

## Special Issue Dedicated to the Memory of Dr. Seong H. Lee

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## Note from Editor

All members of KACA and those who know Professor Seong H. Lee were deeply saddened by the news of his passing in November.

Professor Lee retired from teaching at Appalachian State University several years ago. He was one of the founding members of the Korean American Communication Association (KACA), and was the second President of the KACA. Professor Lee played a pivotal role in developing the KACA during its early days, and had such wonderful memory of the early history of the KACA.

Some of us have had the privilege of knowing him personally while many younger members had no chance to meet him. By dedicating this special issue of *KACA Newsletter* to the memory of the late Professor Lee, I hope that all of us can get a glimpse of what a wonderful person, dedicated scholar, and caring mentor he was, and how much he had given to KACA throughout his long career. 🇰🇷

— KACA Newsletter Editor, Jisu Huh (University of Minnesota)

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The Late Professor Lee's Photo at the Memorial Service

# In Remembrance of *Professor Seong H. Lee*

by Jae-won Lee

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**T**he late Prof. Seong H. Lee closes one beginning chapter of the KACA. It sounds paradoxical, but his passing, in a way, makes this Korean-American group of ours an enriched network of shared history. I just regret that his departure is untimely though I had been aware of his health concern for some years.

Upon learning of his passing only today while staying abroad, I somehow recall a particular line from T. S. Eliot's one epic poem: "Where is the Life we have lost in living?" Prof. Youm's tribute and the memories from Prof. Byun seem to attest the late Prof. Lee's career as being a full life of more than an untimely passing.

In early 1970s, there were only a few of us with the Korean tag in our field, hence the close-knit feel among the small group. We dwelled on the odd experiences of our reporting days back in the turbulent Korea and the pleasure of seeing our children grow as a second generation in this new land. And, of course, we shared worries and ambitions of succeeding or surviving in this academic route.

Prof. Lee was a very meticulous person in running and organizing a group like our KACA. When I was heading it at the outset, he executed much of the detail works not only as a deputy but also as treasurer and even as the newsletter editor. He did the same when we rejuvenated the group in early 1990s. His congenial personality was his asset, no doubt. Kind and generous and selfless--that was him, a bona-fide gentleman.

I cherish a fond memory of seeing him a few years ago on one wintry day at his home base of Boone, in the middle of the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains. He sounded very satisfied at being one of the key journalism instructors on his campus. My wife joins me in celebrating his life; they share the time-honored Korean "virtue" of high-school connection from Daegu, the coed attached high school of Gyeongbuk National University Teachers College.

With regrets for missing a good old friend... 🇰🇷



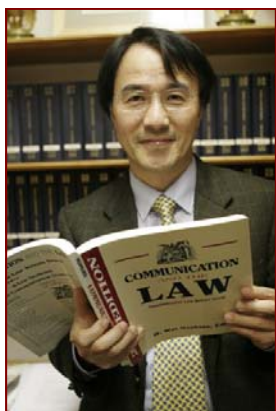
Dr. Jae-won Lee

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Prof. Jae-won Lee has just retired after 36 years of teaching at Cleveland State University. He specializes in news journalism studies and political communication. A graduate of Seoul National University, he worked five years as a reporter for *The Korea Times* before coming to this country as a Fulbright Scholar. His master's is from Marquette University and his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. At Cleveland State, he had been directing the Journalism and Promotional Communication Division while concurrently serving as the university's Director of Curricular Affairs. His e-mail address is: [j.lee@csuohio.edu](mailto:j.lee@csuohio.edu).

# In Remembrance of *Professor Seong H. Lee*

by *Kyu Ho Youm*



Dr. Kyu Ho Youm

and many of my Korean and American friends were profoundly saddened by the news that Prof. Seong H. Lee, whom I made friends with 20 years ago, died on Nov. 15, 2008.

As KACA President Hye-ryeon Lee stated in her note of Nov. 17, 2008, Prof. Lee, a founding father of KACA, was "pivotal" to the continuity and success of KACA as an academic organization for communication students and scholars in the U.S. and beyond.

Prof. Lee not only founded KACA in 1978 with some of his Korean-American friends, but he also rebuilt the then seemingly moribund KACA in the early 1990s.

