



# NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

**Faculty Committee on the Global Network  
Tuesday, February 6, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.  
President's Conference Room, Bobst Library**

## **MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETING**

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

**Martin Klimke**, NYU Abu Dhabi, *Co-Chair*

**Sylvain Cappell**, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences

**Una Chaudhuri**, FAS and Tisch School of the Arts

**Billie Gastic**, School of Professional Studies

**Alexander Geppert**, NYU Shanghai

**Guido Gerig**, Tandon School of Engineering

**Brendan Hogan**, Liberal Studies

**Sam Howard-Spink**, Continuing Contract Faculty Senators Council

**Dale Hudson**, NYU Abu Dhabi

**Matthew Kleban**, FAS (Physics)

**Kristie Koenig**, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

**Rachel Law**, Student Senators Council

**Heather Lee**, NYU Shanghai

**Teboho Moja**, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

**Yaw Nyarko**, Provostial At-Large Liaison

**Todd Porterfield**, Gallatin School of Individualized Study

**Gail Segal**, Tisch School of the Arts

**Mal Semple**, Global Sites (NYU Sydney)

**Paul Smoke**, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

**Allison Squires**, Rory Meyers College of Nursing

**Carol Sternhell**, FAS (Journalism)

**Jiawei Zhang**, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

## Guests

**Zvi Ben-Dor Benite**, Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Network Faculty Planning

## **MEETING NOTES**

Eliot Borenstein introduced Zvi Ben-Dor Benite. Now that Ben-Dor has been in the role for one year, Borenstein and co-chair Martin Klimke invited him to give the committee an overview of his work so far. The second half of the meeting will be used to discuss coordinated hiring, which also falls under Ben-Dor's purview.

Ben-Dor asked first read to a statement on the recent denial of security clearance to NYU faculty:

### ***Statement of Zvi Ben-Dor Benite***

*Though I did not come to the committee to compete with prior statements, I did think it would be helpful to provide my recollection of events since I was specifically mentioned here in a previous meeting.*

*First, I would like to state three things.*

1. *Prior to November 2017, NYU Abu Dhabi's affiliation program was not a part of my portfolio in any way. (I was previously a part of the NYU Shanghai affiliation program only.)*
2. *I have been a member of MEIS for many years and served as department chair until Fall of 2016. I was -- and remain -- accustomed to helping my colleagues in this department.*
3. *I note, not without irony, that our professional identities and work as historians and scholars in this department in particular center on a very sensitive issue over which human beings have no control: their origin.*

*Now, what Arang Keshavarzian, my colleague of many years, seems to be implying in the minutes is a mischaracterization of my actions and intentions.*

*To be clear, I never discussed Keshavarzian's visa denial with Dean Young, and in fact, I was not familiar with the details of the denial, nor was Dean Young aware that I was going to speak to Keshavarzian.*

*It was Keshavarzian himself who informed me, in mid-August, of what had happened, when I bumped into him on the street near our department. He told me of the visa situation, which upset me greatly. I believe he was telling me about what had happened as both a colleague and friend. In that conversation we even commiserated about the shared experience of not being able to go to various places because of our respective national identities. Still not knowing much, I told him that I was going to check if there was anything being done. Once I learned that the university had also recently become aware of the situation, I wrote to Arang to ask if we could meet. Since he was on vacation I followed up with him by phone about few days later.*

*As for the "offer that he go elsewhere" (a wording that I heard a lot since last September) – I did not offer that. I have been for years very committed to strengthening the connections between MEIS and NYUAD's Arab Crossroads Program and I w. I offered to explore the possibility of going to another site, but I made it clear this was without any connection to the outcome of visa appeal and for very different reasons: I told him that if for personal reasons it would help him to be away for the semester, I could look into other options for him. I also made that point clear in my last conversation with him. In fact, only a few months earlier, I was asked by a member of Keshavarzian's family to help do just that. I have been aware for some time now of Keshavarzian's family's living situation and believed this to be a factor in his desire to spend time away from New York. My goal was to offer help to Keshavarzian and was not positioned as anything else. I said this on the phone and I made that point even more perfectly clear to him in the conversation we had on September 12<sup>th</sup>, after he addressed the entire department and shared his thoughts on the matter.*

