

1378 words/ 9.5 minutes

Inauguration of Institute for Korean Studies

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President, Indiana University

Global and International Studies Building

Friday, September 9, 2016

4:00 p.m.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Dean Feinstein.

I want to welcome all of the distinguished Korea scholars who have travelled to Bloomington for the inaugural conference of Indiana University's new Institute for Korean Studies.

I am very pleased to welcome Consul Kyunghan Kim, of the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Chicago. He is here today representing Consul General Jong-Kook Lee.

I am also very pleased to welcome Mr. Sihyung Lee, president of the Korea Foundation. An extraordinarily generous grant from the Korea Foundation and three Korean IU alumni allowed IU to establish its first endowed chair in Korean Studies, and thus greatly assisted IU in establishing the institute whose opening we celebrate this afternoon. We are very grateful to the Korea Foundation and the alumni donors, and I want to express our thanks to them once again for their generous gift.

I am also very pleased to welcome Ambassador Thomas Hubbard, the former United States Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, and the chair of the Korea Society, which

works to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the people of the United States and Korea.

We look forward to hearing from Mr. Lee and Ambassador Hubbard in a few moments.

I also want to express, on behalf of Indiana University, our gratitude to Dr. Bae Yong Lee, president of the Academy of Korean Studies, who could not be with us today, for sending her greetings and for the academy's support of today's conference and IU's Institute for Korean Studies.

I also want to acknowledge Sheila Crowley, the acting associate director for volunteer recruitment with the Peace Corps. IU Bloomington ranks seventh in the country in terms of the number of alumni who serve with the Peace Corps. IU is proud to partner—in a number of areas—with such a distinguished organization that promotes peace, intercultural understanding, and a lifelong commitment to public service.

## 2. THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: A DYNAMIC COUNTRY WITH A RICH HISTORY

Over the course of the past 30 years, I have had the great pleasure of visiting the dynamic countries of East Asia a total of more than 40 times, including seven visits to the Republic of Korea over 25 years, the first being in 1990, when Korea was a very different place.

As most of you know very well, with its rich and eventful history that spans more than 5,000 years, Korea is home to one of the world's oldest cultures.

Over the last few decades, Korean society has experienced rapid modernization on an unprecedented scale, with dramatic transformations in its political, economic, and cultural sectors. Today, Korea's economy is the fourth largest in Asia and the 11th largest in the world. It is also among the world's most technologically advanced and

digitally-connected countries—and is one of the United States' most important strategic and economic partners.

For these and many, many other reasons, Korea is a very important focus of study for all who are interested in global issues that confront the world today.

Yesterday's provocative nuclear test by North Korea, in continued defiance of the United Nations, greatly underscores the urgent need for multilateral and collaborative solutions to our shared challenges. The resolution of major pressing global issues—including the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons—requires genuine intercultural and international understanding and competencies in every field.

In large measure, the urgent need for graduates with these skills and competencies has led, in recent years, to Indiana University's commitment to expanding and strengthening its academic programs in Korean Studies.

### 3. ESTABLISHING IU'S INSTITUTE FOR KOREAN STUDIES

Our efforts to do so have been greatly aided by the remarkably generous grant from the Korea Foundation and three Korean alumni—which allowed us to establish an endowed chair. This watershed moment in IU's history of international engagement marked the first time that international alumni, in combination with a government organization, contributed in a major way to supporting academic programs at IU through the funding of a chair focused on their home country.

Just over a year ago, we were delighted to announce that Professor Seung-kyung Kim, whom you have met, was hired as the founding Korea Foundation Chair in Korean Studies, and as director of IU's new Institute for Korean Studies.

Indiana University is also deeply grateful to the Academy of Korean Studies for the generous grants that will help establish IU's Institute for Korean Studies as a thriving hub of Korean studies in the Midwest. In addition to their support for today's conference, the academy's grants will also support Korean studies research at IU and support the further expansion of IU's Korean studies curriculum.

Over the course of several decades, IU's academic programs in area and regional studies—and international studies more broadly—became widely acknowledged as among the strongest in the country. IU has long ranked among the national leaders in externally-funded area studies programs, and no other university in the United States teaches more languages.

IU's new Institute for Korean Studies will join these programs as a vibrant center for multidisciplinary research and scholarship about Korea that will benefit IU students as well as scholars and institutions around the world.

#### 4. IU AND KOREA: INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

The new institute will further strengthen Indiana University's deep and extensive ties with Korea.

Nearly 4,300 IU alumni are affiliated with Korea. Among them are remarkably successful business leaders, government officials, faculty members at Korea's finest universities, and members of the diplomatic core. Our Korean alumni are among our finest international ambassadors—for which we at the university are deeply grateful. In 2009, Indiana University held its International Alumni Conference and Reunion in Seoul. The event was a great success, with alumni coming from around the world to participate.

As a university that ranks 16th in the nation out of about 1,200 American universities in terms of the number of students who study abroad, IU continues to collaborate with partners around the world to expand study abroad opportunities for its students—including in Korea. Students from IU's Kelley School of Business, for example, travel to Korea to learn about emerging economic markets. Groups from IU's School of Public and Environmental Affairs have also travelled to Seoul to study the effects of globalization on Korea's government, business, and non-profit sectors. And last year, student members of the IU Chamber Orchestra in IU's world renowned Jacobs School of Music travelled to Seoul for a series of high profile concerts, culminating in a performance at the Seoul Arts Center, Korea's foremost art and culture complex.

IU also ranks 16th in the nation in terms of the number of international students enrolled. Around 9,000 international students are enrolled at IU, approximately 1,000 of whom are from Korea—and these students are a vital part of the life of Indiana University. Korea is, in fact, one of the leading countries of origin for international students at IU.

Many IU faculty members have extensive research collaborations with faculty members at institutions in Korea. It has been my privilege to meet with leaders of Korea's most distinguished universities to explore ways to build upon the individual collaborations of our faculty in order to create more opportunities for faculty and students.

IU's institutional partnerships with Korea's leading universities are among our strongest international research and educational partnerships. IU's partnership with Yonsei University, for example, is 30 years old. We also have agreements in place with Ewha Womans University, Seoul National University, and Sungkyunkwan University, among others in Korea, and many more throughout Asia.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As Indiana University prepares to celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2020, we have launched an extensive range of strategic initiatives that will culminate in our Bicentennial year. These initiatives build upon IU's nearly 200 years of excellence in teaching, research, and service.

One of our main priorities is to create global leaders. In an increasingly global society, IU students and graduates must be prepared for all that the world has in store. With new and innovative programs like the Institute for Korean Studies, Indiana University will expand its tradition of international scholarship and outreach and prepare its students to meet the complex global challenges of the 21st century.

On behalf of Indiana University, let me once again extend our congratulations and thanks to all who have helped make the establishment of the institute possible.

All of us look forward to witnessing its success in the decades to come.

Thank you very much.