As a productive journalism and mass communication scholar, Prof. Lee was one of the first Korean-Americans to publish in top refereed U.S. journals [see, e.g., Raymond S.H. Lee, "Credibility of Newspaper and TV News," *Journalism Quarterly* 55 (summer 1978): 282-87]; "Early War Korean War Coverage," *Journalism Quarterly* 55 (winter 1978): 789-92]. Throughout his decades of teaching and research in the United States, he actively engaged in conference presentations, and journal and book publications. As a former daily reporter in Seoul before his graduate study in the U.S. in the 1970s, he often contributed to American and Korean newspapers.

In the late 1980s and the early '90s, I got acquainted with Prof. Lee through KACA during his and Prof. Jae-won Lee's second "founding" of our organization. I closely worked with him when he served as the KACA vice president and as the KACA president – for the second time – in 1990-93.

Prof. Lee was visionary as a founding organizer of KACA. His passionate drive to execute his vision for KACA was almost unmatched. Most remarkable to me and others was that he was an organizational genius. We frequently marveled at his meticulous execution of what he planned to do in and outside KACA.

What made Prof. Lee stand out from others was his charming personality. He was a genuinely heartwarming person. To me and other young Korean-American scholars, he, more often than not, felt like an older brother. He was such a caring, dependable "senior" Korean friend. Unsurprisingly, he was my occasional roommate at academic conferences in the 1990s. During our freewheeling "pillow talk," he shared his abundant wisdom and experience as a successful college professor in the U.S.

Prof. Lee's untimely death is "a big loss" for many of us, simply because he had been our institutional memory. At the same time, it compels me and others to reflect on how much we owe him for what we are today professionally and non-professionally. 🇰🇷

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Professor Kyu Ho Youm is Jonathan Marshall First Amendment Chair at the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon. His e-mail address is: youm@uoregon.edu.

# In Remembrance of *Professor Seong H. Lee*

by Kwangmi Ko Kim

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Dr. Kwangmi Ko Kim

I was one of the few fortunate members of the “younger” generation to know the late Dr. Seong Lee. I still remember the day I met him in Hickory, NC, where he drove down to pick me up at the airport for my faculty position interview. It was both a delight and relief to meet him since I wasn’t aware that there was Korean faculty in the department when I applied for a position.

From the moment I met him, my anxiety and uneasiness over the job interview were subdued. His bright smile and kind yet detailed, firm advice made me feel home. By the end of one hour drive to Boone, he had already become my mentor. I can’t remember the details of our conversation, but it was sufficient enough to show me a glimpse of who he was and what he cared about in life.

The two years at Appalachian State University were the most challenging years of my life – with a “fresh” Ph. D. and little teaching experience, pregnant with a second child, living by myself, and teaching a full load of courses while my husband was teaching in a different state. As a “broken” family, we saw each other two times a semester in the first year, and then my husband visited us every other week during the second year.

When I look back those days, I can’t believe how I ever managed to live like that or how I survived. However, it was so natural for me at that time. Dr. Lee and his wife, Mrs. Lee, were at the heart of those days with their guidance, comfort and wisdom. Often after Sunday Mass, I would eagerly await his invitation to take us hiking up the Blue Ridge Mountains. In his small body, he possessed the strength of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Besides being my mentor, he played another important role for my kids. My five-year old daughter, who has now turned to 18, used to adore him and call him “the nicest and funniest godfather.” His bright smile and humor lightened up my kids’ faces, as well as mine. After all those years, my kids still cherish all the wonderful memories he provided us with.

A man with a big heart and dignity. We all miss him a lot. 🇰🇷

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Dr. Kwangmi Ko Kim is Associate Professor at the Department of Mass Communication and Communication Studies, Towson University. Her email address is: [kkim@towson.edu](mailto:kkim@towson.edu).

# Special Feature:

## *Personal Story from a Korean Scholar*

*by Hye-Jin Paek*

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I am writing this essay on a flight back to Michigan after attending the NCA conference in San Diego. During my last visit there for the 2003 ICA conference, I didn't realize how much the city had to offer. But I know why. Back then, I was a graduate student suffering from the pessimistic bias (i.e., bad things will happen to me, not to others), and I had no idea what to write for my dissertation. Now, I am an associate professor in one of the largest communication programs in the US. Pressure still exists, but uncertainty does not.