*I find the statement about not following up with Keshavarzian later quite confusing. After our phone-call, I had the impression that I had left things with him: I had updated him on what I knew about the visa issue, and told him I was standing by to assist him if he would like it.*

*Following our initial conversation, I attended a conference in China, and then spent some time undergoing medical treatments. Keshavarzian and I spoke again on September 12<sup>th</sup>, right after a departmental meeting we both attended. During this meeting, he told all of us in great detail what had happened, how he felt about it, and asked for our support as a department. Right after the meeting we had a conversation. In this conversation, every detail of which I remember very well, Keshavarzian did the talking and discussed issues connected to Abu Dhabi and its leadership. I mostly listened and offered sympathy for his feelings. No follow-up on my part was needed after this conversation.*

*Now, I appeared before this committee a year ago and I came today to mark that date, not to set records straight. But having been mentioned in the last meeting this committee held. I cannot leave you without my thoughts regarding my colleagues' visit to the committee in November. I read the November minutes with great care several times, and I am of course closely following the mobility discussion that is taking place in many parts of the university.*

*I share the concerns that are being raised most keenly. My historical, personal, and professional sensitivities to issues of mobility are well known; I take this matter very seriously – I have been denied academic opportunities that have been available to colleagues because of my passport many times since*

*I started my studies. And while I don't expect the University to solve longstanding diplomatic issues, I am heartened to see that they are taking serious steps to improve its own workflows and communication processes.*

*The expansion of the global network and the increasing possibilities for mobility for faculty -- and even larger numbers of students -- of an increasingly diversifying array of nationalities present both increasing opportunities and complexities. This unprecedented increase in movement and diversification of the student and faculty body is precisely why I and many of my colleagues are supporters of the GNU.*

*But, and I believe I said the same thing in the first appearance before the committee a year ago shortly after I was appointed, it presents us with a whole set of new problems and challenges.*

*Among them is the great task of making sure the University is doing everything possible to facilitate the ability of our students and faculty to move between sites and campuses in order to teach and study. This is made far more challenging given where we are at a moment when many walls between nations and countries are rising again, and many gates seem to be closing. In the past, we only had to deal with problems of scholars and student coming to NYU here on the Square -- which is in itself, increasingly fraught -- but now, we must engage many governments, representing students and faculty of who are nationals of more than 140 countries.*

*It is true that given the size of the GNU, the numbers of visa denials are low. But as we could read from the personal statements made here in this forum only last November, for each person involved the damage could be real-- to their scholarship, and to in many cases, their personal life. The University has made clear that it should -- and will -- do better, and I am happy that we, as a community, are taking this matter seriously. I know that representatives of the administration will be working closely with this committee in the days, weeks, and months ahead to ensure we are doing all we can to address an extraordinarily difficult set of issues. I think we should continue the conversation, and the report this committee produced last December is a good start.*

Borenstein asked the committee if they had any thoughts or questions for Ben-Dor on this matter. A committee member noted that when the committee spoke to NYU AD Vice Chancellor Al Bloom and Provost Fabio Piano in December, they asked that someone with access to records of admissions to NYU AD could review them and see if there's a correlation between security clearance and faith. Has there been any progress in that effort? Ben-Dor answered that he did not know, but is in favor of such a project them but is not part of the portal.

Another committee member thanked Ben-Dor for his response. This issue of mobility comes up in faculty discussions often and clearly NYU would like to see it resolved. He has often heard faculty ask how much effort NYU puts into resolving these issues at the highest level. Do they shy away from addressing it because it might offend the government of the UAE? Ben-Dor answered that he does not know, but he likes to think NYU AD works with the proper channels, as the University does in the US. He hopes that when faculty are denied admission, the University will make each case and that will lead to change. The religious makeup of NYU AD doesn't suggest there's a correlation between faith and visa denial, but they still need to look at the data.

