



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Faculty Advisory Committee on the Global Network
Thursday, April 2, 2015, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
President's Conference Room (Bobst Library, 12th Floor)

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Meeting Notes

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN MEETING

Eliot Borenstein, FAS (Russian & Slavic Studies) *Co-Chair*

Una Chaudhuri, FAS (English) and Tisch (Drama) *Co-Chair*

Patricia Corby, College of Dentistry

Chen Jian, NYU Shanghai

Don Garrett, FAS (Philosophy)

Paul Glimcher, FAS (Neural Science)

Liliana Goldin, Silver School of Social Work

Martin Klimke, NYU Abu Dhabi (FAS, History)

Ritty Lukose, Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Vicki Morwitz, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

Fred Myers, FAS (Anthropology)

David O'Connor, Institute of Fine Arts

Christopher Packard, Liberal Studies

Arvind Rajagopal, T-FSC (Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development)

Robert Rowe, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

Gail Segal, Tisch School of the Arts

Lisa Springer, School of Professional Studies

Joshua Tucker, FAS (Politics)

Nancy Van Devanter, College of Nursing; Global Institute of Public Health

Report on Meeting

Co-chairs Una Chaudhuri and Eliot Borenstein opened the meeting by welcoming all committee members.

The topic of discussion at the meeting was the recent travel ban of Professor Andrew Ross from the United Arab Emirates. Co-chair Eliot Borenstein first described the materials distributed for the committee's review at this meeting, including statements and resolutions from the Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty Senators Council and the Full-Time Non-Tenure Track/Contract Faculty Senators Council, Provost David W. McLaughlin, and the NYU chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP); as well as co-chair Una Chaudhuri's initial draft of a statement from this committee. Borenstein encouraged the committee to think about what it would seek to convey in its response.

The following points were made by committee members in discussion of this topic:

1. It was suggested that most NYU faculty feel that the response from the administration has been lacking, and that the travel restriction was clearly related to Ross's research. It was agreed that the committee should issue a statement of protest and concern. Committee members agreed that Chaudhuri's draft provided an excellent starting point and foundation for discussion.
 - a. Many committee members added it is important that the committee put out a statement quickly, noting that its charge is to reflect the views of the overall faculty.
 - b. Committee members discussed whether the statement should include a comparison to NYU affiliates being denied entry to the United States.
 - c. It was agreed that the committee's statement should not position itself in opposition to the Provost and the President, and that it should aim to represent the views of the faculty as a whole, not merely defend Ross as a specific faculty member. It was further noted that expressing a sentiment of faculty indignation and concern can serve as a source of support for the administration.
 - d. Committee members agreed that the statement should be unequivocal about the importance and non-negotiable nature of academic freedom, regardless of geographical location.
 - e. The committee discussed what kind of message it would wish to convey in issuing a statement: a wish for the university to disengage completely from UAE and China, or an encouragement for NYU to continue to engage the governments of the UAE and China, insisting on academic freedom while conducting research and teaching within those countries.
 - f. It was suggested that the committee's statement, in addition to voicing concern about the threat to academic freedom, should also commit to fact-finding about this case and about mobility through the global network in general.
 - g. Committee members discussed whether or not the statement should express "outrage" on behalf of the faculty in its response, or simply state that "academic freedom is non-negotiable." There was some disagreement on this point.
 - h. One committee member suggested that the statement should address a few productive tensions that must be negotiated: (i) formally traveling through the

structure of the GNU vs. traveling for research purposes in general; (ii) the specificity of this incident vs. the opportunity to move forward through reporting mechanisms, etc.; and (iii) the work of this committee, whether it is signaling opinions to a broader public vs. holding the administration accountable.

- i. Committee members also agreed that the statement should keep in mind the points of view both of faculty at NYU New York and faculty at NYUAD.
 - j. It was suggested that the statement refrain from assuming that an active investigation of the Ross case is currently underway, and that it instead should urge the administration to openly conduct such an investigation.
 - k. It was noted that Chaudhuri's draft response concludes with recommendations focused on mobility and on how NYUAD and NYUSH faculty members have been navigating the landscape of academic freedom at the Portals. It was largely agreed that the committee's statement should focus on long-term, big-picture issues such as the spirit of these recommendations, rather than on the particulars of the Ross case.
2. It was noted that there have been other cases of visa denials presenting barriers to academic freedom in the global network, which have not received as much media coverage.
 - a. The committee agreed that its response should not be directed at the *New York Times* report, but should instead address the long-term implications of the case for academic freedom.
 - b. It was noted that the portal campuses provide an opportunity for NYU faculty to illuminate global issues of academic and artistic freedom and to resist the intrusion of politics in higher education. The committee agreed that, while NYU cannot allow politics to compromise its commitment to academic freedom, it must also be realistic that there are travel restrictions throughout much of the world.
 - c. One committee member added that there is still information to be released surrounding labor issues during the construction of the NYU Abu Dhabi Saadiyat Island campus.
 3. Committee members discussed limitations of current information about Professor Ross's case and about restrictions of research conducted by NYU faculty across the global network.
 - a. It was noted that the investigation of Ross's case is not necessarily closed, and that more details may still come to light.
 - b. It was also agreed that there are limitations on research in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai, that the NYU community has long been willing to accept some of those tradeoffs and limitations, and that limitations also exist on research conducted in the U.S.
 - c. Some committee members responded that it would be counterproductive for the committee in this statement to address in detail restrictions on research in the United States.
 4. It was suggested that a member of the administration be invited to visit the committee at one of its upcoming meetings in order to discuss this issue.
 - a. It was, however, noted that this might require a premise of confidentiality, while the committee operates on a principle of transparency and public access to all its discussions.

