Confucius Institute Opens

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If you’d like to experience China without traveling half way around the world, look no further than Helm Library on the campus of Western Kentucky University.

In this week’s View from the Hill, Amy Bingham takes us inside the brand new Chinese Learning Center at WKU’s Confucius Institute.

Everything about the Chinese tradition comes alive in a newly transformed space inside WKU’s Helm Library. What better way to mark the grand opening of the Confucius Institute Chinese Learning Center than with traditional Chinese entertainment.

Hundreds of people got their first look inside the Chinese Learning Center after being led in by traditional Chinese Lion dancers.

The Center is anchored by non other than Confucius himself.

 “The highlight of the CLC is the statue of Confucius that was donated to us by Hanban, which is our sponsor and that showcases and sets the tone for the room.”

Seven plasma TV’s are stationed around the Center showcasing a particular part of the Asian culture.

 “All of them are interactive, you just hit the screen and it gives a little history about them.”

For example on the Chinese paper cut, you just enter your birthdate….

 “And it will bring up the sign that corresponds to that particular birth year.”

It’s truly a room filled with authentic Chinese displays.

 “We have the Peking opera, the Chinese food culture, Kung fu and calligraphy, we have Chinese instruments located at the various stations.”

So it’s only natural the grand opening would be filled with authentic Chinese entertainment…

Students returning this fall are in for a real treat.

 “It is going to be a phenomenal place.”

Confucius Institute Director Wei-Ping Pan says eleven teachers were placed in elementary, middle and high schools this past year. Eighteen more will arrive from China this summer and be placed in 21 schools.

 The CI also offers Chinese language and culture classes for the university and the community. With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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