University Space Priorities Working Group
Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Friday, November 9, 2012

Members in attendance: Barbara Albrecht, Robert Berne, John Billings, Corey Blay, Mary Cowman, Rajeev Dehejia, Mason Dettloff (for SSC/Mariam Ehrari) David Engel, Allyson Green, Wen-Jui Han, James Jacobs, Angela Kamer, Marty Kurth, Ted Magder (chair), Laurence Maslon, Panos Mavromatis, Tony Movshon, Tony Saunders, Rosemary Scanlon, Andrew Schotter, Jalal Shatah, Matt Stanley, David Vintinner, Larry White, Diane Yu

Members unable to attend: Perri Klass

1. Call to order and announcements

The group members introduced themselves to one another. Twenty-five of the 26 active members of the group attended the meeting. Provost David McLaughlin, Associate Provost Carol Morrow, Executive Vice President Martin Dorph, Senior Vice President Lynne Brown, Vice President Alicia Hurley, Chief of Staff Rich Baum, attended as guests and presenters. Mason Dettloff attended in place of Mariam Ehrari, representing the Student Senators Council.

2. Academic space and academic momentum (David McLaughlin, Lynne Brown)

[A copy of Provost McLaughlin’s presentation notes is available on the “Documents” page of Working Group’s Web site. The document is entitled “Academic Space and Academic Momentum”.

Provost McLaughlin began his remarks by emphasizing that NYU’s space strategy, in its most fundamental state, is a statement of need. As Provost, he said, his first priority is to improve academic quality, for which specific, high-quality academic space is required. He outlined three main points for his presentation:

1. NYU must maintain its academic momentum.
2. Over the last decade, NYU has made large investments in space to maintain such momentum, and the investments are working.
3. Many unmet needs remain, which must be met in order for NYU to sustain its academic momentum.

Necessity of academic momentum
NYU’s current strength, Provost McLaughlin noted, is based on its academic momentum. This is what attracts high academic talent, both students and faculty. Since NYU’s position in the sector has improved dramatically and relatively quickly, Provost McLaughlin said, it is more reliant on academic momentum than its peers. It is critical for NYU to continue to improve, as maintaining the status quo
will lead to stalling and will be perceived as NYU having reached its peak and beginning to slide backward, he indicated. He emphasized that, as Provost and faculty member, he does not want NYU’s momentum to stall and that NYU must retain momentum and competitive edge to retain and attract top talent.

Investments in space
Provost McLaughlin underscored the importance of sufficient, high-quality space to attract top faculty and students. This isn’t the only thing that draws top talent, he said, but it is necessary. Provost McLaughlin then provided an overview of NYU’s investment in space over the past decade:

- Partners plan – The Partners Plan was an investment in the arts and sciences at NYU, in which the trustees funded an expansion of faculty in these areas by 100-125 people. Together with replacement hires, NYU replaced approximately one-third of its arts and science faculty. A key part of this effort, Provost McLaughlin noted, was to improve office and laboratory space significantly in a variety of targeted departments and for ~300 tenure and tenure track faculty. Such space improvement took place in the following departments:
  - FAS Economics
  - Politics
  - Philosophy
  - English
  - Linguistics
  - Journalism (new space for an institute)
  - Sociology (at the Puck Building)
  - Social and Cultural Analysis
  - Physics
  - Chemistry
  - Genomics
- In addition to the partners plan, Provost McLaughlin also listed several additional new and renovated spaces over the last decade:
  - New buildings at the Law School
  - Consolidation of Wagner from five dispersed locations to the Puck Building
  - Development of studio space for Tisch Performing Arts programs
  - Development of undergraduate classroom space for Stern (under Schwartz Plaza)
  - Renovation of Bobst Library, beginning with the lower levels, which include space for undergraduates and classrooms, and plans for graduate student space on higher floors
  - Consolidation of Gallatin into a single building
  - Purchase of two new buildings—730 Broadway and Forbes Building
  - Consolidation of SCPS at 7 East 12th Street, which was accomplished by relocating administrators
  - Consolidation of Liberal Studies Program, a positive “domino effect” of consolidating SCPS into its new home. He explained that “domino effects” occur when a project displaces an existing occupant, which then needs to be relocated. In this case, SCPS displaced administrators from 12th Street, but also released space in Broadway that could then be made available to LSP. Unfortunately, however, the new LSP space does not suffice and the upper floor location is not ideal.
  - Conversion of some Mews residences for use by academic institutes
- Provost McLaughlin also described efforts in the areas of student and co-curricular life:
Construction of Kimmel and Skirball Centers

