View From The Hill
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Liping Chen - Chinese Flagship

When WKU received word of funding for the Chinese Flagship earlier this year, there was no time to waste.

In this week’s “View from the Hill”, Amy Bingham shows us how a recently hired director has already gotten the  program off the ground.

Dr. Liping Chen first came to the United States from China less than ten years ago.

She received her Ph.d. in Linguistics from Rutgers University and also worked at the University of Pittsburg.  But  she says the opening for a director at WKU’S new Chinese Flagship program seemed like the perfect opportunity.

“I think this is wonderful for me to use my experience and expertise to shape and develop this brand new program.”

Dr. Liping Chen arrived in Bowling Green on August first.  She quickly put together curriculum for freshmen wanting to enroll in the four year program.

“We are separating Chinese language teaching from learning it within the major so we have students from all different majors and we want them to learn some language component.”

And learning it they are….students have a rigourous six hours of Chinese curriculum each week….including  lectures and drills.

“The goal of this program is to produce a superior level of speakers of the language.”

Dr. Chen says the other goal of the  program is to find new ways to teach foreign languages in the U.S.

She says while students used to want to learn Chinese for self enjoyment…they now know more is at stake.

“Nowadays people would come to me and say why they learn Chinese is because of the economic growth in China,  the opportunities in China.”

Dr. Chen says students and professors involved in the Chinese Flagship make a huge commitment.  Students must travel to China for one year to immerse themselves in their major and also do an internship for one semester.

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