

Korean Student Association of Western Washington University

05/06/2013

KSA was once one of the strongest ethnic clubs on campus, but without a firm foundation it quickly deteriorated and fell apart. We, the current officers of KSA, hope to establish for the current club a steady foundation with strong ties to the student body and the Korean-American population on campus so that future incarnations of the club may thrive. Korean-Americans have a unique identity because many of us were raised in a split culture. While many of us were raised in America, we also grew up in Korean families with Korean traditions. Many Korean-Americans struggle with their identity and find themselves choosing to "be Korean" or "be American." As the Korean Student's Association on campus, we aim to provide a place where Korean-Americans can realize their identity with other like-minded students.

Our Goals:

- To create a safe environment where Korean-American students can interact with each other and explore their identity.
- To introduce and spread Korean culture to Western's campus.
- To develop international relationships and ties with Korean exchange students to further the horizons of our members (including the exchange students).

Activities

- General weekly meetings where members learn about Korean and Korean-American culture as well as meeting other students with Korean heritage.
- Quarterly Events such as potlucks, outings, fundraisers, game nights and movie nights to strengthen group dynamics.

Contacts

President: Joan Hong

Hongj8@students.wvu.edu

VicePresident: Johan Ahn

Ahnj4@students.wvu.edu

KSA E-mail: ksa.wvu@gmail.com

What about the ESC interests you to become a club?

- The ESC is a good resource to raise awareness for our club on campus. We want to ensure that we are reaching every student who would potentially want to join our club.
- We believe that under the ESC, we will be able to provide a safe environment with a firm foundation for Korean students to gather and explore their identity.
- As KSA expands, support from other students and the ESC both morally and financially will help us to further our goals (listed above) and to strengthen the Korean presence on campus.

Does your club represent a historically underrepresented population?

- Koreans have a long history of being invaded to the point where the culture has gone through multiple transitions. It is imperative to recognize and retain traditional Korean culture as well as Korean-American culture so that students will be able to identify with their heritage.

Does your club primarily serve students who feel marginalized on campus?

- In fall 2008, only 8.3% of the enrolled student body identified as Asian American at Western, and Korean Americans only represented a fraction of that percentage. On a primarily Caucasian campus (76.5% of the enrolled student body in 2008), Korean Americans lack a place where they can connect to their culture and explore their identity outside of KSA.
- As a result of the various occupations of Korea by other countries, there are many students who are descendants of people with mixed ethnicities. KSA strives to provide an encouraging environment for these students as well.

Does the group/club promote educational/cultural awareness for their members?

- During weekly meetings, we teach our members about traditional Korean practices as well as modern culture and current events. Many Korean-Americans are unable to speak Korean fluently and so we dedicate a small portion of our time to teaching our members the language as well.
- Gatherings outside of the club are encouraged as well amongst members. These gatherings aim to further affirm Korean identity within the club.
- During midterms and finals weeks, we reserve a room on campus where members can study together and use the officers and each other as educational resources.

How does your group/club distinguish between being an interest club and a cultural club?

- Our club does not focus on individual aspects of Korean culture; we focus on all aspects of culture as a whole.
- KSA seeks to educate and affirm Korean-Americans of their identity.