- Construction of Global Center for Academic and Spiritual Life
- Relocation and upgrade of centralized bookstore; the space it released was renovated for a new Academic Resource Center
- Renovation, and replacement and addition of new classrooms

Provost McLaughlin noted that over the past decade NYU has added 1.1 million new gross square feet of space to its academic space inventory—approximately 100,000 gross square feet per year—through purchases, leases, and construction. In addition to these academic additions, he noted, NYU has also added approximately 150,000 gross square feet of faculty housing and shifted approximately 1,600 student beds from leased to owned space.

Unmet needs
The improvements NYU has made are impressive, Provost McLaughlin said, but they simply do not suffice. More space is needed for students, academics, and schools.

- Schools’ needs: Provost McLaughlin related that deans, chairs, and faculty tell him all the time that additional space is critical to recruiting and retaining faculty and students. He specifically noted three areas for which space needs are especially acute: Sciences, performing arts, and in all schools, space to decompress and enable academic development.

- Students’ needs: With regard to students, Provost McLaughlin noted that decompression is the major concern. He cited the fact that facilities have not kept pace with the growth of the student body over the last 20 years. In particular, needs for student study and lounge space (including for commuter students), for the creation of a global student services center, and for an upgraded gym (which will improved the quality of life for the whole NYU community) are quite severe.

Provost McLaughlin went on to describe several specific unmet needs in detail:

- Science: The 2002 Presidential Transition Team identified the poor state of science teaching labs. Since then, some improvements have been made. In 2010, Provost McLaughlin commissioned a committee of science chairs (led by then-FAS Dean of Science Dan Stein), which recommended the creation of new laboratories on the scale of a full floor of the Silver Center. In addition, Steinhardt expressed need for additional lab space for science teacher training for K-12 science education. Ideally, these programs (FAS science and Steinhardt science teaching) should be co-located. This need for additional space is approximately 25,000 gross square feet.

In addition, long-standing science space needs were articulated in a 2007 report by a committee addressing FAS and Courant needs, and again last year by the Provost’s Council for Science and Engineering, which laid out a vision for science at NYU in 2020. This vision requires substantial growth in science programs at NYU, which equates to the following space needs:

- Three additional floors of the Silver Center converted to science research space (in addition to the two floors recently renovated for Chemistry)
- Additional 3.5 floors of 730 Broadway, which is an outstanding building for laboratory use (in addition to the 2.5 floors that are being assigned to Physics).
In total, approximately 180,000 gross square feet are needed for science development by 2020.

As a result of this science development in Silver, many existing uses will be needed to be relocated as a result of the “domino effect,” including general purpose classrooms, CAS administration, academic departments and programs (including Classics, Art History, Music, Liberal Studies), and University administrative offices.

- **Performing Arts:** Performing arts are one of NYU’s signature programs, and maintains an outstanding national and international reputation. As a result, in Tisch, the student population has nearly doubled in size with no accompanying increase in space, other than some drama studios. Over time, the space inventory has not been redesigned or renovated and is thus decreasing in quality. Tisch’s Institute of Performing Arts (IPA) has an incremental need of approximately 95,000 gross square feet, to meet their full program need of approximately 150,000 gross square feet. And this does not include Steinhardt’s needs in this area.

- **Classrooms:** The need for better and more classrooms is constant and recurring. Currently, the Registrar cannot house 250 classes for the spring semester for FAS alone. The Registrar solves these problems, but in a last minute piece-meal fashion. NYU’s inventory of general purpose classrooms stands just short of 180 (179), virtually the same as in the spring of 2008 (177); the inventory has not increased for over five years. Insufficient classroom space, which sometimes requires leasing space at the last minute, is exacerbated by a high utilization rate, inflexible classroom design, a less than ideal mix of classroom sizes, and the lack of large lecture hall space. The cumulative need totals approximately 60,000 gross square feet to increase inventory, plus more to replace classrooms now in leased space. In addition, space is needed for up to 30 classrooms that will be displaced in the Silver Center by the science expansion.