Dr. Hye-Jin Paek

Many friends and colleagues congratulated me on moving to a bigger program and receiving early promotion. They envied me for being able to relax and no longer worry about tenure. But my relief from that specific worry does not allow me to relax altogether. I am no longer a junior researcher who often concerns publication quantity first and foremost. Nevertheless, I have to be careful about sustaining the quality of my publications. It is not just publication but the entire combination of teaching, mentoring, scholarship, and service that counts. I have no place to hide anymore.

In the early years of my career, positioning my research agenda was especially important because my academic identity has always been questioned. Currently I work in the field of advertising, media, and health communication. But I was trained in a well-known political communication program. When I was on the job market, I applied for 37 positions in the fields of media effects, advertising, public relations, persuasion and communication science, and risk and health communication. Everywhere I was invited for a job interview, I was asked the same question: "Who are you?"

Failures from many job interviews and paper submissions made me grow. In academia, you should consider failure as an entry ticket to a new level. Failure itself is not a sin. The real sin is to be so afraid of failure that you don't even try. I learned how to position my research agenda through being rejected in numerous job interviews (the in-group/out-group bias indeed exists!). I learned how to write better papers through being rejected by many reviewers, whom I now consider to be my private tutors. I do not like failure (who would?), but I do like learning. Learning is a painful process because you have to admit to yourself that the struggle to improve your knowledge will never end. But if you can find enjoyment in this endless learning process, you will love the academic life. Life in general is never fair, but academic life is at least predictable. If you work harder and harder, you will have a better chance to succeed.

As my flight descends into Michigan, the time approaches to resume the routines of my workaday life. Once I have returned, I will continue to juggle a handful of projects with my students while I curse my own slowness to learn. But I will also continue to enjoy the multifaceted and ever-changing intellectual rewards of academic life. 🌈

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Dr. Hye-Jin Paek is Associate Professor at Michigan State University. Before joining MSU, Dr. Paek taught at the University of Georgia for three years. Prior to her academic career, she worked for seven years as a broadcasting news reporter, an account executive and copywriter, and a political campaign consultant. She earned her B.A. (1994) from Yonsei University and her M.A. (2001) and Ph. D. (2005) in Mass Communications from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her email address is: [paekh@msu.edu](mailto:paekh@msu.edu).

# KACA 30th Anniversary Conference

## Panel Session:

### *Looking toward the Future*

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*This is a summary of the Special Panel Session which was held during the KACA 30th Anniversary Conference in August 2008 in Chicago. The panel included Drs. Taik Sup Auh (KAIST), Jisu Huh (University of Minnesota), Hye-ryeon Lee (University of Hawaii at Manoa), Hee-Sun Park (Michigan State University), Jae Chul Shim (Korea University), and Kyu Ho Youm (University of Oregon), and a graduate student Chul-Joo Lee (University of Pennsylvania). (Comments listed based on the last name alphabetical order)*

**Moderator Dr. Eungjun Min (Rhode Island College):** We have maintained KACA for 30 years without adequate financial and material support, and thanks to many dedicated members. The questions are: Where do we go from here as an organization that promotes communication education, scholarship, and creative activities among members? What are some strategies we can develop? What do the members expect from KACA as an academic organization and what KACA expect from its members?

**Taik Sup Auh (KAIST):** I went to school in Indiana and later taught at Virginia Commonwealth University. At that time KACA was born and there were only a handful of us teaching journalism and communications in universities in the U.S. Nowadays the number of Korean scholars is 400 strong and still counting. Not only the size but also quality has grown as well. I can't read leading journals without running into Kim's, Lee's, and Park's in every issue. Not only that, at most of the major universities in the U.S., such as Big 10 schools and Pac10 schools, and east coast universities, there are top-notch Korean scholars. This is a phenomenal growth. As the old Virginia Slim ad copy said, "You've come a long way baby!"

Despite all this impressive growth, I think, there's a lot to be done not only by KACA but our mother ship organization, KSJCS (Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies). Not independently of each other but in a collaborative sense. I think the key word here for both KACA and KSJCS is "Collaboration."

