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Advocate

At Western Michigan University

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Choose Your Own "T-Leaves" to Read – Twinning Programs and/or Tenure at WMU!

Ariel L.H. Anderson
WMU-AAUP President

Twinning Programs in Malaysia and Hong Kong.

I have just returned from an amazing trip to Malaysia and Hong Kong, travelling as one of 11 from Western who recently visited our twinning programs at Sunway College in Malaysia and Hong Kong Baptist University. This trip, sponsored by the Provost's office, was arranged in order to provide several members of the University community with the opportunity to become acquainted with the concept of "twinning," and to build some understanding of what these programs and relationships have to offer WMU, as well as our international "partners" in higher education. As Chapter president, I agreed to participate in this journey in order to gain some first-hand expertise within the Chapter leadership so that we can respond more appropriately to faculty colleagues who have questions and/or concerns about Western's twinning programs.

Well...I learned a lot! I must say that Howard Dooley, Bill Woods, and Cathleen Fuller, all from our International Affairs office, did an outstanding job of organizing the expedition. Our hosts at Sunway College and Hong Kong Baptist University were most gracious. The students at Sunway (Hong Kong students were on break) were quite obviously honored and thrilled to receive our company, and members of our delegation had delightful interactions with students who will eventually travel to Kalamazoo to continue their education with

us. Several Sunway/WMU graduates who have returned to their homeland are interested in returning for further educational experiences – their love and appreciation for Western is quite obvious. Meetings with faculty and staff at both twinning sites led me to the conclusion that standards of excellence in these programs are strong – the faculty are dedicated and highly enthusiastic. Given that my own academic focus is on young children and their families, I was enthralled with the Kindergarten facilities that are nearly complete at Hong Kong Baptist University – complete with child-sized sinks and toilets, and the most glorious playground facilities I have ever seen!

In short, I am appreciative of having had this opportunity to become acquainted with two of our twinning programs. I am aware that some faculty have concerns about these international partnerships, and I find that quite understandable – it is normal to feel apprehensive about the unknown. While my knowledge and understanding of these twinning programs is limited, I at least feel that I have a much more solid understanding of the purposes and standards of such endeavors, and I will be glad to share my thoughts and experiences with those who are interested. I will also compile a photo album to document our travels. I extend an open invitation to stop by Montague House for a coffee or soda and a chat about our twinning programs in Malaysia and Hong Kong.

Ariel L.H. Anderson
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