment system, intending to provide students with opportunities for diverse major selections. Under the open major division system, school officials said, a certain number of students must be taken from each department, while the exact number of students taken from each department is still under discussion.

From the 2025 academic year, the school will select more than 5 percent of the total student quota through the open major division, and it plans to increase the percentage in the future. Therefore, the admission of this year’s freshmen will mark the end of the admission process in which all students in a department are admitted without going through the open major division.

However, as HUFS specializes in various minor foreign languages in which many students are reluctant to take, Kim Ha-yeon, a junior studying Scandinavian Languages, voiced her concerns, saying, “The increasing proportion of open major admission students could lead to a decline in enrollment and resources for less popular majors like specialized language studies.” It is necessary to examine whether all students enrolled will have the opportunity to study if many students move to choose popular majors rather than selecting majors for which they could display an aptitude. 📧

**By Cho Subin**


*subincho2022@hufs.ac.kr*

## HUFS Newly Sets Up 8 High-Tech Convergence Divisions

HUFS has set up eight new divisions for the 2024 academic year on both campuses, including those related to artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, culture and technology, and climate change.

Under the establishment of the divisions, the university aims to make the Seoul Campus specialize in the convergence of foreign studies, based on multilingual data centered on languages and social sciences, while building up the Global Campus as the cradle of practical studies based on information, bio, and culture technologies. The wave of change triggered by the Fourth Industrial Revolution calls for fundamental changes in the paradigm of higher education and breakthrough innovations in universities worldwide.

In line with these chronological and social changes, HUFS aims to foster future global convergence talents through the establishment of the following divisions: Division of Language & AI, Division of Social Science & AI (under the College of AI Convergence, Seoul Campus); Division of AI Data Convergence, Division of Finance & AI (under the College of AI Convergence, Global Campus); Division of Digital Contents, Division of Tourism & Wellness (under the College of Culture & Technology, Global Campus); Division of Semiconductor and Electronics Engineering (under the College of Engineering, Global Campus); and Division of Climate Changes (Global Campus).

Among them, the College of AI Convergence, which has divisions on both the Seoul and Global campuses operates as an integrated college between the two. In particular, the Division of Language & AI is the first natural science recruitment unit to be established on the Seoul Campus and has recorded the highest competition rate in the 2024 admissions. Kim Min-jin, a junior studying International Economics and Law, said, "I hope these eight divisions will benefit the students, the school, and society with a well-structured curriculum and programs." 


**By Kim Yi-eun**  
*twosilver258@hufs.ac.kr*

## HUFS Ranks 1st in Evaluation of Critical Foreign Language Education Promotion

HUFS ranked first in the comprehensive evaluation of the Critical Foreign Language Education Promotion in 2023, made by the Ministry of Education, for two consecutive years, school authorities announced on Jan. 24.

Critical foreign languages are those designated by a presidential decree to be strategically necessary for national development, with a total of 53 languages currently designated. HUFS has carried out projects since 2018, when it was designated as a specialized educational institution of the Critical Foreign Languages Education Promotion following the enactment of the Act on the Promotion of Education of Critical Foreign Languages, targeting 16 critical foreign languages. The 16 languages are: Dutch, Hindi, Hungarian, Iranian, Italian, Kazakh, Laotian, Malay-Indonesian, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Swahili, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, and Uzbek.

In addition, the National Institute of International Education under the Ministry of Education has designated HUFS as an educational institution of five more languages — Azerbaijani, Croatian, Czech, Greek, and Ukrainian — for the year of 2024, bringing the total number of languages that the university's Critical Foreign Language Education Promotion Institute offers to 21. The institute aims to foster specialists in critical foreign languages and also provides courses for citizens to learn critical foreign languages.

Jeong Myung-seo, a junior studying Persian and Iranian, who participated in the Persian translation talent training program, said, "In the program, we translated Korean songs by choosing appropriate vocabulary that would convey the meaning correctly and put it into sentences. It was a meaningful experience to understand and explore Persian culture. My major language is only offered at HUFS, so it's hard to learn it elsewhere." It is a great strength of HUFS to offer these many language programs since there is not much opportunity for students to learn critical foreign languages elsewhere. 

**By Kim Yi-eun**  
*twosilver258@hufs.ac.kr*

## HUFS Library Renovation for Better Studying Environments

The HUFS Student Council on the Seoul Campus has held talks with school authorities, clinching agreements including the 24-hour operation of reading rooms in the school's library during exam periods as part of improving its studying environment, it said.

During the Jan. 9 talks with the university library director and the Academic Research Information Team, the council, known as "YeoWoon," and the school agreed to open all five reading rooms around the clock when students sit for exams. YeoWoon, which had made an election pledge to improve the library's studying environments, also said the school has taken measures to remove all the tables in its Hyu Place resting room and install 10 additional sofas in a bid to turn it a complete resting place for student users. Other agreements with the school include extended opening hours of 16 group study rooms inside the library to 9 p.m. in the first semester. In addition, HUFS students also have found it inconvenient that chairs in the reading rooms had some problems such as unfixed backs of chairs and armrests. In order to address this, YeoWoon decided to independently have new chairs installed on a pilot basis.

Many students welcome the YeoWoon-school agreement that resolves to provide a better studying environment. Park Yoon-jeong, a sophomore studying English Linguistics and Language Technology, said, "Only the two reading rooms out of five were open 24 hours a day. When I studied in one reading room, I had to move to the other two rooms if I wanted to study after midnight. This felt inconvenient. Through this renovation, I can avoid the hassle of moving to other reading rooms so that I can study for more time with no inconvenience." 📖

**By Joo Heejin**  
jhj7951@hufs.ac.kr



▲ HUFS Library implements changes so as to improve the studying environment, in preparation for the 2024 Spring semester.

©HUFS Library

## Prof. Rhee Yunna Named to Head Korea PR Association

Rhee Yunna, a professor of the Division of Media & Communication at HUFS, was named as the 28th president of the Korea Public Relations Association (KPRA) at its general meeting on Feb. 7, the association said. Her one-year tenure begins on March 1.

Rhee, who graduated from Ewha Womans University and earned both a master's degree and a doctorate in Journalism

and Communication from the University of Maryland, served as the chairperson of the 31st Korea PR Awards Steering Committee in 2023 and the chief of the PR Expert Certification Committee in 2021. The professor, who was previously with global marketing firms Ogilvy and Ketchum, has built extensive experience in the PR field. She became the General Affairs Director of the Korea Advertising Society and the Research Director of KPRA. Rhee co-wrote books titled "ESG X Communication," (2023) "Public Relations in the Digital Age" (2021) and wrote the book "Global PR" (2014).

The association, established in 1989 to promote the PR industry and protect the rights and interests of corporate PR professionals, runs a variety of businesses such as a campaign for PR ethics and research on the effective management of PR activities. 📖



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▲ Prof. Rhee Yunna is scheduled to serve as the 28th president of KPRA from March 1, 2024.

**By Joo Heejin**  
jhj7951@hufs.ac.kr

# News Briefing

By Kim Su-yeon  
Editor-in-Chief



## The Upcoming General Election in South Korea

The South Korean 22nd general election will be held on April 10, 2024. Thus, each political party is busy formulating election strategies. The ruling People Power Party (PPP) and the main opposition Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) are gearing up for a fierce battle. Meanwhile, Lee Jun-seok, the former chief of the PPP, and Lee Nak-yeon, the former prime minister and leader of the DPK, have surprisingly cooperated to establish the New Reform Party (NRP). However, they are in conflict over who will lead in the election.

Each party began the nomination process to decide who will run for the National Assembly in each constituency. Han Dong-hoon, head of the PPP's Interim Steering Committee and a figure gaining popularity, is advocating for a single nomination to focus on a promising candidate, while Lee Jae-myung, a leader of the DPK, proposed a reshuffling of nominations, leading to disharmony within the party.

The number of seats each party will gain in the election is crucial because the practical power that each party can exercise depends on the number of seats. The PPP aims to stay far ahead of the opposition party. For the DPK, it is important to gain a majority of the parliamentary seats. The introduction of the NRP as a third party might be a factor affecting the DPK, as it provides another choice for swing voters. The NRP aims to gain more than 30 seats to challenge the two major parties, though the possibility remains uncertain. 🇰🇷



▲ Lee Nak-yeon (R) and Lee Jun-seok (L) smile at a launching ceremony of a steering committee, on Jan. 16, 2024, preparing for establishing Lee Nak-yeon's new political party.

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▲ Han Dong-hoon delivers a speech at the launching ceremony of "The Future of the People," the proportional representation satellite party, in Yeouido, Seoul, on Feb. 23, 2024.



▲ Lee Jae-myung delivers a speech at the New Year's press conference in Yeouido, Seoul, on Jan. 31, 2024.



# Transformation of Everything into Art by MSCHF



**By Joo Heejin**

*Staff Reporter of Culture Section*

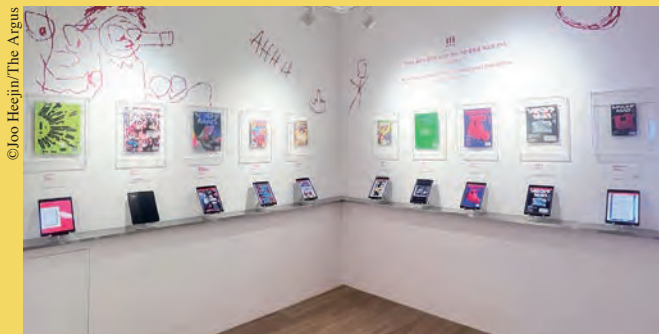
**A** Louis Vuitton bag smaller than a grain of sea salt. Boots that are too big to wear. Both of these unique works were created by “MSCHF,” an artist collective that became the talk of the town in 2023. MSCHF surprises people by creating more diverse forms of art, a departure from commonly known forms of art such as paintings and sculptures. Once it presents new works, people express an interest in them, and the works rapidly spread via social media, creating a great buzz around the art. Visitors can see about 100 works of art from MSCHF, who presents novel and influential works, in its first exhibition in an art museum, “MSCHF: NOTHING IS SACRED.” held in Daelim Museum located in Jongno Ward in Seoul until the end of March. The Argus applauds the message MSCHF wants to convey to society, focusing on the hidden meanings behind its works.

## Before Reading

<b>Location</b>	Daelim Museum, 21, Jahamunno 4-gil, Jongno Ward, Seoul (It takes 3 minutes on foot from Gyeongbokgung Station Exit No. 3.)
<b>Dates</b>	2023.11.10 - 2024.03.31
<b>Time</b>	Tues.- Thur., Sun. 11:00-19:00 (Entrance closing: 18:00) / Fri.-Sat. 11:00-20:00 (Entrance closing: 19:00) / Closed on Mondays.
<b>Admission Fee</b>	Adults: 17,000 won (US\$12.73) / Teens: 5,000 won (US\$3.74) / Infants and Children: 3,000 won (US\$2.25)

## Culture Trip

### !!! Who is MSCHF?



▲ In the ARCHIVE section, visitors can read MSCHF Mags through iPads.

“Nothing is sacred.” This is the slogan of the artist collective MSCHF. MSCHF was established by Gabriel Whaley, Kevin Wiesner, Lukas Bentel, and Stephen Tetreault in 2019, and it is currently based in Brooklyn, New York. The group “drops” its new works every two weeks, which means that it releases them on its own phone application and website. The new works are always original and attract great attention. MSCHF criticizes social systems and people’s psychology and behaviors through works that combine artifacts from many fields such as shoes, websites, robots, beverages, and games.

The ARCHIVE section, the first section of the exhibition, shows the digital magazines that MSCHF publishes every quarter, named MSCHF Mag. Through iPads on the shelf, visitors can read a total of eight magazines including seven unique volumes and one special edition. The magazines contain all the works MSCHF has released so far and the messages of each work, and visitors can identify the values it pursues, suggestions for new projects, and its viewpoint that challenges mainstream culture. In the magazine, “Vol. 06: Eat More Meat Watch More Fox Stop Printing the Bible Stick Your Hands in Your Mouth,” an article asserting that Bible printing should be stopped is representative. It maintains that the Bible, the most printed book of all time, causes negative effects on the environment. In the process of printing the Bible, large volumes of CO2 are emitted, and therefore, the number of trees declines and the earth’s ability to reabsorb CO2 is weakened. Ultimately, this article tells the dark side of the mass production of the Bible, saying that printing the Bible contributes to the destruction of the environment. Simultaneously, at the end of the article, it suggests a groundbreaking alternative; it says that because the Bible is boring and too long to read, some phrases should be extracted and used to make a montage of short videos. In this

way, MSCHF shows its counter-cultural view of the world and conveys its unique messages through the magazines.

### !!! MULTIPLAYER Section

The second section of the exhibition, the MULTIPLAYER section, presents works in the form of games, and visitors can participate in the games.

“Aaaaahhh! Aaaaah!” This is the sound that is endlessly played on “Scream Club,” a website where users share their screams with other users.

When visitors scan the QR code on the wall, it is linked to the website. Logging onto the website, visitors can hear a variety of screams of other users, that is, Scream Club members, and the screams that the visitors have recorded can be heard by others as well. In addition, the names of members who screamed for the longest time appear on the leaderboard at the edge of the website. As of February 26, 2024, the person who screamed for 1,503 seconds is in first place. MSCHF was inspired by Zoom calls and did this project in order to engender large-scale collective action among the public, and as a result, a lot of people shared their screams via the internet.

Above this, in the exhibition room, visitors can experience a game named “Chair Simulator.” First, in order to play the game, visitors have to sit on the game machine that looks like a chair. Subsequently, they have to make characters move and sit on the chair, accumulate sit points, and buy other chairs with the points. The game is played in this way repeating these three steps. While characters are sitting down



▲ Scanning the QR code on the wall will link visitors to “Scream Club.”



▲ Visitors can sit on the game machine and play “Chair Simulator.”

on the chair, the sit points are accumulating, but if they manage to sit a long time for the purpose of earning more points, the level on the discomfort meter rises, and they die, and as a result, the game ends. So as not to make the characters die, it is necessary to have them not sit on only one chair but rather move and sit in various chairs. Through this, MSCHF aimed to point out that existing real-life simulation games are in discord with daily life. For example, the video game, “The Sims,” is related in that it is a life simulation game that imitates the routines of contemporary people with such aspects as meals, sleep, parties, and vacations. However, this kind of life is not one that everyone can enjoy, and luxurious leisure activities in particular are only available to some people. On the other hand, “Chair Simulator” consists only of the movement of sitting on a chair, which most people do every day, so it is different from the Sims. In this way, “Chair Simulator” satirizes simulation games that are disconnected from real-life.