- **Student Study spaces:** Best practices at other high-quality universities suggest that the inventory of student study spaces would hold one-quarter of the student body. For NYU, that means approximately 10,000 seats. Currently, NYU has 3,000 seats, which are located mostly in Bobst Library. This need is manifested clearly in places like Kimmel, where many students are sitting on the floor and in every available chair. In addition, NYU’s large numbers of commuter students, many of whom are undergraduates with HEOP support and live at home, do not have sufficient space and this represents an urgent need. Even if NYU added 30,000 gross square feet—equivalent to one additional floor of Bobst Library—significant unmet need would still exist.

- **Social Sciences:** In the social sciences, particularly at Wagner, Steinhardt, and Silver, the faculty profile is changing with the addition of new research-active faculty with large grant portfolios and teams, who need additional space to conduct their funded research. The current need, which could easily double if projected out, is approximately 30,000 gross square feet.

- **Entrepreneurship:** Programs in entrepreneurship (specifically, the proposed University Entrepreneurship Institute) have garnered significant interest from faculty and students.
Right now, this activity is located on an upper floor of 7 East 12th Street, in borrowed space from SCPS. The program would benefit from more accessible and visible space.

- **New initiatives:** A rough estimate of need for new university academic programs is 100,000 gross square feet, including for the following:
  - Interdisciplinary institute on cities and the urban environment
  - Courant’s plans for an interdisciplinary degree and research in data sciences
  - Global Institute of Public Health (GIPH)

- **Additional school-based requests and needs:** In addition to the specific needs stated above, schools have expressed the following needs:
  - Stern: space is inadequate in comparison to competitors (e.g., Wharton, Berkeley, Michigan)
  - Steinhardt: needs additional space for their studio arts programs, and departments of Music & Performing Arts Professions, and Media, Culture, & Communication
  - Libraries: additional space for special collections
  - Liberal Studies: need a visible home and more space than they currently have
  - Gallatin: additional floor of space at 715 Broadway

- **Leased space:** Right now, many academic programs are in leased space—more than 400,000 gross square feet in Manhattan alone. About half of this should be replaced with space that we own. When we add the student dormitories whose leases expire before 2020, the ‘replacement’ need for leased space is more than 600,000 gross square feet. Currently, academic programs/departments in leased space include the following:
  - FAS Expository Writing Program
  - Tisch Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music
  - Entire Wagner Graduate School of Public Service (lease at Puck)
  - Sociology Department
  - Steinhardt Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health
  - Some Gallatin programs

To summarize, these needs total approximately 1.3 million gross square feet of additional space for academic needs. He mentioned that these needs focus on the years up to 2020, are extremely fluid, and are continually being refined over the course of the space planning process.

[Provost McLaughlin distributed a handout entitled “Academic Needs in Washington Square Campus Core (New and Incremental)” which is available on the Working Group’s Web site.]

He concluded his remarks by emphasizing the significance of NYU’s academic space needs and the fact that options, using the current methods the University has been employing, have been exhausted. He said that NYU cannot “continue to rely on quick fixes and opportunistic leases” and that the Core Plan provides crucial relief to the current “space gridlock.” He went on to say that the Core Plan provides a strategic solution to NYU’s academic space needs over the coming decades, and that the Plan, which NYU can afford, will allow the University to continue on its trajectory on becoming a great research university. He emphasized that the south block, and the development proposed on the superblocks in particular, presents at least a partial opportunity to confront the critical unmet needs he described.
One member of the working group inquired about the necessity of locating research labs in the campus core on Washington Square. Provost McLaughlin responded by noting that lab space is located around the city, for example in the First Avenue health corridor and in Brooklyn. However, he continued, science faculty at NYU believe that providing undergraduates with research/lab experience is crucial, and for some faculty, this means that the labs must be located in the core. The Provost also mentioned the view that interdisciplinary faculty relationships in science would suffer greatly if programs were not co-located. He went on to note that NYU had explored the possibility of relocating science to better space that exists farther from the core—such as St. John’s Warehouse and other properties near 14th Street—and scientists were unanimously opposed, saying that such relocation would place them in the relative “hinterlands”.

Other members inquired as to the priority of faculty housing and the University’s commitment to faculty housing as a part of faculty recruitment. Provost McLaughlin cited zoning constraints in surrounding buildings as one reason that new space opportunities cannot always be used for housing, but emphasized that the location and provision of faculty housing are integral and defining characteristics of NYU’s unique character. He noted that the University’s inventory of faculty housing is nearly adequate given current need, but when projected out to include additional housing will be needed for those faculty working within the global network who need short term lodging in New York, need certainly arises.

