

## **EAO Workshop - Summer 2019 Summary**

### Experiences and Knowledge Gained

The Summer 2019 faculty development workshop at the Europäische Akademie Otzenhausen (EAO) in Germany was an amazing experience. The theme of the workshop was “Sustainability”. The trip was only one week in duration, but it was filled with activity. There were lectures, group exercises, a hike, lots of fellowship and an overnight field trip to Strasbourg, France. What follows is a brief recap of the knowledge that I gained and how I am applying that knowledge in my courses.

By far the biggest impact on my own thinking was from Klaus Wiegandt’s lecture on global climate change. He is the editor of *A Sustainable Future: 12 key areas of global concern* (2017, London: Haus Publishing Limited). His presentation was filled with data like those from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (<https://www.ipcc.ch/>). The presentation painted a sobering picture of the Earth’s future unless substantial change is undertaken. A most memorable moment came after the lecture. I approached Mr. Wiegandt and told him how much I appreciated his presentation. He replied, “One day our children will ask us ‘Why didn’t you do something?’” This motivated me to include modules on global climate change in two of my courses (see below).

There were many other presentations by qualified experts in the EAO workshop. Their subjects included how to manage global climate change, the context of sustainability, pedagogical techniques of sustainability, the energy mix of tomorrow, sustainable agriculture and the future, the structure of the European Union (EU), etc. The presentations were interactive and given in a very pleasant setting with frequent coffee and pastry breaks.

Some of the memorable experiences during the week included a half-day hike to the ruins of the Celtic hill fort of Otzenhausen, led by an archaeologist. The forest was beautiful, and the ruins made an impression. Another adventure was an overnight trip to the old city of Strasbourg, France. The bus trip between Otzenhausen and Strasbourg took two hours and I was astounded by the number and size of the windmills in the German landscape that were visible along the way. The Europeans are much more advanced in sustainability than are the Americans. In Strasbourg we were taken on tours of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. These examples of the post WWII political and economic integration of Europe were inspiring. Another highlight was a half-day walking tour of the medieval center of Strasbourg led by a knowledgeable and colorful local guide.

It was great meeting and working with colleagues from across the KSU academic community. We spent much time together working in group projects, at meals and in general socializing. There was also time for extracurricular activities such as hiking, ping pong, bowling, and mingling in the on-site pub. All of this took place in the most beautiful campus-like setting of the EAO. The meals were exceptional. It was an altogether extraordinary experience.

### Knowledge Applied

I have gained a new focus in my teaching from the EAO workshop and am applying its principles in two of my courses, GEOG 7701 Peoples and Places and in GEOG 3330 Economic Geography.

The course GEOG 7701 Peoples and Places is designed for graduate students seeking the M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education and the M.Ed. in Secondary Education. It is taught once per year with an enrollment of 15-20 students. Most of them are teachers working in various local schools. In Fall 2019 for the first time as a result of the EAO Workshop I will be including a module on “How to Teach Climate Change”. In this module the students will be reading an essay on various methodologies of teaching climate change in the K-12 classroom (do a lab, show a movie, assign a novel, assign a research project, etc.). After reading the assigned text on various pedagogies the students will write, post and discuss online a 500-word essay on the suggested methods and how they themselves might employ them in their own classrooms. I look forward to these discussions, hoping to learn a substantial amount myself. I am inclined to expand the climate change component of the course, based on this first experience.

The course GEOG 3330 Economic Geography focuses primarily on world resources and trade patterns from a spatial point of view. The course is offered once per year with about 30 students, mainly from the humanities and social sciences. Historically I have required students to write a research paper on a commodity of their choice, tracing its geographic origins and flows to the market. The paper is a central aspect of the course. From now on I will ask the students to include in their papers the environmental costs in the production and transportation of their product and how these costs can be mitigated. To assist in the Spring 2020 offering of the course, I have invited Dr. Bernie Burgener, Executive Director of Greenhouse Accelerator ([www.greenhousatl.org](http://www.greenhousatl.org)) as a guest lecturer. Dr. Burgener is a P.hD. economist by education and a sustainability consultant by avocation, working with professors to bring concepts of sustainability to their courses. He will lead the students in a discussion on environmental cost-benefit analysis in the production and distribution of various goods.

As a result of the EAO Workshop, I have come to believe that climate change and our responses to it will be the defining issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I feel an obligation to include this critical issue in my courses. I owe this new professional direction to my experiences in Otzenhausen this past summer.