

Seoul National University Development Plan

Joon-ho KANG · submitted August 2026 · English edition of the full submitted document

Chapter 1

Preface

Seoul National University has led Korea's development and contributed to the world as the education and research institution representing the nation's intellectual authority. Today, however, SNU faces great challenges at home and abroad. Outside, a civilizational transition of the AI revolution, the climate crisis, US-China rivalry, and social polarization is questioning the university's role and reason for being. Inside, both academic excellence and public responsibility are being put to the test, and while each member is second to none, the university as a whole has yet to realize its full potential.

We are starting Pioneering, the SNU Way.

'Pioneering, the SNU Way' captures three ideas. First, amid profound uncertainty, we must set the standards for a new era rather than rest on past achievements or relative standing. Second, we must build a system of autonomy and connection that turns individual excellence into university-wide strength. Third, we must begin now to lay the groundwork for SNU's centennial: a leading global university that represents Asia and contributes to the world.

This development plan stands on three values: autonomy, connection, and challenge. Autonomy is SNU's way of being and the principle that makes each member an owner of the university. Connection is the spirit of the age, where different people, disciplines, and worlds meet to create possibilities that did not exist before. With the power of autonomy and connection, we must take on the work of setting the standard of the era before the world does.

What we need now is not quantitative expansion but qualitative growth built on substance and fundamentals. Rather than showcase projects, we must honestly solve the core problems that have constrained SNU's potential. Anyone can make promises. What makes the difference in the end is not the size of the promise but the power of practice.

Kang Joon-ho presents the following development plan to renew SNU as a university that leads the AI era.

The full statement is available in the Statement.

The 333 promises and the funding plan

The 333 pledge means a faculty salary of ~~₩~~300M, ~~₩~~30M in annual base research funding, and an annual teaching load of three courses. We will concentrate the administration's capacity on achieving these three in the first half of the term. In the final version, the three promises are carried out through pledge 01-4 (teaching-load autonomy), 02-1 (annual base research funding of ~~₩~~30M), and 03-1 (a ~~₩~~300M faculty salary system). The required funding comes from 04 Building a stronger, more self-reliant financial foundation, and the funding targets set by the priority actions are as follows.

Priority Actions

- Expand the university's own funds to ~~₩~~1T
- Raise ~~₩~~1T in development funds
- Secure a total of ~~₩~~2T in new funds over four years

9 Pledges and 42 Sub-pledges

The nine flagship pledges fall into three directions. Below is the full text of the final version: 42 detailed pledges with their action items and each pledge's priority actions. Click a pledge title to open its detail page.

Setting the standards for a new era

01 Educating students to lead in the age of AI

We will develop distinctly human strengths and practical AI capabilities together, giving every student greater scope to realize their potential.

01-1 Redesigning liberal education to cultivate human agency

- Strengthen liberal education to deepen critical thinking, ethics, community spirit, and the ability to act
- Redesign curricula, teaching methods, assessment, and the credit system from knowledge transmission toward capabilities
- Address the shortcomings of LnL and give every incoming student an opportunity to experience a new form of residential learning.

01-2 Strengthening domain competitiveness with AI productivity

- Expand an AI common-competency framework across all fields centered on the undergraduate college and partner with an AI competency assessment site
- Provide financial and administrative support for major-specific AI education
- Secure teaching-focused faculty to meet growing course demand

01-3 Expanding students' autonomous right to learn

- Expand undergraduate research and bachelor's-master's-doctoral pathways and strengthen incentives to secure the next generation of scholars early
- Build career-launching paths: internships, capstones, industry projects, and job-search support
- Strengthen systems that balance students' choice of major with the sustainability of the academic ecosystem
- Make course registration easier and create more flexible conditions for graduation

01-4 Flexible teaching loads and academic operations

- Lower the annual teaching-load standard from 18 to 9 credits, with autonomy by major
- Support curriculum reform in each major as teaching hours fall
- Relax course-cancellation thresholds by discipline and make semester and class operations more flexible

01-5 Build a lifelong learning system

- Expand the Institute for Continuing Education into a separate corporation, SNU Lifelong University (working title), as a lifelong education platform for the public
- Offer online and in-person non-degree and career-transition education for workers, retirees, and socially disadvantaged groups
- Run public-interest and revenue programs by audience and purpose

Priority Actions

- Establish an annual teaching load of three courses (nine credits) and give colleges autonomy over it
- Provide every incoming student with an opportunity for a new form of residential learning.
- Teach foundational AI competencies to every undergraduate and partner with an AI competency assessment site
- Launch SNU Lifelong University (working title)

02 Giving ambitious research the time and support to thrive

We will create a stable research environment where faculty can pursue major questions over the long term, beyond the pressures of short-term performance competition.

