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Summary of what I learned at the EAO in May 2018 and how I will apply that knowledge in my classroom and/or in your scholarship.

The week spent at the EAO in May of 2018 learning about sustainability from a variety of disciplinary perspectives was transformative for both my teaching and for me personally. Prior to attending the Academy, I regularly incorporated issues in sustainability into my courses. For example, I have taught the First-Year Seminar in a sustainability-themed learning community and I have incorporated topics of conscious consumption and recycling into my Honors Sociology course. The week in Otzenhausen did not just provide me with updated information to incorporate into my existing course structures, it also helped me rethink the way I teach sustainability altogether, and it spurred me to make changes in my own life as I consider my “carbon footprint.”

My original proposal for this faculty development opportunity was to incorporate a module on sustainability into the First-Year Seminar using what I learned at the workshop. I am still doing this, however, in addition I am scheduled to teach an interdisciplinary Honors 3100 (3 credit hour) course of my own design on sustainability and society in Spring of 2019. The idea to offer this course is a direct outcome of my participation in the Academy. I will use the perspectives gained from the Academy sessions and fieldtrips as a starting point for the course.

Students will examine sustainability from a variety of disciplinary perspectives including science (social and natural), law, policymaking, and business.

The content of the Academy was excellent and exceeded my expectations. The lectures and field trips, which encompassed topics such as sustainable development, energy and climate policy and management, water, food, waste management and reduction, and conscious consumption, were enlightening and are providing fresh material for my courses.

Even though I am an academic, in today's hurried world with so many demands on my time, I rarely get a chance to spend focused time learning about a topic. The week at the Academy afforded just that. It was like a "boot camp" for learning about sustainability in depth. From this base, I have been independently researching sustainability. I can say that I now more fully understand the basic issues that help me go deeper in my inquiry – thanks to the EAO. I am also much more effective in my teaching because of this deep understanding. The field trips to the Energy Landscape in Morbach, the c.s.a. farm, Winery Schloder, the pump storage station in Luxemburg, Germanwatch, and the Wuppertal Institute were instrumental in providing both the working illustrations of key concepts, as well as the global perspectives, that are so valuable.

On a personal note, this trip was deeply transformative. As a result of what I learned and saw, I am much more conscious of how I consume. One thing is for sure, I will never look at plastic the same way again! Since returning from Germany I have drastically reduced the amount of plastic food containers I bring into my home, and have virtually eliminated my use of single-use plastics. I am wasting less food at home and I am buying less "stuff" that will end up in the landfill. Also, as a result of the trip, my conviction to teach college students about sustainability in the hope that they will be agents of positive change has been revitalized.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the benefits of participating in the workshop with my KSU colleagues. The University has grown so much in the last few years that I rarely meet people outside of my department. The week in Europe with the group yielded lasting friendships and opportunities to form cross-campus and cross-disciplinary collaborations.