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Confucius Institute and Light Center for Chinese Studies

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Confucius Institute and Light Center for Chinese Studies  
Welcome by John M. Dunn  
Dec. 7, 2010

• First of all, thanks to the Hanban for its generosity in supplying funding ($150,000 annually) to launch our Confucius Institute, as well as for providing Chinese language faculty members. Western Michigan University was deeply honored to be selected as the home university for a Confucius Institute, and we treasure the addition of our new faculty colleagues.

• Since the launch of the Confucius Institute on the Western Michigan University campus, we have been working hard to maximize the impact of the new Chinese studies capacity on our campus.

• To most efficiently make use of the resources provided and to ensure the communities served receive maximum benefit, we chose to house the Confucius Institute within our existing Haenicke Center for Global Education. That center is our base of operations for all of our international work, including domestic outreach and study abroad.

Housing the institute within the Haenicke Center allows us to take advantage of existing business services and office personnel as well as well-established
connections at both the international and local levels. The Haenicke Center provided an instant infrastructure that includes office space and personnel needs, assistance to visiting professors, faculty time in several colleges for institute work, travel, curriculum development and designation of an institute director.

• We have further leveraged the resources provided through our new Timothy Light Center for Chinese Studies. The Light Center was established this fall with a private $1 million gift from the Light family made to celebrate our Dr. Timothy Light's lifetime of accomplishments.

• A Kalamazoo native and expert on the Chinese language, Timothy Light joined WMU's comparative religion faculty in 1991 and retired in 2003. His 50-year academic career includes teaching and administrative positions related to East Asian language and culture studies at international and domestic universities and colleges, including the Chinese University of Hong Kong and University of Arizona, and the publication of numerous scholarly books and articles for professional journals.

• The Light Center is designed to coordinate activities and promote educational, artistic and research scholarships related to all aspects of Chinese studies at WMU.
It will further the work of WMU faculty members and graduate students who have expertise in some field of Sinology, or teaching or research interests in China. It also aims to enhance teaching and understanding of China studies through programs accessible to undergraduate students and the public.

- Most important, the existence at WMU of both the Confucius Institute and the Light Center will add to the new capacity being created through the Confucius Institute. It will offer the University an opportunity to gain national prominence with regard to China and broadly to East Asian studies. Over the next several years, these two programs coupling with the resident competence already in place among our faculty will bear considerable scholarly fruit.