02-1 Annual ₩30M base research funding and a two-track research policy

- Provide every full-time faculty member with ₩30M in base research funding
- Integrate support for diverse academic activities into the base research fund, with members free to spend the total without item-level restrictions
- Divide research policy and inventory survey methods between humanities and sciences
- Reward breakthrough and high-risk research fully and fund the follow-up work
- Strengthen the foundation for international research exchange through faculty research years and visiting-research support

02-2 Organizational and Administrative Reform of the Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation

- Transform the Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation into an organization that provides effective support for research and technology commercialization.
- Expand support functions for winning overseas projects, international joint research, and technology commercialization
- Completely reorganize the entire research administration process, from agreements and execution to settlement, around researchers and integrate support

02-3 Expand research infrastructure and create a support team for large research projects

- Expand research space, shared instrumentation, university-wide GPU infrastructure, and library database subscriptions
- Expand shared spaces to respond flexibly to colleges' urgent and temporary space needs
- Create a support team for large research projects, staffed by Ph.D.-level personnel, to handle project planning and proposals and provide administrative support
- Use AI to shorten IRB review times and make them more flexible by discipline

02-4 A knowledge ecosystem of academic diversity and sustainability

- Raise the quality of graduate education by strengthening faculty incentives
- Expand sustained, long-term research support for basic, underrepresented, and emerging fields

02-5 Full-cycle support for researchers' growth

- Strengthen orientation and teaching training for new faculty and expand settlement and housing support
- Build administrative, space, and institutional support for affiliated joint-appointment professors to work effectively
- Create postdoctoral fellowships linked to global corporate brands, such as Samsung-SNU Postdoctoral Fellows
- Expand TA funding and basic living support for full-time master's and doctoral students

Priority Actions

- ₩30M in annual base research funding for full-time faculty
- Organizational and Administrative Reform of the Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation
- Create postdoc positions co-branded with global companies
- Establish a large-scale research project support team and expand technician staffing

03 Rewarding excellence and supporting well-being

We will ensure that every member of the SNU community can teach, conduct research, and work with pride.

03-1 Average full-professor pay: approximately USD 200,000 (KRW 300 million)

- Improve the faculty salary system with the goal of the highest level in Asia
- Expand staff performance bonuses and establish a rational compensation system
- Sustainable funding for pay and economic support through a restructured financial strategy

03-2 Rebuild and expand faculty and staff apartments and provide loan guarantees

- Establish an Office of Housing to build an integrated housing and welfare support system for members
- Rebuild and expand faculty and staff apartments to improve aging housing conditions
- Provide housing support during the reconstruction of student dormitories
- ₩300M credit loans through financial-partnership agreements for faculty and staff

03-3 Establish a life-cycle family support system tailored to faculty and staff

- A flexible integrated support fund (₩10M per year) that bundles childbirth, childcare, education (including university tuition), medical, and care benefits, to be used freely by life stage and personal need
- Expand on-campus childcare centers and after-school care and consolidate the family support window
- Create tailored working environments such as flexible work and protect members' rights through life and legal counseling

03-4 Health and wellness

- Rebuild the gymnasium as a multi-wellness center and expand welfare infrastructure
- Expand programs linking health, exercise, rehabilitation, and psychological counseling
- Support care linked to Seoul National University Hospital and secure burnout-prevention programs and recovery spaces

03-5 Prepare for the retirement age extension and redesign roles

- Redesign roles so members can use their experience and expertise after retirement, including SNU Lifelong University faculty positions for ages 65 to 70
- Improve regulations in preparation for extending the retirement age

Priority Actions

- Target average full-professor pay of approximately USD 200,000 (KRW 300 million) and expand staff performance bonuses
- Establish an Office of Housing and rebuild faculty and staff apartments

- Create a tailored integrated life-stage support fund (₩10M per year)
- Rebuild the Multi-Wellness Center to strengthen faculty and staff welfare

Redesigning autonomy and trust

04 Building a stronger, more self-reliant financial foundation

We will give SNU greater control over its future by reshaping how it raises, manages, and invests resources.

