4-17-2015

Welcome Haenicke Institute East Asia Forum
Introduction of Dr. Timothy Light

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Good afternoon. Welcome. I'm really happy to meet with you all here today for this wonderful faculty development effort. I've always thought this is what great universities do best--help those of us with similar academic interests grow, collaborate and leverage each others specialties in a way that makes us all better teachers and scholars.

This is the first East Asia Forum, and I'm sure it would most accurately be called the first of many to come. I understand there has been a strong interest demonstrated by faculty and staff and our colleagues at other locations in Southwest Michigan. That is certainly understandable when you look at the depth and variety of research happening here.

- There's Jacqueline Eng, an anthropologist whose work in Mongolia has been followed by National Geographic;
- Marketing professor Ann Veeck does research on consumption patterns in East Asia;
- Gregory Veeck, a geographer, has longtime contacts with the higher education establishment across China; and

With firepower like that, as well as their students and colleagues, how could this idea help but succeed. And then there's the fact that for six years, WMU has been host to a Confucius Institute that puts us in constant contact and collaboration with our colleagues at Beijing Language and Culture University.
The result of such academic strength and the planning for this initial forum is a day of conversation that includes five strong panels, and discussion on research, policy analysis, artistic and creative work, and other academic endeavors.

To help launch this first East Asia Forum, the Haenicke Institute could not have identified a better keynote speaker. Dr. Timothy Light is a hometown scholar--born and raised here in Kalamazoo--who just happens to enjoy an international reputation in the field of Chinese language. He also is the namesake for our Light Center for Chinese Studies that was opened on campus five years ago and he has been a wonderful counselor to us all in our Confucius Institute initiative.

Tim Light is professor emeritus of comparative religion at WMU. His 50-year academic career included 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. He also is the author of numerous scholarly books and articles for professional journals.

He was a professor and chairperson of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature at Ohio State University, a provost and professor of linguistics and Asian studies at Kalamazoo College who went on to serve as acting president there. He was then president of Middlebury College before he returned home to Kalamazoo in 1993 to serve as provost at Western Michigan University. He stepped down from that post in 2000 to pursue his academic work and retired in 2003.

He retired but he has never stopped working. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Dr. Timothy Light.