

NYU Berlin Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, April 13, 2018, 9:30 am EST

383 Lafayette St., Room C-08

ATTENDEES

- Janet Alperstein (Global Programs)
- Jesse Bransford (Steinhardt)
- Mosette Broderick (Art History)
- Katrin Dettmer (NYU Berlin)
- Tom Ertman (Committee Chair, Sociology/CORE)
- Gabriella Etmektsoglou (Site Director – NYU Berlin)
- Alys George (German)
- Regina Gramer (Liberal Studies)
- Jason King (Tisch, REMU)
- Kevin Kuhlke (Tisch Drama)
- Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)
- Marianne Petit (Tisch ITP)

INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newly appointed Committee Chair Tom Ertman opened the meeting with (re-)introductions of committee members. Marianne Petit encouraged committee members to read the recently published memorandum titled “[Updates on Study Away and Academic Developments at the Global Sites](#).” The memorandum particularly emphasized that more NYU students study away than at any other university in the country...and study away enrollments keep growing. Marianne also emphasized President Hamilton’s priorities for the global network, as articulated in the memorandum, including reducing friction points and barriers to participation in the global network (for both students and faculty).

Tom also highlighted that 34% of CAS’s incoming class is comprised of non-US citizens students, a significant leap from a low 20% range in years past. Tom encouraged consideration be given to whether the needs and priorities of this international student cohort are consistent with the domestic student body. Nancy noted that the university-wide international population is around 20%, noting in particular that the number of students studying at global sites among non-U.S. student cohorts is almost the same percentage as American students studying away. Other universities are not seeing that trend, Nancy noted, whereas NYU students can often visit three, four, or even five different global sites during their undergraduate academic study. Gabriella said that this extensive global circulation has helped inform NYU Berlin’s ability to adapt to cultural differences, specifically to include writing workshops and resource offerings. Chris noted that 17.7% of the students currently studying in Berlin are non-U.S. citizens.

Jesse expanded on Steinhardt’s experience in handling the growth of international students as well, noting a particularly large cohort from China. He cautioned against creating stand-alone resources for international students, as they tend to reinforce silos and encourage isolation from the larger student body. Gabriella agreed, noting that NYU Berlin does not orient non-U.S. students any differently, but rather engages with them in a tailored manner, precisely to prevent siloed resources and experiences. For example, Katrin often does one-on-one writing assessments with students to confidentially find out who may need additional support (and may not ask for that support, precisely because of their cultural norms).

Tom suggested talks with NYU Shanghai regarding German language instruction may be worth pursuing given the economic importance of German and the comparative advantage the language skills would offer students; Alys noted that exploratory language textbook conversations had occurred, but did not produce significant interest at this time. Gabriella followed up by encouraging the committee to read Global Learning Objectives (pg. 9) of the [Faculty Working Group on Global Learning Objectives \(GLO\) report](#) created by representatives from eight schools, who conducted a systematic reflection on the role of study away and global learning in a 21st-century undergraduate education. She noted her strong enthusiasm for the report and also encouraged reading Eliot Borenstein's [reflections and conclusion](#), which beautifully sum up the global network as increasing connectivity in a world that is increasingly isolationist. Gabriella went on to note that global education is difficult work, with a curriculum that is trying to balance both consistency and discovery, but thanked the Committee for their commitment to NYU Berlin and its development.

SITE DIRECTOR REPORT

Gabriella provided the Committee with updates regarding developments on various academic pathways. With regards to Math and Environmental Studies, she noted that increased enrollments would benefit those programs. She noted Clayton Curtis is traveling to Berlin for his first site visit and book presentation related to the psychology of thinking about the future. She also noted that History will be offering a January Term course.

Jesse provided an update on Steinhardt's Art & Art Professions curriculum, noting his department has taken on a new chair but the international mission continues to play a core role in the curriculum. Steinhardt's new undergraduate director participated in an interdisciplinary site visit to Berlin, which included representatives from NYU Abu Dhabi, SPS, and Tisch and led to new connections and discussions about new interdisciplinary course offerings.

Kevin updated the Committee on the continued success of the Tisch Drama Special Program, noting a particularly strong group for Berlin's renowned FIND Festival at the Schaubühne, which is co-sponsored by NYU Berlin. A significant percentage of the Tisch cohort is comprised of international students; Kevin noted their strong influence on the program, utilizing their interest in making political art to push the program. Kevin noted he remains proud of the continued connections with local theaters and the continued strengthening of those connections. Schaubühne remains the major partner and its Director, Thomas Ostermeier, has visited the students on multiple occasions.