04-1 Establish professional financial governance

- Build an integrated management system for SNU's finances centered on a professional chief financial officer (CFO)
- Establish a budget operating system that links a mid- to long-term financial strategy with investment priorities

04-2 Large-scale funding

- Secure large-scale funding by actively using university bonds and idle assets
- Expand overseas research funding and attract funding from domestic and international private foundations
- Expand funding through active planning and identification of large national projects

04-3 Build a foundation for generating the university's own funds

- Revitalize SNU Holdings by securing a CEO and professional staff, attracting capital, and reorganizing its business portfolio
- Create an alumni-participation investment fund
- Launch SNU Lifelong University (provisional name) and pursue both revenue-generating and public-interest projects
- Settle a system that returns tech-commercialization and IP revenue to the university

04-4 Systematize the value-creating development fund platform

- Develop purpose-specific giving programs for scholarships, basic fields, and internationalization
- Develop and run naming programs and project-based fundraising products, including endowed chairs by college and DARPA-style project fundraising
- Expand fundraising programs tailored to donors such as entrepreneurs and retired alumni and introduce planned giving
- Activate small recurring gifts from younger alumni and build a global alumni fundraising system
- Expand tailored fundraising programs and participation at the department and college levels

04-5 Optimize the corporate budget through rational resource allocation

- Reconsider priorities in allocating the corporation's budget
- Strengthen and make transparent an integrated financial operating system covering the corporation, the Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation, and the Development Foundation

Priority Actions

- Expand the university's own funds to ₩1T
- Raise ₩1T in development funds
- Secure a total of ₩2T in new funds over four years

05 Making university administration simpler, smarter, and more responsive

We will redesign work processes, jobs, and organization around members' experience, establish data governance and an ontology, and realize genuine AX.

05-1 Administrative innovation that starts from member experience

- Clear promotion bottlenecks through a better rank system and long-term HR strategy
- Redesign administrative processes and organizational culture around student and faculty-staff experience
- Collect members' opinions and sources of inconvenience through an always-on policy suggestion and communication channel

05-2 An integrated AX agent

- Automate repetitive work and redundant procedures and build a single service window
- Introduce an integrated AI system to support academic guidance, regulation searches, and document drafting
- Standardize guidance, search, and administrative response services and establish an AX support system

05-3 Strengthening AX capability and administrative expertise

- Allow unpaid self-development leave for staff and expand generative-AI training and department-level learning opportunities for administrative staff.
- Share AX best practices and build a system for expanding practical adoption
- Educate members on AI ethics, security, and responsibility principles and establish practice standards

05-4 Accountable data governance

- Establish data governance centered on the University Innovation Center, build common management standards, and connect key administrative data across departments
- Clarify security management standards, including privacy protection and access rights, and establish accountability
- Settle analysis and use of data to support decisions

05-5 Minimal approvals, autonomous administration

- Fewer approval steps and faster handling through wider delegation
- Revise facilities-management and administrative-system manuals and expand discretion in the field
- Simplify how regulations and bylaws are revised to improve decision-making

Priority Actions

- Redesign administrative systems and cut processing time 50%
- Build a data governance and management system
- Reduce physical records storage by 80% and achieve 100% paperless administration
- Cut regulation-revision and decision cycles 50%

06 Empowering colleges through autonomy and shared governance

The central administration will provide strategy, coordination, and support; colleges will have the authority to lead innovation.

06-1 Freely connected education and research governance

- Build an education and research governance system that connects freely across college and department boundaries
- Build practical support systems to activate interdisciplinary education and research

06-2 Expand college autonomy over authority and budgets

- Expand the autonomy of colleges while the central administration supports, coordinates, and shares responsibility
- Expand college operating budgets and respect autonomy in finance, academic operations, and evaluation standards

06-3 Improve central governance and activate communication with members

- Reorganize the vice-presidential offices and delegate real authority to office heads (vice president for academic affairs: education, research, students, international affairs, and industry cooperation / vice president for planning and finance: planning, finance, facilities, personnel, administration, information, communication, external relations, and legal affairs / vice president for the multi-campus system: the Siheung, Pyeongchang, Yeongeon, and Suwon campuses)
- Establish a task force to improve the presidential election system
- Institutionalize quarterly communication between the central administration and faculty, staff, and students
- Expand students' opportunities to participate in university decision-making discussions