Sure enough I am always impressed by fascinating articles, mainly in the IT-related area. For good reasons, Korea is considered truly the leader in the IT industry and IT products produced by Korean companies have become dominant. Now, why not expect the same high achievement in the area of scholarship? Many of the unique behaviors and outcomes stemming from IT is truly Korean phenomena. There is not much research on the IT phenomenon in Korea and it is one area where fruitful results can be produced by collaboration.

In that regard, I think I can make a small contribution. Particularly, I'd like to talk about a couple of items today. I am chairing a committee to organize a program for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of KSJCS and we're going to hold this special program in mid-May next year. We haven't thought about a collaborative program. As soon as I get back to Korea, I will discuss this with the Executive Board members. Another is: I'm editing a journal entitled *Asian Communication Research*. It's 4<sup>th</sup> year in its existence and we're publishing the 9<sup>th</sup> issue. It's not that heavily populated as that journal has not been accredited. In that regard, *ACR* is a low ROI journal. That's why many communication scholars are not very willing to submit their good papers to *ACR*. But, things will be very different once it's fully accredited and it's expected to happen some time next year. I'd like to invite you to submit your paper to this journal and contribute.

One final item: there are funding agencies in Korea which have limited application submissions only to scholars and full-time lectures in colleges and universities in Korea. I think it's a good time for you with Korea nationality to exercise your right as a Korean citizen and request them to expand their boundaries to scholars teaching outside Korea.

**Looking toward the Future, p. 7**

## Looking toward the Future, cont'd

**Jisu Huh (University of Minnesota):** KACA is facing unique challenges with the changing membership base and diversified demographics of Korean American students and scholars in the U.S. and Canada. We include many different people, those who were born in the U.S. or moved here as a graduate students. When I talk about changing membership base, I don't just mean the age or gender of members but the fragmentation of our discipline. Because the communication discipline includes more different kind of sub-areas, and students and scholars tend to be increasingly specialized, they are usually associated with people and organizations within their own sub-areas. For example, in the advertising field, people usually become a member of AAA, AMA, and AEJMC but don't usually go to ICA or NCA conferences and don't feel that KACA is relevant to them. Nowadays with the growing number of Korean students and scholars in the U.S., it seems that the needs among Koreans to turn to other Koreans for emotional support and advice through KACA-type of organizations are decreasing. They would rather go to organizations within their own sub-fields. With this situation, I think, the most important question today is: "How KACA can better serve the students and scholars in different sub-fields who may not feel that KACA is important or even relevant to them?" What should KACA do to make Korean students and scholars in America feel that KACA is for them, they can gain some benefits from being a member of KACA, and there are some things they can and want to do in KACA?

**Hye-ryeon Lee (University of Hawaii at Manoa):** That is indeed a difficult challenge that we face. Unlike some other disciplines such as psychology or sociology that has a single large academic organization to which everyone belongs, we have multiple associations such as, ICA, NCA, AEJMC, and AAA. So, depending on what specific sub-discipline we belong to and which conferences we prefer to attend, we can go on 20 years without ever bumping into each other. So, trying to create an organization for all Korean Americans all across the country and disciplines, when we don't have an opportunity even once a year for all of us to get together in one place to plan activities and discuss what makes sense. That is really a key challenge and I don't have an answer for how to overcome that. But, I think that is something we should all be mindful about.

And I also want to add to Professor Huh's comment about the fact that we have to offer something tangible, something valuable to KACA members in order to be able to survive and prosper for years to come. Right now in America, there are somewhere around 500-600 professors and graduate students who are either from Korea or of Korean ancestry. That is a humongous number of people and we do absolutely have the necessary critical mass. The problem is only about 10-15% of them are active. When our messages go out, most of them kind of scan the messages and they are not really willing to be involved. The key for our successful existence is how we can make the rest of them feel that KACA is important and activate them to become truly involved in KACA. I think what we can do is actually two-fold: one is social and the other scholarly aspect.