Following Provost McLaughlin’s remarks, Senior Vice President Lynne Brown called the Group’s attention to the maps presented in the briefing materials (see “General Facts” on the Web site), which detail the breakdown of owned and leased properties and the renovations completed in academic buildings over the past ten years.

In addition, she emphasized the constraints in the neighborhood surrounding NYU’s core, which include highly regulated landmark and historic districts in SoHo, NoHo, and the Lower East Side. While some of these buildings can be purchased, she said, they are very difficult to develop and come with significant regulatory hurdles, including restrictions on adding density or changing the exterior in any way. Zoning restrictions, Brown noted, are also restrictive, especially in the area east of Broadway where blocks are still zoned for manufacturing. The manufacturing zone does not allow for classrooms or dormitories, just faculty offices.

Brown also highlighted the fact that NYU has exhausted “as of right” development opportunities—those opportunities where no special zoning approval is needed. She noted that even our current building portfolio comes with complications, which require NYU to obtain variances (as in the case of 730 Broadway) for desired uses.

3. Potential real estate opportunities in the core neighborhood (Martin Dorph)

[A copy of Dorph’s presentation is available on the Working Group’s Web site.]

Martin Dorph, Executive Vice President, Finance and Information Technology, provided information on the current real estate opportunities that exist within the neighborhood surrounding NYU’s core at Washington Square. He explained that the University utilizes the consulting services of Newmark Frank—a real estate firm with which NYU contracts—to gather information about properties for purchase or lease. Currently, he noted, NYU leases 875,000 square feet of academic and administrative space, in addition to dormitory space. Leasing, he said, is an inefficient practice due
to the fact that rent payments on long-term leases often total an amount that would have been enough to buy the property, but there is nothing to show for it at the end. Dorph noted that, due to its overall lack of space, NYU often enters the real estate market on a “quick basis”, which leads to a less than ideal negotiating position.

With respect to specific properties, Dorph suggested that some properties where NYU leased a large portion of the building, including 726-730 Broadway, became good purchase opportunities for the University. Others, like 194 Mercer (where NYU leases floors two–eight of the 10 stories), are buildings that we would like to buy but have not come on the market for purchase. He also cited the Forbes Building, which was purchased by NYU, as an example of a high-quality purchase opportunity.

Additionally, Dorph noted that only two purchase opportunities currently exist within NYU’s core neighborhood—both at per square foot costs much higher than feasible. With regard to leasing, a point-in-time analysis reveals a short list of four properties that are not conducive to NYU’s needs for a variety of reasons, including zoning constraints, short-term leases, and inadequate space.

Members of the committee inquired as to the cost of existing leases, the relative cost of specific properties in and around NYU’s core (including Hebrew Union College), and the role of NYU-Poly in Brooklyn in alleviating space needs. Dorph noted that space in Downtown Brooklyn is a large part of the conversation (citing leased space at MetroTech for Poly and the inter-school facility for digital design and games), but that fit with academic priorities is the driving concern. In addition, he suggested that options uptown are more expensive than in the core, and that previously-purchased properties on Roosevelt Island are not as desirable as Washington Square for faculty housing. Dorph also noted that the alleviation of these concerns were some of the main reasons that the superblocks became attractive options for development, citing the fact that NYU already owns the land.

4. Consultation with constituents (Ted Magder)

The committee approved the extension of the next meeting, which will be held on November 15, 2012, until 6:00 PM. The agenda for this meeting will include presentations from Vice Provost Joe Juliano, Dean Mary Schmidt Campbell, and Executive Vice President Martin Dorph. In addition, an invitation to members of the Faculty Against the Sexton Plan (FASP) group remains open for future meetings. Whenever possible, briefing materials will be provided to the group and posted to the Web site in advance of the meeting.

As part of the Group’s ongoing discussion about various ways to consult with their respective constituencies, members discussed various options that might be tailored to specific groups, including focus groups, mailings, departmental meetings, etc. Members discussed current plans for reporting, which included having a related discussion at faculty meetings and a focused town hall meeting for students on the subject of space priorities. The Group recognizes the importance of each member thinking about connecting with their respective schools and constituencies.