

# **SABBATICAL REPORT**

**AY 2013-14**



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### Introduction

This Sabbatical Report provides a detailed narrative of activities undertaken in order to provide evidence of the list of accomplishments aligned to the goals and objectives of the sabbatical as articulated in the Letter of Request submitted to Dr. Steve Gammon, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, in pursuance of my application for sabbatical leave for the 2013-14 academic year which is appended to the report. Intended goals and objectives of the sabbatical were:

- Extend my previous research efforts which have centered on gambling studies into related realms of morality-related public policy.
- Provide insights into the political and economic aspects underlying these complementary policy arenas which have become increasingly popular as economic development tools for fiscally strapped governments.
- Creation of a Craft Beer Studies concentration at Eastern Oregon University.

The primary research questions associated with the sabbatical were:

- Government structure has a significant impact on the craft beer industry's contribution to public finance.
- Beer-related tourism as an economic development strategy has the ability to provide a substantial contribution to public finance.

With the exception of the creation of a Craft Beer Studies concentration, which has been eliminated by the provisions of EOU's Sustainability Plan that eliminated the possibility of creating new concentrations (though a Craft Beer Studies certificate remains a real possibility, depending on a commitment of institutional resources), the following narrative provides ample evidence of the accomplishment of the above intended goals and objectives, and answers to the primary research questions, associated with the sabbatical activity.

My primary research focus has moved squarely onto craft beer, especially (1) the relationship between craft beer and tourism, with a particular focus on the economic development aspects of beer tourism (2) the politics of craft beer, examining regulatory policy, tax structures and their effect on public finance, and (3) emerging trends in the craft beer industry, especially the role of women as brewers, brewery operators, publicans and consumers, along with (4) the [environmental 'commitment' of the craft beer industry](#). My previous research has allowed me to develop a series of courses on craft beer policy. Though many assumed these were courses about drinking beer, I have enlightened a number of students on the inherent political nature of beer. You may not taste it, or even consider it when enjoying your next beer, but the future of the craft beer industry, in any country in the world, is inextricably linked to policy considerations played out in the arena of politics.

With the above focus in mind, my research-inspired trip to Belgium had three primary components, (1) first person interviews with key stakeholders in the craft beer industry, (2) interface with stakeholders and European based academics to develop contacts, provide external expertise, and pursue future research opportunities, and (3) gain a learned appreciate for the connection between beer and culture, by visiting breweries, craft beer bars and restaurants, beer festivals, and any other locale (e.g., museums) that highlights the unique cultural contribution of beer to European society.

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Needless to say, you just can't show up at a craft beer location in Europe and expect immediate attention. The culture of business in general here is a bit more formal; Letter of introduction explaining what is sought and what you can bring to the table, a formal meeting (generally over a beer or two!), and follow-up articulating your gratitude. It's a bit different than America, where more often time than not I show up at a beer-centric location unannounced and am generally warmly received. In the end, I found the fact that I was an American Professor *studying* beer made entree and appointments much easier to facilitate.

### Brewers of Europe

My first research appointment after arriving in Belgium was with officials from [The Brewers of Europe](#). Located near European [Parliament](#) and [Commission](#) headquarters in Brussels, founded in 1958, long before the creation of the 'common market' European Union and the craft beer 'movement', The Brewers of Europe is the voice of the European brewing sector to the European institutions and international organizations. Current members are the national brewers' associations from EU Member States, plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. I was pleased to be able to meet with Anna-Maria de Smet, Regulatory Affairs Director, and Marlies Van de Walle, Economic Affairs Manager. Over the course of several hours (and a [Rochefort 10](#)) we discussed a far ranging set of issues confronting the European craft beer scene, and I was able to provide some learned insights from the other side of the pond. Note that all the following critiques were shared with my kind and informative hosts.

- **Beer Tourism.** I was surprised to find the topic of beer tourism had not been extensively studied in Europe, primarily attributable to most of the festivals being organized by small parties. The Brewers of Europe has yet to engage in operating large scale festivals and events ala the [Brewers Association](#) in the United States, operators of the [Great American Beer Festival](#) and the [World Beer Cup](#). The recent [Brussels Beer Challenge](#) provided but one example of how craft beer tourism contributes to the economic impact of tourism in general, but alas, this had yet to become a significant topic on the radar screen for The Brewers of Europe. Instead craft beer's economic impact had been buried under the aegis of the 'hospitality' sector. Given the (perceived at this juncture) significant economic impact of European beer festivals and events such as [Oktoberfest](#) in Germany, beer tourism in Europe is a topic in need of significant study in the near future. I attempted to highlight the special and specific economic contribution of [craft beer festivals](#), and we agreed to examine potential collaborations on this topic.
- **Taxes.** One of the primary facets of my craft beer policy research agenda centers on the politics of taxation of craft beer and the subsequent effect on public finance. An examination of [state excise tax policy with regard to craft beer](#) in the United States demonstrates a wide array of tax schemes and rates. Local and federal excise taxes on beer complicate the equation. An examination of tax structures for craft beer in European countries highlighted a confusing Byzantine structure that made reading a street map of [Brussels](#) or [Antwerp](#) seem simple to understand. Each European country had their own craft beer tax scheme, usually predicated on production levels, overlaid by the strength of the beer. The latter factor then became more confusing, as a multiplicity of schemes, including kilotons of grain used, original gravity, final gravity, alcohol by volume, etc. were utilized. I raised the issue of how the European Union 'common market' goal could be reached if each country had a different tax scheme which could affect the ability to

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import and export goods, the hallmark of the common market approach. Anna-Maria and Marlies indicated this was an issue of concern for The Brewers of Europe. I countered the hallmark of international relations-Sovereignty-was the primary culprit. No country likes to be told what to do by other countries or regional 'governments', and the European craft beer scene evidenced the cross-national difficulties of forming a more perfect (European) Union. While excise taxes on beer don't constitute a large percentage of any country's budget, it was interesting to note only a few countries-Denmark, United Kingdom-had, in fact, lowered their craft beer excise tax rates. [France's 160% increase in their craft beer excise tax rate](#), clearly designed as a protectionist measure for their prolific wine industry, was in the throes of litigation at the European Commission, and I provided my hosts insights on the impact of low craft beer excise tax rates on public finance, and moreover, employment, from the United States perspective. This issue has quickly risen as one of the primary policy areas of concern for the Brewers of Europe. Clearly, [taxes](#) may be the match that ignites a future "Beer War" in Europe.

- **Sovereignty.** As any student of European political economy would surely note, the European Union will only work if each member country surrenders a part of their sovereignty for the collective good. At this juncture, with regard to the craft beer industry, the EU is seen as *infringing* on each country's sovereignty. While cultural differences, historical antagonisms (an understanding of the unique history of Belgium highlights the complex interaction between current EU member-states), the bottom line is, despite the existence of the EU, all states can *unilaterally* raise their craft beer excise taxes. While there is currently a minimum craft beer excise tax rate which all member-states abide by, there is no mandated maximum rate. I pointed out how smart shoppers 'shop with their feet', and given the proximate distances between countries, cross-border competition in the craft beer retail sector could prove detrimental to the host brewing country. My hosts pointed out how the recent tax increase by the Netherlands had driven smart beer consumers to travel to nearby countries to purchase product, and moreover, altered the craft beer distribution landscape, providing a clear example of the negative aspects of increasing taxes on consumer products, and moreover, a short-sided approach to the regulation of craft beer in a common market. Anna-Maria and Marlies provided a convoluted example of how this 'new's tax scheme worked: Beer produced in the Netherlands was shipped to Germany, then shipped back to the Netherlands to minimize the tax 'hit'. Clearly, sovereignty continues to trump the goal of a common market for the craft beer industry, and the economy in general, in the European Union.
- **Going Green.** Anna-Maria and Marlies highlighted the extensive commitment to environmentally friendly practices by the craft beer industry in Europe. However, given my previous immersion in environmental policy in Oregon, I raised several concerns for my hosts to contemplate. The first centered on the lack of deposit for craft beer bottles and cans. The prevailing practice is there is a .10 Euro 'fee' paid by the consumer at the purchase point. Deposits on beer containers existed in only 4 European states. Belgium had a 'voluntary' return option, though I saw very few bottle returns inside stores. Instead, the ubiquitous glass return pods, separated by 'clear' and 'green' bottles, was located on many street corners throughout Belgium. My hosts noted that while there is a growth in environmental culture in Europe, it takes time to change culture, and that any changes to this bottle return policy needed to be voluntary on the part of states. Once again,

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sovereignty rears its ugly head, and the detrimental effect on the environment, both short-term and long-term, needs to be addressed by craft beer policy makers in Europe.