Dr. Park was talking about KACA being kind of home where you can come and ask any questions without feeling stupid. It is important for us to provide that kind of space for our graduate students to feel comfortable to ask professors about the job search and interview processes, what to talk about and what to wear. We want to create a forum where they can come and get that kind of information. By the same token for the junior faculty as well. As they go out to teach at a university they do get some mentoring within their institution. However, I think, we have a little more special challenge as we are from another country and English is not the first language and the academic culture is different between Korea and the U.S. So, though we're getting mentoring, there are some components in the mentorship that you might not get elsewhere. So, it's important for KACA to provide a mentorship network for the junior faculty. Sometimes just sitting there and listening to senior faculty who have survived and excelled in their fields, and sometimes getting some very specific valuable advices. So, I think in those ways, KACA can become an important social network where people can be psychologically and socially supported.

However, that is not going to be enough. This is also an academic organization, and for us to be meaningful and successful, we have to also be very good in terms of providing scholarly support. One of the things we can do is broking collaborative research opportunities between Korea and America. As the world becomes more globalized, the fact that we are located across the Pacific is not difficulty or challenge but advantage.

Looking toward the Future, p. 8

## Looking toward the Future, cont'd

I think KACA can work hard to become a good forum where people can come with research ideas and be able to connect with research partners who can offer different views, different expertise, and access to different sources. And use that as a collaboration opportunities.

Also, as we become stronger, we should start thinking about going beyond Korean communication associations. KACA can become a lot more conscious and active in that area. Other associations such as European Communication Association and Chinese Communication Association. We're not really interacting with them in any meaningful way. I think it is possible to create collaborative relationships with these international organizations.

**Chul-Joo Lee (University of Pennsylvania):** Let me talk about my experience in the U.S. I was born and went to school in Seoul. So, when I came to the U.S., everyday was a battle. I was filled with questions such as how to write papers and where to submit them. Fortunately, I have met great advisors. But, those professors are extremely busy and whenever I had questions regarding my personal concerns I have turned to senior graduate students and other Korean scholars. Probably KACA can connect successful Korean scholars and senior graduate students with new incoming graduate students. So far, I've had great fortune of having wonderful senior graduate students around me but, I realize that asking them to sacrifice their own time and energy to help me with my questions would be unfair to them. Maybe KACA can organize a more systematic graduate student mentoring system with research interests matched. That would be very beneficial to new incoming students.

**Hee-Sun Park (Michigan State University):** When I got email about this panel, I didn't know what to talk about. For about a month, I was going blank. Still now. Future is hard to predict, especially providing suggestions for an organization is more difficult. If we can predict and find solutions, no organization would go bankrupt. I didn't know about KACA until my 7<sup>th</sup> year in the U.S. I came across a Korean and he saw my last name and asked me "Are you a Korean?" KACA didn't help me with anything and did nothing for me. But, whenever I get a Korean student as my advisee, I have noticed patterns of behaviors and mistakes. They often make critical mistakes without knowing. After 12 years being in America, I feel that we need to exchange our failure stories and help other Koreans to make a better transition. At least we can help one another avoid embarrassing ourselves, losing valuable opportunities, and failing in job interviews. Whenever I get a new advisee, I go through a list of things. I do that at MSU one-on-one but wish there were more systematic ways to do so. We can share our experiences and help others avoid making the same mistakes. We don't need to reach out to every single Korean in America. But, if there are people needing help and if we can help each other, then more people will become involved in KACA.

**Jae Chul Shim (Korea University):** I don't have any theoretical statement or practical answer for the question posed today. But, I remember *Times* coverage of immigration issues in 1985 and Nancy Gibbs stated that "wherever you are if you feel comfortable that's your home." In that sense, KACA is my home. KACA has been my academic organization and I have met many smart, generous, and wonderful people through this organization and learned a lot from them. I developed my career through KACA and those I met through KACA. After I returned to Korea, I had to go through a re-acculturation and re-adaptation process which was very difficulty. And I relied on Dr. Auh and others to learn and get advice. So, whenever I have the opportunity I tell my students to join KACA. So, that is my experience with KACA. I consider this organization our home of academic life.

**Kyu Ho Youm (University of Oregon):** This is a great opportunity for us to look forward but more importantly to look backward. To talk about the prospect of future of KACA, we need to think about the reality and history. Sometimes we still need to think about the founding members and what they thought and did. Let me just say something about what happened. We had our own ups and downs, and some faculty members think they are not Korean Americans. For whatever reasons, sometimes, the word "American" makes them uncomfortable.