**!!! FRAUD FOR ALL, FRAUD FOR ONE Section**

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▲ “Medical Bill Art” consists of three large paintings.

The third section, the FRAUD FOR ALL, FRAUD FOR ONE section, consists of works about public-participatory online/offline programs that criticize unreasonable and irrational social systems. “Medical Bill Art” is a work that reflects MSCHF’s awareness of medical debt in the United States. “Medical debt,” an unfamiliar concept in South Korea where national health insurance functions well, is a familiar phrase and a common phenomenon in the United States. The work consists of three oil paintings that are drawn by enlarging three actual medical bills in the United States to about 72 inches long and 56 inches wide. The paintings were priced the same as the face value of the original medical bills, and all three paintings were sold, so a total of 73,360 dollars was generated. The profits were used to pay the debts of the owners of the bills. The bills,

which were not worth anything, became oil paintings, and each work turned to reap 8,600 dollars, 17,700 dollars and 47,000 dollars, respectively. By transforming bills into paintings, it became possible to buy and sell them, and MSCHF showed the power of money with these works. As a result, the medical debts were paid, and the bills became invalidated. Through this work, MSCHF criticizes the U.S. medical insurance system that makes people depend on private insurance that puts too much pressure on individuals and shows how the value creation in the art world contrasts with the system in the United States.

Walking past “Medical Bill Art” and turning around, visitors can see a robot writing letters by itself and working at a desk and chair without anyone. Young children’s handwriting is seen on large sheets of paper above the desk. This is “Children’s Crusade,” a robotic machine that writes letters by turning



▲ A robot is writing letters by itself.

online messages in which people have written complaints about the government into children’s handwriting. Why borrow the handwriting of “children” to convey messages? It is because the handwriting of children is an effective method to convey political messages. This work started from the idea that “the most effective way to get in touch with members of Congress in the United States is to become a kid who writes endearing letters with a crayon.” Since calls and e-mails to the office of the U.S. Congress include messages of discontentment with the politicians, they tend to be easily neglected. Hence, the letters of kids can be a good way to make a politician look good. If they post the kid’s letter on their social media, it gets attention from a lot of people, and it is enough to give an impression of “a warmhearted politician that accepts the demands of children.” When looking at the letters on the board beside the work, visitors can see misspelled words and notice that capitalization is not used correctly, making them look like letters from kids. The letters include language to mimic a view of the world through the eyes of a child, such as “Hello mr. senator. my mommy says she is really mad at you,” or to communicate pure ideas of children such as “Sometimes my stomach feels weird when I eat a lot of almonds.” In addition, through the content of

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## Culture Trip

letters like, “I hate guns because they took my cousin recently,” and “Please pledge to stop taking NRA money as a first step,” an attempt is seen to influence the policies of the members of assembly by describing the gun violence that is worsening in the United States, through the voices of children. Ms. Roh, a visitor from the city of Gwangmyeong, Gyeonggi Province, 15 kilometers south of Seoul, commented, “I was impressed by the delivery of messages about preventing gun accidents as if written by children.” In this way, MSCHF is outstanding in that it presents unique-looking works, conveys messages of criticizing and satirizing social issues, and provides people with an opportunity to reconsider these issues.

### !!! FOR EVERYTHING ELSE, THERE'S MASTERCARD Section

Going one floor up the stairs, the FOR EVERYTHING ELSE, THERE'S MASTERCARD section appears, the fourth section, which shows the limited editions of items that MSCHF reinterpreted and transformed mass-produced products into. The works in this section criticize the psychology of contemporary people obsessed with possession, such as the inclination to possess something just because it is famous or a limited edition. Institutions and companies who consider customers' psychology as a weakness, exploit it, and try to make a profit are targets of criticism as well.

If there are a basketball with the signature of Michael Jordan, a famous American basketball player, do you want to purchase it? What would you do if it was presented with a certificate of authenticity and a video of him signing it? “Dunk Dot Biz” is a collection of these three pieces, and in the exhibition room, visitors can only see the basketball. Most people who purchased this work expected, without a doubt, that they would get the ball signed by the basketball player Michael Jordan, but

their expectations were completely inaccurate. The basketball was signed by a different person with the same name, Michael Jordan, a journalist and professor at Long Island University in New York. In this manner, “Dunk

Dot Biz” criticizes the psychology of people obsessed with celebrities and the resulting consumption culture.

Passing several works, visitors can discover a microscope. When getting closer to and looking through it, visitors can find that there is a tiny bag on the substage. It is called the “Microscopic Handbag.” The bag, which is so small that the longest side of it is 700 micrometers, cannot even be identified with the naked eye as to whether it is a grain of sea salt or a bag. Thus, the microscope used to view it is displayed, and only when viewed under the lens, a figure of the bag can be seen. It is a Louis Vuitton bag elaborately made in the way that intravenous injections are produced. By drastically reducing the size of the handbag, MSCHF eliminated the function of the bag of holding things and only left the symbol of the brand “Louis Vuitton.” Through this work, which, MSCHF states, is the final word in bag miniaturization, the group intended to satirize the phenomenon of bags becoming far from practical and only functioning as a symbol of brands.



▲ The Louis Vuitton bag can only be seen through a microscope.

Another work, red boots that are so big that they seem uncomfortable to wear and take off, is called “Big Red Boot,” and they are similar to the boots the protagonist Atom wears in the animated film “Astro Boy.”(2003) The work became more popular since several influencers, such as the American rappers Lil Wayne and Ice Spice, uploaded pictures and videos to their social media accounts wearing the red boots. They might look uncomfortable to wear, but according to those who have tried wearing them, they are comfortable and feel stable since they are made of rubber, so the upper part is flexible, and the bottom part is hard. Visitors can try wearing these red boots sitting on the chair on one side of the exhibition room. In addition, there are two follow-up works of “Big Red Boot,” comprising “Big Black Boot” and “MSCHF x Crocs. Big Red Boot (Yellow).”

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▲ On the basketball, the signature of the journalist and professor named Michael Jordan is written.

©Joo Heejin/The Argus



▲ Visitors can wear “Big Red Boot” in the exhibition room.

In these works, the color of the boots changed to black and yellow, respectively. As for “MSCHF x Crocs. Big Red Boot (Yellow),” it was made in collaboration with the shoe company Crocs and has holes on its surface. These two pairs of boots are available as well. By making abstract, unrealistic and

cartoonish things into real products that can be worn, MSCHF made surrealistic images, similar to the increasing number of AI-generated images in social media, and brought them into the real world.

### !!! NOTHING IS SACRED Section

©Joo Heejin/The Argus



▲ The sole of “Jesus Shoes” is filled with holy water from the Jordan River.

The Nothing Is Sacred section is the last section, which is also the title of the exhibition. In this section, works are presented that overthrow social ideas and common perceptions and blur the

lines of the standards and boundaries of the world. MSCHF’s well-known works, “Jesus Shoes” and “Satan Shoes,” are representative. As visitors can tell from the names of the works, both are related to Catholicism and were made with the Nike Air Max 97. “Jesus Shoes,” which are covered in white, were made in 2019 with 60 cc of holy water from the Jordan River in the sole. Between the shoelaces, there are glossy crosses covered in silver and gold with Jesus Christ decorations on it. “Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.” This is from Matthew 14:25 in the Bible. As these shoes allude to the scripture that depicts Jesus walking on

water, “MT.14:25” is written on the side of the shoes, and they sold for 1,425 dollars. When considering the high prices, visitors might think that MSCHF went to the Jordan River in



▲ In contrast to that of “Jesus Shoes,” the sole of “Satan Shoes” is filled with blood and red ink.

person, brought back holy water, and poured it into the shoes; however, MSCHF said that it bought holy water from the Jordan River on Amazon and just used that. The shoes are a work that epitomizes the collaboration culture with celebrities and the idolization of brands with religious veneration. Even though there was no consultation, MSCHF arbitrarily created a collaboration between Nike and Catholicism.

Passing by “Jesus Shoes” and taking the steps to the right, visitors can see “Satan Shoes” covered in black in contrast to the white ones. These are the follow-up work of “Jesus Shoes” made in 2021. Unlike “Jesus Shoes,” the shoes contain the blood of one of the MSCHF staff members and 60cc of red ink, and there is an inverted pentagonal star ornament in place of the cross. The shoes contain the verse of Luke 10:18, “He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,’” and “Luke 10:18” is written on the side of the shoes. MSCHF manufactured and sold 666 pairs of the shoes in accordance with the number 666 that represents Satan, and they were sold out within a minute. Contrary to “Jesus Shoes,” Nike filed a trademark infringement suit against MSCHF for this work. Nike cited in its complaint the reason for the lawsuit as being that the unapproved “Satan Shoes” could possibly cause chaos and decrease the value of the original product. Furthermore, they were concerned that, to Catholics, the work would be considered blasphemous, and thus provide Catholic customers with a reason to boycott Nike. Eventually, MSCHF reached an out-of-court settlement and spontaneously recalled all the shoes sold. Through “Jesus Shoes” and “Satan Shoes,” MSCHF broke the common conception that the sanctuary is inviolable.

MSCHF not only pursues an aesthetic value but also reflects a critical awareness of society. MSCHF constantly creates various forms of creative art, and its works are gaining more popularity and attention. Visitors can observe forms of art that they could not otherwise imagine with strong messages. The works mentioned in this article are only a small fraction of MSCHF’s offerings, as visitors can see about 100 works displayed over three floors of the exhibit. Why not visit “MSCHF: NOTHING IS SACRED” and see its diverse works and consider the messages behind them? 📖

*jhj7951@hufs.ac.kr*

# New Leadership “YeoWoon: Afterglow,” Who Will Leave Long Lasting YeoWoon

By Cho Subin

Staff Reporter of Theory & Critique Section

“**A** lasting legacy, YeoWoon.” This is the slogan of YeoWoon, the 58th General Student Council (GSC), which was elected on the Seoul Campus after 11 years. Two candidates ran in the election last December, and after a public hearing with face-to-face meetings with students, YeoWoon won the election with 67.15 percent of the votes cast with a final turnout of 50.79 percent of the student-body “YeoWoon: Afterglow,” who started its term in January, conducted activities like renting graduation gowns and meeting with library officials during the vacation, and is preparing to fulfill its promises in various fields such as school festivals, education & career events, living welfare, facilities, communication, human rights and solidarity ahead of the upcoming semester.

At the start of the semester, students exhibit heightened interest and significant attention in the GSC’s activities, as it has been a long time since the last GSC presidential election at the Seoul Campus. What plans does it have for the upcoming year? The Argus interviewed the president and vice president of the 58th GSC at the Seoul Campus to delve into their aspirations and plans for the year 2024.

## About YeoWoon

*The Argus: Please introduce the presidents of YeoWoon: Afterglow, the GSC to The Argus readers.*

Hello, we are Oh Chang-hwa (Department of Public Administration '21), and Yeo Chan-woo (Department of Portuguese '21), the president and vice president of the 58th Seoul Campus GSC.

*The Argus: Tell us about the meaning behind the name, YeoWoon.*

**YeoWoon:** YeoWoon means to spread out and leave a lasting impression, and we want to be a student council that will leave a lasting impression by performing well.

Furthermore, we added the phrase, “to leave a lasting impression at HUFS,” in the sense that we hope that this year’s student council and the 70th anniversary of the university will leave a lasting impression in the university’s history. Consequently, many of our pledges are related to facility replacement or regularization that can leave a lasting impression on the university. We usually use the



©Pledge book of YeoWoon

▲ HUFS 58th Seoul Campus General Student Council “Yeowoon” presidency: Vice president Yeo Chan-woo(L) and President Oh Chang-hwa(R)

word “Afterglow (Yeewoon)” when something touches our hearts or when we feel good, so I hope our university life will be memorable for us and students who are running after their dreams.

**The Argus:** *Why did you two decide to run together for the GSC Student Presidency?*

**Oh:** In the 57th Central Steering Committee (CSC) last year, I was the student president of the College of Social Sciences and the vice president was the student president of the College of Occidental Languages. Since the CSC is a regular meeting where the most important decisions of the university are discussed, we had opportunities to discuss values related to the development of the university, detailed events, or the school’s discourse.

**Yeo:** I decided to run for the position alongside our student council president because I share the same aspiration for HUFS to truly develop into a school that can provide students with satisfaction in terms of experiences, facilities, and more.

**Oh:** Also, the specific experience that made us both decide to run for office together, I think it was very meaningful for us to discuss together what kind of events we were going to plan, how to develop the university, how to plan better events during the overnight Student Council OT as a president of each college.

**The Argus:** *Please briefly introduce the key pledges of Yeowoon.*

**Yeowoon:** Among various pledges, our most dedicated aspect is cultural branding. We believe that cultural events themselves are a method of branding. Therefore, we aimed to brand HUFS by combining culture and branding, leveraging the identity of foreign languages that HUFS possesses through regularizing cheering events and other initiatives. Additionally, in the aspect of student life and welfare, we aimed to provide pledges that students can directly feel and benefit from. Thus, we are making efforts to provide various legal counseling seminars and manuals related to long-term home rental fraud and contracts to directly assist students’ lives.

**At the Beginning of the Glowing  
“Yeowoon: Afterglow”**

**The Argus:** *After the election, you might have a renewed sense of determination before starting the new semester. What does the final voting rate of 50 percent mean for Yeowoon?*

**Yeowoon:** The fact that this was the first election in 11 years means that very few of the current students have ever experienced an election, so we were very honored. We think the 50 percent turnout means two things, the first is a huge responsibility. There is a strong feeling that the students are closely observing us as the elected representatives. The second is that we are receiving a lot of support, because not only the school departments, but also other organizations around us know that we won the election with a high turnout of 50 percent, so this gives us a lot of momentum when we are working together on projects or making demands to the school.

One of the things we said during the election was, “We won’t make promises we can’t keep,” and now that we have been elected, we are determined to make tangible promises and realize what the students want in order to show them.

**The Argus:** *There is a high expectation having received the votes of the students, that the student council will be more attentive to the voices of the students. Please explain the specific plans for communication with students and the school.*

**Yeowoon:** First of all, we are confident in communication with the school. Before the election started, we had discussions with the school departments about our pledges. For example, in meetings with the Facility Management Team, we discussed not only the feasibility of our pledges, but also the direction of specific actions to fulfill those pledges. Therefore, the school departments are aware of our pledges, and we are making efforts to realize them.

