

§ Preface

Writing this preface now more than six years after my return from a year-long appointment at the University of Utah Asia Campus (UAC)—a place I describe in this book—I am unavoidably conscious that much of what I detail here would currently be impossible. Pandemic-related travel restrictions remain in place in 2022 and probably will continue to limit travel for the foreseeable future. With a much smaller percentage of COVID-19 infection than my native United States has, South Korea (henceforth Korea) nonetheless continues to be extremely vigilant about entry of foreigners—not to mention internal movements of its own citizens and residents.

However, I am privileged to remain engaged with the Asia Campus, albeit from nearly 6,000 miles and—depending on Daylight Savings Time—15 to 16 hours away. I have served as a member of the extended campus' executive committee, which oversees budgetary decisions, the additions of new academic majors, the appointment of new campus administrators, and efforts to coordinate and collaborate with the several other universities also operating foreign campuses in New Songdo City. I have been on several other committees recruiting and hiring new faculty members for writing courses there. I have worked with graduate and undergraduate students interested in researching international education for whom the Asia Campus is an intriguing and accessible site. And I have most recently co-taught an online course on English as an international language in which a colleague and I have combined her Asia Campus students with my US-based campus students at the very narrow sweet spot on the clock when we can meet synchronously. We hope this course is only the first of others that help our students connect across distance—especially at a time when a global pandemic makes the distance seem especially long.

Neither this book nor these other opportunities would have been possible without the generous, consistent, creative support of many faculty colleagues, administrators, staff members, and students—a number of whom appear pseudonymously in chapters that follow. I can and will name Robert Newman, former dean of the University of Utah College of Humanities and current president and director of the National Humanities Center, who asked me to go to the brand-new Asia Campus in the first place. My friend, colleague, and former program director and chair, Maureen Mathison, graciously and willingly assented to my going even though it left our then-tiny fledgling department short-staffed, and even though it delayed my return to the

US as incoming department chair. As the Asia Campus' first chief academic officer, Stephen Walston adeptly led colleagues and me into the unknown large and small considerations of administering and teaching at a brand-new site, setting a vision and helping unpack and distribute textbooks—often simultaneously. Successive chief global officers Michael Hardman and Chris Ireland kept us connected to the broader university from its home base and laid groundwork for Asia Campus students' transitions to the US for at least a year of study, and they spoke with me about their direct involvement in the campus' founding vision. They also contributed funding for travel, accommodations, and food for research assistants and me on trips to Korea in 2016, 2017, and 2018.

I cannot write glowingly enough about those research assistants—all academics and/or professionals in their own right. Charissa Che applied her sharply critical eye and resulting insights about the ways “Asian” student identities circulate in higher education. Joanne Castillo contributed boundless curiosity, asking questions I had not thought to ask. Justin Grant Whitney traveled with prior experience in and love for Korea, which helped me and the Asia Campus faculty members he met there understand the context just a bit more. All three were invaluable collaborators in interviews and observations about classroom activities and the Asia Campus more broadly. Indeed, the impressions and insights they shared on our trips connected that campus' pedagogical work even more closely with its natural and built environments as those environments were constantly evolving.

All writers can tend to be a little too close to what they are writing and thus unable to imagine other arrangements, ideas, and possibilities. My academic and personal commitments to this book have inspired my writing but, at times, have run the risk of propelling me too quickly past important details that make this transnational educational experiment richly complex. So I am extremely fortunate that Terry Myers Zawacki is such an able and sensitive reader. I am further deeply grateful to Terry's enthusiastically supportive editorial colleagues, Magnus Gustafsson, Anna Sophia Habib, and Joan Mullin, and to the two anonymous reviewers whose incisive comments made this manuscript far better.

Last, I thank the people who have shared my space even while I, many times, have lived far more inside my head than truly in their presence. Davis Jordan and Jennifer Neal love me unconditionally, and it shows. I was away from them for almost a full year at the start of this project, and I have found reasons to travel here and there since I came back. But even if they do not always go with me, they are always the best part of me.