Faculty Advisory Committee on the University's Global Network

Development of the Global Network: Principles and Tensions
[Document In Process]

As a constellation of sites and portals throughout the world, NYU’s Global Network could grow into a set of valuable resources for teaching and research. As the network develops, it should, ideally, serve as the springboard for international collaborative scholarship and for an exchange of ideas and experience across continents. These new opportunities—which could be realized through technological connectivity as well as by actual movement through the network—represent an unprecedented range of potential advantages for NYU faculty and students. However, the planning and operation of a global university constitute uncharted territory for higher education, and these opportunities also come with concerns.

The “principles” articulated below are intended as values for guiding all matters in the global network, and the “tensions” are intended to represent built-in pressures that need, first, to be acknowledged, and then carefully monitored going forward.

A. Principles

1. The development of the global network should not occur at the expense of the development of schools, departments and programs in New York. The quality of our existing programs must be safeguarded in the following areas and ways:
   - Financial resources should not be diverted from NY to global sites and portals.

---

1 The “global network” refers to the three “portal campuses” (NYUNY, NYUAD, and NYUSH) and the eleven “Study Away Sites” (Accra, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Florence, London, Madrid, Paris, Prague, Sydney, Tel Aviv, and Washington, D.C.). The fundamental difference between these two kinds of entities (portals and sites) must be kept in mind as policies and other modalities are developed for the network.

2 These general ideas do not constitute either a report or recommendations, which we hope to issue by the end of the academic year. We anticipate that our work going forward will consist of (1) fine-tuning these fundamentals, and (2) seeking modalities to put them into operation.
• The flow of New York-based faculty to the global portals should be managed to avoid any shortfall in the scale, range and quality of curricular offerings and research activities in NY units. Departments and schools should have final approval over which of their personnel and activities participate in other parts of the university's global network, and when.

• Any increase in the workload of New York units that results from global initiatives should be fairly distributed, properly recognized, and appropriately compensated.

• The flow of undergraduate students to the global sites should be guided and constrained by a commitment to ensuring that students follow the best possible pathway through their major program(s) of study, and that their progress towards the degree not be impeded or retarded. Departments, programs, and schools should have ultimate and unfettered authority to establish requirement and recommendations regarding study away for their majors.

• Any development of graduate programs should at NYUAD or NYUSH should be managed to ensure that there is no negative impact on the size and quality of graduate programs in NYUNY.

• Participation in global initiatives must be voluntary and should not be a yardstick for measuring the success or vitality of a department or other academic unit. Global initiatives cannot be the only path for a department or academic unit's development.

2. Global initiatives must be developed according to the principles of shared governance, with broad and meaningful consultation of the relevant departments, programs, and academic units. There should be clearly defined processes for NYU units to participate in program and curriculum development at the sites, and for collaboration with the portals, as well as reporting system back to the departments.

3. The development of global programs should not create disparities in academic quality across the network.

• Students: Resources should be devoted to ensuring that all schools can compete financially for the best students—for example, by increasing financial aid resources for undergraduate students in NY and by including financial support for international students.

• Faculty: Shared and well-articulated standards of professional qualifications, research and teaching excellence, and work expectations should guide the development and growth of the faculties at the portals, as at the Square.

4. The development of global programs should not disrupt the established and valued traditions and protocols of the different schools at the Square, nor force any unwelcome standardization upon them. The same principle applies to different departments or units within the schools. We need standardization of protections, but not standardization of models.
5. To ensure the academic quality of all programs offered by NYU, wherever they may be, every effort should be made, and resources should be allocated, to enhance connections and facilitate collaboration between the faculty members, departments, and academic units that represent the same discipline in different parts of the global network, including the movement of all NY faculty through the network.

6. The principle of academic freedom must be preserved and defended throughout the global network, as at the Square. Our students, at home and abroad, must be assisted in understanding how the demands of free inquiry relate to the behavioral norms, cultural traditions or tensions, and laws in different places. Every effort should be made to address these issues publicly and transparently so that neither academic speech nor research is chilled by fear or uncertainty.

B. Tensions

1. While there is nothing like universal support for the idea or fact of a “global network,” and even strong opposition to parts of it, the establishment of the two portal campuses makes the global network a reality that NYU faculty must attend to.

2. Autonomy versus integration, or diversity vs. standardization. The global network will reproduce—and even heighten—a tension we have long dealt with here at the Square: wanting to preserve the special character and traditions of our different schools while maximizing our students’ and colleagues’ opportunities to interact, collaborate, and benefit from synergies. In the case of global, we will want our sites and portals to reflect and engage with the unique cultural identities of their respective locations, while at the same time being navigable for all our students and upholding the same rigorous academic standards.

3. Centralization vs. Departmental control
Departmental control is essential to maintain the quality of the curriculum and in faculty recruitment. Yet, the development of the global network has already produced an unprecedented acceleration of centralization of control, partly because the scale and range of locations—and the vast variety of special issues (legal, governmental, etc.) raised in each location—make it necessary to route departmental involvement through centralized operational structures. It is essential to ensure that those centralized structures do not conflict with departments’ values and needs.

4. Need for wide and deep involvement of NYUNY faculty and departments (see items 2 and 3 above) versus crippling increases in workloads, and unmanageable proliferation of committees.
5. Need for transparency, clarity, and explicit statement of policy versus need for flexibility, nimbleness of response, and ability to make “course corrections.” Especially in early stages of the development of a site or portal, a “trial-and-error” approach is needed; however, every effort should be made to make all existing policies, even provisional ones, as explicit, clear, and widely known as possible.

A related tension stems from the constraints on transparency based on confidentiality agreements with our funding partners, as well as their need to institute certain educational values in an incremental, culturally sensitive, and less public manner than we might.

6. Conflicting timetables: the goal of recruiting a high-quality faculty can conflict with the need to staff the curricula at the new portals immediately.

7. While the successful recruitment of first-tier faculty to the portals would be enhanced by the presence of first-tier doctoral students at those portals, the small size of the portal programs makes it impractical for them to have their own doctoral programs at this time. Solving this problem by recruiting doctoral students to NY for initial training and then exporting them to the portals for part of their doctoral work raises novel educational challenges and places an additional burden on NY faculty. Balancing the need for doctoral students at the portals with the challenge of long-distance doctoral supervision will be critical.