Jason elaborated on the successes of and modifications to the Recorded Music program, now in its third semester. Many of the modifications have focused on improving students' experiences and alignment with the program in New York. Jason thanked the NYU Berlin staff for their commitment to the program. And while this semester's cohort of seven students is small, Jason reports they are getting a lot out of the program, including through a required global business class on cryptocurrencies. Jason was enthusiastic about seeing students return to New York with new ideas and deliver graduation talks of transformative experiences abroad. Gabriella noted

that Jason and Kevin would be in Berlin in May for a final student show that is open to the public and an opportunity for collaboration.

On the topic of advisement, Gabriella noted this is an area to strengthen; advisors sometimes do not have the information they need to advise properly. Gabriella suggested focusing advisement around relevant academic clusters, noting for example that emerging media and technologies and the Berlin start-up scene will be a new area of focus in the near future.

Relating to diversity, the NYU Berlin Global Equity Council launched a diversity fellowship program (named the Martin Luther King Jr. Fellowship) in collaboration with the ongoing work with the Carl von Ossietzky school in Kreuzberg; Gabriella noted that the first two fellows (of non-German ethnic backgrounds) have been amazing and prompted discussions around solidarity, managing a gendered language, and issues concerning people of color in Germany.

On the local engagement front, Gabriella highlighted the *Milestones of Berlin* project, designed to provide students with the tools to read and experience Berlin's vibrant cultures and communities through seminars, self-initiated projects, and faculty-guided explorations of Turkish, Jewish, and Vietnamese Berlin.

The German language team continues to work on NYU Berlin's very own German language textbook for the elementary level. The first sample chapter has been piloted in the elementary courses and is now being evaluated and reviewed for future adjustments and developments. Also, the website prototype has been launched for a test period. It includes resources, content, and interactive exercises that were previously scattered across multiple platforms. [This video overview](#) of the multimedia textbook project was shared with the Committee.

Tom congratulated Gabriella and NYU Berlin on its global engagement and impressive range of global activities. He noted that faculty on the Square might not immediately recognize how these efforts relate to their work, but suggested tying those efforts to their research (where applicable) could prompt increased faculty engagement in the global network. Gabriella mentioned a global panel conversation about undergraduate research that involved faculty; while still in the works, those faculty involved in the conversation saw an obvious value add – particularly related to capstone projects. More thought is needed on incentivizing this research, such as extra credit, Gabriella suggested. Tom suggested a point person be dedicated to this effort. Regina noted that all Global Liberal Studies juniors have thesis requirements, but noted the difficulty of staying in touch on these projects, especially when connecting through online courses. Regina further highlighted the differences in German standard approaches to research versus American approaches, and how those different perspectives and bureaucratic protocols can influence students' research. Gabriella proposed infusing more research opportunities into the syllabus to raise awareness and also suggested revisiting some experiential learning initiatives as well, noting it may be better for research to focus not on a specific internship, but rather a chosen topic of interest to the student. Gabriella recommended connecting with Janet Alperstein on these research questions to continue the conversation and perhaps try a pilot in Spring 2019.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Tom congratulated Gabriella for another round of impeccable program evaluations and Mosette noted that returning students from Berlin rave about the program.

ENROLLMENTS

Janet Alperstein of Global Programs encouraged site visit opportunities among faculty and departments and provided the Committee with an overview of the enrollment data provided and offered to speak to any classes who might be interested in learning more about curricular offerings and internship opportunities at the site.

On the enrollment trends front, Gabriella's report noted that NYU Berlin has a record number of students, while the numbers of majors in particular pathways are still small (though CAS in general is still a large group). The largest groups are Tisch (33), CAS (24), Gallatin (22), Liberal Studies (20), and Steinhardt (10). NYU Berlin is very happy to also have relatively high numbers from Abu Dhabi (13) and Shanghai (6) as well. Of the 33 Tisch students, 25 are in the ReMu and Theatre programs, and 8 Tisch students came to NYU Berlin without taking Tisch sponsored courses. Of the 20 Liberal Studies students, 12 are GLS and 8 are Core.

NEXT STEPS:

- Gabriella, Tom, Janet, Regina and other interested Committee members should continue the conversation of undergraduate research proposals and explore a pilot for Spring 2019.