Moreover, we believe that the most important thing is communication with the students. Therefore, internally, we are providing updates with the heads of each department

in the CSC without withholding any information. Externally, we aim to utilize promotional social media. For YouTube, we plan to address the low participation issue of traditional public hearings by live-streaming public hearings, making them a platform for communication with students. Additionally, we aim to transition from one-way communication, often seen through community platforms, to a more interactive approach. Therefore, we are currently renovating the GSC website and striving to foster a inclusive culture of communication within the campus community by facilitating discussions in such online spaces.

### Preview of YeoWoon's 2024

***The Argus: According to the satisfaction survey report of the first half of the 2023 academic year by the 57th GSC "Doyak: Leap," as 81.5 percent of students selected the school festival QUINQUATRIA as the most anticipated project for the second half of the year, pledges related to QUINQUATRIA stood out first. Please briefly explain the pledges related to QUINQUATRIA.***

**YeoWoon:** This year, firstly, we will collaborate with Cheongnyangni Market to operate booths with a night market concept, and support student-led flea markets in vacant spaces within the Cheongnyangni Market, allowing students to enjoy diverse content on the first day of the festival. Additionally, if there are booths using ingredients such as fruits at department booths, sufficient support is possible, and there may be pop-up stores such as fresh fruit juice.

Secondly, through collaboration with alumni companies, we plan to attract promotions and secure finances to enhance the quality of the festival. Lastly, we are considering ways to expand the scale of the festival through cooperation with local governments, with the goal of establishing QUINQUATRIA as a local festival, emphasizing branding efforts as part of the university's 70th anniversary celebration.

***The Argus: The "Win-Win Project with Cheongnyangni Market" night market collaboration stands out as it involves both students and the local community. How did you conceive this idea and what benefits do you anticipate from its execution?***

**YeoWoon:** Dongdaemun Ward is one of the areas with the most universities in Seoul, so we thought it was important to have a cooperative relationship with neighboring schools. In addition, the MOU we had previously signed with the ward was limited in that it was only a formality and did not really help students. Therefore, we came up with the Dongdaemun Ward Win-Win Project, and we thought that the Cheongnyangni Market was a popular and positive target for cooperation with the festival.

We also think that experience is the most important when it comes to starting a business, we think that a short experience of selling your own products and understanding the market demand can lead to a big business later, so we are discussing to extend the booth in Cheongnyangni Market to two weeks or even longer.

***The Argus: There were detailed pledges regarding the library, a vital student space. Could you outline the main commitments? Additionally, despite discussions with the library, the budget for the reading room chair replacement project was deemed insufficient. How do you intend to address this issue?***

**YeoWoon:** The main suggestions include expanding the hours of the second, third, and fourth reading rooms, replacing the chairs in the reading rooms and installing ventilation, standing desks, and more lockers. The most popular requests were for extended reading rooms or expanded lobby hours, so we are currently discussing this. However, due to monetary factors such as labor costs for expanded operating hours, we are planning to proceed with further discussions, and it seems that a three-way meeting between the budget teams, the library officials, and the GSC will be held. In particular, University Library Director changed on February 1, so we plan to have another meeting around the end of February or in March



for detailed coordination.

The only thing that may be difficult to resolve is the replacement of the reading room chairs. So, we plan to use the GSC budget and run a pilot seating system to see the demand from students. Then, we will incorporate it into the main budget in December, or prioritize the replacement of chairs, starting with the first reading room.

**The Argus:** *There are many pledges related to employment and entrepreneurship, but YeoWoon has planned expand the number of students in the Career Credit Program and improve the Entrepreneurship Credit Program. Can you explain these two programs? Additionally, are there specific discussions and plans in place for their realization?*

**YeoWoon:** In the Career Credit Program, students can earn credits by pursuing their aspirations and validating their activities. The Entrepreneurship Credit Program allows students to obtain credits for validating their entrepreneurial endeavors. While both systems offer credits, there are two issues with foreign universities: students lack awareness of the system, and meeting the selection criteria proves challenging. In contrast, other institutions have ample credits, and the criteria are less strict. In order to improve this, we are trying to arrange a meeting with the Career Development Center or other deans of the school to talk about it for the second semester, around May or June.

**The Argus:** *Given your focus on the financial aspect, particularly with the Songdo Campus commitment, could you explain the issues and your plans to address them, considering that many students may not be aware of the situation?*

**YeoWoon:** To fulfill our pledge and uphold our core values, securing finances is very important. However, the university's financial situation is not favorable. Therefore, we are initiating the "HUFS Saving Projects," a commitment urging corporations to lessen taxes on

the Songdo Campus. This initiative aims to enhance the university's financial standing and support students.

We are experiencing delays in the development of the HUFS-owned Songdo Campus due to the requirement for Ministry of Education approval to change its location. Associated tax burden due to the delayed development, amounting to 7.9 billion won (US\$5.9 million), is adversely affecting the school's finances. Addressing these issues would enable funds to be reallocated for the expansion of scholarships. However, students lack access to information on campus development and how the departments will be adjusted. We aim to convey student opinions to the Songdo Campus development committee to promote transparency and student involvement. Currently, our focus is on raising awareness of these Songdo Campus challenges.

**The Argus:** *YeoWoon mentioned a plan to use the money from the Songdo Campus to expand scholarships. Is there a particular reason for this?*

**YeoWoon:** Two years ago, the quota of the "7+1 scholarship" (7+1) suddenly halved in number, which I thought was a problem considering that many students enter HUFS with the expectation of becoming an exchange student or participating in programs like the 7+1. So, we had a meeting with the Office of International Affairs regarding quota. They told us that the quota is allocated according to the 7+1 and exchange program scholarship budget, but since the budget has decreased, quota have been halved. So, we thought that the first solution to increase the quota is to increase scholarships. Therefore, we have talked to the Tuition Review Committee to explore the possibility of expanding scholarship offerings.

**The Argus:** *The main audience of The Argus is international students, and you have proposed a special lecture on employment for international students and the establishment of a task force (TF) team to translate the course manual. Could you share details regarding the realization plans and activities of the TF team, particularly as it relates to school life?*

## Round Talk

**YeoWoon:** In fact, the need to translate the course guide has been raised repeatedly, but not implemented due to the internal manpower problem and the translation work requiring, a lot of effort. It would have been difficult to translate the course guide while translating the announcements of the GSC. Therefore, we have skillful members with language and will translate the course manual through the TF team to help international students adjust to our school by translating the course manual. In fact, the previous GSC “Doyak” has translated the bylaws of the school, our current focus is to channel our efforts into translating the course manual.

The existing course catalog is tailored to the needs of domestic students, encompassing aspects like reservists and graduation requirements. To adapt the course manual to better suit international students, it is important to understand their specific needs and circumstances. That is why we will create a Translation TF comprising both international and domestic members. This project is being led by the International Solidarity Department in GSC, and we plan to start discussions in mid- or late March. This timeline takes into account the recruitment period for new students and the return of international students, with the ultimate goal of completing the translation of the course manual for the second semester.

### Words from YeoWoon to HUFSan

**The Argus:** *The previous GSC “Doyak” garnered high satisfaction, achieving a 93 percent satisfaction rate in the latter part of its term. What activities do you intend to replicate or enhance from past GSC events, and in what ways will YeoWoon distinguish itself?*

“Pledges that students can tangibly feel.” This is the most frequently mentioned phrase during the interview. YeoWoon approached the interview with a serious attitude, pledging to become a student council for the students by emphasizing their commitment to preserving the characteristics of HUFs and providing more for international students. Having gone through the process of reviewing their promises during the election process, it is now time for the student to offer feedback on whether YeoWoon is representing their opinions. Collaborating with YeoWoon, students can contribute to steering the university in a positive direction. The Argus hopes that students will continue to follow and support the progress of the YeoWoon. 📧



▲ The Argus interviews “YeoWoon: Afterglow” in the General Student Council office.

**YeoWoon:** Since the CSC and the GSC keep each other in check through decisions, we had many opportunities to give feedback on many projects last year as the CSC during the term of “Doyak.” Also, we are still giving feedback on projects that were well received by students and why. We think that what students liked most about “Doyak” was the events where they could have firsthand experiences and using the strength gained to advocate for their educational rights. That is why we organized cultural projects that students can genuinely feel. The distinctive feature of YeoWoon is that we have the opportunity to take advantage of various programs in collaboration with local governments.

**The Argus:** *What do you ultimately hope to accomplish through your involvement in the organization?*

**YeoWoon:** First of all, our name and the keynote we mentioned reflect our goal. Despite having only a one-year term, our aspiration is to leave a lasting impact by organizing activities that make the entire four years of university life worthwhile. So, if students are asked, “What kind of year was 2024?,” and they answer that they recall the multitude of enriching experiences and cherish happy memories at HUFs, we think it will bring us great joy and happiness. Therefore, our focus is on diligently organizing activities to achieve this. We want to make the school itself better, so that is our primary objective.

subincho2022@hufs.ac.kr

# Looking into the Digital Era Through the Eye of a Cultural Scientist



©Park Han-woo

By Lee Seun

Staff Reporter of Theory & Critique Section

In January, Samsung once again made strides in technology by releasing the Galaxy S24 series equipped with on-device AI. On-device AI is an artificial intelligence embedded in the device itself, allowing the device to perform lightweight AI learning and computations without the need for a network connection. With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, many companies besides Samsung are incorporating on-device AI into their electronic devices. In line with this trend, the South Korean government plans to announce its on-device AI implementation plan in March. High technologies based on big data are seamlessly being integrated into our daily lives.

However, focusing solely on technological advancement may lead to overlooking the new societal issues that technology brings about. Therefore, there is a need for an approach that goes beyond the scientific perspective of so-called innovation and delves into a humanistic view. Hence, through an interview with Professor Park Han-woo, author of “I am a Glocal University Professor,”(2024) a professor at Yeungnam University and HUFs alumni, the objective of this article is to examine the era of big data from a fresh perspective. The Argus aims to explore the digital era from the standpoint of the social sciences and humanities, helping readers develop a nuanced understanding of future societies.

## Before Reading

### Book “I am a Glocal University Professor”

The book “I am a Glocal University Professor,” published on January 26, 2024, is authored by senior colleague Park Han-woo from HUFs. This digital hub addresses the determination of a regional university member not to fall behind global trends and to move forward into the world. The book, through five chapters, reinterprets the problems arising in the digital era and local communities from the perspective of a social scientist.

The first chapter covers not only weighty topics concerning the intelligence information society, but also light topics including discussions on YouTube. It also explores the prospects and crises of the new era initiated by ChatGPT, among various other contemporary issues of the digital age. The second chapter presents a pessimistic view of digitalization, discussing the diminishing role of restaurant managers due to unmanned automated systems and proposing private and governmental solutions to this issue. The third chapter explains the functions and dysfunctions in politics, economics, and the arts through the utilization of digital tokens, such as cryptocurrencies and NFTs. The fourth chapter connects localities to issues of media, politics, culture, education, and technology. Meanwhile, the fifth and final chapter focuses on university innovation viewed through the Triple Helix perspective, which suggests that local community problems should be approached from the three perspectives of corporations, individuals, and society.

### Introducing Professor Park Han-woo

**The Argus:** *Hello, Professor Park. Would you please introduce yourself to the readers?*

**Park:** Nice to meet you. My name is Park Han-woo. I enrolled in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at HUFS in 1991 and graduated in February 1995. Currently, I am a professor in the Division of Media and Communication at Yeungnam University, a private university located in the city of Gyeongsan and the city of Daegu (237 kilometers south of Seoul) where I teach the same major I studied during my undergraduate years.

**The Argus:** *Do you have any special reasons or motivations for consistently majoring in Mass Communication, which has now changed its name to Journalism and Information Studies, after graduating from HUFS?*

**Park:** I persisted in majoring in Mass Communication, which is now referred to as Journalism and Information Studies, even during my high school years when I was preparing for the college entrance exam. The reason behind my choice was primarily because contemporary society has become highly reliant on information, with data emerging as the most crucial aspect in recent times. Consequently, I believed that understanding the broader trends of the world required a grasp of the communication environments provided by language and media. This led me to pursue Journalism and Information Studies as my major. I continued to delve into the same field during my doctor's degree and while studying abroad in the United States. This made me reflect once again on why I had chosen this path. However, even if I were given the chance to choose again, I believe I would still opt for Journalism and Information Studies.

**The Argus:** *It may seem at first glance that there is little connection between Journalism and Information Studies and the realm of big data. What is the significant intersection between the two fields?*

**Park:** It seems there may be some misconceptions about what the term "media" entails. In a narrow sense, media, often referred to as journalism, encompasses the reporting activities of newspapers and broadcasting outlets. However, in a broader sense, media refers to all forms of communication phenomena. These communication

phenomena are mediated through messages. Furthermore, these messages are composed of information, which is often derived from processed data. From this perspective, I am engaged in identifying and analyzing the information produced through various media channels. Therefore, big data and media are by no means separate entities.



▲ Professor Park Han-woo is having a book interview on Jan. 27, 2024.

### Professor Park's Perspective of the Digital Era

**The Argus:** *You wrote a book called "I am a Glocal University Professor." Please briefly introduce the book and tell us what readers should pay attention to.*

**Park:** The book is a compilation of various articles I have written over the past 20 years, systematically organized. It covers topics that have piqued my interest, such as data, social media, and the emerging realms of Web 3.0, as well as societal, cultural, and political issues observed within local communities. The greatest strength of this book lies in its analysis of various phenomena based on academic papers and perspectives, offering insights into societal issues.

Another key advantage is that, drawing from my experiences teaching and conducting research in local areas over the past two decades, I present unique and creative solutions to address the disparities between metropolitan and regional areas in South Korea (hereafter Korea). Thus, the title of the book, "Glocal," signifies approaching local issues with a global perspective. Additionally, readers can find the sources of the articles listed at the back of the book, revealing that discussions on issues within Korean society have emerged over decades, rather than suddenly appearing. By tracing the flow of longstanding discussions within Korean society, readers can find enjoyment in exploring the book.

