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CDS Hosts Delegation from Korean University to Advance Accessibility Partnership

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This January, the [Center on Disability Studies \(CDS\)](https://coe.hawaii.edu/cds/) (<https://coe.hawaii.edu/cds/>), in the UH Mānoa College of Education (COE), hosted a delegation of visiting faculty and students from Hankyong National University (HKNU) located in Anseong, Korea. Through a series of three meetings, CDS and HKNU worked to strengthen international collaboration in the areas of disability research, campus accessibility, and universal design.

The HKNU visit was made possible through more than a year of partnership-building conversations and coordination with HKNU partners led by CDS Associate Specialist Kiriko Takahashi.

“We are grateful for this partnership to come to fruition as HKNU has progressive programming for students with disabilities, and we look forward to ongoing exchange and conducting joint research in the near future,” Takahashi said.

During the second meeting, Takahashi, CDS Director Meghan Miller, Hugh Dunn, along with COE Director of International Programs Kaori Burkart, met with HKNU counterparts and UH executive leaders. Together with Interim Vice Provost for Academic Excellence Laura Lyons and Acting Chief Global Officer Xiaoxin, they discussed next steps for advancing a draft memorandum of understanding intended to support future faculty and student exchanges, shared academic resources and publications, potential joint research, and conferences.

“We believe our collaboration will create new opportunities for students and valuable experiences for educators, and we hope it will serve as a positive global model for inclusive education,” said HKNU team leader, Yunwoo Lee.

A centerpiece of the exchange was the CDS Student Ambassador Program led by Dunn. With support from a local non-profit, CDS selected four UH System student to lead discussions focused on disability, accessibility, and universal design in higher education. The ambassadors engaged with 16 HKNU students in structured, interactive activities fostering conversations and idea-sharing, culminating in concrete, student-informed recommendations for improving accessibility in learning environments, campus services, and everyday navigation of university spaces.

“I enjoyed participating in such a supportive and attentive environment,” said HKNU student, Celine Choi. “It was wonderful to exchange ideas and learn from peers from different backgrounds.”





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