- **Trends in Packaging.** While European-wide deposits on beer containers may be a long way off, it was somewhat surprising to find that the European craft beer community had embraced canned beer as a trend. For example, with very rare exceptions, France and Romania (!) had moved to selling beer only in cans. This trend was linked to recycling practices, and sports events. There is a profound linkage between the craft beer 'business' and sports sponsorships in Europe, evidenced by the [Belgian First Division Football League being sponsored by Jupiler](#), the only beer available when I was fortunate to attend a soccer match in nearby Anderlecht.
- **Social Responsibility.** Irrespective of any criticisms aimed at the European craft beer community, they do take their responsibility to be good, responsible neighbors seriously. Health 'warnings' on craft beer cans and bottles, an integral facet of [TTB label](#) approval process in the United States, had been adopted only in France. However, a number of craft beer companies had *voluntarily* adopted these labeling practices. Instead of a long, wordy warning, the European craft beer industry utilizes symbols, ie. Pregnant women, to demonstrate social responsibility. Anna-Maria and Marlies pointed out how this was an example of craft brewers 'self-regulating' an issue, which provides an alternative prism to 'top down' governmental regulation, that is often met by resistance from the independent spirit of the craft beer industry in any country.
- **Nutritional Labeling.** Despite the above social responsibility measures, there have been further labeling proposals, centering on listing of ingredients and nutritional information. After 2 years of sustained effort, the European Council stopped this labeling practice, and the alcohol industry has an exemption that other food industries do not enjoy. The Brewers of Europe were willing to embrace this new labeling practice, as long as all alcohol sectors (spirits, wine) were held to the same sector. Clearly, there is animosity between the sectors, especially wine and beer, as more consumers have moved toward craft beer as the libation of choice. The influence of the wine industry, particularly in France and Italy, has inhibited progress on this nutritional labeling proposal.
- **Responsible Drinking.** One of The Brewers of Europe's most successful policy initiatives centers on the topic of responsible drinking. As I had already become aware, the minimum age for purchasing beer in Europe is lower than the federally mandated 'raise the drinking age to 21 or you don't get highway funding' scheme in the United States. The minimum age is 16 in Belgium, though Netherlands had recently raised their minimum to 18 years of age. Once again, an examination of national craft beer policy in the European Union reveals a range of minimum drinking ages. While differences in culture may be the primary factor in this disparate scheme, once again sovereignty, and its close cousin, culture, have inhibited full scale integration of the craft beer industry in the European Union. Most certainly [another cultural difference between Europe and the United States](#) worth pondering over a beer, especially the impact on lower drinking ages to Minor in Possession convictions, an albatross around many young Americans necks who decided to 'illegally' explore craft beer culture.
- **Craft Beer and Taxes.** While the excise tax on craft beer may be the foremost policy concern confronting the European beer industry, Anna-Maria and Marlies pointed out the industry paid a wide range of taxes, including Value Added Tax (VAT), Hospitality Taxes when beer was served in lodging facilities, personal income and social security taxes as

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part of employment costs, and property taxes associated with brewing facilities. While reduced excise tax rates for small breweries were a way to alleviate this tax burden (a policy embraced by Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Denmark), in the end high taxes, and moreover the cumulative tax burden, may inhibit growth of the craft beer sector in Europe. Hence the good work of The Brewers of Europe in interfacing with public officials, lobbying for favorable legislation, and informing the public of the positive contributions of craft beer to the community are a necessity, especially in economically challenged times where governments perceive 'vice' industries as an easy target for higher taxes.

After my policy-focused visit with the kind folks at the Brewers of Europe, I dedicated much of the remainder of my research efforts to exploring the burgeoning craft beer tourism scene in Belgium. Armed with the knowledge provided by my affable hosts, they kindly invited me to a reception where they released their annual report, [Economic Impact of Craft Beer on the European Economy](#) where I was introduced to a number of stakeholders in the European Beer Community-Guild Presidents, festival operators, members of Parliament, etc. Most importantly, I was introduced by the BoE staff to Eline Poelmans, Assistant Professor of International Economics at the Catholic University of Leuven. While Eline has a far reaching research agenda, we found commonality in our craft beer related research. We discussed the possibility of future joint research efforts, especially economic impact studies of craft beer festivals in Europe. After my consultation with BoE officials and other stakeholders I felt I had a pretty good grasp of the primary issues to address as part of my craft beer tourism field research in Belgium

### Craft Beer Tourism and Food

One of the primary linkages between industry sectors is craft beer's connection to the culinary world. Needless to say, the food culture in Belgium is focused on providing fuel for hungry craft beer drinkers. As my research focusing on the economic impact of craft beer festivals has repeatedly shown, the lodging and food and drink industry sectors are the primary beneficiaries of beer tourist expenditures. Moreover, the connection between fine dining and craft beer tourism in Belgium highlights several culinary innovators who utilize beer in their cooking, sometimes in every dish on the menu. I was able to enjoy a range of culinary creations which concretized the important relationship between craft beer and food. I will be sure to integrate the findings of this culinary 'effort' into my craft beer related classes in the future.

To be honest the normal fare at the Belgian beer bars I've visited as part of my research effort to just won't cut it. Cheese (often from a [Trappist Brewery](#), I'm willing to try that at a later date), charcuterie (I'd prefer to know where the animal comes from, general distrust of the French and their love of horsemeat), perhaps a Quiche, and not much more. I'm not that desperate to eat. However, where to find the 'right' thing to eat is a bit trickier. I know I'll be avoiding the [McDonalds](#) (always 30+ people waiting in line, perhaps they are after our 'freedom' fries' or [this sorry impingement on Belgian cuisine](#)), along with the other symbols of Globalization-Pizza Hut, Chi Chi's (Tex Mex in Belgium?) and the like. Time to explore some "real" Belgian Cuisine, and its connection to the craft beer industry.

### *Street Fare*

After working through two days of jet lag, I was ready to feed my deprived system. One lesson I've learned when this hungry and in a strange city is find out where the locals are eating

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then stand in line. This led to a classic Dim Sum meal in Chinatown in San Francisco early on a Sunday Morning, and I figured it would work here as well. Walking down busy [Boulevard Anspach](#) led me to understand one of the primary staples of Belgian street food, the kebab. Such was my introduction to the linchpin of Belgian street food, the [Sultan of Kebab](#).

The Sultan's primary offering is rotisserie meats, in this particular instance chicken and beef, though lamb was an off-the menu option. I decided to try the chicken (watching the cholesterol during the trip) and chose the wrap version. As the locals do, I opted for a combination of sauces, a chili-garlic sauce and a sirachi-esque hot sauce. Machine cut fries were an accompaniment to this 'meal' and the ubiquitous soft drink in a can (good luck finding any ice in this country!) was the beverage of choice. I ended up with the Belgian take on a burrito. The next day I went back and made a better choice, the pita bread, which is \*the\* quintessential Brussels street food, served in an open containers so you can down it on your home way from a night out drinking. While the Kebab captures the essence of Belgian street food, nothing encapsulates the typical Belgian tourist like walking around with a waffle in your hand. It makes you stick out like a sore thumb as much as walking around Portland with a [pink Voodoo Donuts box](#) in tow. Luckily, you won't have a problem finding a Belgian waffle (though my taste runs toward the pearl sugar infested Liege variety), so as I walked towards the Grand Place I ran into three waffle establishments within 30 meters of each other. The waffle is the most ubiquitous of Belgian street food, available close to every street corner throughout the country, easily accessible to the craft beer tourist.

After this introduction to Belgian street food directed at the craft beer tourist, I decided it was time for a \*real\* meal. The fine folks at Moeder Lambic, one of the country (and world's) best beer bars, located a mere 200 meters from by Brussels Central apartment, were kind enough to provide a dinner recommendation to a place up the street, [Nuetnigehough](#). This 24 seat brasserie on Rue Lombard features the authentic Belgian fare I had been looking for, a brief, but carefully curated beer list, and tantalizing close a full bottle of Cantillon 50 Degrees North-4 Degrees East that I didn't have the guts to try and obtain. I cleansed my palate with one of the five tap beers, Saison Dupont (served in the appropriate glassware of course), and ordered the rare de Graal Pius X to go with my main course, a delicious beef carbonnade stew made with Rochefort 8, one of Belgian's fine Trappist beers. While the stew was a bit light on vegetables except for a few carrots, the depth of flavor of the stew, bolstered by one of the world's great beers as an ingredient was amazing, and the stone fruit center and caramelized finish on the beer cut into the fattiness of the beef. At this juncture, I felt I had gained an increased appreciation for the connection between craft beer and food, but the best was yet to come- A beer journey to [Denderleeuw](#) to visit the world famous [De Heeren van Liederkercke](#), the #1 beer restaurant in the world.

### *De Heeren van Liederkercke*

Needless to say I was pretty excited about this visit to this most hallowed of beer restaurants, despite more than a bit of trepidation regarding the travel, a continual theme when traveling in a strange country where you don't speak the native tongue. You are lucky if you get English announcements on the trains, trams, etc., so it pays to do your homework and know when you are supposed to depart your transport. That being said, I thought I could walk to the restaurant towing a suitcase. About an hour after departing the train, two stops to ask for directions (one of which spoke no English) I arrived at my destination. This meandering highlights one of the most important lessons gleaned from my beer tourism centered research: **You will get lost!** The key is to be willing to converse with complete strangers and ask for directions (though Denderleeuw is a Flemish speaking stronghold, not as much English spoken as in Brussels).

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After walking aimlessly through the streets of I finally crossed the Senne and arrived in Liederkercke. Given the downpour, dragging the suitcase (which I didn't need), I was thirsty, and *voila* a pub was magic to my eyes, the classic [Maes Aan de Dender](#). I learned several important lessons about craft beer pub culture by visiting this establishment. (1) Well behaved dogs are always welcome. An elderly couple had their Shih Tzu (the King of all Dogs) in tow. (2) Shouting across the room at people at other tables is encouraged, falling under the category of 'having a conversation'. A short glass of the ubiquitous (and In-Bev owned) [Jupiler](#) and I was ready to arrive at my final destination. A few hundred meters down the main road and I arrived at beer and food nirvana, De Heeren van Liederkercke.