**The Argus: What do you think is the significance of big data and artificial intelligence in our lives?**

**Park:** Nowadays, people perceive artificial intelligence as a close and familiar presence, because generative and conversational services are becoming part of daily life. Activities such as education, learning, document creation in workplaces, and information searches are transitioning to generative and conversational services based on artificial intelligence, like chatbot services. Consequently, people have less resistance towards artificial intelligence compared to in the past. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust previous perspectives and approaches towards artificial intelligence. Rather than viewing artificial intelligence adversarially or as in opposition to humans, it should be seen as a partner in the form of service and robots based on artificial intelligence just like how we turn on smart TVs at home and call out their names. Artificial intelligence is becoming an integral part of our daily lives. The emergence of artificial intelligence is ultimately made possible by big data, and for further development, artificial intelligence requires big data. Big data initially provided information about knowledge, information, and their hidden relationships that were completely unknown ten years ago. Over time, big data has evolved beyond this to become the foundation for new technologies such as artificial intelligence.

**The Argus: In the book, you address various current issues in the era of big data. Among them, what do you think is the most noteworthy? And why?**

**Park:** In the past, we lived in a world where analog and digital were clearly distinguishable. However, now digital technology has become so sophisticated that it encroaches into areas previously dominated by analog, making it difficult to differentiate between the two. We are in an era where digital has become more intricate and detailed than ever before. Big data, social media, artificial intelligence, and digital assets like cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum are all products of the digital age. Previously, it was easier to view and analyze the world. We could categorize things as either analog or digital, but now, as we mostly live in a digital world, various digital domains are emerging, each developing at a rapid pace. Consequently, we are experiencing cultural phenomena where some cultures struggle to keep up with the pace of technological advancements. That is why I aimed to approach these issues

more academically, to understand and address the challenges posed by these rapid technological advancements.

**The Argus: What sets this book apart from other books is that you address local issues while also covering the digital age. What prompted you to focus on the local? Also, what do you think is the most important phenomenon of local alienation and what changes have occurred since the advent of the digital age?**

**Park:** Focusing on the local stems primarily from the fact that I reside in a rural area. I believe it is the minimal obligation of an intellectual to take an interest in the environment in which they live. While many people who live in rural areas may commute to Seoul or may not have an interest in their local region, I felt a sense of responsibility to take an interest in where I live.

Living in rural areas comes with certain inconveniences, notably fewer cultural benefits compared to metropolitan areas. However, despite this, living in rural areas offers the advantage of being able to lead a more creative and relaxed life compared to the hectic pace of life in urban areas. Nevertheless, with the advent of the digital age, the boundaries of time and space have been blurred. This allows rural areas to enjoy the benefits of urban areas without incurring significant costs, thus mitigating some of the disadvantages such as the lack of cultural amenities. However, there are still limitations. For example, compared to face-to-face meetings, online meetings may lack the creativity and spontaneity that often arise from in-person interactions. Therefore, digital technology has limitations in expanding creativity compared to offline analog methods.

**The Argus: In the book, you discuss the problems of the digital era that have persisted from the past to the present. What perspective should be most important to solve this problem?**

**Park:** In the digital age, there are various ways to address the problems that arise. Firstly, individuals must have literacy skills, meaning they need to be digitally literate. Just as literacy in Korean refers to the ability to read and write in Korean, digital literacy entails understanding and effectively using digital technology and services. It is essential to personally cultivate such literacy skills. Secondly, there should be adequate provision of assistive devices to aid individuals who may face difficulties in utilizing digital

## Visiting

technology due to disabilities or other reasons. Just as there are closed captioning options on TV for the hearing impaired, there should be assistive technologies available, such as enlarging buttons on kiosks for ease of use. These assistive technologies should be well-implemented to ensure that everyone can effectively utilize digital technology.

### A Word to The Argus Readers

**☎ *The Argus: What do you think about the prospect of big data? And are there any areas that are expected to receive more attention?***

**Park:** The digital age is expected to continue in a direction similar to the present, but the most noteworthy development will be the transition from the era of social media to a new era of decentralized media. Similar to how we shifted from the era of personal websites to that of social media, the era of social media will evolve into a decentralized media landscape. In this scenario, individuals will have digital wallets, akin to using individual email addresses, allowing them to integrate and manage their data. Activities conducted online will be stored and recorded, potentially replacing email as the primary means of communication. Digital wallets will accumulate points, mileage, or digital badges, leading to greater integration among services.

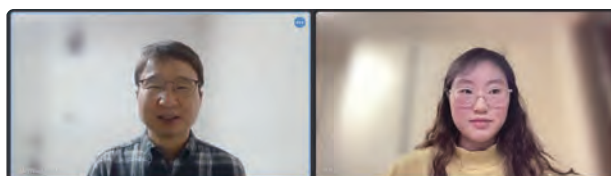
**☎ *The Argus: From a humanistic perspective, what direction should our society move toward and what mindset should each individual have in order to minimize the problems that appear in the era of big data?***

**Park:** Big data and decentralized distributed artificial intelligence are, in a way, interconnected. However, in Korean society, there is still a significant lack of

understanding of data and data literacy. This implies that people often fail to realize the value of data and exhibit a passive attitude towards investing in data creation. Despite the discomfort and unfamiliarity, there is a pressing need to digitize everything for the future. Refusing to do so poses a significant problem. To advance as a more advanced nation, it is crucial to embrace datafication in all aspects. However, simultaneously, individuals must be aware of the risks of their data being leaked or exposed. It is essential to use data cautiously and maintain a sense of security when inputting or outputting data.

**☎ *The Argus: Lastly, please give a word to your juniors at HUFSS, who will be living in the digital era brought about by the development of big data and artificial intelligence.***

**Park:** I think it would be beneficial for students at HUFSS to explore new media platforms whenever they have spare time during their university years. Besides well-known platforms like YouTube and Instagram, there are many emerging social media platforms and networks such as Bluesky and Mastodon. Additionally, with the emergence of new decentralized media and platforms, it is important to understand how these platforms collect, process, analyze, and visualize data, as well as how they utilize this data for political and economic purposes. Therefore, it would be beneficial for students to take an interest in exploring these platforms and understanding their data practices and implications in various domains.



▲ Professor Park Han-woo is giving a word to his juniors on Feb. 8, 2024.

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The advancement of artificial intelligence based on big data is progressing at a rapid pace, and in the future, we are likely to enter an era where all our information is digitized. Considering these changes, it is essential to perceive artificial intelligence not as a separate entity from our lives but as a partner that we live alongside with. To achieve this, modern individuals need to adopt an open attitude towards experiencing not only mainstream technologies but also embracing new developments in technology every day. At the same time, they should be aware of the risks of their data being leaked. This awareness will serve as the foundation for addressing the ethical, social, and political issues that emerging technologies may bring about. It will guide our society in the right direction and help prevent potential problems in various fields. 🗣️

yisuws@gmail.com

# Towards True Education: Striving for Balance between Teachers' Rights and Students' Rights

By Kim Yi-eun

Staff Reporter of Social Section

On September 4, 2023, over 50,000 individuals assembled in front of the National Assembly in Yeouido, Seoul, and 120,000 people in total nationwide took to the streets. It was 49 days after the death\* of a teacher at Seoyi Elementary School in Seoul who took her own life inside the school in July 2023. Following the incident, with escalating demands for actions against the erosion of teachers' rights\* and heightened public focus on the protection of these rights, the National Assembly, in a plenary session on September 21, approved the amendments to the four acts on the protection of teachers' rights (hereafter amendments).

Meanwhile, some are calling for abolition of the Student Human Rights Ordinance, which includes the right of students to be free from violence and danger and not to be discriminated against on the basis of gender, religion, and so forth, arguing that it overly protects the students' rights and is contributing to the collapse of the teachers' rights. So, do teachers' rights and students' rights go against each other? The Argus will look over the Student Human Rights Ordinance and the amendments to the four acts on the protection of teachers' rights, the remaining portion of which will go into effect in March, and aims to clarify that teachers' rights and students' rights are not an either-or proposition, and therefore, we will explore strategies for fostering optimal education and contemplate a more cohesive approach for the entire school community.

\*49 days after the death: A Buddhist belief that a deceased's spirit leaves the human world 49 days after death.

\*Teachers' rights: In this article, teachers' rights include all rights including teachers' human rights and teachers' rights to education.

## Before Reading



### The Death of a Teacher at Seoyi Elementary School

On July 19, 2023, a teacher in her twenties was found dead at Seoyi Elementary School in Seocho Ward, Seoul. It was ruled, an act of suicide. Just before her death, there was a so-called "pencil incident" in which a student hit another student's forehead with a pencil, and suspicion has been raised that the teacher was suffering from distress due to the parents' complaints related to this incident. However, on November 14, police concluded that the investigation did not indicate any criminal wrongdoing, including harassment, verbal abuse, assault, or intimidation by the parents. The parents sued another teacher, who had written a post on the Internet raising suspicions about the suicide of the original teacher, and netizens for defamation. And in January 2024, the teachers' union held one-person protests several times in front of the Seoyi Elementary School and Seocho Police Station in Seoul, demanding a reinvestigation into the parents' allegedly malicious complaints and recognition of the teacher's death in the line of duty.



▲ After a teacher's suicide, people are mourning her death.

@skygag



### The Amendments to the Four Acts on the Protection of Teachers' Rights

#### Background of the Amendment



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▲ Teachers are demanding the truth about the teacher's death and calling for protection of teachers' rights.

Incidents of violation to teachers' rights by various entities have been continuously occurring knowingly or not in South Korea (hereafter Korea), but the death of a teacher at Seoyi Elementary School in July 2023 led not only the educational circles, but also the entire Korean society to realize the seriousness of the issue and to be concerned about teachers' rights. The first memorial rally was held on July 22, 2023, calling for an investigation and demanding the truth about the death of the teacher and the protection of teachers' rights. Moreover, given that the deaths of several teachers, who took their own lives, both prior to and following the incident, were also suspected to be linked to malicious complaints from parents, there has been a heightened engagement in rallies advocating for the truth and the restoration of teachers' rights. Teachers across the country took to the streets every Saturday. The seventh rally held on September 2, The 500,000 Teachers' Memorial Rally, was the largest, with a procession of 200,000 to 300,000 people in front of the National Assembly. Teachers named September 4, 49 days after the teacher's death, the Day to Pause Public Education, and took sick and personal leave to commemorate the deaths and demand the truth and normalization of public education. Also on that day, about 30 schools across the country decided to close for a discretionary holiday, and some parents submitted applications for off-school field trips to join the Day to Pause Public and so as to demonstrate their support for teachers by not sending their children to school.

The Ministry of Education declared 2023 as the year of restoration of teachers' rights. Subsequently, a four-way consultative body for superintendents of ruling, opposition, political, and municipal superintendents was formed to

work together on legislation to protect teachers' rights. The amendments including the Special Act on the Improvement of Teachers' Status and the Protection of their Educational Activities (hereafter Teachers' Status Act), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Early Childhood Education Act, and the Framework Act on Education, were passed by a plenary session of the National Assembly on September 21, 2023, and became effective on September 27. The Teachers' Status Act, excluding articles related to restrictions on the removal from a position, will take effect on March 28, 2024, six months after its promulgation.



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▲ The amendments are being passed in a plenary session of the National Assembly.

#### Contents of the Amendments

In the case of the Teachers' Status Act, which underwent the most changes among the four laws, the articles were separated and stipulated, and several articles were added, increasing the number of articles from 22 to 35 after the amendment. As such, the amendments include several new articles to protect teachers' educational activities, impose obligations on guardians such as respect and cooperation, and strengthen the administrative support system to address issues that hinder normal educational activities at educational institutions. In other words, it is an institutional supplement to protect teachers' rights by preventing infringement of their rights by parents and students and the failure of the schools and the state.

Here's a look at some cases where teachers were not protected by the existing law and the articles of the amendments that can be applied to the case. First, in November 2021, there was a case where a parent came to the classroom of an elementary school in the city of Incheon, 2.7 kilometers west of Seoul and both verbally and physically assaulted a teacher in front of the students. In addition, the Office of Education was criticized



for its poor response to the incident, as it only paid a portion of the teacher's lawyer's fees. In order to protect teachers from parents in such situations, the amendments prohibit parents from infringing the human rights of teachers or other students and stipulate sanctions on parents who disrupt educational activities. Also, the concept of the disruption of educational activities, which was previously unclear because it was not separately defined, was separated into an individual article, and the types of infringement were expanded to include general criminal offenses such as obstruction of justice, false accusation, and malicious complaints. This clarifies the standards and protects teachers and their educational activities. Moreover, to solve the problems that individual teachers have had to bear for various disputes and lawsuits related to educational activities, the articles of the Teacher Protection Deduction Project have been clarified. This ensures that teachers can receive support for legal fees for legal disputes arising from their educational activities, injuries and psychiatric treatment costs arising from infringement of educational activities. This extends to protection services in case teachers face threats, aiming to aid the victimized teacher and prevent further harm in the event of an issue.

Meanwhile, in December of that year, a teacher at an elementary school in the city of Uijeongbu, Gyeonggi Province, 21.6 kilometers north of Seoul, killed himself after suffering from malicious complaints from parents. However, the school reported the incident to the Uijeongbu Office of Education as a death from a simple fall, even though the school knew that a violation of teachers' rights had occurred. To prevent such problems, the amendments prohibit the reduction and concealment of the infringement of educational activities during the reporting process, and stipulate that disciplinary action will be taken against the school's principal or a member of the school's faculty if they attempt to reduce or conceal the infringement. In addition, in order to protect teachers and their educational activities from malicious complaints from parents, the act of repeatedly making unjustified complaints has been defined as an infringement of educational activities. Reflecting the fact that teachers' rights are often violated in the process of handling complaints, the principal is now responsible for handling complaints, which was previously the responsibility of teachers, so that teachers can focus on their educational activities.

Aside from these, there are also cases of infringement of teachers' rights by students. In August 2022, there was a

video that went viral showing a student using a smartphone while lying on the floor next to a standing teacher in class at a middle school in Hongseong County, South Chungcheong Province, located 110 kilometers south of Seoul. Again, in June 2023, a disturbing incident occurred at an elementary school in the city of Daegu, 237 kilometers south of Seoul. During a life guidance, a student rushed to the restroom and confronted the teacher with a toilet lid. The amendments strengthened measures against students who commit such infringements by requiring immediate separation of the offender from the teacher in the event of such situations, and special education or psychological treatment, imposing fines if the student does not comply. In addition, the existing Teacher Healing Support Center was expanded and reorganized into the Educational Activity Protection Center to strengthen the prevention of infringement of educational activities and provide support for the mental recovery of the affected teachers.



