New York University
Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee

Interim Advisory on
The Influence of NYU’s Global Network on the Student Experience in New York

Spring 2016

Background

In April 2015, Provost McLaughlin asked the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee (UAAC) to explore the influence of NYU’s global network on the student experience in New York. In particular, he asked the group to advise him on (a) the impact of curricular innovations piloted at the portal campuses and global sites; (b) how the presence of incoming study-away students from NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai enhances the experience of New York-based students; (c) how these students from the portals should be integrated with their counterparts in New York; and (d) how their presence affects the way that faculty teach.

This is not the first time that the UAAC has explored issues related to the global network. In spring 2011, responding to a request from the Provost, the committee issued an “Advisory on the Implications of the Global Network University for Undergraduate Education.” Although the recommendations within that earlier advisory focused primarily on study away at NYU’s global campuses, as well as at the two new portal campuses, consideration was also given to the increasingly international composition of NYU’s student body—now over 20 percent international in New York alone—and the need to support these students as they circulate throughout the global network. The following year, the committee followed up on one of its spring 2011 recommendations regarding international students, by issuing an “Advisory on the Awarding of Advanced Standing for Country-Specific Standardized Tests” (spring 2012), to which an amendment was added in spring 2013. Together, these two documents identified a total of seven international examinations (other than the Advanced Placement and the International Baccalaureate) for which advanced standing could be awarded and made recommendations about what the minimum score on each exam should be and how many points should be awarded for each eligible exam. Following approval by the Provost and the Undergraduate Deans, the policies outlined in these two documents were implemented immediately.

Over the course of the 2015-16 academic year, the members of the UAAC discussed the various aspects of Provost McLaughlin’s spring 2015 charge. Since this is a very large and complex question, and since hard data are needed to explore certain aspects of it, it was agreed that the committee should limit its focus this year to one important and basic topic, viz., student flows both in and out of New York.

To that end, the members reviewed enrollment reports provided by the Registrar and by the Office of Global Programs. The data contained within these reports included the total numbers of students from NYU’s New York schools who studied away over the past six semesters, as well as the total numbers of students who came to New York from Abu Dhabi and
Shanghai, and from other institutions (i.e., visiting students admitted through University Programs). Although the number of incoming students has grown, so, too, has the number of outbound students; and while the number of outbound students is still far larger than that of incoming students, there is a significant imbalance between the fall and the spring: since New York-based students currently study away in far greater numbers in the spring semester, the overall number of students in New York is much larger in the fall.

The reports also showed the fall 2015 and spring 2016 courses in New York with the highest concentrations of students from NYUAD and NYUSH. (These two semesters were chosen because the 2015-16 academic year was the first in which students from NYUSH were eligible to study away.) These data confirmed that many of the academic units that have historically experienced significant enrollment pressure are also attracting large numbers of incoming study-away students from NYUAD and NYUSH.

**Recommendations**

Having reviewed the results of this impact study, the UAAC makes the following two, multi-part recommendations:

1. A larger conversation about the theory of student circulation should take place within the appropriate venues at NYU. The following topics should be addressed as part of this conversation:
   a. the goals of circulation;
   b. the implicit expectations in terms of access to courses, faculty, and resources; and
   c. possible conflicts with longstanding policies, as well as University-wide priorities, regarding undergraduate education.

2. In the meantime, however, the accommodation of students from NYUAD and NYUSH in courses offered by schools in New York can be facilitated in the following ways:
   a. To ease the imbalance between fall and spring, schools and departments in New York should be strongly encouraged to develop fall-semester study-away pathways to the global sites and portal campuses.
   b. To facilitate planning, students at NYUAD and NYUSH should be surveyed about the kinds of courses they need or wish to take while studying abroad in New York, so that the New York schools can plan to offer additional sections of these courses or enlarge existing ones to accommodate demand.
   c. NYUAD and NYUSH should also be encouraged to share their projections for growth in certain disciplinary and professional areas with the relevant schools in New York.
d. Schools and departments in New York should explore strategies for accommodating students interested in chronically oversubscribed courses (in particular, those with space and staffing constraints)—e.g., giving priority to students in relevant majors; directing students to equivalent or similar courses in other schools; using technology to teach these courses in a blended format, which could allow for additional course sections to be mounted; and offering the courses, where possible, during summer and the January term.

e. They should also proactively recommend courses that incoming study-away students might take, and the advising offices at NYUAD and NYUSH should promote these among their students—not only could this help ease pressure on a few oversubscribed courses, but given the larger scale and complexity of New York, it could also help these students locate opportunities that they might not find on their own.

f. Finally, schools in New York should review their policies and practices regarding advanced standing and earlier registration appointments for students with AP, IB, and approved country-specific exam scores, since these may put students from NYUAD and NYUSH (which do not award advanced standing) at a disadvantage when registering for courses. (This may also be a problem for international students who are based in New York but come from countries where the national exam has not been approved for NYU credit.)

**Next steps**

This is an interim advisory, since further consultation is needed in order for the committee to respond to all aspects of Provost McLaughlin’s charge. Having discussed this charge in detail, however, the committee is prepared to continue exploring this topic next year.

With regard to possible impacts on the way that New York faculty teach, several committee members have suggested that the presence of students from the other portals may be less relevant than that of international students more broadly. Although students’ home schools (including NYUAD and NYUSH) are listed in class rosters available via the Faculty Center in Albert/SIS, many instructors do not make use of this tool and are therefore unaware of the diversity of NYU backgrounds within their own classes. It may be desirable, therefore, to promote use of the Faculty Center among instructors. But since these rosters do not contain information about national origin, instructors have no way of knowing (without conducting their own surveys) what students’ familiarity might be with certain concepts, vocabulary, or idiomatic expressions, or which cultural norms might be informing their participation in class. With this in mind, next year the committee proposes to explore existing models for providing support for instructors teaching in a multicultural classroom.

Finally, with regard to the integration of incoming study-away students from NYUAD and NYUSH, the UAAC notes that several programmatic changes are already underway to increase these students’ engagement with various New York communities, both on and off
campus. The Faculty Fellows in Residence, for example, have opened up space in their activities to students from NYUAD and NYUSH, regardless of the residence hall to which they are assigned. This affords them the opportunity not only to meet more faculty and students but also to explore the city in greater depth. In addition, a number of changes are being introduced to orientation programs that are offered to these students upon arrival. These include moving a number of information sessions to an online format and integrating workshops by the Office of Global Services on adjusting to US culture. Starting in May 2016, a survey will be administered every semester to these students, asking them to evaluate their experience of New York as a study-away site. (This parallels the site surveys that are administered to study-away students at our global sites as well as at NYUAD and NYUSH.) The committee proposes to review these survey results next year, and also to examine what impacts changes to programming have on students’ ability to make the most of their time in New York and on their sense of integration into the local student body.