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International Year of South Korea

WKU students have experienced Equador, South Africa and now South Korea without ever leaving campus.

It's through the International Year of program as Amy Bingham explains in this week's View from the HIll.

Study Abroad participation at WKU has grown by nearly 34 percent in the past six years but that's not the only way for students to become immersed in another country.   The International Year of program puts this year’s spotlight on South Korea.

"I want to represent inside textures, anxiety and calm..."

Artist Jin Man Jo is describing how his metal works reflect the complexities of life.

"My work is like diary.  Everyday I'm working hard.  Express my feelings through sculpture."

Anxiety and fear are just some of the themes of Jin Man Jo's art that was on display at WKU for a month.

Now an art professor at the University of Wisconsin, JinMan Jo talked to students about his art and his native country Seoul South Korea

In it's third year, the International Year of program cuts across the entire campus to bring cultural awareness to the country being highlighted.

"We've had countless faculty involved and a record number of academic courses featuring South Korean content.”

WKU looked no further than it's political science department to find an expert on Korea.  Dr. Tim Rich has studied the country extensively and was asked to lead a group of faculty in a trip

to prepare for the year of study.

"I had been to Korea four times on my own.  This was my fifth time and there were all kinds of things where I never even thought about that restaurant or museum.”

A packed class listened to Dr. Rich talk about the tenuous nature of North Korean politics.

"Students are always interested in talking about North Korea.  There's a demand. There's an interest."

The International Year of extends through the entire academic year before the spotlight shines on another country.

"There's a layering effect that over the course of a students academic career here they're going to learn about the cultural nuances of four different countries."

Home Café in Bowling Green is planning to offer a special Korean menu later this month to tie in with the International Year of South Korea. The dates for that are March 21st through 24th.

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

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