After introductions with my host, the knowledgeable Joost de Four, I settled in with what would end up being an epic evening with one of world's best Lambic beers from [Drie Fonteinen](#). Their [Oude Gueze](#) highlighted contrasting Meyer lemon and horse blanket notes. I'm guessing this taste a bit different from the 75 CL bottle, highlighting the policy and quality implications of craft beer packaging. Once the post-lunch mayhem had died down a bit (Joost told me on Sundays the restaurant is completely full within 15 minutes of opening), I decided to pull out a special present, a ultra-rare 22 oz. bottle of Barley Brown's Pallet Jack. Due to the generosity of Brewmaster Marks Lanham, I was able to bring one of the very few bottles of the 2013 Great American Beer Festival Gold Medal winning batch, brewed on the original 4 barrel system in the pub. Needless to say, Joost was pretty excited, they don't get a lot of really hoppy US beers over here. This kind act highlights the important role of craft beer tourism on the globalization of beer styles, in this case American India Pale Ale, has on craft beer tourism. I wouldn't have had the chance to sample many of the beers I had while in Belgium if I hadn't traveled there, and they wouldn't have had the opportunity to sample Pallet Jack if I hadn't visited.

However, before being able to engage in a beer tasting, there was a long night of work ahead for Joost and his brother Tom, who ably mans the kitchen. Sitting at the Chef's Table, it became clear that Tom was a whirlwind in the kitchen, with only one solitary assistant to serve a very hungry 100+ patron crowd. Watching Tom cook was like watching a ballet dancer, he never stayed in one place more than 3 seconds more than he had to! Given the hard night ahead, Joost got his crew fired up with a traditional Flemish toast. Needless to say, it was very busy. Later discussions with Joost (this was a research trip, of course) revealed that the overwhelming majority of patrons were locals. How lucky they are! Only about 10% of visitors were from outside Belgium. How lucky I felt!

At this early juncture in the evening, I decided it was best to have something to eat, given the long night of drinking ahead. While I didn't have the bravery to try the [November special menu](#) featuring pheasant, duck and rabbit, I was set on trying one of the house specialties. I was fortunate enough to sit with the staff while they took their pre-shift meal, and Tom had prepared some tasty-looking meatballs in a sumptuous looking tomato sauce, accompanied by *frites*, not the usual pasta Americans might expect. It looked a bit, err, different, but the crew certainly enjoyed it! (Once I returned to my Ixelles apartment I prepared this meal for myself several times). After starting with a delicious squash soup (with slivers of smoked duck) I decided to have one of the pasta dishes off Tom's 'Monthly Suggestions' menu, Penne "Diabolique" with fried scampi, zucchini cooked in Orval, and mushrooms stuffed with Boursin cheese and herbs. Joost expertly selected [Tempelier](#) from [Brouwerij Corsendonk](#) to pair with this sumptuous dish. This low alcohol beer's stone fruit middle and caramel finish cut nicely into the delicate cream sauce Tom had topped the pasta with. Very Tasty!

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After finishing my 'light' meal, I decided to partake in some special beers. The first off was Heerenbier, a Belgian Strong Dark Ale made exclusively for the restaurant by [Huisbrouwerij Boelens](#). I followed this up with a 7 year old Orval. The aging had certainly transformed this classic Trappist beer, I wish I had the patience to cellar this! Note that Joost is an Orval Ambassador, of which there are only 338 in the world. A high honor, indeed, and an illustrative example of the connection between craft beer tourism and the culinary world.

At this juncture, I needed to be patient for Joost to end his shift so we could engage in a hoppy beer tasting. You need to understand that dining at DHVL is a leisurely affair, since Tom prepares everyone's dishes himself. If you are in a hurry, this is probably not the best place to come for dinner. I discovered there is a special room downstairs that can be rented for special occasions, and on this evening the room was occupied and trays of delicious looking dishes were delivered by the capable staff, including the new waitress whom I praised to Joost and Jessie, his wife. The young lady was quite pleasant. The fact is for a world-class craft beer oriented restaurant like this to be successful, given the volume of business they do on a nightly basis, everyone has to pitch in.

Well after midnight Joost and his lovely wife Jessie were able to sit down for a few beers (sadly, Tom had left for the evening, after preparing a large pot of stewed apples for Sunday's lunch service). We decided to start with the Pallet Jack, and by the looks on their faces (Jessie *really* likes hoppy beers), they were quite pleased. We decided to do a side by side with some Belgian hoppy beers (Duvel Triple Hop, both the Citra and Amarillo varieties) and all agreed the aromatic qualities of Pallet Jack (due, IMO, to the deft dry hopping touch with Simcoe by Marks Lanham) set it far apart from its European 'competitors'. Another victory for Pallet Jack!

As the hour was getting very late, and the anticipated early arriving crowd on Sunday, I headed to my lodging, located immediately behind the restaurant. At 50 euros (Joost and Jessie kindly threw in breakfast) the location and especially the kind hospitality of my hosts was hard to beat. In the morning Joost was kind enough, despite his busy day ahead, to drive me back to the train station for my return to Brussels. I was able to visit with his darling 5 year-old daughter (despite the language difference), and encouraged Joost to bring his family to Oregon-after the obligatory visit to Disneyland! All in all, a most memorable experience due to my gracious hosts. If you ever travel to Belgium, as a craft beer tourist you owe it to yourself to visit De Heeren van Liederkercke, it is a very special place. I can't recommend the experience of drinking and dining at DHVL highly enough. I've sent several of my friends, including World Beer Cup winning Brewmaster Tonya Cornett, now with InBev owned 10 Barrel Brewing in Bend, to enjoy this legendary craft beer tourism restaurant; she insists on visiting every time she goes to Europe. Indeed, the connection between craft beer tourism and fine dining is strong in Belgium, and I will bring this new found knowledge to bear on future editions of my Beer and Tourism classes at EOU.

### Craft Beer Tourism and Culture

An integral facet of my research agenda on this trip was discovering the cultural jewels to be appreciated while on the craft beer trail. I was fortunate to see some memorable works by Magritte, Warhol, Van Dyck and a number of other artists who were new to my rather neophyte appreciation of fine art. It might have been easier to sit in bars all day, drinking world class beer, arguing the merits of St Bernardus Abt vs. Rochefort 10, Vapeur vs. Dupont, etc. That *could* have been constructive: That *could* have been classified as research. But *why* would I want to do that?? In order to maximize the craft beer tourism experience in Europe, it is essential to immerse yourself in the local culture. Art museums provide a valuable gateway to the craft beer tourist to better understand the local culture and history of the locales you visit.

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### *Brugge*

There's one thing that the United States can't compare with Europe and that's its collections of fine art. That being said, I have seen Leutze's Washington Crossing the Delaware at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and Whistler's Mother at the De Young in San Francisco, both compliments of my much better informed cultural half. While I could have spent the entire time in Brugge in beer bars, I needed to soak up a bit of history and culture as part of my Beer and Tourism research. Hence, I headed to the **Groeningemuseum**, also known as "the City Museum of Fine Arts". While it is a (generally) very small museum, forcing the curators to rotate displays, I came away with a new found appreciation for Flemish Art.

**Marcel Broodthaers** presented a whimsical introduction to Flemish Art with his lithographs *Les Animaux de la Ferme*. Broodthaers worked in a number of different media, including photography and lithography. It was a nice lighthearted start to a very impressive collection. I next enjoyed **Rene Magritte's** *L'Attentat* (Act of Violence). One of the foremost practitioners of the Surrealist school, to be honest I have \*no\* idea what the painting represents, which I believe was Magritte's goal in the first place. Another Belgian artist working within the Surrealist school was **Paul Delvaux**. His portrait *Le Lever* is as important for what it *might* represent as it is with the subjects at hand. Who is 'the other woman'? Some have guessed it represented The Virgin Mary, we are never quite sure. One of the fathers of Belgium Luminism, **Emile Claus** was equally adept at portraits and landscapes. His landscapes show a keen eye for the use of shadows to highlight his subjects. I very much enjoyed, *The Lys at Alsene*. I think the little boy is looking at me! **Edmond Theodor van Hove's** *Life's Sunset*, really spoke to me. It was clear how much love and life this couple had spent together. I hope all my friends have the opportunity to, at a much later date, reflect on how much fuller and richer their life has been by sharing it with someone you love. An Expressionist piece that caught my eye was **Gustav van de Woestyne's** Last Supper. I thought the scale of the features was a bit out of whack, then it hit me: know I know the artistic heritage of PDX Beer Blogger and Label Artist [Samurai Artist!](#) Those tasty 'modern' artifacts aside, I would be remiss if I didn't indulge in the more classic pieces on exhibit. One of the most important Flemish artists was **Hugo van der Goes**, and his *Death of the Virgin*, completed approximately in 1480, was one of his last paintings, and certainly one of his most important. In my humble (and limited knowledge) the two most important Flemish artists were prominently featured, and I saved these to enjoy for near the end of my visit. Like Broodthaers, **Rik Wouters** worked with a variety of media. His sculpture, *Hausliche Sorgen* (Domestic Worries) was quite impressive, but I also enjoyed *Portrait of Mrs. Giroux*. One of the most visually stunning palettes of all the pieces I enjoyed. Undoubtedly one of the most important, and influential, of all Belgium's artists was **Anthony van Dyck**. Along with Paul Rubens, he is one of the guiding lights of Belgium's fine arts. Unfortunately, some of his more important works were not on display, but I very much enjoyed *A Portrait of Mrs. Howard*. The final piece I enjoyed was not so much about the piece itself, but the frame it was in. That sounds a bit, err, wacky, but if you saw the intricate detail you would have been shaking your head like I was. **Gaspar-Peeter Verbruggen II's** *Flower Piece* was, for the most part, a not extraordinary painting, but the frame, done by the sculptor van der Meulen was absolutely amazing. You might be able to buy a print of the painting, but the frame, well, it's unlike anything I've ever seen! Upon reflection, while Brugge is one of Belgium's most important cities from a craft beer tourism perspective, one would be remiss in not indulging in its stellar art (there was also a Salvador Dali Museum) when exploring the city's rich craft beer heritage.