▲ A student is using his smartphone in class as he charges it, all the while lying on his back next to the teacher.

In addition, there have been many cases where teachers faced complaints or reports of child abuse for disciplining students for problematic behavior including actions like waking a sleeping student during class. According to the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the number of reports of child abuse against teachers has been increasing every year, but the actual prosecution rate of child abuse reports is only 1-2 percent. This means that teachers are not protected from baseless reports of child abuse. In order to protect teachers from this, the amendments stated that a teacher's legitimate life guidance of students' lives will not be considered a violation of the prohibited acts of the Child Welfare Act, and stipulated respect and support from parents for the teacher's legitimate guidance. Also, it restricted the disposition of teachers who are reported for child abuse crimes without justification, ensuring that teachers are not excluded from educational activities due to unreasonable complaints or suspicions. Furthermore,

## Cover Story

the amendments stipulate that anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of an infringement of educational activities must immediately report it to a relevant organization such as the school, making it mandatory for not only the victimized teacher, but also other teachers or students who may be involved to report the case. In addition, reflecting the serious infringement of educational activities and teachers' rights by parents, a new article on the obligations of guardians stipulates that they should respect the role of teachers and actively cooperate with their educational activities.

"Until now, if something went wrong, there was a tendency to blame it on the incompetence of individual teachers and to solve it on their own. There were many cases where no one protected teachers when parents filed complaints or lawsuits. I think it is a progressive achievement that the amendments have prevented the system from being overhauled and mitigated the abuse of the law to a certain extent," said Kim Seong Cheon, a professor of Education Policy at Graduate School of Educational Policy and Administration of Korea National University of Education, who evaluated the amendment favorably. The amendments are significant in that they provide a legal basis for the protection of teachers by improving and complementing some of the deficiencies in the operation of the current system.



### The Student Human Rights Ordinance

#### Background of the Enactment

In Korea, students have been treated as objects of protection rather than as individuals with dignity and rights, not only at school but also in society and at home. Corporal punishment, which was taken for granted in the name of the so-called "rod of love," regulations of hairstyles such as "3 cm below the ears for girls, and neat crew cut for boys," and self-study after school, which was enforced in the name of autonomy, have been raised as serious social problems. A well-known case is the so-called "Oh Jang-pung case". In 2010, Oh, a teacher at an elementary school in Seoul, became the subject of controversy after he ruthlessly assaulted students by throwing him to the ground and slamming his head into a wall. Oh even assaulted a student who had hemophilia. "Students were often exposed to corporal punishment beyond the scope of what was allowed by law, and teachers tried to justify violence in the name of corporal punishment. In short, student human

rights were egregiously disregarded as violence and verbal abuse against students were rampant," said Lee Deok-Nan, a legislative researcher at the National Assembly Legislative Research Service Education and Culture Team and president of The Korea Society for Education Law, about the situation before the enactment of the Student Human Rights Ordinance (hereafter ordinance). "There were many things students were told not to do, but there were also many cases where students were not able to enjoy their rights. Clubs and student organizations were nominal," Professor Kim said, referring to the school culture of strong authoritarianism and competition for entrance exams, as well as the zero-period remedial classes and inspection of belongings. He further expressed the appropriateness of the ordinance, saying, "There was a need to institutionally specify the value that students are not machines to study and to be controlled, but human beings with rights that they should enjoy as citizens." The ordinance did not come out of nowhere, but rather was the culmination of a long line of movements to ensure student rights, as many people were aware of the seriousness of the situation and felt the need for improvement.

#### Contents of the Enactment

Among the 17 Municipal and Provincial Offices of Education in Korea, Gyeonggi Province enacted the ordinance on October 5, 2010, followed by Gwangju, Seoul, North Jeolla Province, South Chungcheong Province, Jeju Province, and Incheon. Article 1 of Chapter 1 of the Gyeonggi Province Student Human Rights Ordinance, which was the first to promulgate and enforce such an ordinance, reads, "This ordinance aims to ensure the dignity, value, freedom, and rights of students as human beings by ensuring that their human rights are realized in the school education process based on Article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 12 and 13 of the Framework Act on Education, and Article 18-4 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act." As such, although there are slight differences between each city and province, the ordinance has the common purpose of ensuring student human rights so that all students can realize their dignity and value as human beings in the school education process. Thus, it is significant that it provides an institutional basis to protect students from infringements of students' rights that have been prevalent in schools in the past, including the right not to be

discriminated against, the right to be free from violence and danger, the right to education, freedom of conscience and religion, and freedom of expression.

For example, in the past, many schools had excessive regulations on hair and dress, requiring a certain type of dress without any consideration for weather or comfort, hair length, sock color, nail length, and even the color of girls' underwear. The rationale was that students lack the ability to exercise rational judgement, and that a lack of regulation would not only interfere with their studies, but could also lead them to enter entertainment establishments for adults. In response, Article 12 of the Seoul Student Rights Ordinance states that students have the right to realize their individuality in terms of appearance. Comparable articles can be found in ordinances in other regions, and many regulations have been relaxed, such as the current liberalization of hairstyles.

An illustrative case highlighting the issue of severe corporal punishment occurred in July 2010. A student at a high school in the city of Miryang, South Gyeongsang Province, 279 kilometers south of Seoul, tragically took his own life. This unfortunate event was precipitated by severe punishment administered by his homeroom teacher due to the student's lack of preparation, resulting in significant psychological distress. In the past, it was all too common for teachers to use physical punishment that bordered on violence, such as striking students on the buttocks with a wooden paddle or delivering punches to the body to maintain discipline. To protect students from such violence, Article 6 of the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance states that students have the right to be free from all physical and verbal violence, and similar articles have been enacted in other regions. As such, the ordinance was enacted to address the issue of teachers infringing on students' rights and to establish an institutional basis for protecting students.

Since its enactment, the ordinance has served as a shield to protect students' rights. In accordance with the Seoul Student Human Rights Ordinance, enacted in 2012, the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education conducted surveys of student rights in 2015 and 2019, among students enrolled in schools in Seoul. In the second survey, 70.5 percent of elementary school students, 73.3 percent of middle school students, and 68.3 percent of high school students agreed that the ordinance helps to ensure students' rights. Also, there was a positive change in the percentage of students who answered that they had experienced physical or verbal abuse by teachers or staff at

least once, decreasing from 22.7 percent in 2015 to 6.3 percent in 2019.

However, despite the positive aspects of the ordinance, since the discussion about the enactment of the ordinance, and even now, some conservative groups and parents have consistently claimed that the promotion of students' rights resulting from the ordinance has led to a decline in teachers' rights. Among these arguments, calls for the repeal of the ordinance were raised after the death of the teacher at Seoyi Elementary School. From July 25 to 26, 2023, the Korea Federation of Teachers' Associations conducted a survey of about 30,000 teachers, and 84.1 percent of them responded that the ordinance has contributed to the decline of teachers' rights. This shows the negative perception that teachers have about the ordinance. In addition, concerning the violation of teachers' rights, the Minister of Education and some conservative organizations have argued that the ordinance has made it difficult for schools to conduct educational activities and life guidance. As a result, calls for its abolition or revision have gained traction. In December of last year, the South Chungcheong Provincial Council passed a bill to repeal the South Chungcheong Provincial Student Human Rights Ordinance, putting it at risk of being abolished. On February 2, the South Chungcheong Provincial Office of Education requested a reconsideration, and the ordinance was narrowly defeated, falling two votes short of the threshold for passage. Other regions are also debating whether to repeal the ordinance, and it is still in danger of extinction.



### Teachers' Rights and Students' Rights : Are They at Odds?



▲ The rally participants are shouting for the repeal of the Student Human Rights Ordinance.

Why are some people calling for abolition of this ordinance? Those calling for repeal have cited the ordinance as the cause of problems in schools, such as bullying, in addition



to violations of teacher rights. The debate is ongoing. Some parent unions and civic groups insist on the unconditional abolition of the ordinance, claiming that it violates the Constitution, or that it causes infringement of teachers' rights by strengthening student rights, or that it encourages sexual relations, pregnancy, childbirth, and student delinquency; while others argue that the problem is that there is only an ordinance for students' rights. Some, including Professor Kim, argue that the ordinance should be developed into a law instead of the level of an ordinance; others, including President Lee, suggest that it should be completely revised. In order to conclude this debate and resolve the issue, the first thing that needs to be clarified is whether the enactment of the ordinance has actually led to the decline of teachers' rights.

Professor Kim said, "There are various actors who infringe on teachers' rights, and the causes of the decline of teachers' rights are complex," explaining that parents, teachers, principals, offices and ministries of education, and more are involved, so it cannot be said that students are the only ones who infringe on teachers' rights. He also cited the emergence of some selfish parents and the abuse of the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Punishment of Child Abuse Crimes as key reasons for the decline of teachers' rights. President Lee said, "The enactment of the ordinance coincides with the collapse of teachers' rights. They were all taking place in the same space, so there is some relationship. However, it is difficult to conclude that the ordinance itself caused the decline of teachers' rights." While there may be correlation between the enactment of the ordinance and a decline of teachers' rights, it is not a cause-and-effect relationship. In response to the controversy that some articles of the ordinance violate higher laws, President Lee advanced the opinion that the ordinance does not violate higher laws such as the Constitution, which was also recognized by the Constitutional Court. However, he also commented "Despite the warnings that the ordinance could give students the misconception that only their rights are being strengthened, and that it could make it hard for teachers' guidance, superintendents of education have not responded appropriately enough over the past decade." Repealing the ordinance does not lead to an end of the violation of teachers' rights. The fact that in some cases, the rate of increase in violations is higher in areas without the ordinance than in areas with the ordinance, suggests that the existence of the ordinance itself is not a threat to teachers' rights. That is, teachers' rights are not in conflict with students' rights.



### Prospects

A lack of recognition of the relevant laws and a misunderstanding of the ordinance that leads to a false sense of rights is a big part of the current situation. The ordinance lists dozens of articles about students' rights. In contrast, in some areas, there are no articles on the authority of teachers, respect for teachers' guidance, or responsibilities of students; or if there are such references, they are only declaratory. Furthermore, students, parents, and even pre-service and in-service teachers do not have access to adequate legal education. This is because the Ministry of Education and the universities that train teachers do not offer mandatory education law courses. The purpose of the ordinance is to ensure the freedoms and rights of all students and to improve the educational environment. However, in reality, there are situations where the original purpose is distorted. Many students and parents have a distorted sense of rights regarding rights-focused ordinances, believing that they are enforced to ensure that only their own rights and freedoms are protected. "Although democracy is emphasized on paper, it is only conveyed as social science knowledge, and the values and practices of democracy are not naturally acquired in school culture," commented Professor Kim. He also added, "It is not that the ordinance is the reason for the infringement of teachers' rights, but rather that the philosophy and meaning of the ordinance have not been properly internalized by the people." Rather than focusing on the ordinance alone, we should be thinking about how to address the lack of opportunities to learn about human rights. In such a situation, teachers experience atrophy in their student life guidance and educational activities, perpetuating a vicious cycle. In order to overcome the current crisis, it is necessary to conduct sufficient legal education and improve the balance between rights and responsibilities.


In addition to adequate legal education and a full understanding of the law, the ordinance itself needs to be overhauled. Have students' rights and freedoms actually been guaranteed in schools since the ordinance was enacted? Have students' rights and freedoms been fully realized, such as the freedom to self-study after school and the liberalization of hairstyle and dress? Not quite. President Lee also raised a question about the effectiveness of the ordinance. "A lot of people talk about the need to guarantee freedoms and rights,

but they neglect to support the actual implementation of the ordinance for it to be effective. There should be educational legislation and a policy of the superintendent of education policy capable of effectively addressing the difficulties of reality, including the ordinance.” In addition to improving the ordinance and raising awareness of the law, efforts should be made to strengthen the effectiveness of the ordinance, including administrative and financial support from the state and Offices of Education to ensure that the ordinance is not just nominal but actually increases rights. Moreover, “The ordinance itself is more significant in terms of improving social awareness in situations where student rights have been weak than in ensuring legal force to guarantee those rights,” added President Lee. In general, the awareness and regulation of human rights in Korean society continues to improve and strengthen. However, repealing the Student Rights Ordinance would represent a clear regression in the history of guaranteeing human rights. Rather than restricting and taking away the freedoms and rights of some to protect the rights of others, the focus should be on moving forward together.

To achieve this, the rights and responsibilities of all members

must be balanced so that there is no misunderstanding about the contents of the ordinance. President Lee said, “It would be good to completely revise the Student Human Rights Ordinance and revise it as the ‘Ordinance on the Rights and Responsibilities of School Members’. It should stipulate the rights, freedoms, and powers guaranteed to each member and at the same time stipulate the duties and responsibilities that must be adhered to.” In detail, he suggests, “The ordinance should be organized in such a way, that it addresses the resolution of conflicts between rights and powers. It should assign the principal the responsibility for overall management and inspection while imposing responsibilities on the superintendent of education to provide prevention and support. Additionally, the ordinance should establish procedures and mechanisms for resolving conflicts and competing rights and prepare measures to strengthen the guarantee of rights.” Subsequently, it should ensure that all members of the community, including parents, students, and teachers, receive a proper legal education so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are taught that these are the rights and responsibilities of the community.



After the death of the Seoyi Elementary School teacher, mourning was soon followed by the debate over the prioritization between teachers’ rights and students’ rights. In these circumstances, attention is directed toward the anticipated impact of the amendment, and the debate surrounding the ordinance persists. But first, there is a need to reorganize the relationship between teachers’ rights and students’ rights. The bolstering of student rights, as facilitated by the ordinance, should not be perceived as a challenge to teachers’ rights, and the reinforcement of teachers’ rights should not be construed as an attack on students’ rights. Teachers’ rights and students’ rights are not, and should not be, in conflict. Can human rights, the fundamental entitlements of individuals, genuinely be considered human rights if one’s freedom and rights are prioritized or violated solely based on one’s status as a student or teacher? In this transitional situation, fostering a sense of community is crucial. To develop a better educational environment and enhance the human rights of all community members, efforts are required not just from school members but also through institutional improvements and support at both national and local levels. 

*twosilver258@hufs.ac.kr*



# True Owner of the Consumerist Desire

By Lee Seun

Staff Reporter of Theory & Critique Section

Apple is back. After a year without any new product releases in 2023, March 2024 sees the unveiling of the new iPad Air and iPad Pro. As note-taking, video streaming, completing assignments, and preparing for competitions have all become possible on one device, tablets have become essential for many college students. With the improvement in tablet performance, the tablet adoption rate is increasing, with the iPad being the most popular choice. Therefore, it is expected that Apple's new iPad Air and iPad Pro will also achieve high sales figures.