5. Committee members discussed the relevance of the fact that Ross was not traveling to Abu Dhabi through an arrangement with NYU Abu Dhabi—he had not informed NYUAD colleagues that he was traveling to Abu Dhabi, and did not go through the normal steps of NYU's visa application process—and to what extent that fact changes the responsibility of NYU administration. There was no opportunity for NYU administration to intervene in Ross's case before he was denied entry.
 - a. Some committee members argued that it is more important simply to keep in mind that Ross was denied entry to the UAE because of his public statements. It was also noted that other cases of visa denials within the global network have not been publicized—Ross is not the first.

6. Committee members reported on the response to the news of Ross's denied entry among NYU Abu Dhabi faculty.
 - a. The NYUAD faculty has known Ross and his work for a long time, and there is respect for his academic work and for his advocacy work. He has taken part in several town halls and labor discussions at NYUAD. The commitment of NYUAD faculty to continue to work with the NYUAD coalition for fair labor is very clear, and will continue regardless of this particular incident.
 - b. Faculty representatives at NYUAD attended a series of meetings with NYUAD leadership in the week following the event, which were followed by the issuing of several statements and resolutions. The T-FSC continues to work on a resolution that will be brought to the Senate in the near future.
 - c. Mobility and academic freedom are both taken very seriously as related but separate issues at NYUAD, and the NYUAD faculty sees this case primarily through the lens of mobility. There is a sense across NYUAD that issues of academic freedom are being gradually but seriously addressed.
 - d. Many NYUAD faculty members have expressed concern that nobody on campus knew Ross was coming, since he did not follow the regular procedures that would have given NYUAD a greater ability to address this issue earlier on. There is the sense on the NYUAD campus that there might have been more of a chance for Ross to move ahead with his research had he chosen to avail himself of the resources that NYUAD offers in terms of cooperating with immigration authorities.
 - e. NYUAD faculty members generally do not hold the view that the mere fact of being a member of the NYU faculty automatically grants the right to travel to any site with which NYU has an affiliation—there is agreement that the processes in place must be respected.
 - f. Thus, the committee was urged to consider what would have happened if Ross had been traveling on invitation from NYUAD. One committee member also urged that the statement (or perhaps a separate statement) should inform the NYU faculty about the fact that Ross was not traveling on official NYUAD business, and about mobility barriers that also exist for faculty traveling to the U.S.
 - g. It was suggested that, in a broader conversation about mobility, the administration be asked to provide clear and regularly updated data about travel and impediments in the GNU, including issues with student travel.
 - h. It was also suggested that the committee use this data to educate the community about these challenges to mobility. One committee member suggested requesting an annual report from the Office of Global Programs or Office of Global Services that would then be reviewed either by the FSCs or

by this committee. Another committee member identified the need for establishing institutional “triggers” to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

- i. It was also noted that NYUAD faculty would like their colleagues across the global network to be more aware of the constraints under which they regularly operate (e.g. the impact of recent events in Yemen and Syria on NYUAD faculty life with increased security clearances, etc.). Several committee members expressed the importance of opinions from all faculty members—both at the Square and at the Portals—being expressed in this statement.
7. It was suggested that Ross be invited to visit the committee personally.
 - a. Most committee members disagreed with this suggestion, since it would likely distract from the long-term focus on mobility issues in the global network beyond Ross’s case.
 8. One committee member urged the committee to keep in mind its commitment to working with the labor coalition at NYU Abu Dhabi, and to mindfully distinguish between the construction phase of the Saadiyat campus and issues moving forward. A reminder was stated that the Nardello report on the construction phase is forthcoming.

Co-chairs Chaudhuri and Borenstein proposed that they revise the draft statement based on feedback and priorities raised at this meeting. They urged committee members to send any specific language suggestions to the co-chairs immediately. It was agreed that the statement should be issued the following week. The co-chairs stated they would have a second draft sent out to the committee by Monday, April 6th at the latest.

The planned discussion of faculty forums with NYU Shanghai and NYU Abu Dhabi was deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.