

- **No.49**
- **Community-University Exchange on a Global Scale**

- Name: **Tryon**
- First Name: **Elizabeth**
- E-Mail: etryon@wisc.edu
- Organisation: **University of Wisconsin-Madison**

- Authors: **Elizabeth Tryon**

- **Abstract:**

- This session will highlight a creative new angle to an old sister-city relationship; part of a global initiative of the Science Shop at the University of Wisconsin-Madison called “Wisconsin Without Borders”. Interdisciplinary teams are supported with mentoring and financing to do community-based learning & research, usually in developing countries. Faculty, staff and students share experience as a joint learning community to collaborate on projects including water filtration, reproductive health, malaria prevention, women’s microfinance and even a “homegrown school lunch” program (a new kitchen, garden and a piggery!), in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In a reversal of the dynamic of distributing academic expertise, one team of 15 UW graduate and undergraduate students researched sustainability practices in Madison’s “GreenCity” sister, Freiburg, Germany. By allowing students access to partners in Freiburg cultivated over years by community partners in Madison, the program increased co-production of knowledge on both sides of the Atlantic, while immersing students in an intensive Green learning environment. The CSOs promoting Green policy in Freiburg such as ICLEI and Intersolar were active in driving the research questions. Those Freiburg leaders charged students with bringing back knowledge of German technologies and conservation policies to inform decisions about sustainability initiatives in Madison, for two reasons: to establish partnerships for their Green Business Cluster with Madison-based stakeholders; and as a globally recognized leader in sustainability, a commitment to help their sister-cities move from incremental to transformational change. Students lived in the “Studentendorf” in sustainable neighborhood Vauban, which functioned as a living/learning lab. They were enabled to research efficiencies of the multi-modal transport system, sophisticated biowaste collection, and car-free living, while interviewing students at the University of Freiburg and creating cross-cultural dialog on energy policy. Research sites ranged from solar factories and settlements, passive-house high-rises, and educational facilities. Engineering students shadowed a passiv-haus architect and participated on a solar research team at the Fraunhofer ISE. Others inventoried greenspaces, provided English website translations, and videotaped interviews with various Green economy professionals for a documentary. An Environmental Economics class at Uni Freiburg and a service-learning project with the city parks department were integrated into the learning experience. The service opportunities became a research platform for interviews of residents about integration of sustainability into the fabric of daily life. The students also posted blog updates for students in Wisconsin to read. In fulfillment of the goal of re-

ciprocation, this integrated knowledge is currently being disseminated to the City of Madison's Sustainable Engineering Department, the Gaylord Nelson Environmental Institute, and other local groups and businesses with the goal of implementing Freiburg ideas ranging from a passive house apartment building in a low-income neighborhood, to campus strategies to lesson environmental impact of the UW. This may have long-reaching effects on student career goals and has already been tremendously impactful on student awareness and learning.