

## Editorial

### A creative and innovative platform leading a sustainable society by the 150th anniversary of Ewha Womans University: a presidential farewell address

Running title: Toward 150 years of Ewha

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In 2024, the medical community in Korea encountered significant challenges stemming from increased medical school enrollment quotas [1]. Regrettably, these issues remain unresolved as of February 2025. I sincerely hope for a prompt return to normalcy in both the healthcare system and medical education. Throughout this process, the *Ewha Medical Journal* and its readers, who have consistently contributed research on global and local healthcare issues, are expected to play a crucial role.

In March 2021, I was inaugurated as the 17th President of Ewha Womans University. Serving as the President of my alma mater for the past four years has been an incredibly honorable and meaningful

experience [2]. Later that year, during the 135th Anniversary Founding Ceremony, I announced Ewha Vision 2030+, reaffirming our commitment to building a "creative and innovative platform leading a sustainable society" and propelling Ewha to become a university with top-tier competitiveness. Amid a period of rapid global transformations, including the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, climate change, and various crises, as well as the domestic challenge of declining school-age populations, we established three core values—Inspiring Ewha (Creativity and Challenge), Interacting Ewha (Communication and Innovation), and Integrating Ewha (Empathy and Inclusion). Along with these values, we identified five key goals and have systematically implemented 100 major initiatives to achieve them. The specific content of the five key goals is as follows:

### **First, a top-tier research-oriented university**

We have reached community alignment on the importance of establishing Ewha as a world-class research university that will lead the way for the next 30 to 50 years. To achieve this, we launched the Ewha Frontier 10-10 Initiative, aimed at fostering a creative research ecosystem capable of delivering world-class achievements. This initiative has led to the selection and support of five globally competitive leading research fields and ten promising future-oriented research areas. As a result of these efforts, 39 Ewha researchers have been recognized among the "Top 2% Researchers Worldwide." We have also achieved notable successes, including an increase in publications in high-impact international journals, higher citation counts, and the selection of key research and industry-academic collaboration projects. These accomplishments have significantly enhanced Ewha's reputation as a research-focused university. Furthermore, we have intensified our joint research efforts through partnerships, including a climate technology entrepreneurship program with the Asan Nanum Foundation and a global industry collaboration MOU with Syensqo (formerly Solvay).

### **Second, an educational response to artificial intelligence and big data**

In the era of digital transformation driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Ewha has focused on creating an educational innovation platform that addresses digital needs, strengthens our capabilities in advanced fields, and puts them into practice. Since the beginning of my term, we have established the

College of Artificial Intelligence and the Graduate School of Data Science to nurture key talent for the advanced industrial era. We also developed Ewha's signature teaching and learning model, THE BEST Educational Model, and created a hybrid learning environment to lead next-generation education. In addition, we launched the Global Division within the HOKMA College of General Education as a pilot program designed for international students. This initiative is spearheading the internationalization of education and enhancing Ewha's global brand value.

### **Third, restructuring campus environment for students**

We have introduced a big data-based intelligent academic support system to reinforce students' future planning and improve the campus environment. Additionally, we partially rebuilt and remodeled the Main Hall, which was originally constructed in 1964, into a 21st-century learning space. Most notably, we transformed Helen Hall, Ewha's first library, into the Ewha Advanced Library, a future-oriented, smart academic information center and multimedia cultural space integrating new media. We have also initiated projects aligned with Ewha's 150th-anniversary vision, including the creation of Ewha West Campus (63,000 square meters) to replace the Life Environment Hall built in 1972. The Ewha West Campus is envisioned as a dynamic, future-oriented site where the university transcends the confines of the ivory tower, fostering creativity and innovation through active communication, coexistence, and collaboration with society. This transformation reflects Ewha's vision of becoming an institution that flourishes as an integral, interactive part of the broader community.

