Subcommittee on Student Enrollment and Student Experience in the Global Network: October 10, 2013

Areas for Further Study

After meeting in June, 2013, Joyce Apsel and Andrea Chambers of the Subcommittee on Student Enrollment and Student Experience submitted a series of questions and issues of interest and requested related data on student enrollment and experiences to Linda Mills, Vice Chancellor, Global Programs and University Life. Over the following months, Linda Mills and her staff collected data from various sources into a central document, and the Subcommittee appreciates their work in providing information about the NYU global sites and portals.

On September 18, 2013, in a meeting also attended by Una Chaudhuri and Eliot Borenstein, Linda Mills presented a PowerPoint overview of the data collected in response to the Subcommittee's questions. This compilation of data has been subsequently sent to all members of the NYU Global Network University Faculty Committee.

After review of the data, the Subcommittee makes the following comments and recommendations, and requests follow up and additional data from the Office of Global Programs (OGP):

Issues, Questions to Work On/How to Proceed

The Student Subcommittee presented the following issues and questions, and requested the following information:

1. How effective are current practices of student enrollment and assessment, taking into account specific student demographics and admissions criteria?

- Request past, current and more detailed statistics on enrollment in sites and portals including 2012-2013 numbers and additional background such as: nationality; first language; year of study (first, second, etc., graduate and year); major; gender.
- Request data on particular challenges of students enrolled at specific sites and portals such as English fluency, high school training, adequate facilities, etc.
- Request application standards such as, for example, minimum GPA and explanation of if/how application standards vary according to the above criteria in sites/portals.

Overview of Material Provided:

While many GNU Study Away sites have shown sustained and steady growth over a five-year period, a number have experienced a reduction in enrollment. The two portals Shanghai and Abu Dhabi exhibit growth in enrollment.

In AY 2012-13, 3206 NYU undergraduates studied abroad for at least one term. Beside sites with first-year entry programs, the majority of students go abroad in their junior year.

The student population in terms of gender and diversity is broken down by each site with a graph for comparison with WSQ and "Other Study Away Sites." While the percentage varies, more female than male students predominate at Study Away sites. Comparing diversity was difficult as the data varied across sites. Assembling and providing site-wide data about diversity in a single document would be valuable in assessing enrollment patterns (see below).

Students admitted to the Study Away sites must have a minimum 3.0 GPA and an absence of any major disciplinary action on their record. (Graduate and summer/January term programs have varying admissions standards as admission to these programs is managed by the individual departments.)

While facilities at the sites vary, according to the literature provided, there seems to be a general regard for providing services and accommodations that are at least equal to those on the Square. Generally, sites are listed as conveniently located and appointed. Student comfort and the quality of student life are listed as important factors at the sites.

Areas to be probed/followed up:

In evaluating the material provided by the Office of Global Affairs, the Subcommittee on Student Enrollment and Student Experience of the NYU Global Network University reports that in a number of areas, there has been ongoing collection of data about student assessment and enrollment at the GNU. Continuing coordination of this data for comparative analysis and planning is important. In specific areas noted below, however, it would be important going forward to begin to gather more data to improve evaluative tools about the characteristics and overall experience of students participating in the GNU.

Information absent from the materials important for further evaluation includes the following points:

- First language or English fluency at each site and how evaluated
- Fluency/ level of proficiency in the language spoken in the GNU host country prior to departure
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of EFL or ESL programs available
- Factors contributing to variations in enrollment trends at sites 2008-2012

- Academic majors and areas of interest across all sites and portals, including data on courses students want to take vs. those departments prefer to offer and how these decisions are implemented. (For example, are core courses or electives more desirable at Study Away sites? What are the criteria in place and rationale behind these curriculum decisions?)
- Percentage of non-NYU students permitted to study at each site and portal.
- What is the policy going forward on non-NYU students studying at NYU sites? For example, will this practice be continued, expanded, or discontinued over time. Will there be a different policy at different sites?
- As pointed out by the Office of Global Affairs, data can be presented in a number of ways. The Subcommittee would find it helpful if there were charts collating materials on gender, ethnicity and other diversity information that provide more comparative evaluation across sites and portals along with the site- by-site evaluations already provided. In addition, the same format in regard to academic majors and areas of interest would be valuable for assessment and planning.

