
GC 2012-5650: ENGINEERING EDUCATION IN KOREA - STATUS AND CHALLENGES

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KSEE Plenary

Engineering Education in Korea - Status and Challenges

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Republic of Korea (South Korea)—noted for its remarkable industrial developments over the last 30 years (especially in the engineering industry) and having many readily-recognizable global engineering companies such as Samsung, Hyundai, LG, POSCO and SK—is, owing to its strong historically Confucian cultural roots, also noted for Koreans’ general respect for education as evidenced by the yearly statistics that over 70% of high school graduates enroll in colleges. Although it may seem apparent—with the coupling yearly statistics that about 23% outright majority of the college population major in engineering—that Republic of Korea is on smooth sail with respect to its engineering evolution, there are—due to threats pertaining to changes in industrial structure, culture, economy, politics, education, environment and social structures (and, ultimately, people’s psyche, work-ethics and living styles)—some alarming early signals pertaining to the numbers, quality and sustainability pertaining to its engineering workforce. In this presentation, more introspective examination and analysis beneath the façade is presented which, in turn, points to some challenges that lie ahead for engineering education in Republic of Korea.

In the context of the general engineering education development hierarchy, mirroring the corresponding hierarchies associated with International Federation of Engineering Education Societies (IFEES) and American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE), Korean Society for Engineering Education (KSEE)—under the mission of promoting engineering education in Republic of Korea and with close ties with the Korean Engineering Dean’s Council (KEDC), the Accreditation Board of Engineering Education in Korea (ABEEK) and the National Academy of Engineering of Korea (NAEK)—has been playing a crucial role in disseminating new developments in engineering education since its founding in 1993 and—with 1800 strong membership from academia and industry—engages in numerous publication and academic activities that include: journal of engineering education research, bi-monthly magazine, proceedings, reports, year-round workshops and KSEE Annual Conference in November (with an open invitation to the international community).