### **Fourth, innovation of administrative infrastructure**

We have undertaken structural reforms to increase administrative efficiency and financial soundness. These include elevating the roles of vice presidents to strengthen industry-academic cooperation and research functions, reorganizing the Office of Academic Affairs to actively formulate education policies, and establishing the Graduate School Innovation Center to promote graduate-level innovation projects more effectively. In addition, we have improved our administrative infrastructure by formulating an ICT Master Plan, upgrading outdated information and communication hardware, and enhancing ICT facilities to streamline processes and boost operational efficiency.

### **Fifth, Ewha's empathy and inclusion**

To cultivate “Ewha’s uniqueness in empathy and care,” we have focused on reinvigorating community-based social welfare center programs, fostering shared innovation projects in partnership with local governments and universities, and disseminating Ewha’s values through endeavors such as the Pear Blossom Sharing Corps. We have also expanded global scholarship programs, including the Ewha-KOICA Program and the EGPP (Ewha Global Partnership Program). In 2024, the College of Music hosted its first New Year’s Concert at the Main Auditorium, inviting residents of Seodaemun District. Approximately 2,800 attendees filled the auditorium, creating a warm community gathering. Furthermore, I-Soo Management, a subsidiary of Ewha Haktang, has employed individuals with developmental disabilities to establish inclusive workspaces on Ewha’s Sinchon Campus and within Ewha Medical Center, exemplifying Ewha’s commitment to coexistence and its core values of empathy and care.

### **Network among three campuses**

Ewha originated from Ewha Hakdang in 1886 and Bogunyeogwan in 1887, both established in Jeongdong. The institution’s core pillars rest on two principles: Christian values and education focused on women’s empowerment and women’s health. These principles form the basis of Ewha’s mission. The Ewha History Museum on the Sinchon Campus serves to restore the legacy of Ewha Hakdang, safeguarding our historical roots. Similarly, the restored Bogunyeogwan at Ewha Seoul Hospital symbolizes respect for both Ewha’s longstanding dedication to women’s education and its emphasis on women’s health, reflecting the essence of our institution's founding values.

At Ewha Medical Center, we have made remarkable strides by developing specialized clinical areas in alignment with the Bogunyeogwan spirit—Korea’s first women’s hospital, established in 1887. Notable achievements include specialized facilities such as the Ewha Cancer Center for Women, Ewha Urology Institute, Ewha Cardio-Cerebrovascular Center, Ewha Aortic Center, and Ewha Mother and Baby Center, all geared toward providing high-quality, specialized care. These accomplishments underscore Ewha Medical Center’s emergence as a leading healthcare institution.

During my term, one of my foremost objectives was to foster organic and robust collaboration among the Sinchon Campus, Ewha Mokdong Hospital, and Ewha Seoul Hospital, thereby creating a thriving, mutually beneficial community. A significant milestone here was the formation of the Ewha Advanced Convergence Med-Tech Healthcare Cluster, where these three entities united to forge an integrated industry-academia-research-hospital ecosystem. This initiative has stimulated collaborative research and entrepreneurship in the biomedical and healthcare fields and marks a crucial first success. Moving forward, I hope the faculty, students, researchers, and staff at the Sinchon Campus, Ewha Mokdong Hospital, and Ewha Seoul Hospital will continue to deepen their shared research, practice, entrepreneurship, service, and collaboration, expanding this communal ecosystem with love and dedication.

In 2025, Ewha will continue to reinforce its standing as a premier institution, proactively preparing for the future and leading in the spheres of research, education, and global engagement. We aspire to rank among the world's top universities. The *Ewha Medical Journal* will act as a trailblazer in realizing this vision, playing an essential role in disseminating outstanding research and sharing the fruits of our collective endeavors.

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#### Authors' contributions

All work was done by Eun Mee Kim

#### Conflict of interest

Eun Mee Kim has been the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the Ewha Womans University. However, she was not

involved in the decision process. Otherwise, no potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

#### Funding

Not applicable.

#### Data availability

Not applicable.

#### Acknowledgments

Not applicable.

#### Supplementary materials

Not applicable.

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