NOVA Center

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What weighs18 thousand pounds and can magnify up to a hundred thousand times?

The answer is the largest microscope you can imagine. Amy Bingham tells us why it’s located at WKU in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU is the only university in North America with this type of instrument. It’s about to be the focus of a conference bringing together experts from around the country.

Underneath this plastic is the large chamber scanning electron microscope.

 “Some of the things we could physically scan would be like, for example, the engine block of a car.”

So what is the massive microscope doing at WKU? Dr. Ed Kintzel, an assistant professor of physics and astronomy used to work at Oak Ridge National Laboratory where the machine was located.

“I was able to come across this piece of equipment and it was offered it to the University, again due to relationships there I was able to aquire it for the school.”

The microscope is now housed at WKU’s Nondestructive Analysis Center or NOVA at the Center for Research and Development.

A conference will be held there in two weeks.

 “We’re coming here to talk about the possibilities of what we can do here that maybe I’m not thinking of.”

NOVA Center Scholarship recipient and physics major Tara Wink will get to take part in a research project using the giant microscope.

 “I think actually we’re going to work with NASA on some upcoming projects and do some scanning of some pieces for them. Pretty cool to do real work for a company.”

Kintzel says it’s also pretty “cool” for the entire area to have this type of equipment at their disposal.

 “There’s also a chance to reach out into the community and do some high school and middle school work.

The NOVA Center Conference will be held March tenth and eleventh at the Knicely Center. The conference will include tours of the NOVA Center and the General Motors Corvette Plant. For details log onto large chamber dot com.

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

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