

NYU Prague Site-Specific Advisory Committee

Inaugural Meeting: October 10, 2013 (8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. EDT)

IN ATTENDANCE

- Elliot Borenstein (FAS – Russian & Slavic Studies)
- Jo Dixon (CAS - Sociology)
- Allyson Green (Tisch)
- Chris Jaehnig (Tisch)
- Perri Klass (CAS – Journalism)
- Tomáš Klvaňa (NYU Prague)
- Linda Mills (Global Programs)
- Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)
- Jiri Pehe (Site Director – NYU Prague)
- Matthew Santirocco (Provost's Office)
- David Schroeder (Steinhardt)
- Aurora Wallace (Steinhardt)
- Larry Wolff (CAS – European Studies)

INTRODUCTIONS

On behalf of their departments/schools, members of the Committee introduced themselves, their areas of academic interest, and their relationship to NYU Prague.

FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Matthew Santirocco explained that the Site-Specific Advisory Committees grew out of extensive consultations last year with the Faculty Advisory Committee on the Global Network and the GNU Initiatives Committee of the Faculty Senators Council, as well as with the Site Directors, School and Global Deans, and many NYU departments, schools and faculty members. Four themes emerged from those conversations: (a) every site is different owing to its history and trajectory of development; (b) faculty would like to be more actively involved with the Global Sites, not only by approving course syllabi and instructors, as they do now, but by engaging in deeper conversations about curriculum planning and site identity; (c) while many faculty were involved in setting up and developing the Sites, they served primarily in an individual capacity and not as representatives of their schools and departments; and (d) no forum existed to discuss synergies among academic programs at the Global Sites. As a result, site-specific faculty committees were formed. The committees comprise faculty from schools and departments with existing or planned partnerships at Global Sites, though faculty from affiliated schools and departments will be invited to participate in the curriculum discussions of the site committees. (More information on these committees can be found here: www.nyu.edu/global/global-academic-partnerships-and-affiliations/faculty-discussions-on-global-sites.html)

SITE OVERVIEW

NYU Prague Site Director Jiri Pehe provided a brief overview of NYU Prague for the committee, elaborating on the materials shared with committee members in advance of the meeting, which covered the following:

- **Site Identity:** Jiri noted that NYU Prague has developed its own academic niche, drawing students mostly from three departments, MCC, Journalism, and Music, though a recent increase in the number of Stern students has led to changes in the site's curriculum. He added that NYU Prague has become an intellectual hub for the city, particularly because of the work of the Prague Institute for Democracy, Economy, and Culture (PIDEC), which promotes research and scholarly work, and is housed at the Site.
- **Faculty:** Jiri highlighted the prestige of the faculty at NYU Prague, noting that 73 percent had terminal degrees and 72 percent have full-time positions at academic or cultural institutions in Prague. The faculty includes veterans of the Czech Republic's Velvet Revolution and prominent figures in the country's transition to democratic rule and a market economy, including former Czech Foreign Minister Josef Zieleniec.
- **Language Programs:** NYU Prague is unique as a non-Anglophone site without a language requirement. Still, 50 percent of students take the opportunity to study one of the four foreign languages offered there: Czech, German, Polish, and Russian.
- **Facilities:** Jiri noted that NYU Prague has moved to a larger academic center to accommodate increasing enrollments, and that the leases for residence halls have been extended through 2018.
- **GRI:** Describing some of the projects supported by the Provost's Global Research Initiative in Prague, Jiri noted the potential for collaboration between the GRI and PIDEC.
- **Experiential Learning:** Jiri described the internship and volunteer opportunities for students at NYU Prague, highlighting in particular NYU student collaboration with the annual Prague Writer's Festival, which draws prestigious writers from around the globe. Through this partnership, NYU students assist in organizing the festival, cultivating ties with the local community and internationally renowned writers. Jiri is also working with the Music Department to explore whether this could be an appropriate model for collaboration with the Bohemian Jazz Festival in Prague.

Multiple committee members thanked Jiri and his staff in Prague for the quality of their work and close collaboration with the Square.

KEY ISSUES

The Committee discussed the following issues:

- **Curriculum:** The Committee agreed that a review of the curriculum would be useful in the development and promotion of academic pathways for students. While the "cluster model" has been successful, a re-balancing of courses may be beneficial to future students. Cross-listed courses are among the most popular with NYU Prague students.
- **Growing Stern Enrollments:** Stern students now comprise a significant portion of NYU Prague enrollments.

- **Financial Aid:** Committee members agreed that financial aid options should be explored to accommodate students with financial need who wish to study away. The recently announced Global Pathways Scholarship program (detailed in the attached memo) gives students with need up to \$4,000, over and above the individual aid packages distributed by schools to offset the costs of studying away. This is especially important for students interested in Prague, which is one of the few sites where work options for supplementary income are limited for non-EU citizens due to visa restrictions.
- **Journalism Double Major:** The Journalism Department requires its students to be double majors. This requirement sometimes creates challenges for students studying away, and this factor should be kept in mind during any curriculum review. It was suggested that program planning for students interested studying away should be encouraged as early as possible.
- **Summer Programs:** Jiri described the various summer programs taking place in Prague, including undergraduate courses sponsored by departments in New York and graduate student research. He added, however, that the Site is underutilized in the summer. The Tisch Amsterdam summer program could serve as a potential model for consideration. It was also noted that a developing partnership with an Australian university might help utilize resources in Prague during the summer.
- **Recruitment:** The committee agreed that it should also review strategies for drawing students to NYU Prague while reviewing the Site's curriculum.

NEXT STEPS

It was agreed that the committee should meet twice a semester. In order to understand the experience of NYU Prague students better, the next meeting will focus on several issues:

- The committee will take a closer look at enrollment data, course evaluations, and syllabi. This review will allow for an informed discussion of how best to increase enrollment predictability, to tailor the curriculum to those students, and to allow for the development/modification of cross-curricular coursework.
- Global Programs will talk to NYU Prague affiliates to solicit their feedback and bring it to the Committee at the next meeting.
- Global Programs will explore using student focus groups to understand better the student perspective on NYU Prague. MCC students are a possible focus group.