

# Addressing Challenges and Providing Support for Exchange Students at SKKU: SKKUEXS

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**Abstract.** SKKUEXS is a project that aims to provide a comprehensive service for exchange students studying at Sungkyunkwan University. The project is motivated by the challenges that exchange students face, such as cultural differences, language barriers, and social isolation. The lack of a community solely for exchange students and accurate and reliable information further complicates the challenges faced by these students. The objective of SKKUEXS is to create a platform that allows students to access and organize learning materials easily, connect with a community of exchange students and local alumni through mentoring and community-building activities, and find accurate and reliable information in a timely manner. Existing services, such as university websites or online communities, provide some information and support, but they have limitations and functional inconveniences. The proposed solution is to offer a community platform for exchange students to connect with local alumni and mentors, as well as provide useful services for them. Python libraries will be used to summarize and analyze student reports, and detailed information about universities that accept exchange students will be provided, organized by country.

**Keywords:** Exchange student · Information support · Community building.

## 1 Introduction

SKKU has international exchange partnerships with hundreds of universities around the world. Through its vast network of prestigious partners, the University provides its students with the unique opportunity to explore the globe, gain new experiences and insights, and acquire diverse knowledge that helps them deepen their understanding of their fields of study as well as different cultures.

Sungkyunkwan University offers students a great exchange program, but many of the students selected for exchange programs often face unique challenges, including cultural differences, language barriers, and social isolation which can make it difficult for them to adapt to their new surroundings.

Therefore, Creating a community for exchange students is essential in fostering a positive and supportive environment for students who are studying abroad and by doing so these students can connect with one another and share their

experiences, challenges, and successes. This community can provide a sense of belonging, support, and understanding, which can help to ease the transition into a new culture.

Specifically, the community will offer practical assistance and guidance, such as orientation sessions, language support, and cultural events. Our team also needs to create a system for ongoing support that can help these students throughout their stay.

## 2 Motivation and Objective

### 2.1 Motivation

Our motivation for this project stems from the challenges that exchange students face when preparing for and living in a foreign country. Through our research, we have identified several issues that exchange students at SKKU encounter, including difficulties in accessing and organizing learning materials, a lack of a community for exchange students, and a shortage of accurate and reliable information.

Firstly, the process of downloading learning materials from the SKKU website is cumbersome and time-consuming. Students are required to click on each file individually and save it to their hardware, making it difficult to view and manage these files online. Additionally, the files are in various formats, which can be inconvenient for students who prefer a uniform format for their materials.

Secondly, there is a lack of a community solely for exchange students. While there is a board on the "everytime" app where students can ask questions, it is not systematic and is difficult to navigate. Furthermore, students can only find information by certain keywords, which can be limiting. As a result, students often form chat groups that are not sustained after their semester ends, leading to the loss of critical information.

Lastly, students struggle to find accurate and reliable information. Blogs and other search engine websites can be informal and provide conflicting information, making it difficult for students to determine what is trustworthy. Students often spend a significant amount of time searching for the information they need, which can be frustrating and time-consuming.

### 2.2 Objective

Our objective with SKKUEXS is to provide exchange students with a comprehensive service that addresses all these issues. We aim to create a platform that allows students to access and organize learning materials easily, connect with a community of exchange students and local alumni through mentoring and community, and find accurate and reliable information in a timely manner. Our goal is to make the process of preparing for and living abroad as an exchange student as smooth and stress-free as possible.

### 3 Background and Related Work

#### 3.1 Background

The exchange student program is a valuable opportunity for students to broaden their horizons and experience different cultures. However, there are several challenges that students face during the preparation and participation in the program. Existing services, such as university websites or online communities, provide some information and support, but they have limitations and functional inconveniences.

One limitation is that existing services do not provide comprehensive evaluations of partner universities or analysis of learning reports. They often lack up-to-date and reliable information, making it difficult for students to make informed decisions about where to study abroad. In addition, online communities may not be structured and organized enough to provide a reliable source of information for students.

#### 3.2 Related work

Yonsei-exchange.netlify.app and Everytime's evaluation system aim to assist exchange students in making informed decisions by providing information and evaluations on universities and courses.

**Yonsei-exchange.netlify.app** classifies menus by country and provides information about each university within the country. Also It summarizes satisfaction with each university, the number of students who have gone there, and the majors of seniors who have been there. This will provide primary assistance to students who are considering exchange program.

**Everytime's evaluation system** manages the evaluation of students who have already taken the course. Similarly, by summarizing comprehensive evaluations of each university and providing numerical data on satisfaction, this system will help exchange students make wise choices.

### 4 Problem Statement / Proposed Solution

#### 4.1 Problem Statement

Our project is motivated by the challenges faced by students participating in exchange programs, as well as research that supports our ideas. A survey showed that 72% of students who were selected for the exchange program felt that they had to prepare for living abroad by themselves without any help. [1] This indicates that many students feel burdened and have difficulties preparing for the exchange student program, but there is currently no active support available for them. This lack of support creates a significant demand for services that connect students with previous program participants or local alumni students through mentoring or community-building activities.

## 4.2 Proposed Solution

The proposed solutions aim to assist students who are considering participating in an exchange program.

**Providing detailed information about universities** that accept exchange students. This information could be organized by country and include data such as satisfaction ratings, the number of students who have participated in the program, and the majors of seniors who have been there. This approach would provide primary assistance to students, helping them to make informed decisions about which universities to apply to.

**A comprehensive evaluation system** for universities that accept exchange students. Similar to the lecture evaluation page of Everytime, this system would allow students to rate their experiences and leave comments. By summarizing these evaluations and providing numerical data on satisfaction, students would be able to make wise choices when selecting a university for their exchange program.

**Community platform** for students to connect with local alumni and mentors, as well as provide useful services for them. To achieve this, we will use several Python libraries to summarize and analyze student reports.

**A user-friendly interface** that displays students' satisfaction with the exchange program, making it easier for future exchange students to make informed decisions. we will be able to efficiently process large amounts of data and extract meaningful insights.

## 5 Planning in Detail

SKKUEXS uses NLP to summarize and analyze reports on exchange students' experiences, providing valuable insights for students who are considering participating in the program and operate a web community for Korean university students to share their concerns and information with exchange students, which will be implemented using Django or Flask.

SKKUEXS will be implemented through various stages, including crawling reports, processing data, designing and implementing the website, and installing the database. The team plans to begin testing by Week 13. The team members are assigned roles that align with their strengths and expertise. Kim Ju-won is responsible for web crawling, server, and database designing, while Seo Hyun-won is in charge of data processing and server designing. Lee Ha-eun will focus on NLP and planning with designing, and Han Hee-geun will be responsible for data collecting and UI/UX designing. Each team member will also lead other team members in their assigned tasks. The team has a clear schedule for each ongoing task, with specific timelines for each stage of the development process.

## References

1. Author, Kang, Miri: Exchange Student Program Participant's Experiences: A Case Study at a Korean University(2019). KOREA University The graduate school of education .