2020 Perspectives on Global Issues Faculty Development Workshop

Sustainable Cities and Communities

Faculty Professional Development Program

Under the aegis of the Office of Academic Affairs, KSU launched a new initiative in faculty professional development starting May 2016. Envisioned as an annual program, and anchored in the KSU strategic plan’s objectives of international prominence and global engagement, the “Perspectives on Global Issues Workshop” will involve a small group of KSU faculty from across the university in an active-learning, globally-focused, inter-cultural, academic-practitioner seminar built around selected themes. The purpose of the workshop is to expand faculty understanding of, and engagement in, broad topical policy debates and discussions occurring in the world today, thereby providing them with an additional foundation for bringing these themes back to the campuses of KSU and extending the engagement to our students and surrounding communities. This workshop also ties into our new interdisciplinary “Research with Relevance” theme of “Sustainable and Safe Communities.” Through a combination of seminar-based discussions, site visits, interactive discussions with policymakers, faculty and other guest speakers, and most importantly group-based dialogue, participants will engage in a wide-ranging, inter-and cross-cultural adult learning community. You will have the opportunity to interact with KSU colleagues from around campus as well as colleagues from various European institutions.

The program will occur this May and take place at the European Academy of Otzenhausen in Germany (EAO). The thematic topic this year will be “Sustainable Cities and Communities.” This workshop will be centered around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These goals “… are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.”

The European Academy of Otzenhausen has supported the educational initiative “Encouraging Sustainability,” which aims to motivate civil society to treat the Earth in a responsible way. It is an excellent place to discuss the idea of what it means to be a “Global Citizen” from an international perspective. For this year, some questions to be addressed include: What is the role of the global citizen in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals? How do the US and Europe compare in terms of sustainable urban and regional planning? What are urban mobility concepts? What technological issues and capabilities are part of the challenges and potentially part of the ways and means to find workable policy responses surrounding sustainability? What roles do various European political/governmental entities play in fostering sustainability? What are the educational challenges and opportunities that emerge from an increased emphasis on sustainability? These and other topics will be viewed and discussed through a wide range of cross-disciplinary and inter-cultural lenses. Besides workshops, field trips to Trier and Kehl, Germany and Strasbourg, France and elsewhere are
planned to show how sustainability practices are being utilized in the region (exact locations are subject to change). While much remains unknown even today, it is clear that a multi-faceted strategy incorporating a wide-range of tools and approaches are required, not to mention broad global engagement by a wide range of actors including both the public and private sectors. (You can see the tentative agenda posted here).

Travel Specifics

The proposed schedule calls for departure on May 7, 2020 and return on May 15, 2020. Costs will be covered by the Office of Academic Affairs including all transportation, room and board, materials, and internal travel directly related to the program (area excursions, site visits, speakers, etc.). Participants will be able to arrange their own personal travel either before or after the program, but must do so at their own expense and must be able to coordinate their arrival and departure with the requirements of the program. Participants will be responsible for all incidental and discretionary costs. If a travel visa is needed to enter Germany, it will be the responsibility of the faculty member to obtain that visa by 13 March 2020.

Selection of Participants

Workshop applications can be found on the “Perspective on Global Issues Workshop” page of the Faculty Affairs website and must be submitted to your dean’s office no later than 5:00 pm on January 17, 2020 (a later due date may be set by the dean’s office as long as the deadline below is met). In order to facilitate the selection of a representative and diverse cross-section of the KSU faculty, we are asking each of the 10 degree-granting colleges to forward two nominees, in rank order, to the office of the Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs no later than February 07, 2020. The method for selecting nominees is left to the discretion of each college, but an open, transparent, and inclusive process is of course essential. The two nominees from each college should reflect the diversity of our faculty so that final selection of one nominee from each college as participants can carry that diversity forward. In a case where the person ranked first cannot accept, or additional spaces become available, the second ranked person will be invited to attend the workshop. Nominees not selected for participation this year are eligible for the next program and colleges may determine their own processes and policies for future nominations. Previous Perspectives on Global Issues workshop attendees are not eligible.

Participants

The program is open to any full-time, permanent teaching faculty member in each of the degree-granting colleges of KSU. There are no specific pre-program requirements for participants other than their willingness to be available for the entire program and to engage fully in all aspects of it. However, in addition to the attendance and participation in the program itself, participating faculty are expected to propose and execute some type of “project” to be carried out at KSU during the next academic year (2020-2021). As part of the nomination process, applicants must submit an application form answering the questions about their reasons for wanting to participate and how this experience will contribute to their teaching and/or scholarship and/or community engagement. This must include a description of what that project will be. Examples might
include public lectures, integration of program “take-aways” in existing courses, or other initiatives that engage other faculty, students, and/or our community in some dimensions of the theme. On the “Perspectives on Global Issues Workshop” website you can find a list of past workshop participants as well as “Faculty Reports” which are examples of how they are using what they learned at this workshop in their scholarship and/or teaching. The success of the program itself will depend on this full engagement of faculty participants and their energetic participation in all sessions, events, and discussions.

Participants are not required to be experts on any aspect of sustainability per se, nor do their academic areas of specialization necessarily have to relate to sustainability per se. We believe that active minds with a variety of different perspectives can create an exciting, adult-learning environment that can stimulate broad-based yet thoughtful policy analysis and problem solving from both academic and practitioner perspectives. Toward that end, applicants who demonstrate this kind of wide-ranging interest in any aspects of being a “Global Citizen” (policy options both theoretical and applied, implications, intercultural dimensions, and cross-disciplinary exchanges of ideas, etc.) will make the best participants and hence the best program. Those selected must be available to attend the entire workshop and must attend a post-workshop meeting towards the end of September.

Additional information about the EAO, including the facilities, its location in Germany/Europe, and programming can be found in the brochure on the “Perspective on Global Issues Workshop” website. Specific information about the proposed program itself is being finalized now and will also be shared with interested faculty as soon as it is available and as requested. It will include cultural experiences as well as interaction with subject matter experts drawn from Europe and Eurasia.

For additional information please contact Dr. Ron Matson, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (rmatson@kennesaw.edu). Also feel free to contact past workshop participants whose names can be found on the “Perspective on Global Issues Workshop” website.

I know this will be an exciting program and an equally exciting ongoing professional development activity for our KSU faculty. We look forward to working together with everyone to develop this as one of the unique KSU initiatives that benefits our faculty, students and community while also building even stronger ties between our University and the global community.

Sincerely,

Ron Matson