Super Computer

VFTH

8/11/11

Imagine a computer with seven thousand times more power than your laptop.

That’s exactly what was installed at Western Kentucky University last week.

Amy Bingham has more on the “super computer” in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU is taking a giant leap forward with a high performance computing center that will support and increase research all over campus.

Two years after receiving a two-point-three million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Ogden College of Science and Engineering is unloading a high performance computer at the new Lost River Data Center located in the Center for Research and Development.

“The super computer here is directly linked to campus thru fiber optic network. Our professors sitting in their office can have a quick and direct link to the super computer.”

The powerful combination of research and data support tools will mean research can be done in a much more timely manner.

“Now we have the power to do it in a week instead of four months, that’s the capability this gives us that we didn’t have.”

One of the driving forces behind the enhanced technology is the Kentucky Mesonet which collects real-time weather data from stations across the state.

“There are experiments, simulations we would like to do using the mesonet data with computer models for weather and climate.”

The super computer will also benefit research in chemistry, physics, DNA sequencing and much more.

“Many of the departments needed this additional capacity.”

But it’s the students who ultimately gain the most, getting front row access to all sorts or important research.

“That’s what I find exciting, allows us to jump forward in a big way.”

In addition to research and education, the high performance computer center will foster public-private collaborations. In fact, a partnership has already been established with Bowling Green Municipal Utilities.

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

###