VFTH

Ransdell speaks at CI Conference

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WKU's Confucius Institute garners global attention at the annual C.I. Conference in Beijing. Amy Bingham travelled to China with WKU's President recently and has more in this week's "View from the Hill."

Confucius Institutes are non-profit public institutions that promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teachers and facilitate cultural exhanges.

WKU's CI has only been around for 18 months, but is already growing at a rapid pace.

In fact, Dr. Gary Ransdell was asked to share WKU's success story with Confucius Institute delegates from all over the world

Beijing's International Convention Center is one of China's largest facilities of this kind--- on this day bringing together people from across the globe to strategize about the future of Confucius Institutes.

There's even vendors with the latest Chinese teaching materials available.

"on left its in English, on the right is Chinese."

"these books are only samples, haven't been produced yet."

WKU's President Dr. Gary Ransdell was among a select group of panelists invited to take part in a forum focusing on the CI's future.

"Last year we were learning and taking notes and this year the primary focus is planning for the next ten years and putting a strategic plan together for the Confucius Institute going forward."

Madame Xu Lin, Director General of the Chinese Language Council or "Hanban" was one of the conferences main speakers. She says Confucius Institutes serve as a stage for bringing Chinese and Americans together.

"Even like me, many Chinese people, we can speak English, but we really do not know deeply real American culture and American people."

Xu Lin has ties to WKU dating back to 1989 when she applied to complete her Masters Degree in higher education management. Only receiving a partial scholarship prevented her from coming more than 20 years ago. But she received an honorary doctorate from WKU earlier this year.

"I think I have responsibility to improve WKU in China relations and I should do my best to support WKU."

That support is something WKU's CI is counting on as it plans to impact up to 25-thousand Kentucky students with Chinese classes over the next five to ten years. And it's that ambitious growth that has other Confucius Institutes taking notice.

"I'm pleased that the Chinese Education Ministry and Presidents of 350 other Confucius Institutes are interested in what we've done at WKU."

Beginning next fall, all volunteer teachers in Kentucky will require state certification. Madame Xu Lin pledged to help secure Hanban's support for helping with training and portfolio requirements before the teachers ever leave China.

With this week's View from the Hill, I'm Amy Bingham.

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