

EAO Debrief
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1) Debrief about the EAO program in general.

The EAO program was immensely valuable for multiple reasons and I'm thrilled to have been selected to participate at the conclusion of my first year as a faculty member at Kennesaw State University. The program was beneficial to me for several reasons. First, the information from the workshops themselves was not only fascinating, but also enlightening and informative. I appreciate the varied format of the workshops and excursions and the variety of information and experts with whom we were able to interact. I am using information from the workshop in my ongoing and planned teaching and research activities (as I describe in further detail below). Second, the opportunity to travel internationally with and get to know a diverse group of faculty and administrators from across both campuses of the university was incredibly valuable. I was able to get to know people because of this experience with whom I may not have otherwise crossed paths and with whom I continue to remain in contact. Also, in various conversations throughout the trip there was an element of much appreciated mentorship from some of the more experienced members of the group. Such information is helpful for me to keep in mind as I enter my second year at the university, plan for my third year review in 2017, and for the tenure and promotion process several years from now.

2) Have you give us suggestions for next time (e.g., advertising, selection process, the trip itself).

I found out about the EAO workshop opportunity by reading about it in the KSU inform email and also hearing about it from my department chair, who encouraged me to apply. I'm not sure if the program was advertised beyond those methods. Perhaps the timeline of the application and acceptance notification process could be moved up a bit to late Fall (for an international workshop the following May). This would help for planning around other research, teaching, and community engagement activities occurring in spring and summer months. Regarding the selection process, I think the application was appropriate in terms of requesting submission of a two page essay describing reasons for being interested in the program and how information from the program will be used in teaching, research, and community engagement. It was a helpful process to think through those ideas in a succinct manner and put them in writing.

Regarding the trip itself, I found it to be a good balance between days spent on excursions and days spent in various workshops and discussions at the academy. The overall length of the experience was adequate, too. The academy as a facility itself is excellent. The staff are friendly and helpful. And the food is superb and abundant.

3) Have you bring a one to two page written document outlining what you are doing/going to do to incorporate what you learned into your teaching and/or scholarship (which I'll keep as documentation to show how you used what you learned in this professional development workshop) and briefly discuss.

The information learned in the EAO professional development workshop was valuable to my teaching, research, and community engagement. One way in which I am using and planning to use the information from the EAO workshop is through my teaching. This fall semester, in my GEOG 1101: Introduction to Human Geography course, I am incorporating aspects of information from the workshop when discussing immigration and refugee issues. In Spring 2017, I am planning to offer a new special topics course, GEOG 4490: Geography of Population and Migration. The syllabus is developed and the course has already been approved for offer in Spring 2017. Within this course, I am including several discussions and in-class activities about migration, refugee resettlement, and immigration and refugee policy. Specifically, I will incorporate information from the EAO workshop in a discussion and activity designed to compare and contrast geographies of immigration and refugee settlement, receptivity, and integration in Europe and North America. Additionally, also in Spring 2017, I am again offering GEOG 3312: Geography of Europe and will incorporate themes from the workshop when discussing immigration and refugee issues in Europe. Furthermore, I also recently met with several other faculty at KSU to brainstorm ideas for a potential future summer study abroad program focusing on refugee settlement, integration, and receptivity issues in Europe. Ideas and potential partnerships discussed during the EAO workshop informed the brainstorming discussion at this meeting about a potential study abroad course.

Another way I am planning to use the information from the EAO workshop is in my ongoing research trajectory focusing on immigrant and refugee settlement, integration, and receptivity in cities and metropolitan areas. In the past and currently, I have been focusing on cities in the United States. Going forward, I plan to include components of immigration and refugee settlement, receptivity, and integration as they occur in receiving communities in Europe, particularly Germany as an example. Comparing and contrasting these experiences as they occur in the U.S. and in Europe will add further nuance and understanding about these topics to the geography literature. This will also benefit students at KSU as I design my research projects in a way to incorporate undergraduate and graduate students as assistants on various aspects of these projects. Through a cross-disciplinary and inter-cultural perspective, the information from the workshop serves as a foundation to help me build a research trajectory to explore the comparative understanding about immigrant and refugee resettlement in Europe and how those processes compare to places in the U.S. As I continue my involvement with community-based participatory research on immigrant integration and receptivity in Charlotte, Nashville, Dayton, and Chicago, and new projects exploring these topics in Atlanta, I am interested in how the U.S. immigrant and refugee integration and receptivity experience at the local level compares to that of immigrant receiving communities in Europe. A comparative understanding is particularly important as the topic of refugee settlement and integration has become a considerable point of debate for countries and municipalities in

Europe, leading in turn to renewed debates about immigration and refugee resettlement in the U.S.

Finally, as my ongoing and future research will continue to involve partnerships with community organizations, I am also using what I learned at the workshop to inform my community engagement. Earlier in September, for example, I was invited to moderate a discussion panel session at a public community event in Clarkston, Georgia, about refugee settlement and integration in the region. Information discussed at the EAO workshop about refugee issues informed my comments at this public event. Additionally, one of my community organization partners, Welcoming America, is currently operating at the national level, growing a network of “welcoming cities” across the U.S. to facilitate more efficient immigrant and refugee integration. They are interested in encouraging their model in other immigrant-receiving countries, including European countries. They are already building partnerships with local organizations in Germany and Australia, for example. Developing comparative research and understanding between the experiences of immigrant-receiving communities in the U.S. with those in Europe and other immigrant/refugee-receiving societies will no doubt create new opportunities for community engagement through organizations such as Welcoming America.

4) Other.

I hope the EAO workshop will continue to be an annual opportunity for a group of faculty to travel together and mutually explore a particular topic of global significance. It was certainly a meaningful experience for me and I’m sure other faculty will also benefit from the opportunity to participate in such a program.