

I truly valued my time and experience at the European Academy of Otzenhausen (EAO), and I am grateful to KSU for facilitating this opportunity and to University College for supporting my application.

Due to the range and quality of lectures and site visits scheduled during our week at the EAO, I learned a lot about sustainability. I previously co-taught a course titled Sustainable Cities, so I was not new to the overarching topic. Yet, because of the European lens, EAO offered new content and perspectives that I can build into the class in the future. For example, I gained a greater understanding of how the European Union and various member states discuss, prioritize, resist, and implement sustainable practices. From lectures on Germany's commitment to reforestation and a comparative look at water policies to site visits to a pump storage station and CSA farm, the workshop highlighted both local and global perspectives that I can take into account in future semesters. The workshop's attention to the policies, technologies, and educational opportunities emerging from sustainability discourses underscored the value of integrative thinking and problem solving, thus reinforcing the need for this type of course/content in the Integrative Studies curriculum.

I noted in my application that I was interested in the workshop because it allowed me to wade into conversations and experiences where I am not an expert. Assuming the role of novice or student certainly helps me relate to my students and some of their struggles more effectively and empathically. The lectures also reminded me of how necessary it is to think about pedagogy from students' perspective. I appreciated speakers who broke up lectures with videos, personal anecdotes, and moments for discussion and interaction. It was a reminder that my attention span is probably about 15 to 20 minutes before I profit from a new activity or shift in organization. The courses I teach are not lecture heavy, but assuming the role of student offered me a clear

picture of the classroom from this vantage point and reminded me of strategies I want to prioritize or avoid in the classroom. The mix of lectures and site visits during the workshop also enhanced my experience and made me reflect on how I could incorporate the experiences and voices of non-KSU experts in the classroom (both as guest lecturers and through off-site visits). I know there is a small fund to support site visits and experiential learning with Learning Communities, and I hope to take advantage of that in future semesters as I offer a course/LC built around issues of sustainability. The workshop's design mirrors my own goals for the LC and continued development of a vibrant, relevant, and hands-on Integrative Studies curriculum that helps students make sense of and act on critical local/global issues.

Finally, EAO helped me feel more rooted in the KSU community. By spending a week developing intellectual and personal connections with other faculty, I learned a great deal about my colleagues at KSU. As a new faculty member (I had just completed my first year at KSU), connecting with other faculty from across KSU offered me a greater sense of community and connection to KSU. It also gave me a fuller understanding of work done across colleges – both on the issue of sustainability and beyond – and opened up channels for conversation and collaboration I would otherwise still be seeking on my own. Beyond connecting with colleagues, the workshop/trip showed the University's investment in faculty and their development. Again, as a new faculty member, that is meaningful and beneficial as I move forward in my teaching and scholarly pursuits and work toward tenure and promotion.