However, people do not solely base their purchasing decisions on performance. The term "iPad Syndrome" has emerged to describe how people often make purchasing decisions based on factors such as device appearance, image, and other reasons unrelated to performance. Many consumers believe that new products are always the best and are willing to spend a significant amount of money, even if their current device is not faulty or causing any inconvenience. Why do many people make emotional purchasing decisions? The Argus seeks to explore the definition, principles, techniques, and significance of neuromarketing, which stimulates consumer emotions and desires, hopefully helping readers make more rational consumption decisions.



## 1. Neuromarketing

### 1) What is Neuromarketing?

"A new product has been released, so I purchased it through direct overseas shipping to introduce it to you before its official release in South Korea(hereafter Korea)." Almost everyone may have heard something like this at least once from mass media outlets like YouTube. Even before new

products are officially released, various mass media outlets are flooded with content introducing them. Through such content, products are presented in terms of various aspects such as their strengths and weaknesses, external factors, and differentiation from other products. The individuals who create such content are called reviewsumers, a compound word of review and consumers that is commonly used in Korea and refers to consumers who try out products, post reviews online,

and significantly influence others' purchasing decisions. The content created by these reviewers plays a role in instilling new curiosity and purchasing desire for the products in those who encounter them. As a result, companies often request pre-launch promotions to reviewers to ensure that consumers are frequently exposed to the products.

Consumers rely heavily on subconscious processes in their decision-making, influenced by advertisements and stimuli like reviewers, that permeate our daily lives. Therefore, companies stimulate consumers' purchasing desires by employing neuromarketing, which combines analysis of brain stimulation activation resulting from unconscious reactions with marketing strategies. Neuromarketing, a term combining neuroscience and marketing, analyzes emotions and purchasing behavior regarding products arising from consumers' subconscious, allowing companies to effectively apply it to their marketing strategies. Neuromarketing emerged as a means to overcome the limitations of traditional consumer research. Traditional research methods such as surveys or observation of purchasing activities often did not yield satisfactory results relative to the costs and time invested by companies. This was because consumers frequently either expressed opinions contrary to their true feelings out of consideration for others or were unsure about what they truly wanted. In fact, consumers often made purchases or developed preferences for advertisements for reasons they themselves did not realize. Traditional research methods were limited in uncovering aspects that even consumers themselves were not consciously aware of. The Coca-Cola Company's announcement of new research findings provided clues to overcoming these limitations.

## 2) Emergence of Neuromarketing

In 2003, there was a remarkable report release. Coca-Cola Company announced the results of brain research conducted on consumers using functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), a method that can identify brain activation areas. While consumers drank Coca-Cola and Pepsi, researchers monitored their brains. Through fMRI, researchers could observe changes in the brain areas of participants during the process of thinking. The experimental results showed that participants, in a blind test where they did not know which brand of cola they were drinking, activated the same brain regions for both Pepsi and Coca-Cola, particularly activating

the prefrontal cortex responsible for reward processing. Reward processing occurs through reward circuits, where dopamine, a neurotransmitter, operates in the brain.

Dopamine is produced in response to tasty food or stimulating behavior. When judging the taste of both brands of cola purely based on taste, participants' brains produced dopamine for both brands, showing no difference in preference between the two brands.

However, when participants were shown the brand logos while being given the beverages, the fMRI images of their brains changed dramatically. When drinking Coca-Cola, different areas of the midbrain and prefrontal cortex were activated, while no changes occurred while drinking Pepsi. Furthermore, when participants knew the brands, they overwhelmingly preferred Coca-Cola. According to brain images, when participants tasted Coca-Cola and Pepsi without knowing the brand, the same parts of their brains were activated. Nevertheless, when participants knew the brands, only Coca-Cola activated certain brain areas indicating that other brain regions were involved in consumer desires besides the prefrontal cortex that was activated in previous studies. The findings obtained by observing brain regions allowed companies to utilize the unconscious mind to make consumers aware of their brands, leading to the emergence of a new field called neuromarketing that goes beyond traditional research methods.



▲ Coca-Cola(L) and Pepsi(R) are the main test substances used in the blind test.

©Google Image



## 2. Cerebrum, the Brain That Drives Unconscious Consumption

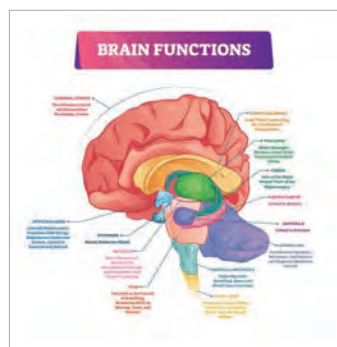
As seen in the cases of Coca-Cola and Pepsi, brands that are frequently encountered from childhood and naturally connected to various memories, experiences activate different brain regions compared to brands or products that are not familiar. Familiar and positive experiences and memories naturally influence consumer behavior. Conversely, even when encountering new brands or products, consumers often impulsively make purchases due to repeated exposure,

## Caduceus

recommendations from friends, or well-designed marketing strategies, even if these products are not necessarily needed in their daily lives.

Thus, what are the neuroscience-based reasons that lead consumers to make emotional purchases when they come across brands or products? The brain areas activated by sensory input and emotions are primarily in the cerebrum. The cerebrum is composed of the cerebral cortex, internal structures, and substructures. The prefrontal cortex of the cerebrum, a part of the cerebral cortex, is responsible for higher mental functions such as emotions, and it regulates information from other association areas and controls behavior. The prefrontal cortex is divided into the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, ventrolateral prefrontal cortex, and orbitofrontal cortex, based on function. Regarding the experiment with Coca-Cola and Pepsi, Kwon Gusang, a Cognitive Science Expert at L'Oreal R&I, stated, "In the case of the Coca-Cola experiment, when preference for a specific object is influenced solely by sensory information such as taste, the ventrolateral prefrontal cortex is activated. However, when exposed to the brand, the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus\* are also activated." The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex is responsible for higher cognitive functions such as decision-making and emotional responses, while the hippocampus is responsible for memory recall. In other words, different brain areas are activated when sensory information is provided and when emotions are stimulated through brand recognition. Neuromarketing induces consumers' unconscious consumption by stimulating brain regions that regulate emotions through strategies.

When sensory responses reach the brain and the process of recognizing brands occurs, there are cases where consumers encounter well-known brands and cases where they encounter new and unique brands that stimulate their curiosity. Dr.



▲ The cerebral cortex takes charge of emotions.

Kwon explained, "When encountering well-known brands, it is familiar information, so the brain automatically switches to a mode where the comprehensive judgment based on the stored brand information operates quickly. At this time, the amygdala located above

the limbic system, responsible for determining whether one likes or dislikes, is mainly activated." On the other hand, when encountering new brands, he stated that, "Because judgment needs to be made after exploring additional information, the brain switches to an analytical mode, and the activity of the orbitofrontal cortex responsible for learning is increased." Regardless of brand awareness, when consumers receive a strong impression of a specific brand or product, although there may be differences in processing time, ultimately, positive emotions are triggered through the activation of the prefrontal cortex and various brain regions responsible for emotions. In other words, if it is a familiar brand, even without the activation of brain areas responsible for emotional judgments, automatic and unconscious judgments can lead to a final purchase decision. As the time for the brain regions' activation and consumers' purchasing decisions differ, the strategic use of neuroscience in the industry to effectively imprint brands on consumers and connect them to purchase decisions is gradually increasing.

\*Hippocampus: The brain area located on both sides of the limbic system near the cerebral cortex that is responsible for memory and learning. It processes declarative memory rather than short-term memory or emotions.



### 3. Examples and Principles of Neuromarketing Technology

#### 1) Amorepacific, Use of fMRI

Amorepacific, one of the first companies in Korea to introduce neuromarketing, adopted fMRI in 2004 to observe the brains of women who frequently use color cosmetics after showing them images of cosmetics. The results revealed activation in parts of the brain responsible for sensory memory, vision, and touch, indicating that women with rich cosmetic experiences could have multisensory experiences simply by viewing cosmetic images. Based on this finding, Amorepacific renewed its flagship products that were basic skincare products, and launched color cosmetics, leading to significant increases in sales.

The technology utilized in this process, the fMRI, detects changes in blood flow to measure brain activity. When a specific area of the brain is used, the amount of blood flow to that area also increases, allowing researchers to measure which areas of the brain are activated. The changes in MRI signals due to changes in cerebral blood flow can be divided into two



main types: one directly proportional to cerebral blood flow and the other related to changes in Blood Oxygen Level Dependent signal (BOLD signal) induced secondarily by changes in cerebral blood flow. The former has the disadvantage of weaker signal intensity and limited coverage of the brain region that can be measured. On the other hand, the latter, measuring BOLD signals, offers stronger signal intensity, can capture all brain regions. Also, a substance used to make images clearer called the contrast medium or exposure to radiation is not necessary during X-ray\* imaging, and as the spatial resolution of the analysis results is relatively good, it is used as the main tool in neuromarketing. Companies use fMRI to confirm consumers' subconscious responses and incorporate them into products to increase sales.



▲ Amorepacific changes their representative goods.

\*X-ray: When fast electrons collide with an object, electromagnetic waves with strong penetration are emitted, which are called X-rays.

## 2) Frito-Lay, Use of EEG

In 2008, the American food company Frito-Lay introduced neuromarketing for a new advertisement campaign for Cheetos. The company predicted that consumers would perceive the orange powder seasoning of Cheetos negatively, but their predictions were completely off the mark. Results measured by electroencephalography (EEG), a method for recording brain activity, showed that consumers' brains exhibited a stronger preference response when they saw the orange seasoning. Reflecting on this, Cheetos underwent a transformation to prominently feature the familiar orange

powder. Frito-Lay incorporated this insight not only into Cheetos advertisements but also into the packaging, making orange the dominant color. Subsequently, the orange powder became a signature of Cheetos.

The EEG used here refers to an electrophysiological measurement method that records the electrical activity of the brain through electrodes. In general, it only refers to measures signals by attaching electrodes to the scalp and measuring fluctuations in potential induced by ionic currents occurring inside nerve cells. What is the principle behind measuring the brain's electrical signals via EEG? The answer lies in the repetitive excitation of the billions of neurons inside the brain, which generate flows of charge.

Nerve cells in a normal state are not normally active, but when a signal comes in, the voltage on the cell membrane increases or decreases, generating an electric signal and transmitting this signal. When a signal is transmitted like this, the ions released from the nerve cell push other ions around them through electrostatic repulsion, and as this process occurs in chains, a kind of wave is generated. The movement of electric charges created by the movement of these ions pushing and pulling electrons is propagated to metal electrodes attached to the scalp, making electroencephalogram measurement possible. The EEG technology offers advantages such as low equipment costs and minimal environmental constraints. Additionally, since it does not use radiation and produces no sound, it has the advantage of generating fewer error signals related to hearing. Companies employ EEG technology to test consumers' unconscious preferences and use it in various areas such as advertising and to entice consumers.



▲ Frito-Lay designs the Cheetos orange.

Can all consumption be considered rational? It is easy to assume that we make rational choices through reason when consuming. However, much of our decision-making is influenced by marketing strategies employed by companies, and companies are constantly researching how to stimulate consumers' emotions and increase their desire to purchase. The advancement of neuromarketing provides an opportunity to understand and utilize consumers' unconscious desires and behaviors more precisely. However, this can lead to a situation where consumers misunderstand their consumption as being based on their own rational judgment rather than being influenced by corporate marketing strategies. Therefore, it is necessary for individuals to develop the ability to analyze and regulate their consumption habits rationally. The Argus hopes that from this time on, readers will be able to be cautious of overconsumption and develop healthier consumption patterns. [A](#)

yisuws@gmail.com

# Quiet but Toxic: Abandoned Spaces in Rural Areas

By Cho Subin

Staff Reporter of Theory & Critique Section

Rural areas are becoming increasingly quiet, with vacant houses losing their warmth, schools once filled with children's laughter now abandoned, and industrial facilities that once buzzed with activity now at a standstill. According to the 2022 Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries Census by Statistics Korea, the proportion of elderly people aged 65 and over in rural areas stands at 49.8 percent, much higher than the national average of 17.5 percent. This indicates that rural areas in Korea have already become an ultra-aged populace according to UN standards. Furthermore, as the population concentrates in urban areas, the rural population continues to decline, leading to an increasing number of abandoned spaces no longer utilized by people.

Efforts to revitalize the increasing number of abandoned rural buildings due to declining populations are ongoing. As part of efforts to address rural underdevelopment, the Rural Space Restructuring Act will be implemented starting from March. However, before the enforcement of the law, there is a need for a perspective that ensures the effective application of relevant laws by examining the issues of abandoned spaces. Abandoned spaces not only remain unused by people but also become hotbeds for crime, increase residents' sense of helplessness, and worsen the economic situation in rural areas, leading to additional problems. Therefore, The Argus aims to analyze the various problems caused by abandoned rural buildings and to contemplate appropriate solutions to effectively address demographic changes and regional imbalances in development.



## Empty Houses

### Problem

#### Increasing Vacant Houses

In contrast to the traffic congestion in major cities every morning, mornings in rural areas are quiet. At first glance, the peaceful rural landscape reveals vacant houses scattered throughout. The increase in vacant houses is attributed to the phenomenon of the low birth rate and aging population, coupled with population concentration in urban areas. According to the Rural Development Act and the Special Act on Vacant and Small Houses, legally, a vacant house refers to rural buildings confirmed by local governments to be unoccupied or unused for

over a year, excluding unsold houses. According to statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) as of 2022, the number of vacant houses in rural areas has increased steadily to 66,024, about 70 percent more than the 38,988 in 2018.

The occurrence of vacant houses in rural areas is related to the population structure. As of 2022, 49.8 percent, approximately half of the rural population, is 65 or older. Therefore, many residents leave their homes due to long-term hospitalization, admission to care facilities, or death due to illness. According to a report by the Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI) titled "Status and Policy Issues of Rural Vacant Houses" (2020), houses typically become vacant during the inheritance process

when the children of residents inherit the property. These vacant houses are often left unmanaged and neglected, posing a problem mainly because rural housing tends to be more deteriorated compared to housing in urban areas. According to the 2019 Housing Census, the proportion of aging houses in rural areas is higher at 26.7 percent compared to 15.7 percent in urban areas. Consequently, many vacant houses in rural areas are not usable, and many require demolition due to severe aging. As a result, children residing in other areas are reluctant to move to rural areas, and there is low demand for renting or selling due to low real estate value. Ultimately, as the number of neglected houses increases and the population ages further, vacant houses become symbols of rural decline.