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### *Amsterdam*

From a historical perspective, Dutch Art rivals the best you'll see on the continent. [Rembrandt](#) inspired generations of artists and art lovers in the Netherlands and beyond. However, the Dutch artist who may end up having the greatest lasting impression is Vincent van Gogh. Hence, I was extremely fortunate to have timed my trip to coincide with the [Van Gogh at Work](#) exhibit at the museum that bears his name. Sadly, my favorite Van Gogh, [Portrait of the Postman Joseph Roulin](#), was not on display at the exhibit. However, luckily for me, due to my extremely much better half, Emily, I was able to see that painting at its permanent home, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The depth and breadth of the collection was stunning: most of Van Gogh's major pieces were on display. All in all, a very memorable museum visit, and certainly worth the time and effort of the detour from this beer-centric research mission. I spent nearly half a day roaming the hallways of the Van Gogh museum, and the masterpieces I was able to see certainly provided fodder for conversation with locals over beers that evening.

### *Mons*

With the end of the trip rapidly approaching, I made myself a list of things that I needed to 'tick' off before heading home. While I'm sure I could have come up with multiple breweries, taverns, beer bars, etc., to visit every day, I wanted to ensure that I left Belgium with a bit more perspective than looking at the bottom of a 25 cl glass. Mons is, I'm sure, like many other towns in Belgium. It has a major pedestrian shopping thoroughfare. It has a university. It has a 'Grote Market', which like many others is being filled to the brim with easily constructed cabins for this weekend's holiday festival. The train station, well, that needs a bit of work, and they were knee deep in a revitalization project. Because they are nice folk, I'll forgo the picture. An easy 50 minute train ride and *I am here*.

Located about 70 km southwest of Brussels, you might think that there wouldn't be a reason for me to come this way, given the limited amount of time he has left here. You would be WRONG. If I hadn't included this quaint little berg as part of my beer tourism journey I would have missed the [Andy Warhol. Life, Death and Beauty - Exhibition](#). Whether you call his style avant-garde, pop art, or just plain funky, there is no denying the iconic character of much of Andy Warhol's work. Not sure I need to provide any commentary on what I saw: the vast majority of Warhol's iconic paintings were on display. However, it's a much different deal to see, to *experience*, these pieces first hand, and for that I am truly grateful to have had this opportunity on my craft beer tourism inspired journey.

I think about the first time I saw the movie *Basquiat*, starring Jeffrey Wright, and how he collaborated on a number of pieces with Andy Warhol, played presciently by David Bowie in a devastating performance. It gave me insight into the genius of Basquiat, but I got more out of Bowie's performance. Bowie got Warhol just right: The important part of genius is inspiring others, not trying to maximize your gift for self-interest. Andy Warhol's finest gift is his [foundation](#), which has provided seed money for a number of young artists to follow their muse. It gives me pause to wonder what my legacy is going to be. Inspiring someone to visit some of the beer places I've been to this visit? Having someone take a detour onto the path less taken and discovering some pearl in the dust? Having a student follow me along the craft beer studies research path??

When I left Mons, I certainly had a new-found appreciation for Andy Warhol's genius. What I didn't know about this quiet little burg until sometime later is the first battle fought by the

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British against the Germans in World War I was fought outside the town's outskirts. A ceremony is performed daily at sunset at the town cemetery where thousands of soldiers are buried. Hence, it is vitally important to understand the local culture and history of the places you visit when engaged in craft beer tourism. Despite its sublime appearance and sub-standard train station, Mons is one of the most historic places I visited while on my sabbatical. While the Warhol exhibit may have been the highlight of my visit, I left with a new-found appreciation of the connection between craft beer tourism in Belgium and the country's historical importance.

### Craft Beer Tourism

Irrespective of the parallel culinary and cultural tracks of my craft beer tourism research, the main event was the opportunity to interface with leading figures on the Belgian craft beer scene. I was fortunate to be able to leverage my position as an American Professor studying beer to gain access and personal insights from some of the world's most important brewers who have indelibly changed the face of craft beer forever.

### Cantillon

I've had an opportunity to reflect my visit to [Brasserie Cantillon Brouwerij Le Musée bruxellois de la Geuze](#). It goes without saying that this is the main stop on any beer pilgrimage to Brussels. I was fortunate that my *Bruxelles Central* apartment was within 20 minutes walking distance. While part of the walk was pretty dodgy, I arrived at my destination, giddy with excitement. After introducing myself I was given the opportunity to join a guided tour, or explore by myself. I chose the latter, knowing that the staff was ready to answer any questions I may have had after the tour. What I saw blew my ever-loving mind. (Pictures of my visit to Cantillon, as well as photos from the rest of my visit, are available upon request).

The crazy part of the visit, and one of the most important insights I gleaned from my craft beer tourism focus of my research, was the fact the vast majority of the visitors to Cantillon were Americans. A conversation over beer with Cantillon Patriarch Jean van Roy (a tremendous honor, he normally doesn't interviews) revealed Americans, Japanese and Brazilians constituted the vast majority of visitors to the brewery. They keep pretty accurate statistics, certainly future fodder for my Beer and Tourism and Globalization and Beer classes, especially the role of non-American tourists in non-US based beer tourism locales. This visitor pattern may be attributable to the difficulty of finding Cantillon products in overseas markets, which may be one of the primary determinants of beer tourism: The harder the beer is to find, the higher the likelihood the majority of visitors 'at the source' would be foreigners.

After my interview with Mr. Van Roy (his son was busy manning the antiquated bottling line, which may also be a factor with regard to lack of availability in foreign markets), I was able to snag three bottles of apricot-infused Fou Foune to take home, which got even better when I was able to have it on draft, a real treat. While embracing the newest technological advances (a new fermentation system has come on line since my visit, along with expanded cellaring capabilities provided by a partnership with the City of Brussels) may have made beer production more consistent (Cantillon fans love the unique character of individual batches due to the use of spontaneous fermentation), I wonder if that's a good thing. In any case, I can't highly recommend a visit to Cantillon enough, there's *nothing* like it in the entire world, certainly one of the world's leading beer tourism destinations. Thanks to the kind Mr. Van Roy for the extraordinary visit.

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### *Drie Fonteinen (Beersel)*

As part of my craft beer tourism escapades, I've gotten absolutely lost on more than one occasion. Sometimes it was the Euro-GPS fault on my tiny screen rented phone, sometimes it was the [bus](#) driver's fault for calling a silent count audible, sometimes it was a [lack of thorough planning](#), and not surprisingly, often it was [Nobody's Fault But Mine](#). Hence, one of the primary lessons for craft beer tourists unearthed on this journey was persistence: [Don't give up, don't ever give up](#), irrespective of the difficulty of the situation. When you have the opportunity to overcome adversity, a good dose of [stick-to-itiveness](#) may ultimately leave a most enjoyable and memorable taste in your mouth. If you give up, you may never be able to savor the final product of your beer tourism hard work and timely employment of common sense which has the ability to result in a once in a lifetime experience. Given the commitment I made to [Doing What It Takes](#) after getting lost, retracing my steps, finding my bearings, I arrived over an hour late for an appointment, far from my usual arrive-15-minutes-early-style. After a profuse apology, I settled into a memorable leisurely lunch and conversation with one of the world's great brewers and Lambic blenders, [Drie Fonteinen's](#) legendary Armand Debelder.

Armand's lovely wife, Lydie, prepared us the classic Belgian lunch: cheese, charcuterie and crusty bread. Of course, this wasn't your everyday run-of-the-mill cheese. Instead, I was able to savor Lydie's special *homemade* cheese, with a 'stinky' cheese as the base, and depth of flavor provided by Drie Fonteinen Geuze and spring onions. The delicious end-product was easily spread on the bread, and addicting as anything I've eaten in a long time! Armand was gracious enough to patiently answer my 'research related' queries (on the way out the door Lydie remarked how much Armand had enjoyed the conversation, it was my pleasure), and his frank and honest responses provided significant insights into the Belgian beer scene, and moreover, the challenges of keeping the Lambic brewing tradition for future generations to enjoy. Over several of the world's greatest beers and a delicious leisurely lunch, Armand's honest answers to my research queries should provide food for thought for brewers throughout the world to contemplate, and fodder for my future craft beer classes to reflect on.

