I was fortunate to have been selected to attend the 2019 KSU Faculty Professional Development Program, Prospective on Global Issues Workshop, at the European Academy of Otzenhausen (EAO) in Germany (EAO Workshop). The EAO Workshop offered concrete examples and facts that enriched my understanding of the impacts and consequences of globalization, the importance of promoting prosperity and population health while protecting our environment, and the actions we must take to have a habitable and healthy planet with abundance of renewable natural resources for all in not only our generation, but future generations. I thoroughly enjoyed the lectures, discussions, and various perspectives although I disagreed with some. The thought provoking activities and follow-up discussions allowed me to see clearly the detrimental damages the developed countries have done to our planet as they accelerated their economic development and became industrialized nations. At the same time, I am very pleased to see the actions many European countries are taking to correct the course. By the time I left EAO, I was encouraged and felt that as long as we work together and take immediate action, we can slow down our negative impacts on our planet and possibly reverse the course to move the world toward a sustainable future.

The EAO Workshop gave me the tools that I can use to teach my courses. At the time of writing this report, I have incorporated what I have learned at EAO in all three courses that I teach in fall 2019 and will continue such efforts in the future. The three class that I am teaching this semester are the core courses for our public health education majors. Specifically, students in the Environmental Health Issues course are introduced to the United Nation’s Sustainability Development Goals (UN SDGs) at the beginning of the semester, and required to complete a semester-long individual assignment, My Journey toward A Sustainable Future, and a semester-long group project, Sustainability in My Community. For the My Journey toward A Sustainable Future assignment, students assess their ecological footprint and the impacts of their actions, identify the actions they can do to reduce their footprint, develop a plan of actions to reduce their footprint, and document their actions and the consequences of
their actions on the weekly basis throughout the semester. Finally, each student will re-assess their ecological footprint and reflect on their journey toward a sustainable future. This assignment helps students appreciate the impacts of individual actions on our environment and the actions they can take to reduce the negative impacts. For the group project, Sustainability in My Community, students in small groups of 3-4 students will select one of the 17 UN SDGs, gather background information and media materials about the selected SDG and conditions/actions related to the selected SDG in our local community, create a digital story based on the background information and media materials collected, and share the digital story in class. This group assignment will not only help students understand the UN SDGs better, it will also make UN SDGs more relevant to them.

Each of my other two classes, the Health Systems and Health Policy, and Epidemiology, includes a learning module on UN SDGs. Students will be divided into small groups of 3-4 students. Each group will select one of the 17 UN SDGs and prepare a presentation on the selected SDG. The presentation will include an overview of the SDG, challenges and progress toward the targets, relevance to the course they are taking, and the actions they can do to achieve the SDG. Regarding relevance, for example, the presentations in Health Systems and Health Policy class will focus on relating the UN SDGs to global healthcare and policy, and the roles and responsibilities of a global citizen in addressing global healthcare issues and promoting population health and wellbeing in the world while protecting our planet. In Epidemiology class, the presentation will focus on relating the UN SDGs to improving global population health, and using the traditional and advanced epidemiology triangles to describe the shift of disease patterns in the world, and identify the positive forces (e.g., biomedical and information technologies) and negative forces (e.g., industrialization and pollution) behind such a shift. At the end of the semester, student groups will share their presentations in class. Since the Epidemiology class is also a required course for our Public Health Education Minor program, the mini-learning module in each of those two classes, will help all of our Public Health Education major and minor students to learn and practice the knowledge and skills needed to become competent global citizens and help address one or more UN SDGs.