

## NYU Berlin Site-Specific Advisory Committee Meeting

November 13, 2014 (9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. EST)

### IN ATTENDANCE

- Jesse Bransford (Steinhardt)
- Tom Ertman (CAS – Sociology)
- Gabriella Etmektsoglou (Site Director – NYU Berlin)
- Christianne Frey (CAS – German Studies)
- Eckart Goebel (CAS – German Studies)
- Karen Hornick (Gallatin, Committee Chair)
- Kevin Kuhlke (Tisch)
- Tyra Liebmann (Global Programs)
- Matthew Santirocco (Provost's Office)
- Chris Schlottmann (Environmental Studies)
- Jochen Steinbicker (NYU Berlin – Sociology)
- David Levene (CAS – Classics)
- Oliver Buhler (CAS – Math)
- Mosette Broderick (CAS – Art History)
- Regina Gramer (Liberal Studies)
- Youssef Cohen (CAS – Politics)
- *Additional guests included:* Nicole Johnson (Polytechnic School of Engineering); Gigi Dopico-Black (CAS Global Liaison); Erich Dietrich (Steinhardt Global Liaison); Gail Segal (Tisch Global Liaison); Stephanie Leahy (Global Programs); Chris Nicolussi (Global Programs)

### REVIEW OF ADVISING IDEAS

The Committee reviewed a compilation of advising ideas from all Site-specific Advisory Committees. It was noted that many of the ideas represented effective communication strategies, and some ideas were also rooted in the structure of the curriculum. The Committee noted some additional NYU Berlin-specific advising approaches, including future initiatives. For example, NYUB and the German Department are discussing advising NYUB students via video conference while they study away, alerting students to developments in the language program and the possibility of minoring or majoring in German.

A number of students returning to the Square from NYU Berlin (NYUB) ultimately become interested in pursuing a minor once back on the Square, and the German department agreed to provide the data relating to such students at the next Committee meeting. Gabriella also noted that local faculty can also be instrumental in engaging these students remotely once they have returned to the Square, building on the rapport established at NYU Berlin.

Matthew raised the notion of “cohorting” as an additional advising strategy to consider. Some departments have preferences for when students should study away to maximize the academic impact of the experience. Liberal Studies (LS), for example, has begun utilizing programs in

Florence and Washington, D.C. to target its first-semester sophomores, yielding significant enrollment numbers. Jesse added that developing cohort-based advising strategies is also beneficial when developing re-entry advising approaches, allowing for better planning through more predictive modeling, targeted reflection opportunities, shared re-entry experiences, and invaluable word-of-mouth advertising for study away programs.

### **Program Assessment**

Aside from individual course evaluations which remain ongoing at the Square and Global Sites, last spring Global Programs paused the program evaluations occurring at the sites following discussion with faculty. The program evaluations collect student views on a variety of aspects of the overall study away experience. However, the program evaluations were not sufficiently focused on academics and were too long (some reached nearly 100 questions). Gabriella noted that the program evaluations historically grew piecemeal through requests from various departments and student life services. In addition, the timing of the program evaluations greatly affected the results. Program evaluations were administered just days prior to students' departure from the site, when students were attempting to squeeze in several "last" experiences, saying their goodbyes, and experiencing mixed emotions as their time abroad concludes. While it is important to capture students' perspective in this moment, it is also important, Gabriella said, to capture their perspective once they have had time and space to reflect on the experience as well. Despite the pause in the program evaluations, Gabriella explained that Global Ambassadors led town-hall style feedback sessions to ensure students were still provided a platform to offer feedback on the overall study away experience at NYU Berlin. This feedback was shared with NYUB staff in writing twice during the semester, enabling staff to respond and take immediate action. Additionally, another evaluation was provided this past year through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The Provost's Office, working with Global Programs, has pulled together a large list of questions, based on faculty feedback, and plans to share a model with the Site Committees in the spring. The model will be shorter than previous evaluations and customizable by site. Matthew shared with the Committee that the literature related to the overall academic experience of study away is thin in terms of quantifiable data, however, this presents unique research opportunities for NYU and its global network. Indirect metrics such as transcript analysis and local engagement rates are examples of measures that could be analyzed, in addition to longitudinal assessments. Gabriella noted a recent European Union study ([The Erasmus Impact Study: Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalization of higher education institutions](#)), which among other key findings, found "transversal skills" to be improved during study abroad, and closely linked increased employability to the study abroad experience.

### **The Urban Greening Lab**

Chris Schlottman provided the group with an overview of the "Urban Greening Lab" at NYU Berlin, which Urban Studies is currently developing as a research center of urban ecology that engages multiple disciplines. Three faculty members (one from NYUB and two from the Square) are circulating proposals for the Lab, which grew out of a course at NYU Berlin entitled,

“Greening Berlin.” A counterpart course is being launched on the Square this spring, exploring how New York City ecologically compares to Berlin. This initiative is an exciting example of how coursework developed at the Global Sites can impact the curriculum on the Square. The long-term objectives of the Lab are to develop research and integrate with the curriculum.

#### **UPDATES FROM SITE DIRECTOR GABRIELLA ETMEKTSOGLU**

Gabriella provided an update that studio space at St. Agnes is now complete and that the first courses occurred a week prior to the Committee meeting. A grand opening will take place in May 2015, and the ceremony will include a jazz performance by Tisch alumni.

