

Jackie H. Jones, EAO Summary

What I learned at the EAO and How I will Apply that Knowledge in my Classroom.

I learned a lot from attending the workshop at the European Academy of Otzenhausen (EAO), Germany and am grateful to KSU for giving me this opportunity. There were a wide variety of topics related to sustainability presented at the conference. Experts in the various areas provided information on: challenges for the global citizens of tomorrow, the future of the energy industry, governance and challenges of climate change, global learning and education for sustainable development to name a few. Although all were interesting, some did resonate with me more than others. I especially enjoyed learning about the political structure in Europe. This was followed by a visit to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg France. The presentation and subsequent discussion on global population growth and the future of the food supply brought home to me the already dire consequences of global overpopulation and challenges of meeting the food supply. It is staggering to hear that 815 million people are hungry and over 1 billion people experience chronic hunger. The many small group discussions we had were thought provoking and exposed me to different ways of thinking and viewing various situations.

It was very interesting to see how sustainability appeared to be more fully integrated into everyday life there. As we traveled in Germany, we saw many wind turbines and solar panels. The rooms in both Otzenhausen and Strasbourg had recycling bins, multi-purpose washing liquid for both hair and body, small shower areas with hand-held shower heads (which definitely encourages quick showers), etc. We were told that Strasbourg had just passed a law that prohibits gas-fueled cars to be driven in the downtown area. None of the shops that I visited provided free plastic bags for your purchased items. You could either bring your own, purchase a bag(s), or carry items loosely. These measures encourage re-use of bags.

I also appreciated getting to know several new colleagues from around the university and our hosts at Otzenhausen. Our hosts, especially Dr. Antje Schonwald and Jonathan Utsch, were delightful. I know the coordination of our visit was due largely to their efforts. The entire experience was well-developed, well-organized, and well-executed. Our group formed a ready and easy rapport that will sustain our collegiality. It was greatly appreciated that they scheduled a little downtime as the days in the classroom were long. I enjoyed the nightly walks up to the lake

with colleagues and the Ninepin Championship. Apparently I have a real skill at this game, something I was completely unaware of as I had never played.

I can easily integrate sustainability into my coursework. In the elective I teach, NURS 4490, Improving Safety & Quality in Patient Care, I plan to create a module on Sustainability in Nursing which will focus on Efficiency. The IOM has identified the six goals or aims for the healthcare system of the 21st century which are that it be Safe, Timely, Effective, Efficient, Equitable, and Patient-Centered. In comparison with other countries, the U.S. is ranked very low on efficiency in healthcare and the vast sums of money we spend on healthcare, nearing 25% of our annual GDP, is not sustainable. The focus of the increased content will be on stewardship of limited resources, minimizing waste in the healthcare environment, providing safe and quality healthcare, and health promotion. All of these are important aspects of reducing health care costs and expenditures. By improving the quality and safety of their own practices, they improve the health of their patients, reducing lengths of stay, and decreasing morbidity and mortality which ultimately also decreases utilization of resources. In NURS 3209, Holistic Nursing, I currently teach about Healthcare Delivery Systems in the U.S. I can integrate sustainability into this content easily.

I also learned more about the sustainability efforts that are occurring at KSU. I would like to become more involved with these activities and also make my students aware of them and encourage them to participate. While modest, I have made changes to my personal life as well. I firmly resolved, after the presentation on hunger, to increase my number of ‘meatless’ meals. I have been more aware of, and am practicing, all the easy ways to reduce energy needs, including flipping light switches off, unplugging chargers and other cords when away. I also take measures to reduce water consumption, including taking quicker showers and turning the water off as I brush my teeth. I scrutinize my trash more thoroughly before discarding to determine recyclability. I compost. These are all small measures but ones that also acknowledge that I too have a role to play in the sustainability of our world and my awareness of this was increased by this workshop.

This was truly a unique experience and one of the very best and impactful faculty development workshops that I’ve attended. As previously stated, I am grateful to KSU for giving me this opportunity.