Regarding this, Professor Lee Jae-soon from the Graduate School of Venture at Hoseo University stated, “Since 60-70 percent of the total land is used for residential purposes, improving the vacant house problem is crucial.” Areas designated for residential use in land use plans are where people are active, with urban areas having the highest proportion of residential areas, making it problematic when houses intended for occupancy become vacant.

Meanwhile, local governments are making efforts to address the issue of neglected vacant houses, but significant improvements are not evident. Local governments are taking measures such as purchasing vacant houses, demolishing them, or providing support for remodeling. However, vacant houses are private property, making management difficult, and the unclear management authority leads to similar or overlapping projects. In other words, the proportion of utilized vacant houses is very low, with the majority remaining neglected.

### Extension of Problem

#### Increased Crime Utilizing Vacant Houses

From a safety and sociological standpoint, the surge in vacant houses can contribute to an uptick in crime rates. Particularly in rural areas, burglaries often occur during the farming season when residents are away. Without intervention to address these criminal opportunities, the prevalence of vacant homes in rural areas is likely to exacerbate crime rates. Indeed, many instances have been documented where vacant houses in redevelopment zones serve as staging grounds and hideouts for criminals. For instance, in 2011, a criminal who sexually assaulted and robbed a woman in the city of Iksan, North Jeolla Province, 180 kilometers south of Seoul, was apprehended while hiding in a vacant house. Moreover, in proximity to the Koreatown neighborhood in Los

Angeles in the United States, vacant houses slated for demolition have been repeatedly targeted by arsonists, with homeless individuals taking refuge in these properties, engaging in drug use, and causing disturbances.

One theory that explains this phenomenon is the “broken windows theory,” proposed by American criminologists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling. According to this theory, if a single broken window is left unaddressed, it can lead to a cascade of crime. Criminologists suggest that individuals inclined toward criminal behavior are more likely to act in areas characterized by signs of neglect, such as broken windows, graffiti, and litter, perceiving them as indicators of lax community supervision. Furthermore, there is a concern that these neglected spaces may serve as a temptation for further criminal activity, symbolized by the metaphorical “breaking of the other window,” ultimately escalating into larger social problems due to perceived deficiencies in community control measures.

### Solution

#### CPTED System

If we cannot immediately reduce the number of vacant homes in rural areas, we must explore strategies to deter their use for criminal activities. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is being considered as a proactive approach to prevent vacant homes from becoming targets of crime. CPTED is an architectural design methodology aimed at creating environments that deter criminal behavior from the outset. By incorporating crime-preventive elements into the design of buildings and urban spaces, CPTED aims to make it challenging for criminals to operate, ultimately enhancing residents’ sense of safety and well-being within their living environment.

The core principles of CPTED encompass natural surveillance, natural access control, and a sense of territory. Firstly, natural surveillance entails enhancing visibility within the layout of buildings or facilities. Unlike security personnel, natural surveillance utilizes elements such as lighting and strategic placement of common areas to increase visibility. This heightened visibility enables residents to detect intruders and respond accordingly, thereby reducing the likelihood of criminal activity. Secondly, natural access control involves directing people toward common areas using roads, landscaping, and doors, effectively filtering out potential intruders and impeding access to criminal targets. Measures may include reducing the number of entry points in an apartment complex or implementing access control mechanisms. Lastly, territoriality encompasses

## T & C Tower

the concept of residents utilizing, occupying, and asserting ownership over imaginary territories. Boundaries delineated through features like fences, signage, landscaping, and lighting serve to define territory and establish a sense of ownership. This fosters a sense of community among residents while deterring unauthorized individuals from encroaching upon their space.



▲ Munsan town in city of Jinju installs solar stud light.

© Jinju Police Station

Furthermore, there is a growing trend of implementing CPTED projects in rural areas. For instance, the city of Jinju, South Gyeongsang Province, 333 kilometers south of Seoul, has initiated CPTED initiatives in villages like Jinsung Woljeong Village, Munsan Safe Village, and Geumgok Dumun Village. These projects involve the installation of wall lights, which are mandatory in rural areas, to enhance visibility, along with environmental enhancements such as murals. Additionally, solar road stud lights have been installed to improve lane visibility on roads. Kang Dong-soo, director of Munsan Safe Village, highlighted the positive impact of these measures in an interview with Gyeongnam Ilbo, stating, “The installation of wall lights has reduced safety incidents, especially for elderly residents walking at night. Furthermore, there has been no damage to crops, making it even more beneficial. We hope to see these initiatives expanded to other villages.”



### Closed Schools

#### Problem

#### Schools Closing Their Doors

The aging of the rural population means fewer children, which in turn leads to a decrease in the school-age population, which is a big reason for the disappearance of traditional schools. According to the Statistics Korea’s “2020 General Survey of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries,” of the 37,563 rural villages in the country, only 8.8 percent of elementary schools, 3.8 percent of middle schools, and 2.7 percent of high schools are located within an administrative district, commonly referred to as a “village.” In the case of high schools, only 39.8 percent are located within a “township,” a regional unit larger than an administrative

district, meaning that students often have to commute long distances to high schools in other regions. As for the criteria for closing schools, the Ministry of Education (MOE) categorizes elementary schools with fewer than 60 students in rural areas or villages, fewer than 120 students in towns, and fewer than 240 students in cities as being subject to closure and allows each local education office to decide whether or not to close them. In South Gyeongsang Province, one of the regions with the highest number of closed schools in the country, the South in Gyeongsang Provincial Office of Education recommends closing elementary schools with 30 or fewer students or merging them with neighboring schools, while actively promoting closure and consolidation of schools with 20 or fewer students. According to the Special Act to Promote the Utilization of Closed School Properties, a closed school is a public school under Article 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that has been abolished for reasons such as a decrease in the number of students or the consolidation of schools.

However, many of these closed schools are no longer utilized and are often abandoned. The former Daesung High School in Gochang County, North Jeolla Province, 238 kilometers south of Seoul, was closed in 2004 and has been neglected ever since. Only on February 2, 2023, after 19 years, was a task force composed of representatives from the Gochang County Office and the Gochang County Office of Education Support, as well as the chairman of the local board of directors, organized to discuss the use of the school, and the first meeting began. According to Do Jong-hwan, a member of the National Assembly’s Education Committee, an analysis of the “Status of Closed School Properties of Local Education Authorities Nationwide” showed that the percentage of closed schools owned by local education authorities was 26.8 percent, or 358 schools. This means that one out of every four abandoned schools is neglected. However, this statistic is based on schools owned by the MOE, and the number is expected to be much higher if we include schools that have been sold to other entities but are not being utilized. In the case of Gubong Elementary School in Jinan County, North Jeolla Province, 195 kilometers south of Seoul, which was closed in February 1998 and sold in December 2005, the schoolyard remains overgrown with weeds due to years of neglect.

#### Extension of Problem

#### Growing Helplessness of Residents

Rural school closures are devastating for both local students

and local communities. The schools that are closing are often the alma mater of rural residents, who often contributed to their creation. Thus, in rural areas, schools are more than just educational institutions.

Students in rural areas are often in the same school from elementary school onward, forming small communities with strong emotional ties. According to the “2022 Statistical Yearbook of Education” of the Korean Educational Development Institute, 95 percent of the nation’s elementary schools are small, with 60 or fewer students, and are located in rural areas. In some cases, multiple grades occupy the same classroom, so there is a high degree of intimacy between teachers and students. Teachers do not just impart knowledge but often are familiar with their students’ home situations in detail. Not only students but also rural residents feel helpless due to the closure of schools. The elderly, especially those in their 80s, understand the inevitability of school closures but express sadness that the schools they and their families attended are closing. In a study on “The Impact of School Closures on Rural Communities” (2017) by Seo Hyung-joo of the KREI, a resident of south village in Jeongseon County, Gangwon Province, 155 kilometers south from Seoul, said, “I was very sad when I heard that the school was closing because it had a long history. My sister-in-law, children, and husband all went to school here. I felt a lot of loneliness when it was closed. There is a building but no students...” she said.

Why do students and residents feel so powerless? According to “A Study on the Ecological Sociology of Education” (2009) written by An Seung-dae, this network of relationships between local people and schools is due to the ecological principle of learning communities. In ecological education theory, the state, schools, teachers, and students are connected in a web of interdependent relationships, just as leaves, stems, trees, and forests form a community of life in an ecosystem. In addition, parents, businesses, and local people are connected in a network of relationships with educational actors, and they should work together to promote learning. In particular, the report “A Study on the Impact of School Closures on Rural Communities” (2017) found that rural residents felt that the schools being closed were often their alma mater and that they felt they were the common property of the village because they had watched the school being built or had a direct influence on its construction. They also felt a sense of loss when school and village sports events, such as the tug-of-war, which were held as a village-wide feast before the school closed, disappeared. In other words, in rural areas, schools are not just a means of individual self-actualization through

education but also serve one of the many functions that make up society.

Considering the importance of schools to rural communities, the current law mandates a process to reflect the opinions of residents in the school closure process, but often the disagreements between the school closure entity and residents result in prolonged discussions on utilization and a sense of powerlessness that is not easily resolved.

### Solution

#### Utilizing Closed Schools That Coexist with Rural Communities

Many rural residents feel attached to schools that face closure, highlighting the need to repurpose these institutions in a way that benefits local communities. Eco-planning offers a solution, allowing abandoned schools to blend harmoniously with the rural environment and serve purposes desired by residents, thereby preserving their sense of belonging. Rural schools, often intertwined with nature, provide an ideal setting for eco-friendly planning concepts, as outlined in “A study on the Utilization of Regional Closed Schools Applied Ecological Concept” (2008) by Jung Jin-ju, Lim Jae-han, and Lee Ji-young. This approach emphasizes architecture that complements the natural surroundings and minimizes the environmental impact. For instance, the “Sunlight Whispering on the Stone Wall” project transformed a closed elementary school into a pension, utilizing the existing layout and terrain to create a serene atmosphere. Additionally, initiatives like the Eumdari Cultural Village repurpose materials from old classrooms, demonstrating the potential for eco-friendly and sustainable reuse of abandoned school buildings in rural areas.

Consequently, efforts should be made to utilize abandoned schools with the input of rural residents. To date, there have been three main types of utilization of abandoned schools: sale, lease, and self-use, including demolition, and the types of utilization include educational facilities, income enhancement facilities, cultural facilities, welfare facilities, and sports facilities. According to the Special Act to Promote the Utilization of Closed School Properties, residents and alumni associations must be consulted when selling or leasing closed schools. However, Yu Jin-sang, a professor of Architecture at Changwon National University, told Hello Vision TV news that residents often think it would be best to provide cultural facilities, but they have a variety of ideas of things they want, such as places for threshing grain or repairing farm machinery to an ill-placed parking lot.

Yu emphasized the importance of finding out what residents want first through participatory design.



### Idle Industrial Facilities

#### Problem

##### Idle Industrial Facilities Gathering Dust

Rural areas are getting poorer. Unused and abandoned warehouses and abandoned factories are a silent witness to a countryside that is losing its vitality. Abandoned warehouses and abandoned factories are among the most idle facilities that were once used for commercial purposes. An idle facility is a building that has outlived its function and role and has been neglected and abandoned without being actively used. These idle industrial facilities further depreciate rural economies that are losing their vitality due to depopulation.

The Rural Development Administration's 2013 study on idle industrial facilities in rural areas categorizes them into three types by the factors: aging, declining industrial competitiveness, and declining production. Aging facilities, like village communal storage centers built in the 1960s and 70s, deteriorate faster in rural areas due to population outflow and an aging population, leading to a lack of maintenance manpower. The second type, those with declining industrial competitiveness, include abandoned facilities unable to keep up with changing industrialization trends, with manufacturing moving to urban areas since the 1990s. Lastly, declining production results in idle facilities due to factors like soil contamination, environmental pollution, and reduced agricultural productivity, affecting village communal storage and other facilities.

Additionally, rural facilities could be examined in the context of changes in national policies. In the 1990s, the opening of markets for agricultural products increased, and projects such as rural road maintenance were implemented in line with policies to improve rural conditions. In the 2000s, rural experience facilities, agricultural production infrastructure, and processing facilities were established, focusing on the multifunctional nature of rural areas. However, facilities such as rural experience centers, common warehouses, and farm machinery maintenance centers have become superfluous, as they do not meet current social and economic needs due to changes in the times. As the use of these facilities has decreased, they impose a burden on residents with associated management costs rather than generating profits.

#### Extension of Problem

##### Economic Impact of Increased Idle Industrial Facilities

An increase in abandoned industrial facilities means an increase in idle economic capacity. Idle economic capacity is the unused part of economic production capacity, which expresses how much industrial production capacity, housing, and employment remain unused and idle. In this case, the idle economic power of companies and the labor market can be identified through the capacity utilization rate. Idle capacity encompasses various indicators such as unemployment rate, number of employed people, factory operation rate, number of new enterprises, and investment growth rate, and idle industrial facilities such as abandoned factories in rural areas worsen these indicators.

How do abandoned industrial facilities hinder rural development? The abandoned spinning mill in Yesan County, South Chungcheong Province, 99 kilometers south of Seoul, has been abandoned for approximately 20 years since its closure. Fortunately, its demolition was confirmed in February 2023, as it was selected as a target by MAFRA's "Rural Space Maintenance Project," which overhauls long-term abandoned buildings in rural areas and improves the environment, but in the meantime, the area failed to develop and declined. The factory was built in 1975 on a site of about 48,000 square meters and steered the local economy of Yesan County during the 1970s and 1980s as the textile industry boomed. However, the factory was closed in 2001 following the 1997 Korean Currency Crisis, and the local economy was devastated. The factory's employee apartments were abandoned, and schools were closed as residents moved away. Naturally, clothing stores, restaurants, and bookstores around the factory also closed, leading to a decline in the local economy. The apartments that were being built around the factory were also abandoned and became eyesores. The local government tried to take action, but the large amount of money required for land acquisition and factory demolition hindered the development of the area, and the harmful substances from the factory caused extreme damage to local residents.