- **The Globalization of Lambics.** Armand estimated that 30-40% of Drie Fonteinen's visitors were foreigners who keenly understood that if "you want my beer, you have to pick it up". During my visit I saw a number of individuals returning crates of empties and leaving with a trunk full of one of earth's most tasty libations. Drie Fonteinen doesn't distribute *at all* in Belgium, what you see is the result of a bottle shop owner or restaurateur making the trek to Beersel. Armand blamed the archaic Belgian distribution laws for this inability to find Drie Fonteinen readily available in Belgium. Armand estimated that approximately 50% of the beer he produced was destined for foreign distribution, up from 33% only two years ago. Armand also noted that the Scandinavian countries, Italy and Brazil were also growing outlets for foreign distribution. This pattern mirrors the burgeoning craft beer scene in those areas, a topic to be addressed in future Globalization and Beer classes.
- **The Homogenization of the Belgian Market.** I was surprised to find out that most of the cafes in the proximity of Grand Place in Brussels were owned by 'big groups' who were not allowed to sell the wares of Belgium's many fine micro-breweries. Instead, you're likely to find the same 'usual suspects' at most cafes in Belgium. Armand felt this situation was not in line with Belgium's more typical taste in craft beers which focused on those brews

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produced by small brewers, driven by the proviso of "Drink Local, Drink Better" a mantra I took to heart throughout my journey, resulting in a better understanding of the local beer culture in many locales, including Poperinge ([Fresh Hopped Hommelbier 2013](#)), Brugge ([Smisje](#)) and Mechelen ([Gouden Carolus Classic](#)). If I was to give one piece of 'free' advice for the next person on this craft beer tourism journey, it would be to make sure you immerse yourself into the local beer culture wherever your travels take you to.

- **The Next Generation.** Armand is absolutely passionate about preserving the Lambic style for future generations to enjoy. To wit, he has offered an option to young brewer Michael Blancquaert to purchase a 50% stake in the brewery over the next five years. However, we should all be relieved that Armand has no intention of stopping brewing and blending, and is intent on properly training Michael, especially on the art of blending. Training one's palate to recognize the nuances and differences between barrels, and then to expertly blend into a final product, takes not only years to master, but a commitment to this artistic aspect of craft beer. At this juncture he has instructed Michael for three years, passing on his wisdom and mentoring this young emerging brewing force, and still feels he has a lot to learn, a point Michael readily agreed with.
- **The Business of Brewing.** Armand is driven by a very simple business strategy: Produce a good product at a good price. However, recent past experience had left a bit of a sour (pun intended) taste in his mouth, as several episodes (i.e. a collaboration with a well-known American brewer) ended up providing minimal financial benefits to Drie Fonteinen. When I informed Armand what the going price in America was for this collaboration brew, he vowed that it would be a *long time* before he considered another collaboration venture, though he did profess utmost respect for two American brewers, [Rob Tod of Allagash](#) and [Vinny Cilurzo of Russian River](#). I offered one bit of 'free' advice and told Armand his beers were *underpriced*. While the three-tier system in America (explored in depth in my Politics and Beer class), along with shipping costs, drives up the price of Drie Fonteinen substantially, my stuffed suitcase home serves as ample evidence of the prolific value of venturing to Beersel to purchase your share (and then some) of this divine elixir.
- **Future Brews.** Having had the opportunity to sample many of Armand's best creations, there is good news on the horizon for the patient and the devoted. When I inquired as to the status of the [Armand 4](#) series (Armand smiled knowingly when I told him I thought the Fall version was far different than the other three) he smiled and told me he hasn't brewed this epic series for four years. However, with an enhanced and aggressive brewing schedule, and expanded off-site fermentation capacity (Armand had to transport the wort from his garage-sized brewing system to another location to ferment, each kettle taking four trips) allowing Armand to develop his own wort and become a bit less reliant on [Lindeman](#) and [Boon](#) for wort for aging and blending. The [Scharbeekse Oude Kriek](#) hadn't been produced for three years, due to a frost killing the entire crop one year and a shortage the other. Armand was hopeful that 2014's growing season would be a bit kinder and allow him to produce this exceptional Kriek. The [Intense Red](#) that Armand was kind enough to share over lunch was produced using only Polish (!) cherries that had spent six months in the tank, skins, pits and all. Most importantly for the aficionados among The Usual Suspects, Armand indicated he wouldn't be selling his Lambic anymore, as some individuals had put it on the market without his authorization. Hence, other than the [HORAL Super-blend](#), if you want to sample the ultra-delicious Jung Lambic, you'll have to travel to the world famous Drie Fonteinen cafe next to the brewery, or be fortunate

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enough to visit the bottle shop when the elusive [Doesjel](#) is available. I was able to secure a 2006 version during my visit! Of course, the link that ties all these beers together is that Armand uses *absolutely no sugar in any of his beers* either to sweeten or to prime the beer for bottle conditioning. This results in a drier, more astringent beer than other Lambic producers. The only thing that could compare to that was having lunch at the cafe, and having the opportunity to savor the cask-conditioned, hand pull delivered Jong Lambik and Kriekenlambik next store at the Drie Fonteinen café, operated by Armand's brother. Those are two beers I won't soon forget. A stunning example of the brewer's art and besides the awesome Onion Soup, a damn good reason to visit the restaurant during your visit to Drie Fonteinen in Beersel.

In the end, what ultimately impressed me the most was Armand's *passion* for beer. While he identified himself as "I'm a blender, not a brewer", I've come to keenly appreciate the importance of the art of blending beers to the final Lambic product we are able to enjoy. With the increased capacity to brew and ferment his own wort, the future of Drie Fonteinen, driven by this affable and humble man and his lovely and energetic wife, with a young doyen acquiring the knowledge of two generations of master blenders, is extremely bright. All in all, one of my most memorable craft beer experiences *ever*, and the insights this affable man and world class brewer and blender provided will be integrated through my craft beer-related curriculum.

### *Brugge*

One of the anticipated highlights of my European adventure was the opportunity to meet one of the world's most important publicans, Daisy Claeys of [t Brugge Beertje](#). Needless to say, for all beer lovers and the majority of visitors, Daisy is *the* face of Brugge. Given the relatively late (and typical Belgium pub) opening hour of 16:00, there was an opportunity to partake of Brugge many craft beer tourism related opportunities before heading to this 'bucket list' venue for any aspiring global beer traveler. After arriving at the Brugge train station I had a short 10 minute walk to my lodging, the affordable [Hotel 't Putje](#) (at 50 euro the night I stayed, a real bargain in this tourist-driven town, and they threw in breakfast for free!). After that, it was time for lunch, and of course, a beer. After a bit of research, I settled on [Brasserie Cambrinus](#). Since it was during the busy lunchtime period, I settled up at one of the empty bar stools, and then was confronted by one of life's most vexing quandaries: selecting a beer out of "The Book". Nearly 4 inches thick, featuring over 600 beers! I settled on a house beer, the Brune, to accompany my reading assignment.

As I didn't want to cut too much into my drinking space, I went with what had become the stalwart of my beer-food pairing in Belgium: Onion Soup. The Cambrinus version was delivered in a [La Creuset mini cocotte](#) that evidently had been baked, given how hot it was to the touch. This was more along the lines of the typical French Onion soup you get in the states, with a floating conglomeration of cheese and bread on top. To be honest my least favorite onion soup of the trip, far behind the fabulous version at Drie Fonteinen. On a positive note, the restaurant features a very beer inspired menu, using beer in many of the dishes, but it's a long ways down to second place from the world's leading craft beer restaurant, the fantastic [De Heeren van Liederkercke](#). Anticipating that I would be returning to Brasserie Cambrinus later in the trip, I decided to venture around town and take in some of the other beer tourism related sights. I have been astonished at the high prices for beer in most of the bottle shops I have visited. As part of my research, I decided to conduct some market analysis and see if there were any 'bargains' to be had for beer tourists in

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the bottle shops of Brugge. I first stopped in the aptly named [The Bottle Shop](#). Located on one of the busier thoroughfares in Brugge, there were some relative bargains to be had. Westvleteren 12 for only 10 €! If that sounds a bit exorbitant, the going price in Brussels for this holy grail in 12€!

The next stop was a shop that had come highly recommended, [2BE](#). Outside the shop they had the proverbial Wall of Bottles which drew the usual number of tourist having their picture taken in front of it. Hey, it's just a bunch of bottles of beer! This store was a bit more promising, closer to a 1000 bottles in stock, a number located in a downstairs 'cellar', but no assistance of any kind to be had. They also had a number of *tchotchkes*, beer glasses, cheeses, gift packs, etc. In the rear of the building there is an (apparently) Delirium affiliated cafe, with about 6 beers on tap and 50 bottles in refrigerated cases which could be enjoyed on an outside terrace located by one of Brugge's scenic canals. The last, and IMO the most important of the beer shops in Brugge, was the local outpost of beer stalwart [De Struise](#). Unfortunately, due to my midweek (Wednesday) visit, (highly suggested, as the lodging prices *more than double* on the weekends) they were closed. That didn't keep me from salivating at what I saw, and at 17€ a relative bargain.