Kevin Kuhlke continues to pursue rehearsal space, and will be in Berlin in December to explore options. Kevin’s trip will coincide with the performance of the NYU Berlin Theater Group. This project was conceived to encourage students to artistically engage with their experience in Berlin and, in collaboration with a group of German high-school students, build an original, multi-lingual theater performance.

Additionally, Gabriella noted that NYU Berlin students are working on the third literary magazine to be published at NYU Berlin and that the first Global Liberal Studies-exclusive trip to Görlitz was a success. (More of these types of academic trips will be occurring in the future, focusing on border cities.)

One new course, “Ancient Art in Berlin: Discovering the Collections of Museum Island,” will be available next semester. Gabriella noted there are currently 29 faculty at NYU Berlin for both content and language courses; three of the faculty are on longer-term contracts and the rest are mostly based in German universities or are international artists/scholars. NYUB faculty also coordinate with other sites in a number of ways; one exchange recently occurred with the NYU Washington, D.C. site, and a coordinated trip with NYU London and NYU Florence faculty to Brussels is scheduled for spring 2015.

Commenting on the College Core Curriculum, Tom Ertman noted that there has been discussion about where to offer courses in the humanities. Core came to the conclusion that it was offering false incentives, encouraging students to delay taking Core “Cultures in Context” humanities courses until later in their studies, often at a global site. Core would like students to take these courses earlier in their studies and “Expressive Cultures” later. This is not intended to be a drastic shift, but there is a desire to expand the number of Expressive Courses offered at the global sites, which can be terrific resources for such curriculum. Mosette’s architecture course was one such example, and consideration for another course focusing on sculpture is also under discussion. Matthew also raised Performance Studies courses as a possibility, and Tom confirmed that he has been in conversation with Performance Studies. As a result, Expressive Cultures courses taught by Performance Studies faculty are now planned to be taught on the Square. Tom noted there is great potential for such offerings at the global sites as well; it is believed that such offerings at global sites will offer an additional incentive for students to study away.

Taking language barriers into account, the Committee noted that such expressive cultures courses could be tailored for a select group of students with exceptional language abilities.

Gabriella noted that the site has reached enrollment capacity of 100 students for Spring 2015, which will include 16 Tisch students. Gabriella said that the site has capacity for some expansion if needed, and can accommodate additional housing needs by assisting students with apartment searches or home stays. She noted the trend of students coming to the site in increasing numbers, and the respective departments following with the introduction of coursework (such as Tisch and Gallatin). Tom noted that it is sometimes difficult to find faculty who have both the expertise and experience teaching in a British or English system. Gabriella said there has been great success thus far, but that it is important to continue hiring in close collaboration with the respective department in New York and provide regular feedback and training. Gabriella noted that specialized training and ongoing dialogue with NYUB faculty have helped improve concerns regarding students' reading and writing skills. The Global Research Institute has been a great resource for faculty training, Gabriella said.

Matthew raised the issue of "mixed courses," that is courses in which some students who know German study texts in the original language. Gabriella clarified there is currently one such course at NYU Berlin: "Topics in German Cinema." Students are also encouraged to audit courses at Humboldt Universität. Gabriella noted one benefit to the overall site enrollment growth is that the number of students with advanced language skills also grows.

## **ENROLLMENTS AND CURRICULUM**

Global Programs provided the Committee with detailed enrollment data prior to the meeting. The Committee noted that enrollments for the spring and fall semesters have begun to stabilize, which is a good trend to see and not necessarily the case at all sites. Gabriella said this is due to a few additional course offerings in the fall. It was also noted that a large number of juniors are studying at NYU Berlin, in addition to the sizable number of visiting students (12 in Spring 2014 and 18 in Fall 2014). The visiting students are coming from quality institutions, such as Duke, Brown, and Princeton, Gabriella said.

Matthew asked the representatives from partner schools/departments to review their enrollments to see if anything stands out or needs further discussion. Small enrollments would be one such example, since they raise pedagogical, financial, and morale issues. Gabriella noted that this is typically not an issue at the site, and midterm evaluations are used to identify whether courses are successful or need improvements. Matthew noted Gabriella's great track record of identifying low-enrolled courses prior to their becoming an issue, and suggesting alternative approaches. Should the data raise any concerns, faculty should reach out to Janet Alperstein ([jalperstein@nyu.edu](mailto:jalperstein@nyu.edu)) or [global.academics@nyu.edu](mailto:global.academics@nyu.edu) for follow-up.

### **Process for Developing New Courses/Pathways**

The Committee appreciated the new course flowchart provided by Global Programs, and Gail Segal asked that this be distributed broadly among Global School Liaisons.

Chris Schlottman asked for an update on internships. Gabriella mentioned briefly that the internships are going well, and remain open to all who meet the language requirements and the submission deadlines. Chris also spoke with the Registrar, who mentioned formalizing a virtual

platform related to academic advising. Matthew clarified that an Academic Planner will soon be piloted, and then incorporated into the overall Global Arch website. This could be discussed at the next meeting in more detail.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Gail Segal requested that the helpful new course approval flowchart be circulated to global school liaisons. [*Completed on 11/14/14*].
- At the next meeting, the German Department/Global Programs will provide statistics on the historical record of students who have become German minors while studying at NYU Berlin or after their return to New York.
- Partner departments will take a look at their enrollment histories, particularly identifying any trends among low-enrolled courses. Should any such trends emerge, the Department should be in touch with Janet Alperstein.
- Topics for the Next Meeting: internships and the Global Arch Academic Planner.