#### Solution

##### Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship

Creating startup or cultural spaces for young people is crucial to bolstering the active population in rural areas. This is vital for boosting economic activities and tapping into the untapped economic potential of abandoned industrial facilities. While other countries have successfully repurposed abandoned



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▲ Choong Nam Spinning CO., LTD. in Yesan county has been neglected for about 20 years.

warehouses into cultural facilities, Korea has faced challenges due to a focus on civic bonding over economic gains when utilizing idle facilities.

For instance, the Book Museum in Yeongwol County, Gangwon Province, 137 kilometers east of Seoul, initially opened in 1999 using classrooms from a closed elementary school. However, due to operational challenges, the museum faced closure and relocated. This illustrates that cultural facilities often struggle to generate direct economic benefits and may not be sustainable. Therefore, local governments can offer entrepreneurship spaces for young people in rural areas, attracting outsiders and revitalizing commercial areas.

In the city of Suncheon, South Jeolla Province, 294 kilometers south of Seoul, a startup space was created for young people by utilizing an abandoned warehouse. Suncheon Brewworks and Youth Store are similar examples. Suncheon Brewworks is a cafe that was created by renovating the “151-31 Jogok Neighborhood Nonghyup Warehouse” and has been in business since 2018. Built in 1993, the warehouse served as a Suncheon Nonghyup granary for two decades before being repurposed into a cafe. Similarly, the nearby Youth Store, originally constructed as a grain warehouse in 1945, now functions as a mixed-use space, providing a platform for young entrepreneurs aged 19 to 39 to establish stores. As of 2020, the monthly rent for the space was around 10,000 won (US\$7.4) and allowed for a two-year stay, easing the burden on young entrepreneurs. Despite store closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 Suncheon Bay International Garden Expo facilitated the rental of the entire store, leading to a remarkable 138 percent increase in monthly

sales compared to 2022. This is a representative example of creating new economic value by utilizing idle industrial facilities and contributing



© Brewworks Homepage, @brewworks\_space

▲ Brewworks is a cafe that utilizes an abandoned warehouse in the city of Suncheon.

to the revitalization of the local economy. Professor Lee said, “While some local governments have demolished abandoned spaces for parks or parking lots, this approach has limitations. Repurposing abandoned rural spaces to reflect the region’s uniqueness could create sites that revitalize the local economy.”

Another option to similarly support entrepreneurship is to operate a vertical smart farm in an abandoned warehouse. A vertical smart farm is a system that artificially controls the growing environment for crops within an artificial structure such as a greenhouse or building. Smart farms can be utilized to lower the initial entry barrier for people in their 20s and 30s who want to farm. It also makes it possible to create jobs by providing education related to smart farms.

“When people come to a region, consumption occurs, and the region is revitalized, and since the space that people need the most is residential space, we should utilize empty houses to attract people to the region,” Lee said. She also added that even if rural vacant houses are not used as primary residences, they should be expanded to support the concept of workcation, which is a concept that combines “work” and “vacation,” aligning with trends like telecommuting and the four-day workweek. This approach can address multiple needs, providing space for entrepreneurship, employment, and relaxation. By inviting young people to rural areas and reducing vacant houses, communities can naturally thrive.

The issue of rural exodus includes abandoned spaces like vacant houses, schools, and industrial facilities, resulting from an aging population and urban migration. This neglect leads to social issues, perpetuating the cycle of rural decline. To break this cycle, new approaches to repurpose abandoned spaces are crucial. While addressing the root causes of rural abandonment, such as an aging population, is important that practical solutions also be explored. The Argus urges readers to recognize how demographic challenges affect both rural and urban areas, emphasizing that rural development is integral to societal progress. 📖

*subincho2022@hufs.ac.kr*

# Running for the Truth

By Lee Jue-hyun  
Editorial Consultant

Samuel Maleski, the husband, is found dead on the snowy ground after falling from the third-floor storage room of his home. Depending on the autopsy results, it could be ruled as suicide, but it might also be a homicide. Consequently, Sandra Voyter, the wife who was the only person present at the same time and place, becomes the prime suspect and faces trial. Daniel, their son who first discovered Samuel after walking with his guide dog Snoop, becomes a witness in the trial. A tragic incident befalls this seemingly harmonious family — a successful novelist mother, a professor father, and a son with visual impairment due to an accident — drawing widespread attention from the media and the public. The unfortunate dispute over the truth unfolds, with each character narrating his or her own version of the story.

Justin Triet’s film “Anatomy of a Fall (Anatomie d’une Chute)” ultimately does not reveal the truth behind Samuel’s death. Therefore, in a situation without clear evidence, audiences are left with the choice of believing in a combination of fragmented stories. Thus, what is the truth? The film’s ending, not definitively answering the question, may leave some feeling unsatisfied. However, the movie raises doubts about the concept of truth itself rather than focusing on the actual details of the incident.

## “ What To Believe

Daniel recounts a memory from the past when his father, during a car ride to the animal hospital, hinted at suicide. Daniel’s testimony crucially contributed to the verdict that absolved Sandra of responsibility for Samuel’s death. So, was the truth of the incident that Samuel committed suicide? The trial clearly ended in Sandra’s favor, yet the film leaves a lingering sense of unease. When Daniel, caught in a conflict between his parents, is told by his caretaker, “When you have to believe in one thing but have two choices, you have to choose one,” Daniel responds, “So, just make up a belief?” Daniel’s final statement in court undoubtedly had a disruptive impact. His outcry, confirming that he gave



©Amazon

▲ Anatomy of a Fall (Anatomie d’une Chute) by Justin Triet wins the Palme d’Or at the 76th Cannes Film Festival on May 21, 2023, and wins Best Film and Best Director at the 49th edition at the French César awards.



©Screen Rant

▲ Daniel supports his mother’s innocence by assuming his father’s suicide.



his dog aspirin to support his claim about his father's suicide attempt, adds an emotional layer, even bringing tears. The final punctuation of this story is ultimately determined by Daniel.

Daniel's words are all true, but whether these facts can collectively constitute the truth of the incident is questionable. Truth is generally considered an immutable answer that exists simultaneously with the creation of a problem. However, the film demonstrates how what we believed to be the truth can be nothing more than well-crafted stories. In the film, as expressed by the lawyer Vincent Renzi, who tells Sandra, "In court, how others perceive your actions is more important than the truth," leaves room for discussion about whether what is officially determined as the truth is indeed the actual truth.

### “Anatomy of a Truth

During the process of elucidating Samuel's death, the inner workings of an individual and a family are thoroughly exposed. These private revelations — Samuel, who grappled with deep depression due to the failure of his writing dreams and guilt over his son's accident, Sandra's sexual orientation as a bisexual, and the recorded conversations revealing the escalated emotional distance between the couple — are generously laid bare. Daniel, placed in a position to lose his mother, after the trial, finally smiles after a long period of grief, wrapping his head for a while upon seeing his approaching mother, and eventually embraces her. The process of how the anxiety of possibly losing his mother, already having lost his father, pushes Daniel to make a choice between his parents, provides an experience of understanding the violence a young boy undergoes during the period of truth's dissection. Through the investigation process, which claims to repeatedly recreate the death in various ways, and the circumstances where a man has to explain his private life in front of numerous people and cameras, subjective personal aspects become thoroughly objectified.

What does the movie "Anatomy of a Fall" aim to convey to the audience? The term "anatomy" evokes scenes of tearing apart and closely examining the original form. However, the film suggests that truth is not necessarily enclosed in a sturdy package and does not require one to peel away the surface to reveal what is inside. If truth, as portrayed in this movie, can be determined in a certain way, the film urges us to focus on how we pursue the truth throughout its 150-minute runtime. Throughout the process of navigating through the intricately woven fabric of truth and fiction, conscientiously choosing which truth to believe, we should hope for an ending where our journey does not inflict wounds on someone. 📺



©Zagreb Film Festival

▲ Lawyer Vincent Renzi advises Sandra to consider how others will perceive her actions in court, rather than focusing solely on telling the truth.



©The Projector

▲ The prosecutor speaks of inferences as truths, seeking justification for claims rather than uncovering the actual truth.



©The Projector

▲ Sandra is dissected meticulously in front of numerous people in the courtroom.

[hufsworkspace0520@hufs.ac.kr](mailto:hufsworkspace0520@hufs.ac.kr)

# A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE



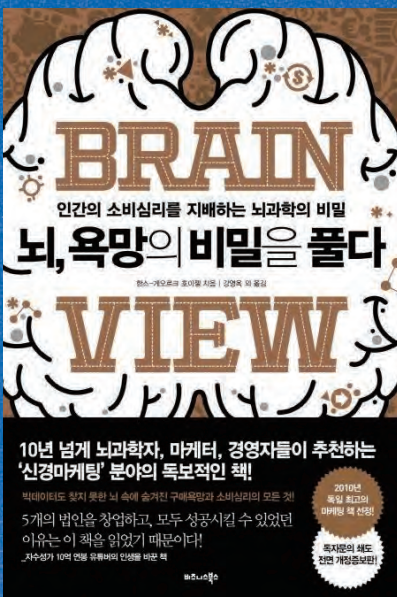
Kim Su-yeon

The primary change that I aim for this year is to cultivate diligence. Looking back on my past few years, I have come to realize that I have dedicated too much time to adjusting to campus life. It might sound ridiculous that I spent all three years simply adapting. Feeling stagnant lately, I find it intolerable. Therefore, I am trying to make some changes. Nowadays, I am tackling personal tasks that I have long been putting off, one by one. The process requires me to distance myself from the familiar and embrace the new. As a senior, I often felt like I was swept away by the relentless flow of time. Nevertheless, I will pause, take a deep breath, and then embark on my journey of self-improvement.



Kim Yi-eun

Until now, as I lived without a clear goal, I have had many regrets where I should have tried or tried harder. I would like to live a bit busier in 2024. As a starting point, I want to embrace every moment as a reporter of The Argus and do my best without regrets. While preparing for this March issue, I have been reflecting on whether I have ever devoted time and effort to something during my life in university. So, this year, even if I fail, I want to truly give my best to what I do and find myself growing from it. Later, when I look back on this year, I hope I do not have any regrets.



Lee Seeun

Last year, I did not engage in any activities. However, being part of The Argus gave me a chance to appreciate the pleasure of sharing meals with fellow journalists, discussing about difficult tasks, and working together to produce excellent outcomes. Initially daunting, each step of sharing and finding solutions together became invaluable to me. Witnessing the transformation of a piece of writing, from a mess of ideas to a polished work filled me with immense pride. Furthermore, with each article I wrote, I experienced a level of immersion and contemplation that I would never have felt during vacations without any specific plans. Engaging in The Argus provided me with a precious opportunity to participate in the beauty of communal living and the process of producing great results together.

## Cho Subin

As this is my first semester as a staff reporter of The Argus, I want to change into someone who has more responsibility and does not waste time. I believe having a sense of responsibility means valuing each moment and making it count. However, reflecting on my past school days, I realize I often failed to focus on the present due to worrying about the distant future. However, preparing for this March issue taught me that fulfilling goals in the present shapes my future. I found that rather than agonizing over crafting the perfect article, starting to write, and finding direction along the way was more productive. Perhaps, as I accumulate diligent days, a bright future awaits me.

## Joo Heejin

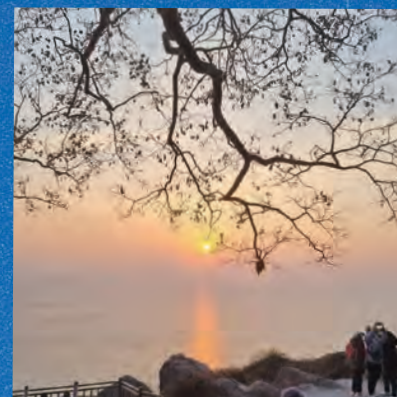
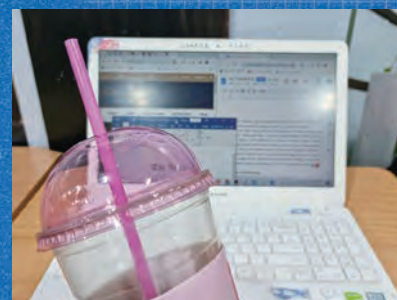
I hope that I will be more diligent in 2024 than I was in 2023. I have sometimes been in trouble since I tend to put off tasks for the pleasure of the moment. I started to study for an exam when the exam date is less than a week away and to work on the assignment a few hours before the submission deadline, so I was pressed for time and stressed out. Once I experienced these difficulties, I thought I should not live like this. So, now I am going to try to be diligent this year. I aspire to overcome my inclination to spend time in bed and instead commit to sitting at my desk, studying diligently, and, above all, giving up the pursuit of immediate pleasure. When reflecting on this year, I aim for a sense of fulfillment without any regrets stemming from laziness.

## Lee Jue-hyun

When I first entered university, I anticipated that by this senior year, plans for the journey ahead would be somewhat solidified, and I would have a sense of certainty about what I wanted to achieve. However, rather than drawing my own picture, it seems I have not quite reached the image I had envisioned in the past, severely swayed by the surrounding circumstances. But luckily, I will be challenging myself by becoming an exchange student in Germany this semester, navigating an environment I have never experienced before. I sincerely hope to have a deep conversation with myself and return home with my own answers.

## Cho Eun

“Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be,” Job 8:7 is the verse for me in 2024. After a significant hiatus, this year marks a new beginning for me. Like an engine growling at the starting line, I am carefully checking for any flaws or needs. Instead of adhering to a harsh schedule that would easily exhaust me, I am approaching the year like a long-distance race, aiming to keep going without taking breaks. If you happen to notice me being lazy, please give me a nudge to bring me back to my senses!



한국외국어대학교 영자신문사

# THE ARGUS

## 113기 수습기자 모집

### 지원 내용

**자격** 최소 3학기 이상 활동 가능한 양 캠퍼스 재학생

**방법** HUFS 공지사항에서 지원서 다운로드 및 작성 후 아거스 공식 이메일 (hufsargus@gmail.com) 으로 발송

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### 전형 일정

#### 원서 접수

2024년 3월 4일 (월) ~ 3월 17일 (일) 23: 59

#### 서류 합격

2024년 3월 19일 (화) 개별 문자 통지

#### 필기 면접

2024년 3월 21일 (목), 22일 (금)

#### 최종 합격

2024년 3월 24일 (일) 개별 문자 통지

For more information contact: hufsargus@gmail.com  
or call our office at 010-3458-4399

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