2. What is the process/level of support for advising students about the GNU experience and preparing them for study abroad as well as for re-entry to their home portal? Is this process and level of support adequate for increasingly complex student needs?

Requested documents and information where available for student advisement before and during stay at site/portals, such as information on process and resources for site selection and global pathways; pre-departure preparedness and re-entry; types of support and advisement available for students.

Overview of Material Provided:

The Office of Global Programs (OGP) has in place a series of resources to provide information and student support with regard to the GNU experience on site and upon re-entry, though some improvements are needed and planned.

Pre-departure, detailed information is presented to students through online links and one on-site orientation. However, no timetable was provided for the pre-departure orientation. Anecdotal student evidence suggests that this information is often presented too close to departure. OPG is now taking steps to spread out orientation materials throughout the pre-departure semester and to provide more detailed advice earlier in the pre-departure timetable.

In addition, the OGP works with academic departments and advisors to provide information on various sites. Beginning with AY 2013-14, student services staff of the OGP will be assigned to specific academic areas to better coordinate academic advising.

Immigration support, both pre-departure and upon re-entry, health insurance through HTH Worldwide and NYU Traveler are made available to students.

On site, there is 24-hour support, including crisis management and general wellness counseling for students encountering difficulties with the transition. No data was presented on current student needs/issues and whether the level of support was adequate to those needs.

Upon re-entry, students are again provided with online resources and invited to join the Global Ambassadors group as well as attend specific site-related cultural activities to stay connected to their study abroad experience.

Areas to be probed/followed up by the Committee:

- The data presented does not specifically address the question posed by the Subcommittee: *Is this process and level of support adequate for increasingly complex student needs?* It would therefore seem that further analysis is needed as to whether the level of support currently provided is indeed adequate. For example, at what sites or portals is full-time psychological support available? Is there any feedback on how often such resources are requested or used? Further information may take the form of a student survey or more in-depth analysis of specific student issues as well as the resolution process for key areas of student acclimatization, both academic and social.
- How does the NYU level of student preparedness at all stages of the study away experience compare with that of other global programs? Are there any lessons we might learn from interviewing representatives from one or more other schools that provide global study?

3. What is the level of student satisfaction at portal campuses and sites?

Current data on student satisfaction at portal campuses and sites in terms of: intellectual rigor and quality of teaching; student life; housing and facilities; general student support and advising.

Overview of material provided:

Recent surveys of student satisfaction conducted by the International Affairs Committee of the Student Senators Council show a generally positive response to the Study Away experience, with student life receiving the highest score (8.64 vs. 7.6 for both academics and on-site preparedness and 6.19 for pre-departure preparedness.) Several sites receive lower scores in most areas. It would be helpful to follow up and find out why and what

can be learned from these less positive responses. Again, there is a need to balance understanding patterns and trends across the Global Network University with assessing the particularities of each site and portal.

In anecdotal evidence provided, students expressed dissatisfaction with the following:

- Confusion and late material in pre-departure orientation process
- Confusion and difficulties acquiring jobs/internships and general level of support and consistency in these areas
- Failure to be immersed/involved in local culture
- Course/major availability
- Lack of consistency with matching classes in NYU
- Inadequate advising

The International Affairs Committee of the Student Senators Council has proposed some general remedies/recommendations, but these seem to be ad hoc at this time.

<u>Areas to be probed/followed up by the Committee:</u>

Additional and more detailed research is needed to look into areas of concern noted above by students. Steps are being made to address some of these concerns such as involvement from Wasserman for jobs and internships; more interaction with local cultural groups and universities; more involvement from the academic departments. Nevertheless, a broader initiative on all these fronts is warranted. The new "Global Encounters" course required at all sites is designed to address some of these issues; it would be helpful to have more detail on the training, course content and methods used to convey the information at all sites and portals.

How does preparation and re-entry vary among different programs, disciplines and divisions? What can be learned from existing programs about providing students with support before, during and after their stay at a site or portal?

4. What are the current and planned evaluative tools for assessment of the student global experience?

Request all available surveys and focus group reports on quality of student experience and plans for further information gathering with an explanation of the evaluative tools used in the past and planned for the future.

Overview of Material Provided:

A series of tools and metrics for assessment and evaluation at sites was provided both from outside studies such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as well as on-site program evaluations. A number of ways to collect, analyze, and distribute course and other evaluation data to on site faculty and staffs as well as departments in WSQ were discussed.

