Korean students have had a strong presence on the IU Bloomington campus for many years. In the past three decades, 6,000 IU degrees went to students from Korea. In the fall of 2015, 753 Korean students were studying at IU Bloomington, representing almost 12 percent of the international student population. For three years, Korean students, with the support of the East Asian Studies Center, have offered the Bloomington community a window into Korean culture through a night dedicated to all things Korean. This year’s event, “Inspired: Korea in Indiana,” with generous support from the Korean Consulate General of Chicago, was the most ambitious ever.

Festivities began with family-friendly activity tables in the afternoon. Evening ceremonies featured performances
The Devil Force Dance Club, an IU student group, performed “The Sound of the Drum (드럼의 소리)” and “Two Weeks (이주)” at Korean Night.

Below: The Chicago Korean Dance Company also performed Salp’uri (살풀이 춤), a Korean folk dance.

Left: The Devil Force Dance Club, an IU student group, performed “The Sound of the Drum (드럼의 소리)” and “Two Weeks (이주)” at Korean Night.

Below: The Chicago Korean Dance Company also performed Salp’uri (살풀이 춤), a Korean folk dance.

by professional and community groups that included dancing, singing, traditional instrumental performances, and martial arts demonstrations. Veterans of the Korean Wars were honored in a special ceremony. Sang-Il Kim, Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Chicago, provided welcoming remarks and Mark Minton, former U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, spoke on the current state of Korean-U.S. relations. The program included a dinner of Korean food from local Bloomington restaurants.

Hye-Seung Kang, associate director of the East Asian Studies Center, coordinated the event. For her, its value was as much in the preparation as in the event itself. “This was the work of the community, not just the work of the center or of the university. Almost 30 volunteers from outside IU joined with a large number of students working with passion and energy to promote Korean culture and art to the community.”

Korean Night reached well beyond the campus and Bloomington. Those who came to learn about Korea “left with more heart for the region. They came to love Korea,” said Kang. Korean Americans from as far away as Indianapolis and Carmel were also there. “They said they were afraid they were losing a feeling for Korea. The event made them feel less lost. From our event, they felt like they are acknowledged by us and our courtesy.”
Opposite page, top: The Korean Dance Company from Chicago performed Chil-go-mu (칠고무) or “Seven Drum Dance.”

Above: Consul General Kim honored veterans of the Korean conflict. Their service is held in high regard in South Korea even 60 years after the conflict ended.

Opposite page, bottom: Students from the Bloomington Korean School demonstrated Taekwondo.

Left: Dr. Chan E. Park played the Janggu (hourglass drum) and sang Pansori with Eun Sun Jung playing the Gayageum (Korean zither). The storytelling song is “Kim Byung-Ho Ryu Gayageum Sanjo.”
Korean Night began in the afternoon with arts and crafts tables.

It takes a community to make an event like Korean Night. Here volunteers—students and community members—posed at the end of the evening.
Korean Night festivities included a private ceremony to dedicate the Korean Conference Room (한국의 방), made possible with a gift from the Korean Consulate General of Chicago. A centrally located study room in the new Global and International Studies building is being appointed with exhibits and reference materials, as well as the technology for video conferencing and screening of films. The room will not only supply the resources for Korean programming, but because it is open to all, will also create a constant presence of Korean culture for anyone who wishes to study there.

Sara Friedman, acting director of the East Asian Studies Center, notes that Korean Night is one of several major events of the center this year. Others include:

**Sensing Taiwan.** “This was a month-long series of events,” said Friedman. “The Miao-Li Chen Family Pei-Kuan Pa-Yin Group from Taiwan performed in Bloomington over three days, with demonstrations of local and traditional music in classes on campus. This project had funding support from the Taiwan consulate.” There were also screenings of several Taiwanese films and a guest lecture on the commercial viability of Taiwan cinema.

**China Town Hall.** “The event began with a national panel discussion of the recent growth of Chinese direct investment in the U.S. It was webcast live to more than 75 locations around the world,” Friedman explained. “That was followed by a local panel responding to the issues of the national speakers. Our respondents included administrators from Peking University and an Indianapolis lawyer with experience working for the State Department. Capitalizing on our relationship with external entities, we regularly seek to provide events that speak to the larger community and to the state more generally.”

**China, Russia, and the World.** Each spring in a symposium that includes experts from IU and abroad, the center collaborates with IU’s Russian and East European Institute and the European Union Center “to explore our understanding of regional boundaries and to get a better sense of the connections and flows between different parts of the world,” said Friedman.