06-4 Stronger government and external relations

- Establish standing communication channels with the Blue House, the Ministry of Education, and the budget office
- Develop and operate educational programs for National Assembly aides

06-5 Sunset rules for offices and committees

- Regularly evaluate committees, task forces, and centers and reorganize overlapping functions
- Improve the practice of automatically renewing temporary bodies and establish principles for reorganizing functions

Priority Actions

- Establish a task force to build networked governance for education and research units
- Expand college operating budgets and support for convergence education and research
- Hold quarterly communication with the faculty union, staff union, and student council
- Enact sunset rules for committees
- Develop and operate educational programs for National Assembly aides

Connecting with the world

07 Connecting our campuses through distinctive strengths

We will reorganize multi-campus governance so that each campus becomes a hub for innovation and real-world experimentation alongside its region, while the campuses develop as an organically connected system.

07-1 Build a people-centered, eco-friendly campus and improve transport access

- Introduce a digital energy management system (EMS) for autonomous, efficient electricity use and lower carbon emissions
- Build a dense transportation network including expanded parking, light rail connections, and a smart mobility system

07-2 Reorganize multi-campus governance and operating systems

- Introduce a responsible vice-president system and reorganize the related organizational, personnel, and financial operating systems

07-3 Strengthen campus specialization and regional ties

- Bring buildings around SNU into campus use in connection with the Nakseongdae AI Valley
- Develop the Pyeongchang, Siheung, and Suwon campuses as innovation and experimentation hubs alongside their regions (Experimental Stations)
- Pursue the free transfer of the academic forest and convert affiliated schools into experimental schools for educational innovation

07-4 Build the Gwanak-Siheung-Yangjae AI belt and the Yeongeon-Gwanak-Siheung biomedical cluster

- Establish a metropolitan AI belt strategy linking Gwanak, Siheung, and Yangjae
- Create the Yeongeon-Gwanak-Siheung biomedical cluster and secure a foundation for biomedical research and industry

Priority Actions

- 100% digital EMS for efficient power use and lower carbon emissions
- Create responsible vice-presidents for the multi-campus system
- Bring buildings around the Gwanak campus into campus use and establish a master plan to rebuild the Hoam Faculty House

08 Putting SNU's expertise to work for society

We will put SNU's academic expertise to work for tangible progress in Korea and society.

08-1 Build SNU 2+10

- Propose to the government 'two global leading universities and ten SNUs at once'
- Expand research and education cooperation with regional national universities by field and identify common agendas

08-2 Admissions reform that points the way for education

- Improve admissions structure and evaluation based on the talent and evidence the future requires
- Introduce in-depth evaluation linked to faculty incentives to point the way for education and strengthen fairness

08-3 A platform for national and social problems

- Substantiate the National Future Strategy Institute's think-tank role through a platform strategy
- Build a cooperation network with leading global think tanks such as Brookings, RAND, and the Hoover Institution

08-4 Problem-solving support for industry

- Expand socially beneficial university-industry cooperation that addresses problems faced by small and medium-sized enterprises and startups
- Build a support system to activate technology transfer to industry and strengthen its dedicated channel

Priority Actions

- Persuade the government on the SNU 2+10 strategy and expand field-specific cooperation with regional national universities
- Sign partnerships with Brookings, RAND, and the Hoover Institution

09 Opening more pathways to the world

We will expand opportunities for every member of the SNU community to learn, collaborate, and grow through global engagement.

09-1 The Global Research University Network (G-RUN, working title) initiative of 20 leading global universities

- Build a cooperation network with 20 representative universities by country to address global agendas together through scholarship
- Host the event on a rotating basis by country, invite the host country's leader, and attract sponsorship from national flagship companies

09-2 Expand growth opportunities connected to the world (outbound)

- Expand exchange-student destinations by linking with G20 initiative universities such as Harvard and Oxford
- Restore the staff overseas-training program and introduce an exchange-staff program through which employees can experience administration at leading global universities and grow professionally.