In subsequent documents, Linda Mills has provided additional material on student course evaluations:

Global Programs conducts evaluations for all courses at the global sites (Abu Dhabi evaluations are conducted separately) regardless of the course's sponsoring school or department. The survey instrument includes 16 quantitative questions that are uniform across all sites. These questions are derived from the UAAC-recommended questions provided to all NYU schools and departments designed to help ensure consistency and comparability among student responses to courses. In addition to the 16 core questions on the survey, site directors have been allowed to add up to two additional quantitative questions to address local needs. The survey instrument also includes one section for students' open-ended feedback. The prompt for this feedback can vary slightly based on site director preference.

Evaluations are comparable to courses at Washington Square in that all surveys conducted by schools in New York are encouraged to follow the UAAC guidelines. However, as individual schools conduct their own evaluations in New York, and use different survey instruments, some variation in questions and the answer scale used exists.

 Beside course evaluations, there are also a series of end-of-semester program/site evaluations for students to comment on student experiences including academics, advisement, housing, and general support.

Areas to be probed/followed up by the Committee:

More information on how the Office of Global Programs can facilitate coordination between undergraduate programs and departments at WSQ and global sites is needed. What are some of the concrete problems for students in terms of completing requirements for majors and minors, and quality control across sites and portals? How and what evaluative metrics will be used in planning to improve present offerings at sites and portals; and in future planning? In addition, more information is needed on the academic experience of students returning to the Square. Do they find the level of academic rigor

and scholarship comparable, greater, or less than that on the Square? What are the sources and methods of evaluating this data?

The Subcommittee also requested information on the number of students who transfer out after returning from global study. Linda Mills has provided the following information:

The Office of Institutional Research (IR) confirmed that there is currently very little information on students who leave NYU; there are also challenges with obtaining relevant information once they have transferred. The University has only slightly more information on internal transfer patterns and we are in discussions with IR to analyze that data in a meaningful way, particularly with regard to study away status. Specifically, we are looking to see what, if any, differences there are in the transfer patterns of those who studied away vs. those who did not study away. Understanding why students transfer is complex, but we hope that the available data will help us see if there are significant differences in the groups and possibly help illuminate a better way of identifying transfer patterns/experiences in the global sites.

 Finally, it would be very helpful to provide sources of data supplied where available.

5. *How are graduate students currently integrated into the GNU and what are the plans for future expansion of graduate study and resources?*

Given the work of the Faculty Subcommittee on Graduate Programs and Faculty Research, this Subcommittee is going to limit its focus to the collecting of data and experience of undergraduates.

Concluding Remarks:

In Conclusion, the Subcommittee again requests additional data in the following areas:

- Charts collating materials on gender, ethnicity and other diversity information that provide more comparative evaluation across sites and portals along with site-by-site evaluations already provided. In addition, the same format in regard to academic majors and areas of interest would be valuable for assessment.
- Data on first language or English fluency/level of proficiency at each site and how evaluated
- Data on fluency/ level of proficiency in the language spoken in the GNU host country prior to departure
- Data on evaluation of the effectiveness of EFL or ESL programs available
- Data on factors contributing to variations in enrollment trends at sites 2008-2012
- Data on academic majors and areas of interest across all sites and portals

- Data on support services at the sites and portals, including student psychological support and counseling
- Data on pre-departure and re-entry preparedness

In addition, the Subcommittee has identified the following areas of related interest for further analysis by the Office of Global Programs and for suggested discussion by the Committee at large:

- Is there any evidence, statistical or anecdotal, that students with higher GPAs do significantly better in a GNU experience than those who meet only the 3.0 minimum? If that proves to be true through data analysis, how can this information be used for long-term curriculum development such as a GNU "Scholars" program or general advanced courses?

- How do first language and proficiency/ fluency in the language of the host country factor into a) student satisfaction with the GNU experience and b) success therein. Based upon the response, should the Committee put forward recommendations for language study/preparedness before the GNU semester(s)? What about English proficiency and critical thinking skills for students entering portals or other sites with freshman programs?

- In evaluating the NYU level of student preparedness at all stages of the study away experience, it may be helpful to compare the GNU with that of other global programs. Are there lessons we might learn from interviewing representatives from one or more other universities that provide global study programs?