

Report on Attendance:

“Perspectives on Global Issues Workshop - Sustainability” at the European Academy of Otzenhausen (EAO) Germany, May 2017

Michael Carroll, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Kennesaw State University

It was a great opportunity to attend the “Perspectives on Global Issues Workshop - Sustainability” at the European Academy of Otzenhausen in May 2017; the benefits of this experience were many and include:

- 1) The opportunity to meet with colleagues from other colleges at Kennesaw State University in a foreign country and discuss issues of sustainability within a European and a North American context. In general, The Department of Architecture is somewhat isolated from KSU and it was truly an honor to meet fellow KSU faculty with a vested interest on a broad range of issues related to the theme of sustainability. Although brief, given that pace of the conference, there was some time to have both informal and structured discussions on sustainability across various academic disciplines and personal perspectives.
- 2) Exposure to a variety of perspectives on issues of sustainability from a range of German academics, in particular I enjoyed the presentation by Antje Schönwald whose presentation “Sustainable Development, Challenges for the World of Tomorrow” encapsulated the beginnings of the sustainability movement and introduced the term ‘antropocene’, as well as, the UN’s Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the conversation, both of which I was unfamiliar with before the conference. Stefan Niederhafner’s lecture, “The EU Energy and Climate Policy and the German Energiewende” gave a detailed overview of energy policy in the European/German context. This was certainly interesting in relation to the lack of a cohesive effort and policy within the United States and/or North America. For an insightful overview on the role of corporations within a sustainable model, I particularly enjoyed Dr. Wolfgang Meyer’s political commentary and the discussions that he fostered with other KSU colleagues during the break-out discussion sessions. Perhaps one of the best lectures was left to the final day with Dr. Lenelis Kruse-Graumann’s presentation that examined the connection between environmental psychology and sustainable development. I was drawn to her more philosophical take on sustainability from a humanistic perspective.

- 3) The various excursions from the EAO were also inspirational as it was an opportunity to see how the various theories and policies related to sustainability were put into action. The Energielandschaft Morbach, the Zero Emission Campus Birkenfeld and the Organic Farm were all interesting from an architectural and land planning perspective. It was great to see large photovoltaic arrays, wind turbines and sustainably designed buildings within rural Germany.

- 4) With my interest in design, architecture and cities, the visit to Freiburg was inspirational given its historic context with a variety of new buildings that complemented the character of the old town. After the EAO conference, I also had the opportunity to visit both Stuttgart and Berlin and experience more of the German culture. In Stuttgart, I toured: James Sterling's Neue Staatsgalerie, UN Studio's Mercedes-Benz Museum, The Porsche Museum and the Weissenhof Colony with houses designed by a variety of Bauhaus architects and Le Corbusier. In Berlin, during my week-long visit, I toured a number of contemporary architectural projects that certainly contributed to my overall architectural education on design precedents. These included, Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Piano's Potsdamer Platz and Sauerbruch Hutton Architects' GSW Building (Europe's first double-skin tower). I also had an opportunity to interview with Tim Edler, an architect who had previously lectured at KSU_Arch, on his newest endeavor, the Flussbad Project whose objective is to transform an arm of the River Spree in the middle of Berlin into a "swimming pool" whose water is filtered by plants.

I am using my experience at the faculty development workshop at EAO in a variety of ways:

- a) As proposed in my initial application for the EAO conference, in the Fall 2017 third year design studio that I teach, the students are focused on the KSU Marietta Campus and are exploring a range of architectural interventions that address issues of sustainability such as: on-site energy generation, solar shading, waste and water management, responsive architectural systems and the like. The product of the design studio will be the basis of an exhibition that will open in January 2017 in the KSU_Arch Gallery. I hope to invite KSU Sustainability Fellows and other KSU officials to the opening of the exhibit to contribute to the discussion on how the KSU campus, in general, can be designed to be more sustainable.

- b) Some of the information from the EAO conference has been used as base material in my current course ARCH 3311: Thermal Comfort and Building Systems. Content from the conference, as well as, my study of German architecture will continue to enrich the content of the course throughout the semester.

- c) Because of meeting various KSU Sustainability Fellows at the EAO conference, I am now attending (as an invitee) the Sustainability Commission meetings. As a result, I am more aware and engaged in relation to sustainable initiatives at KSU.