Having done more than my share of (beer) window shopping, it was time to get back to the business at hand, Beer Tourism related research. Given my relatively narrow window (and attempts to protect my liver), I next ventured to the 'Monk's Hole', aka ['t Poatergat](#). Located in the cellar of a 16th century church, local legend has it the front door was used by the monks to exit in order to visit the local brothel. The interior was ultra-dark, I'm glad I was carrying my phone with the LED flashlight app. There was some comfortable chairs and couches in the corner by the entrance. Given the relatively early hour, it was pretty empty, which was just as well, since I had my primary target left on this beer sortie.

Having scoured the alleys and planned my route, I ventured into 't Bruge Beertje. Very unassuming from the outside, this one room 'brown' cafe features an eight seat bar and about eight tables in a relatively small space. There were four beers on tap and a photocopied beer book with about 300 beers, not quite up to the printing standards of Brasserie Cambrinus. To get to the chase, Daisy wasn't in the house, and the kind and knowledgeable barkeep let me know she usually only works on Fridays. (I came back on Friday and we had an extensive, informative visit). I settled in at the bar beside one of the locals who obviously had spent more than one evening on his corner stool: he never had to ask for a beer, it was always brought to him in a timely manner. Points for service. Unfortunately, on the other side of me was a 'lady' who was apparently affiliated to the 'gentleman' with the "[comeback Elvis](#)" haircut and sideburns. To call him a gentleman was a real stretch, the first two times she talked to me he tried to pull her arm out of the socket!

Unfortunately it got worse. She was 2 1/2 sheets to the wind, having downed *three Rochefort 10's* in a bit over an hour. Then she became more determined to engage in a conversation with me. I was smart enough to pick up the 'womanizer' references by the locals (I picked up just enough Flemish to be dangerous), to which I responded, you *loco vatos* must be old school. The current parlance is *player*, and if you knew me you'd know I was a *player-hater*. They scratched their heads in bewilderment, which only further intrigued the 'lady'. She started *demanding* that I look her in the eye when I talked to her, and I quickly planned as escape. Not interested, I like my women [more cerebral](#). Fortunately, I had spotted a table of like-minded beer tourists across the room, and things got much better in a hurry, despite the hangdog look on the lady's face, like she had lost her best friend. Good riddance!

Jon and Mary were visiting from Staffordshire UK to celebrate his 30th Birthday. He had an affinity for sampling the wide range of Oude Krieks available at Daisy's. Sitting with them was [Ron Downer](#), Brewmaster at [Blackberry Farms Brewery](#) in Walland, Tennessee, one of America's

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top ranked resorts. He and his energetic young business partner were on a research trip to explore Belgian beers in advance of their planned expansion from a half-barrel to a 20 barrel system. Hopefully they will be able to brew more of one of the best named beers I've run across, their Dubbel named "[Screaming Cock](#)". To say we had a good time was an understatement, despite the forlorn look from the Elvis worshipping female at the bar. After closing down Daisy's we went back to Brasserie Cambrinus for a late night snack and one last beer, and then met for a quick luncheon beer the next day. Jon was headed up the church steps to the bell tower, the Tennessee folks had an appointment at Vapeur to draw further inspiration, and I was headed to the museums to further enjoy Flemish fine art.

A few observations about 't Bruge Beerjte. The bartenders keep your tab on little post it notes, there is no cash register, and I'm not sure how they deal with inventory control (or cash flow for that matter, which may be the point). The cafe is usually overrun by tourists like you and me, and the locals look down on you with a certain air of disdain. The beer menu is very well organized, easy to navigate, and the knowledgeable barkeeps are certainly willing to provide recommendations if need be. Lastly, I did have the chance to meet some other craft beer tourists in Daisy's fine establishment, and while we may not see each other in the future (I later ran into the Blackberry Farms folk at the Great American Beer Festival in Denver where we reminisced about our unforgettable experience in Brugge), we have a memory that will last a lifetime. For the craft beer tourist, this visit and the people I met, well, it doesn't get much better than that.

### *Antwerp*

An important facet of Beer Tourism that has been repeatedly reinforced through my sojourn has been the need to be persistent to reach your destination when circumnavigating the dizzying conflux of Belgian byways. It would be a bit easier with street signs, but more often than not I've ended up absolutely lost-and loving it! Just when you thought that understanding how to get from Point A to Point B, especially when your GPS decides to go bonkers, [a little technological glitch](#) shouldn't stop you from making your appointed rounds. After running what could figuratively be considered a circle route, *voila*, my appointed destination was in clear sight- The Kulminator, one of the earliest, and most beloved, craft beer bars in the world.

As with many of the beer destinations I ventured into during my visit, the early arriving (4pm opening) crowd was generally comprised of beer tourists like myself. Similarly to ['t Brugs Beerjte](#), there was [classical music playing in the background](#) to sooth the frayed travelers nerves. Settling into my seat at this [tiny tavern](#) one could easily sense this is one of the most historically craft beer drinking establishments in the universe, due to the insight, commitment and passion of Publican Dirk van Dyck and his lovely wife, Leen Boudewijn.

Evidently one of the beer world's great 'urban legends' was that Kulminator was *the* original craft beer bar. In conversations with Dirk, I discovered that this was his *second* bar, after the sadly forgotten by all but the most ardent craft beer historians, [Cafe Bodega](#). While most of the current crop of craft beer connoisseurs and tourists weren't even *alive* when *Biertempel van Dyck* commenced operations, it's always important to reflect on your craft beer roots; how you started on this journey, and how you got to where you are at today, especially a site of such historical importance.

To say the beer 'bible' at Kulminator makes for some interesting reading would be an understatement, made far more understandable after asking Leen about 'the code' used throughout this lengthy tomb. I was more than a bit perplexed when one of the beers I had targeted for

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enjoying, a 2003 Westmalle Tripel (my favorite Belgian beer), was conditioned with *egg whites* instead of yeast. When was the last time you saw a bottle of *that*? There were too numerous other one-of-a-kinds and chestnuts listed, even one of the more adventurous The Usual Suspects with a *huge* sense of commitment would take at least a week to try everything interesting. It's no wonder Hair of the Dog's Alan Sprints lists Kulminator as one of his favorite places to drink. With a sense of adventure, you will surely have something you will never have the chance to have again: A vertical of Orval's from widely different vintages? A de Cam Kriek from *before* there was a de Cam? Or, if you are lucky, the expatriate may find something familiar and tasty from back home.

Sadly, Dirk's left knee is about to give out. Even climbing a stool to fill the water cooler brought about a great deal of pain, evidenced by a wary grimace and rubbing his aching knee for several minutes. Believe me, I know that *bone-to-bone* feeling. Ugh. When I told him that the wonders of modern medicine (surgery or knee replacement) may provide some relief, Dirk told me in no uncertain terms that his knee was *kaput*. Looking toward Leen for support for my medical initiative, she gave me the 'what can you do' look of a wife who had spent a lifetime with their spouse and knew once his mind is made up, that's the end of the discussion. For all lovers of craft beer, this is a place you must visit once in your lifetime. Given Dirk's health, there should be a sense of urgency on your part. I *know* this is one of the top places in the entire beer universe that The Good Lord would 'tick' on his Where Would Jesus Drink journey.

### *Amsterdam*

While I didn't travel as extensively as I first envisioned (Bamberg and Cologne were on the radar, but alas, fell by the wayside), I was determined to head to the Netherlands to check out their burgeoning craft beer scene and explore Amsterdam's local 'culture'. One of the important, yet underappreciated, aspects of craft beer tourism is isolating the 'best' mode of transportation to travel from venue to venue. If you have a car at your disposal, the drive from Brussels to Amsterdam is a fairly easy jaunt. However, I eschewed automotive transport on this research trip (\$8.50 a gallon gasoline had something to do with it) in favor of the old school technological favorite, trains, along with localized trams, each city's being a bit unique. In order to get to Amsterdam, you have two primary train options at your disposal. The high speed [Thalys](#) travels about 185 mph with minimal stops. However, that kind of speed precludes the ability to check out small village train stations, see the countryside, etc. Moreover, if you don't make a reservation quite a bit in advance, the journey, lasting less than two hours, will set you back a bit over 200 dollars. Not being in that much of a hurry, I chose the [Brussels Railway](#) option, which required one change of train (in Antwerp), took a bit less than 3 hours and cost about \$100.

Amsterdam Central Train Station is located on the northernmost border of the Olde Center neighborhood, where most of the tourist activities associated with this worldly city are located. After some research, I obtained lodging at the affordable [Hotel CC](#), located on bustling Warmoesstraat a mere 300 meters from the train station. While my room wasn't ready when I arrived, the superb staff upgraded me to the penthouse suite in the backside of the building away from the noisy street. Affordability in lodging is one of the primary determinants of craft beer tourism 'success', and I was fortunate on to obtain affordable lodging wherever I went.

**Warning:** While planning your routing from place to place in Amsterdam *may* be beneficial, and GPS *may* help you in a pinch in the byzantine street grid, and sightseeing *may* be encouraged, it's not going to do you a bit of good if you are laying on the ground having been hit by a bicycle. You quickly learn the #1 rule of Amsterdam (shared by Brugge): The Bicycle Is

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King. Stay off the bike paths, especially if you are checking your map, gazing at the sights, etc. Five minutes after arrival I witnessed a scooter-bike collision, and the scooter got the worse of it, and received no sympathy from the numerous bystanders. The only sympathy the scooter rider got was from the bicyclist. BEWARE!