A committee member thanked Ben-Dor for his commitment to mobility. She asked for an update on the other points the committee raised in its December 20 statement. Where is NYU in terms of devising more concrete procedures and increasing transparency? Ben-Dor thinks in March they will report to the committee and present a set of procedures that increase the level of communication between campuses and lays out what NYU will do and how it might respond if and when this happens again. They will also look into what can be done to prevent these situations and minimize the chance of it happening.

The committee member said she was excited to hear that these protocols might be described concretely as soon as March. Will someone be tasked specifically with this, or will the responsibility be divided? Ben-Dor shared that he does not know all the details because many people are working on this plan, but it will almost certainly be a team, and not one person. Borenstein noted that in the report, the committee

expressed its desire for one “point person” for faculty to contact with concerns. Klimke noted that in President Hamilton’s response to the committee’s statement, Josh Taylor, Associate Vice Chancellor of Global Programs, was named as a liaison. Borenstein added that no matter what the administrative structure, he hopes that any faculty member with concerns will feel free to come to committee as the committee assumes a more public role in these matters.

Another committee member thanked Ben-Dor for visiting. She’s always been concerned with communication between the three portals and is happy that it’s on the agenda. One thing she took from the presentation by Professors Keshavarzian and Bazzi was their feeling of being lost, with no one to whom they could turn. When Ron Robin was at NYU, he was a visible resource for faculty, but now there’s a feeling that that’s lacking. Currently, many faculty do not know Zvi is in his role. We must do a better job advertising Borenstein’s and Ben-Dor’s roles, as well as those of Marianne Petit and Gbenga Ogedegbe (Associate Vice Chancellors for Global Network Academic Planning). Josh Taylor can’t be the only resource; there must be a faculty member involved. Ben-Dor noted the time gap after Robin left and before his appointment, and that NYU also used to have Hillary Ballon as a resource for faculty. When he was appointed, he was not put in charge of NYUAD affiliation but, in any case, his new position was advertised. He believes he could be the point person for faculty in the future. When he was appointed, he did his best to meet as many people as possible in different schools. He is happy this will become his official responsibility.

### **Both/And**

Ben-Dor pointed out that he did not succeed or replace Ron Robin or Hillary Ballon. The volume and nature of recruitment at the portals has changed since they were at NYU. Because of his specialty in Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, he was involved in search committees for Shanghai and Abu Dhabi, hiring for departments that didn’t then exist. Now the portals are populated, but they must keep thinking about the meaning of connectivity. In addition, Ron Robin was a Senior Vice Provost, reporting to the Provost; as Associate Vice Chancellor, Ben-Dor reports to Vice Chancellor for Global Programs Linda Mills.

Ben-Dor described his role as making sure systems are working so that faculty are plugged into the right academic unit and intellectually housed in the relevant place. He has been doing this for NYU SH and will now do the same for NYU AD. In terms of hiring, he communicates with chairs and makes sure search committees are talking. He has more input in some places than in others. He is also involved in tenure processes and promotions in the portals but doesn’t vote on specific cases. He makes sure processes are as similar as possible on the very diverse portal committees.

Klimke pointed out that last year’s progress report highlighted the issues and challenges relating to implementation of the “Both/And” policy. Ultimately, the committee recommended two options: to strengthen and clarify the policy, or to replace the current mandated version of connectivity with more customized versions. (Borenstein clarified that in option 2, the affiliation process would only begin after the hire was made.) Ben-Dor pointed out that when “Both/And” was written, it was mostly “both” and little “and,” because the portals were small. Now, it needs revision because the portals have grown and should not be tied to one trajectory. There should be more autonomy at the portals and communication between all parties involved before entering into a search. Better communication from the beginning will facilitate smoother entry of faculty hires. A committee member asked Ben-Dor what level of departmental and faculty connectivity he is looking for, and what else he is trying to achieve. Ben-Dor responded that we of course must revisit the Both/And document and when necessary discuss the possibility of revising it. The university is changing and the portal campuses are growing and that might bring the need for change in the future. He thinks the autonomy of the portals should be increased and NYU should develop a more diverse “menu” for different types of affiliation and connection between departments.