09-3 An SNU the world's talent comes to (inbound)

- Build a one-stop support system for visas, housing, daily life, and administration to help international faculty and students settle
- Invite distinguished scholars from abroad, expand international summer courses and ODA programs, and link them organically

09-4 SNU's overseas footholds

- Establish education and research cooperation hubs and overseas offices in strategic regions such as Silicon Valley
- Build a global local network in partnership with alumni, overseas universities, and companies

Priority Actions

- Build joint research, joint curricula, and international forum partnerships on the G20 initiative (G-RUN, working title)
- Support global experiences for all undergraduates, introduce a staff exchange program, and establish one-stop support for international members
- Establish a Silicon Valley startup hub and an overseas network linked to alumni and companies

The pledge details here are identical to the pledge detail pages.

How he executes shows in the tax-law revision, the Main Gate square, the learning-sciences system, and the other Key Achievements.

Financial plan

Every spending pledge needs a credible funding plan. A finance-governance system led by a chief financial officer will manage SNU's medium- and long-term financial strategy, resource allocation, and execution.

Five funding pillars

- **Large-scale financing:** use university bonds and tangible assets to secure the large resources needed now.
- **Rationalize resource allocation:** reset priorities and reduce unnecessary budget waste.
- **Alumni development fund and expanded fundraising:** launch alumni-participation and designated-giving funds, and develop overseas, donor-specific, value-creating, and naming-program products.
- **Activate SNU Holdings:** organize the governance and portfolio of ventures, real-estate management, intellectual property, and licensing to expand university-generated revenue.
- **Increase government funding:** target ₩1T annually while first persuading the Ministry of Planning and Budget and the Ministry of Education to allow more flexible use of existing grants.

Operating principles

- **Set financial-strategy goals:** make the ₩300M faculty salary, ₩30M base research fund, and faculty-and-staff apartment reconstruction the top spending priorities.
- **Set a staged roadmap:** connect each pledge's cost estimate to its funding source, publish allocation criteria, and specify annual milestones.
- **Publish the link between need and funding:** disclose fundraising performance and adjust the pace of implementation when fiscal conditions change.

Funding targets

Expand university-generated funds by ₩1T, raise ₩1T in development funds, and secure ₩2T in new funds over four years.

Why this plan is different. It restructures the financial strategy by moving beyond dependence on government grants and conventional fundraising, and it is grounded in direct experience negotiating more than ₩500B in annual government funding and establishing SNU Holdings. The allocation and implementation record will be open to the members.

Execution system

A credible platform requires a clear system for delivery. This plan sets out a four-year timetable and a structure for review and accountability.

Year 1 | Design and launch

Establish the CFO-led financial system and the dedicated government-negotiation team. Begin administrative reform through broader delegated authority and a pilot AX agent.

Year 2 | Institutionalize

Finalize and publish the 333 roadmap and pledge-level KPIs. Institutionalize teaching-load autonomy and the base research fund.

Year 3 | Expand

Implement college autonomy budgets and central-organization reform. Launch the alumni development fund and designated fundraising products, and activate multi-campus operations and the global university initiative.

Year 4 | Complete and evaluate

Evaluate progress toward the 333 promises and the nine pledges, publish an implementation white paper, and codify successful changes so they survive beyond one term.

Administrative capacity and accountability

During the first half of the term, 50% of administrative capacity will focus on the 333 promises and 50% on the remaining pledges. Each pledge will have a public KPI, regular progress reports, and a named person responsible for delivery. Members will be able to check progress, temporary bodies will be reviewed under sunset rules, and missed commitments will be explained with a revised plan.

Picturing SNU at its centennial

Twenty years from now, SNU will celebrate its centennial. No one can know how profoundly artificial intelligence, science, and technology will have changed the world, or whether universities will resemble those we know today. Universities themselves may look different, as may the ways they teach and conduct research. That uncertainty is part of the future for which we must prepare.

We cannot prescribe one fixed vision of SNU's future and follow only that path. We need the capacity to find our own answers and adapt as new questions and circumstances arise. We must stay true to the university's foundations, its people and knowledge, while continually renewing the institutions and structures that support them.

Twenty years may seem a long time, but it is not long when it comes to transforming a university. Changes in education and research, finance and administration, organization and culture do not happen overnight. Each change enables the next, and their cumulative effect shapes the university's future. The SNU of twenty years from now will emerge from changes we begin today.

I will therefore begin clearing the way for change now. By removing obstacles, we can allow one change to lead to another and build momentum. I will work to ensure that the changes we begin today grow into greater achievements over the next twenty years. Whatever the world looks like at SNU's centennial, the university must be able to find its own path and lead.

I will take responsibility for getting this work started.

I will lay the groundwork for SNU's next twenty years.