After catching my breath, I decided to begin the beer research portion of the trip. After the usual direction glitches, I arrived at my first stop, one of the Netherlands most important pubs, In de Wildeman. This craft beer oasis has a well-worn in feel to it, and apparently, is a bit off the radar screen for most beer tourists. There are about 6 tables in front, room for about 20 on the rear 'mezzanine', along with a separate overflow room. Not surprisingly, there were no stools at the bar, as I had learned that the Flemish and Dutch, if they are going to frequent the proximity of the bar, would rather stand. I decided to sit at a table by the front window, with its extensive selection of brewery memorabilia, where I had to decide on a beer. Unfortunately, I had done inadequate research into the Dutch craft beer scene, and except for De Molen and a few select others, was a bit baffled at what confronted me. After a couple of tough stabs at local products, I then had my faith restored by the affable bar staff and owner who informed me In de Wildeman often featured beers no one else on 'the continent' received, as I discovered after perusing the 'special' supplementary menu and, voila, a phalanx of Real Ales from Thornbridge. Firkin Yeah!! In de Wildeman is a real world class beer cafe, a must visit for the beer tourist delving into the craft beer scene in Amsterdam. The prices were more than democratic, the food (which I didn't try) looked very appetizing, the staff helpful and the clientele friendly.

The next research stop was the world famous Arendnest Proeflokaal. Featuring only Dutch beers, the Eagles Nest is located on the west side of Olde Town, just across ~~the~~ a canal (I got my bearings, err bearings, from the Amsterdam map by counting the number of canals I had to cross to reach my destination). While it would have been nice to sit canal side, the weather, the first day of fog the entire season according to the locals, made a seat at the bar obligatory. Then the real research began. While my stateside friends of Dutch heritage would have had little problem navigating this Dutch only tap list (not to mention the 200+ Dutch only bottle list), I was on my own to make my choice. I was pleasantly surprised to see that the Dutch has embraced Belgian styles (Tripels, Saisons), but was bent on trying some of the local fare. Upon the recommendation of the barkeep, I tried the Willy beer from local brewer De Prael. Willy was a quintessential Winter Warmer of Barleywine strength, clocking in at a better-be-careful Doggie Claws-like 11%. What makes De Prael special is their story: they employ mentally challenged individuals to aid in tasks around the brewery, located about 200 meters from Amsterdam Central train station, to provide them a job, and moreover, a sense of self-worth. As my mentor Tom Hovet imbued in me, always be sensitive to the plight of the less fortunate, a trait I believe my best students have gleaned from me. It appears the Dutch craft beer scene had adopted this 'other regarding sentiment.'

My next stop was the legendary beer store De Bierkoning. Featuring over 1200 beers, this is the closest you'll come to a Belmont Station or John's Marketplace experience in Europe. They had a number of American craft beers-the Bruery, Upright (!), and Founders, a wide selection of spontaneous fermentation beers (Cantillon, Drie Fonteinen), and a superb selection of Dutch craft beers. As my suitcase capacity was nearly accounted for, I was only able to procure 4 small bottles, including the last bottle of De Molen Rook and Leer Smoked Imperial Stout. While the prices were a bit on the high side, they certainly paled in comparison with the Brussels Grand Place rip-off, err, bottle shops, which serve an important function to the craft beer tourist

The last beer research stop on the Amsterdam agenda was the Beer Temple. Apparently owned by the same party as De Bierkoning and Arendnest Proeflokaal, this craft beer bar focuses

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on bringing American craft beers to their relatively young European clientele (as with most stops during this trip, I was the senior person in the bar). Beer Temple features a pretty eclectic range of beers, a bit light on Dutch breweries (you can head over to the Eagle's Nest for that) and featuring several American craft beers on tap and in bottle. For some reason beyond me, the featured American breweries were Anderson Valley, and Rogue. The highlight of the Beer Temple visit was seeing PDX expatriate, craft beer aficionado and tuba lover (!) [Brian Yaeger](#). Joining his Nike-employed wife for a two-year Amsterdam-based work assignment, I helped Brian with research for his upcoming book, informing him that, yes, Mt. Emily Ale House really had closed. We caught up on recent developments on the Oregon craft beer scene and promised to try and find each other at the Essen Kerstbierfestival. After a [To Ol Snowball](#), we headed over to In de Wildeman for a nightcap, then Brian headed home (via bicycle, of course) to make sure his young child made the 830 am childcare appointment.

While I didn't delve into the Netherlands craft beer scene up to my eyeballs, I did get a tasty sampling of what this burgeoning beer scene has to offer. Given my limited time and other obligations, this was as deep as I was able to dig. However, as you can hopefully see, there are some choice chestnuts to be had on the Amsterdam beer trail. I'd heartily recommend visiting these watering holes the next time you are in this neck of the woods. My visit to Amsterdam will provide significant insights for future students in my craft beer related classes.

### *Brussels*

During my trip I was fortunate to stay in Ixelles (Elsene in Dutch) one of the better neighborhoods in Brussels. With my stay here ending , and an ensuing road trip to the Netherlands and the [Essen Christmas Beer Festival](#) before heading home, I thought it would be appropriate to reflect at this juncture on my quest to find the quintessential beer bar here in Brussels. Hopefully these observations may help the next person going down this path, and the insights gleaned from this locally based research integrated into future craft beer classes at EOU.

- **Just because it's famous doesn't make it good.** One of my least favorite pubs to visit was the world (in) famous [Delirium Cafe](#). Yeah, they have over 2,000 beers (they will sell you a beer list for 5€), but I'm not looking to drink a beer from Singapore while in Belgium. They have Belgian beers I've never heard of, points for that, but why on earth would I want to drink a [Floris Ninkeberry](#)? The big downside on this subterranean tavern is the atmosphere: Intensely boisterous, louder than a 747 at takeoff, and filled to the brim with foreign beer tourists who wouldn't know [Urbain Coutteau](#), one of the world's greatest brewers, from [Richard Simmons](#). It is always an adventure to get your beer at Delirium: You *must* obtain your brew at the bar, and finding room to belly up to order makes a rugby scrum look like good clean fun. And don't think having a seat at the bar gives you any privileges, you'll find yourself being constantly banged aside on a regular basis by the drunk and thirsty mob. While a visit to the Delirium Cafe should certainly be on the bucket list for any Belgian beer traveler, the reality is the upstairs Delirium Taphouse has a better draft list; about 25, leaning toward the hoppy, of which the Belgians are quite enamored. My advice would be to keep your visit short, while a visit to Delirium is mandatory for the craft beer tourist, there are much better places to drink in Brussels.
- **Just because it's hard to find doesn't make it good.** As with the majority of destinations on my Brussels beer sorties, I had trouble finding the Delirium "complex" the first time, probably because I was asking the wrong question. While there are some small signs at the

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end of 'the alley', given the number of people on the narrow streets, you probably won't even see them when you pass by the first time. I should have asked do you know where I can find the Jeanneken Pils, which is located across the alley from the Delirium Cafe. The use of landmarks is highly advised, as (after your GPS skills go out after the 3rd or 4th beer), you start asking locals, who in many cases give incorrect or conflicting directions.

- **Just because it isn't hard to find, doesn't mean you shouldn't stop in.** Located just across the street from Jeanneken's brother, Mannekin Pils, one of Belgium's most beloved (and photographed) tourist attractions, is one of the most unique taverns on earth, [Le Poechenellekeder](#). The vast majority of beer tourists who come into this proximity aren't looking for this totally unique tavern, instead they are looking for one of the foremost photo opportunities in all of Beer Tourism. Of the thousands of people who travel by this spot every day, I doubt more than a small fraction venture across the street to have a meal and/or a beer. The help is attentive and pleasant (unlike the Delirium Cafe, who are a bit too full of themselves, especially the Yannick Noah wannabe who spins the empty bottles around like juggler's pins), the food democratically priced and good portions. The atmosphere is unlike anything you'll find anywhere in the world. I'm so glad I was able to spend a memorable evening there (after getting thoroughly drenched in a downpour) with Beer Goddess Lisa Morrison and her hubby Mark Campbell, sitting with the life-size figurine of General Montgomery (who is absolutely revered in Brussels). BIG fun!
- **Just because you've been by the place a dozen times, doesn't mean you shouldn't have stopped a dozen times.** Thanks to the kind advice of [Luc De Raedemaeker](#) one of the most knowledgeable experts on craft beer in Belgium, I visited [Het Goudblommeke in Papier](#). When I arrived there I realized, *I've walked by this place a dozen times, including my first night in Brussels!* HGiP is the type of unassuming place you would never expect to be a world class beer destination. However, if you let your preconceptions fall to the wayside, you realize this is *exactly* the kind of place you were looking for. Good food (one of the better onion soups I've had, you get to add your own cheese and croutons as you please), a killer beer selection (Giraldin Jung Lambic, big points for that) and the walls reek of history. This is where the movers and shakers of the Surrealist movement met to discuss their next projects. I wish I could have been here to ask Magritte what the meaning and intent of *L'Attentat* was, because I don't think I will ever figure that out on my own! The place is so highly valued that it is listed on the protected site list for the Brussels region. How many taverns have that designation! If you are intent on 'ticking off' all the 'famous' places, you'd miss the opportunity to visit the truly historic places in Brussels like this! Don't be afraid to make a non-scheduled stop along your beer tourism journey, you'll be surprised at the pearls you find!
- **Just because it isn't about beer doesn't mean you shouldn't appreciate it.** One point I've tried to reiterate time after time is there are a LOT sights you will confront on your beer tourism journey. Don't be in too much of a hurry to get to the next bar, tavern, cafe, you may run across something you'll never see again, and moreover, should take a minute or two to ponder and appreciate. Walking down an alleyway in Mechelen after lunch at Het Anker, I came across some commissioned sculptures in a private garden that gave me pause to reflect on their beauty and meaning. Once again, be sure to immerse yourself in the local art culture as part of your craft beer tourism journey.
- **Just because it's in your backyard doesn't mean it isn't worth searching out.** I am staying in a *very* nice part of town. This wouldn't have happened if I hadn't made a