Another committee member noted that when the hiring process comes up in the annual planning report, the impetus for a new hire comes from the faculty. In many NYU AD searches, the impetus to hire seems to come from deans which does not appear the right way to do it. Ben-Dor responded that in the past when the portal campuses were just starting, greater decanal involvement was needed, but no longer. The correct chain should be from faculty chairs to deans to provost. Borenstein noted that this question stalled the committee last year. Due to the departmental structure in New York, deans have to listen to faculty, but the

portals do not have departments. The portal structure might not ensure as much faculty-driven hiring. A committee member added that when they proposed two options last year, they did not recommend that every department come up with its own system. Instead, their focus was on junior faculty members. If junior faculty join NYU and processes are not regularized, it is extremely unfair, dangerous, and destructive to their professional development. They need a clear procedure for how affiliation happens and who will be reviewing them. Ben-Dor agreed but reminded the committee that he does not decide policies.

A committee member raised the issue of how to motivate New York faculty to participate in portal hiring committees. He's worried also about cultural differences in the portals, which may reflect on whether a candidate is likely to succeed. For example, when he visited NYU SH he could see that there were excellent opportunities for faculty to solicit funding and collaboration opportunities within the Chinese government and industry. If these same faculty were evaluated in New York, the committee wouldn't know to take those opportunities into account. Ben-Dor thanked him for sharing that information, which he didn't know. They take cultural differences into account in other matters, but not always in searches. Regarding how to incentivize faculty, he noted that there are modest incentives to participate on committees now. We have to recognize that the level and volume of hiring in departments is huge. They have been overwhelmed in the past but are fixing it. Personally, he tells faculty that hiring for the portals is an exciting experiment in education. A committee member shared that if he's chairing a hiring committee for NYU SH, he receives \$2,000, but he would rather that money be used to visit the portal, since face-to-face visits have such an important effect on connectivity.

Another committee member asked for an update on the process of clarifying NYU AD's P & T procedures. Ben-Dor confirmed that he has been working on that since March 2017 and reported to Fabio Piano (Provost of NYU AD). Piano told him there was an Abu Dhabi-based committee working on it and they joined up. Progress is slow, but they are close to completing a revision of the process and it will be presented to NYU AD faculty soon. Faculty will have the chance to comment, dispute, and clarify the revision, and then it will become the new NYU AD document. The committee member asked whether it will govern current tenure cases. Ben-Dor answered that he hopes to have a clear document with procedures in place for next year's hires. Borenstein asked whether the problems cropping up in NYU AD might also appear in NYU SH hiring? Ben-Dor pointed out that the NYU SH document is very clear.

A committee member noted that Gallatin is similar to the portals in that there are no departments. When associate professors are promoted to full, there's a discussion between the chair of the senior promotion committee and the dean. If the committee and dean are in agreement, that recommendation is passed on. Borenstein responded that this procedure hinges on having a good dean – lacking that, structures and institutions are very important. The committee member agreed and said that if this dynamic continues, it will not be helpful to think of a dean functioning as a chair. Ben-Dor agreed that we must strengthen promotion and tenure structures.

A committee member seconded her colleague's earlier idea of inviting chairs of committees to portals prior to hiring. As a portal faculty member, she can attest that they love when people come to NYU SH. Those who visit are usually surprised at the differences there, and more opportunities to travel are better for faculty networking. Ben-Dor agreed and said that portals should consider it their duty to invite faculty, who are free to decide whether to go or not. A committee member pointed out that they can make these visits more beneficial by letting visitors give a talk or lecture. Ben-Dor pointed out that this is why J-term, which is not part of his portfolio, is wonderful. Borenstein noted that those interested in doing a J-term should write to Carol Brandt, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor of Global Education and Outreach for NYU AD.

A committee member asked Ben-Dor to touch on the issue of graduate students in NYU SH and NYU AD. Ben-Dor answered that he does not work on graduate programs at the portals, but he may be involved in the future. There's been a lot of progress in the sciences, but it's more challenging in the humanities. Borenstein noted that in Ph.D. programs, initiative for this comes from the departments.

Borenstein thanked Ben-Dor for coming and speaking to the committee at such length. At 10 am, the meeting ended.