## Looking toward the Future, cont'd

In 1990, I got a phone call from Professor Seong H. Lee. At that time I was teaching at ASU. He basically said we had to do something to rejuvenate KACA. In the late 1980s, KACA was absolutely moribund. But, there was an opportunity for us to do something better. I have to thank Dr. Lee and others for giving us the forum we belong to without thinking too much about actual or perceived barriers among our communication disciplines. I think that the fact that we are Koreans is probably the more important factor.

Before I came over here, I checked the AEJMC conference program. We have 37 Kim's in this program and 21 Lee's and 7 Park's, and that's based on my conservative counting. There are more than 100 Korean or Korean-sounding names listed there. When I look back when I was editor of KACA newsletter, this is amazing. The newsletter was published in July 1991 and back then, there were only 20 paper presenters at AJMEC, ICA, and NCA altogether. Now, we have more than 100 Korean or Korean-sounding names. This is amazing.

I didn't know anything about KACA until I received the phone call from Dr. Seong H. Lee. He was the second president of KACA. Then, I was struggling to survive as an assistant professor in the U.S. and instead of wasting my time for KACA I wanted to work on my research. But, eventually I really enjoyed getting to know people and going to KACA activities. And for almost 20 years, I have leaned a lot and returned as much to you and others.

This is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of KACA. Of course, KACA should be a thriving organization for another 30 years. We have lots of opportunities to grow. We'd like to think about something tangible and something beneficial. But, more important thing is people. We should think about our history and connecting that kind of history to the next generation. Get to know each other and reach out to other people. That's something we need to think about. 🇰🇷

# KACA Financial Report

*Prepared by KACA Treasurer Taehyun Kim*

	Income	Expense	Balance
Balance as of December 2007			1,179.18
<b>January 2008</b>			
Informa UK payment (in Pound)	516.96		
International conversion fee		12.00	
ICA fee		95.00	
Membership dues	79.12		
End-of-term balance			1,668.26
<b>February 2008</b>			
Membership dues	229.41		
Newsletter cost reimbursement		598.19	
End-of-term balance			1,299.48
<b>March-April 2008</b>			
Membership dues	20.00		
End-of-term balance			1,319.48
<b>May 2008</b>			
Consulate General of Montreal	1,000.00		
T-shirts production costs		1,067.28	
T-shirts sale (ICA)	290.00		
Membership dues (ICA)	120.00		
Donation (Yongik Chung and Kyo Ho Youm)	50.00		
KACA breakfast meeting		60.32	
End-of-term balance			1,651.88
<b>June-July 2008</b>			
T-shirts sale (AEJMC)	105.00		
Membership dues (AEJMC)	120.00		
Donation (Seok Kang)	17.00		
End-of-term balance			1,893.88

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## Financial Report, cont'd

	Income	Expense	Balance
<b>August 2008 (KACA 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference)</b>			
Registration fee	1,520.00		
Sponsorship from KSJCS	3,500.00		
Hyundai Mobis	4,860.82		
Sakyejul Publishing Co.	1,000.00		
Mr. Ki-Chang Shim	500.00		
Consulate General	1,000.00		
Reception support from <i>The Korea Times</i>	5,000.00		
Donation (Kwan Min Lee)	1,000.00		
Plenary speakers honorarium		500.00	
Plenary speakers travel		3,311.65	
Audio visual equipment		602.01	
Videographer		150.00	
Videotape & battery		61.47	
Production & printing		505.00	
Banner		100.52	
Student awards (x3)		1,500.00	
Young scholars (x2)		2,000.00	
Check fee		3.00	
KACA contribution awards		423.72	
Mailing to Korea		4.72	
Domestic mailing		162.10	
Coffee/tea		741.78	
Lunch/sandwich		256.95	
Reception		4,998.37	
End-of-term balance			4,653.41
<b>September-November 2008</b>			
Wal Mart check printing cost		9.15	
KACA ICA membership fee		120.00	
Membership dues (NCA)	536.77		
Donation from NCA dinner	232.74		
End-of-term balance			5,293.77
<b>Balance as of December 16, 2008</b>			<b>5,293.77</b>