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chance acquaintance at GABF. While waiting in a hotel lobby in Denver with [Tyler and Corinna Brown](#), we struck up a conversation with a couple-from Belgium! Tyler let the nice lady know I would soon be visiting Belgium and she asked me where I was staying. When I indicated I had found lodging in (section of town deleted) she responded "Why would you want to stay *there*?" OOPS. She indicated that Ixelles is a nice part of town, and here I am, though it's about a 45 minute walk from downtown. So, my quest began for a tavern to frequent within easy walking distance of my [flat](#) began. The easiest alternative is just across the street, spitting distance if the wind is blowing right, Le General *seemed* like an easy solution. However when I asked my landlord, he said "that place is for losers" with that snarled lip at the end of the statement that lets you know the French speaker *means business*. I didn't intend to come half way around the world to hang out with a bunch of USC people. Given my proximity to [Universite Libre de Bruxelles](#), I figured the college folk may know a thing or two about drinking, especially since **the age to purchase beer in Belgium is 16** (imagine, yourself drinking [good beer](#) when you were 16!). I started out with the famous college pub, [Le Tavernier](#). Only 5 beers on tap (though pitchers of La Chouffe were 10€) and 20 bottles. The big draw is a huge outdoor seating area, where the young folk roll their cigarettes and wonder what type of cheese they will have with their baguette for dinner. Big disappointment. At this juncture, a trip off the beaten path holds the opportunity of big rewards. Hence, I decided to make a short detour to visit [L' Atelier](#). You'd never even know this iconic craft beer mecca was there from the outside, two solid wooden doors, no windows facing the street, a small sign above the door indicating, for the knowledgeable, this is what you were looking for. Indeed, it was. Along with Kulminator, this is one of the original craft beer bars in Belgium. The owner let me know that: (a) The Delirium people got their business idea from him. About three months after engaging in an evening long conversation, the Delirium complex was born. (b) He didn't meet Dirk van Dyck of Kulminator until a number of years later, when they found out they had opened their craft beer meccas just a few months apart in 1975. (c) Being the publican of a place like this means you have to *go* get the beer. As with many of the best Belgian breweries, they either self-distribute, or more likely, you have to go to the brewery to get their beer.(d) Business people from a number of countries had contacted him to 'franchise' his concept. They had about 20 beers on tap and about 200 bottles for sale. This is one of the only beer bars in Belgium where I've seen both Cantillon and Drie Fonteinen for sale. The real clincher for me though was, other than the brewery, l' Atelier has the best selection of De Struise beers in the universe, including a number of vintage selections.

Other than the Double Black bottle (100 Euro!) the prices were very democratic. He showed me his significant beer cellar, he'd really put his heart and soul into collecting what has been the best collection of contemporary beers I've seen in Belgium (no one touches [Kulminator](#) for vintage beers, though for Orval vintages [De Heeren van Liederkerke](#) takes the prize). I provided some insights into the depth and quality of his collection, and encouraged him to better catalog what he had, a recommendation his bartender later told me he took to heart). After the tour, he kindly shared a bottle of 2010 [Pannepot Reserva](#) with me, and showed his beer acumen while admiring this brew and stating "this is the last beer you should drink in an evening, nothing tastes as good after this." I have to agree. My favorite place to drink in Brussels.

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### *Kerstbierfestival*

One of the primary facets of my craft beer tourism related research agenda during my sabbatical was attending the world famous [Kerstbierfestival](#) in Essen, Belgium. Located on the main railway between Antwerp and Roosendaal, Netherlands, Essen is an otherwise forgettable village other than hosting one of the best beer festivals on the planet. Kerstbierfestival, smoothly run under the auspices of O.B.E.R. (Objective Beer tasters, Essen Region) features a mind-boggling **170+ Christmas beers**.

While I contemplated staying in close proximity of Antwerp Central train station, given my impending departure for home, I decided to confine my visit to Essen to Saturday and sleep in my own bed in Brussels. The train ride from Brussels took about an hour and a half, and provided a window of opportunity to devise a plan of attack for the festival, no easy feat. A perusal of the **60+ page program** revealed a number of beers the Kerstbierfestival was the *only* location in Belgium where these foreign offerings would be available, a number of rare beers no longer being produced, and a number of beers being offered at the festival for the first time to keep the selection fresh and interesting.

While the festival supplied discounted bus service (1 Euro) from the train station to the festival location approximately 2 kilometers away, given the coinciding train arrivals from both directions, I eschewed mass transit for a stern power walk. As Emily will most certainly attest, I walk very fast, and this certainly paid benefits as I joined the Kerstbierfestival version of The Front Of The Line Club. Upon arrival, about an hour before the festival, I found myself about 25th in line, with only the locals ahead of me. This aerobic activity certainly paid dividends, as by the time the door opened at 13:30, there were **over 400 people standing in line**.

There were two lines to get in, an express line, where you received a tasting glass (stemmed, mine didn't survive the journey home), a program with extensive tasting notes (you can have your choice of French, Dutch or English versions) and 9 tasting tokens. Beers ranged from 1 (most of the nearly two dozen draft beers and the majority of bottled versions) to 3 tokens for the extremely rare offerings. Individual tokens were 1.70€(approximately \$2.33): I can hear some of the Usual Suspects complaining about this (relatively) high cost, as we are used to one (dollar) token samples with very rare exceptions. However, to put it all in perspective, it's quite a bit cheaper than buying gasoline over here. After obtaining my 'packet' I quickly surveyed the law of the land and found an empty table centrally located near the draft station, the 'kitchen' and the middle section of the bottled offerings. I was quickly joined by a group of young, friendly chaps from across the border in Roosendaal, these guys were *very* cool!

The community building where the festival was located was not much bigger than a good size high school gym in the US. Of course, the configuration was more in keeping with [indoor soccer](#) and [team handball](#) as the predominant sporting usage. It quickly became apparent that the local Fire Marshall was a craft beer fan, as while the 'suggested' capacity was 1,000, about two hours after opening the hall was packed. All in all, a most memorable beer experience, one I would certainly recommend to any beer lover. Once again, the craft beer journey is really about the people you meet. I invited the Roosendaal crew to come to Oregon to enjoy some American brews, I think you'll enjoy hanging out with these guys, big fun!

I very much look forward to integrating the numerous 'lessons' I learned on my journey into future beer-related classes at EOU, developing on-line versions of my popular craft beer focused classes, publishing the fruits of my labor in academic journals, and continuing my strong working relationship with key stakeholders in the craft beer industry. I was fortunate to be able to engage in this once in a lifetime experience. Thanks!

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### **COPY OF LETTER REQUESTING SABBATICAL**

14 November, 2012

Dr. Steve Gammon  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Eastern Oregon University  
La Grande, OR 97850

Dear Dean Gammon,

This Letter of Request is submitted in pursuance of my application for sabbatical leave for the 2013-14 academic year. I hereby respectfully request a full sabbatical award in support of my research proposal, "The Craft Beer Industry in Comparative Perspective". The study will extend my previous research efforts which have centered on gambling studies into related realms of morality-related public policy. The study will provide insights into the political and economic aspects underlying these complementary policy arenas which have become increasingly popular as economic development tools for fiscally strapped governments. The study will attempt to address two primary research questions: (1) Government structure has a significant impact on the craft beer industry's contribution to public finance. (2) Beer-related tourism as an economic development strategy has the ability to provide a substantial contribution to public finance.

An interesting intended outcome of the project holding the potential of significant positive institutional implications is the creation of a Craft Beer Studies concentration. I intend to leverage my significant connections throughout the domestic and international beer communities to create an academically rigorous program which focuses on the policy implications of this dynamic industry. The program will leverage existing courses within the EOU curriculum (Politics and Beer, Globalization and Beer, Beer and Tourism) that have been previously taught as Weekend Colleges. Support provided by this Faculty Scholars Program grant, in tandem with the above proposed research, will aid in the development of on-line versions of these courses into a program that will be utterly unique in higher education. While there are several existing beer related programs (e.g., UC Davis), they focus solely on the brewing process, not on an examination of the politics surrounding this dynamic industry.

Having been a member of the faculty for 12 years, I have forgone several opportunities to submit sabbatical proposals in the past due to my fervent desire to do what is best for our most valuable resource, our students. Having accomplished a number of institutionally important tasks, including Assessment Coordinator, Faculty Senate President, and most importantly, teacher, and having established a significant record of scholarly achievement, I would like to have the opportunity to leverage my knowledge and skills in a new, exciting direction. Support of this proposal will enable me to make a profound future contribution to our fine institution.

Please let me know if you have any questions in this matter.

Best Regards,

Jeff Dense  
Professor of Political Science  
Eastern Oregon University  
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