

NYU Sydney Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 27, 10am

383 Lafayette St, C-08

Table of Contents

Attendees	1
Site Director Report	1
Australian Studies Minor	2
Undergraduate research in Sydney	2
Summary	4

Attendees

- Aurora Wallace (Steinhardt – MCC)
- Eugenia Carol Kisin (Gallatin)
- Fred Myers (FAS – Anthropology)
- Gbenga Ogedegbe (School of Medicine & Global Programs)
- Janet Alperstein (Global Programs)
- Jennifer Gerdes (Global Programs)
- Jini Kim Watson (FAS – English)
- John Burt (NYU Abu Dhabi)
- Lamar Sanders (Tisch)
- Linda Mills (Global Programs)
- Malcolm Semple (Site Director)
- Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)

Site Director Report

Fred Myers opened the meeting, welcoming all attendees and facilitating introductions. Linda Mills then drew the committee's attention to the "Updates on Study Away and Academic Developments at the Global Sites" memo, emailed to all NYU faculty on March 8th, before Mal Semple gave an overview of the site director report, which was distributed to the committee in advance of the meeting.

Mal reported that the semester is going well and that the site is managing a large increase in students from 50 students in the fall to 150 students this spring, the largest spring cohort to date. In response to this increase, NYU Sydney did not add to the number of courses on offer to accommodate student demand, but rather increased course caps where possible. There are 25 or more in several classes this semester and they have begun utilizing the auditorium on a daily basis to accommodate the science courses (which have as many as 43 students) as well as a Tisch course.

One challenge has been Core Curriculum courses, which have a fixed cap of 20 students per section. This Spring, NYU Sydney is running two sections of a core course, but there remains unmet student demand. It's a four-hour class, so scheduling additional sections will not be possible within the framework of courses. If enrollment at the site increases further and demand for the Core Curriculum courses continues to grow as well, this could become a larger issue.

Last fall, NYU Sydney introduced pre-health science courses for the first-time (previously pre-health courses were only offered in the spring) - Biochemistry I, General Physics I and Principles of Biology I (which had to be cancelled due to low enrollment). While NYU Sydney hoped to see larger fall science enrollment in 2017, early indicators show that science enrollment for fall 2018 will be consistent with the previous fall semester. This trend is promising as there had been some concern that the large Spring 2018 cohort might negatively impact Fall 2018 enrollment.

Australian Studies Minor

Linda returned the committee to a conversation that began at last semester's meeting about the creation of an Australian Studies minor. Mal said that there is an interesting story of Australia threaded through a lot of the classes so it could be a nice fit with the curriculum.

Fred noted that a minor is generally four to six courses. In theory, a student could complete the minor while studying at NYU Sydney for a semester; he asked what courses in New York apply to this minor? The committee discussed this question, noting a few possible courses in New York, deciding it would be helpful to have an inventory of pre-existing courses in Sydney as well as at all three portal campuses that could potentially count towards this minor.

They also discussed students potentially going to Sydney for J-Term plus one semester to complete the minor, but that length of stay could have visa implications.

It was noted that the approval of a new minor would need to go before the curriculum committee and the UAAC and that it would likely be a cross-school minor. A certificate, which was also discussed, would require state approval.

Fred then asked the group if they thought an Australian studies minor would actually attract students? The committee discussed some of the reasons students are initially attracted to Sydney, including myths and romantic notions about Australia. Mal explained that the Australian Experience course was created because many students want to learn more about Australia and were overwhelming the anthropology courses on offer. Students really love this course and may be attracted to a minor on the topic.

Undergraduate research in Sydney

The conversation then turned to research possibilities at the site. John Burt spoke about his experience teaching J term courses in Sydney since 2013. He feels that there's a real opportunity throughout the global network to do comparative courses, comparing how different locations respond to the same issue. In John's course, students conduct field research in the community to collect environmental data and compare their results with patterns observed in other coastal cities.

Linda explained that during Global Conversations there was a discussion about undergraduate research at the global sites. Students would like to pursue ongoing research opportunities while studying abroad. The group wondered if there was potential in Sydney to explore an intentional 8 credits of research, perhaps under the supervision of a faculty member from a portal, and anchored with students taking a directed study course, similar to what is in place for for-credit internships. Perhaps one course for field based research and one course for lab based research could make sense. Faculty working with the students could come to the site for a week to anchor the work. Sydney seems like a great place to try this. John agreed and expressed interest in moving this idea forward.

The group considered how the research opportunity could be broadened to other fields like photography, filmmaking, and visual arts. Eugenia Carol Kisin noted that a number of her students' projects are at the intersection of environmental studies and visual work. Fred noted that many students are interested in experiential learning but it was challenging to find lecturers to teach in that area. There was discussion of partnering with local universities along with faculty at the portal campuses.

When it was brought up that John's science courses integrate visual components, Mal asked John to speak more about the course, as it's a departure from traditional lab science research. John explained that the course he teaches is for non-science majors and uses Sydney as a natural laboratory and a case study for environmental issues. Students use tablets with GPS to fill out surveys and take photos while investigating course topics. The whole class has access to the entire data set being collected and the same course has been offered in New York, London, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai. The course starts with image based work and ends with video based work. Students look at the data that has been collected across sites to investigate how people in different coastal cities are dealing with the same issue.

The group was intrigued by this idea and wondered what other topics could work with this framework. Aurora Wallace noted that Sydney is a remarkably good site for doing media work given the site's close proximity to the Sydney Herald, Google, Facebook, ABC, etc. The group also brought up the Business, Entertainment, Media, and Television minor and asked if maybe we should focus on existing minors that could easily be accomplished with coursework in Sydney. Environmental studies was mentioned as another minor that would mostly be accomplished in Sydney. The group asked for a survey of potential minors that could be largely accomplished with coursework in Sydney.

Returning to the question of research, Jini asked if the group was thinking of research projects within a class or a class where students do research? Mal said the latter and that he used to teach a course grounding research experiences, like the existing internship courses. Jini noted that in the English department, this would be more like a humanities style lab.

Fred began thinking about a course on decolonization that could be cross disciplinary and a way for students to be engaged in broader topics and find Sydney in a different way. Perhaps it could be a course anchored by one person with visiting artists coming in each few weeks. Eugenia said she would be interested in exploring a course like this. The course could be a model for thinking about decolonization with a rotating cast of cultural producers. It could be both an arts course and a social science course. The committee discussed possibilities for this further, including potentially focusing on Indigenous arts and students curating a show as the outcome of the course. Jini described the course as applied humanities.

The committee was excited about developing these ideas further.

Summary

The committee then summarized the next steps from the meeting as follows:

- Australian Studies minor - Global Programs will conduct further research to determine student appetite and the process for proposing the new minor;
- Other minors - Global Programs will look into what minors can be easily accomplished with pre-existing courses in Sydney;
- Research courses - Global Programs will work with John on science research course, Aurora on a potential media research course, and Eugenia on an applied humanities course.