

NYU Berlin Advisory Committee Meeting

*Monday, November 11, 2019, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
EST CO6 Conference Room (383 Lafayette Street)*

Attendance

- Janet Alperstein, Office of Global Programs
- Momette Broderick, FAS - Art History
- Melissa Ceballos, Office of Global Programs
- Katrin Dettmer, NYU Berlin
- Gabriella Etmektsoglou, NYU Berlin
- Pierre Germain, Courant - Math
- Karen Hornick, Gallatin
- Jason King, Tisch - Recorded Music
- Kevin Kuhlke, Tisch - Drama & Dramatic Writing and Tisch - Performance Studies
- Tyra Liebman, Office of Global Programs
- Marianne Petit, Tisch, and Associate Vice Chancellor, Global Programs
- Anne Rademacher, FAS - Environmental Studies
- Elisabeth Strowick, FAS - German

Meeting Minutes

Gabriella Etmektsoglou, Site Director of NYU Berlin, opened the meeting and the committee members introduced themselves. Tyra Liebmann, Office of Global Programs, announced to the committee the affordability and sustainability measures highlighted in the meeting agenda. Janet Alperstein, Office of Global Programs, announced scholarship information for students who study away, including the Gilman scholarship which is available to students with Pell Grants among others. Committee members expressed great interest in funding options for their students, and one member asked if scholarships cover students going to Los Angeles, noting the high transportation costs in California.

Gabriella highlighted the incredible teamwork among NYU Berlin staff, which has made many events possible this semester, including the upcoming 30th anniversary celebrations at NYU Berlin (see site director report). Gabriella also highlighted the diversity initiatives at NYU Berlin, including Katrin Dettmar's work to promote inclusive teaching formats and a long term goal to create a module or workshop on diversity that can be used by different populations at the site. Gabriella drew attention to the site's Milestone project, which enabled students to become familiar with different cultural communities in Berlin through walking tours and seminars. Gabriella also highlighted, following mention of a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, that students prize project-based learning and the practical application of learning and marketable skills. She asked the group: "how do we define marketable skills?"

Karen Hornick asked if students are focused on lowering their carbon footprints, given the University's sustainability initiatives. Gabriella explained that at NYU Berlin, students are increasingly making vegan dietary choices and zero waste is a strong focus of the community.

Fall 2019 Site Director Report:

Berlin

NYU Berlin started the new academic year seeing a slight decline in fall enrollment but expecting again a large cohort in Spring semester 2020. We welcomed an outstanding group of students, many of whom have some prior knowledge of German. A large number of students indicated in the Pre-Departure Survey that they selected NYU Berlin as their study away location because they wanted to immerse themselves in the local language and culture and were interested in the courses offered in their areas of specialization. Especially since 2015, NYU Berlin has increased student curricular and co-curricular engagement in activities that focus on the complexity of diverse local communities and cultures; debates regarding post-colonialism, migration, ethnicity, citizenship, and the right to mobility; art, accountability, and representation, including political theater and alternative music careers; the tech start-up scene; climate change, sustainability and new urban ecosystems; the future of liberal democracy and of the EU and the rise of populism, and other topical themes. Students value our teaching philosophy that emphasizes experiential learning and a holistic perspective on education. This is reflected in the Spring 2019 evaluations, where we saw a big rise in how academically challenging the students perceived their courses at NYU Berlin to be. Half of the students described their semester as either academically “very challenging” or “extremely challenging”. 93% rated the quality of the co- and extra-curricular activities as either “good” or “excellent” and 96% of the respondents would recommend the program to a friend.

A very large majority of students (89%) stated that they developed a deeper understanding of people they considered different. Furthermore, 53% “strongly agreed” and 37% “somewhat agreed” that they developed a deeper understanding of themselves. Students found our community to be very inclusive and appreciated the support they received, which enabled them to contextualize new definitions and narratives of diversity and navigate Berlin’s multi-layered and ever-changing social ecology.

One aspect we are always concerned about is reaching a higher response rate, and yielding more meaningful results. In Spring 2019, we achieved a 61% response rate. We will continue discussing with students the importance of offering constructive feedback.

Enrollment Statistics

In summer 2019, NYU Berlin hosted nine NYU programs and one external program, supporting a total of 128 students. In Fall 2019, we welcomed 73 students of whom 18 are expected to return for a second semester. Specifically, 20 Tisch students are enrolled (including 14 from the Clive Davis Recorded Music program, for whom a semester in Berlin is mandatory), 16 Liberal Studies, 12 CAS, 12 Gallatin, 5 Steinhardt, 4 NYUSH, 1 NYUAD, 1 Silver, 1 Tandon. Ten of the students are sophomores, 50 Juniors, and 12 seniors.

Curriculum

- The highlights in Fall 2019 are two new joint courses with Berlin’s Humboldt University (HU): *Intensive Intermediate German* (with HU’s Language Center, taught by our Language Coordinator Denise Uhl) and *German Prose* (with HU’s Institute for German Literature, taught by the Dean of HU’s Faculty of Languages and Literature Prof. Ulrike Vedder and NYU Berlin lecturer Prof. Elke Brüns). Our students greatly appreciate the HU experience and the intense schedule. The different semester rhythm remains an organizational hurdle, and we

had to adapt our timetable. In addition to the new courses, several co-curricular activities are planned in collaboration with the HU Language Center. For Spring 2020, we plan to develop an *Intensive Intermediate* course more closely oriented towards the European Framework of Reference for Languages so that students can acquire the language prerequisite for admission to German universities.

- *Elementary German I* is now taught on the basis of material produced by our German Language team, which reflects our commitment to diversity and inclusion and the use of gender-neutral language wherever possible. Specifically, we have produced: a 90-page *Grammar Reader* available online and free of charge which meets the new digital accessibility requirements; a 160-page *Course Reader* and a 146-page *Online Homework Set*. 109 professionally produced videos and audios, 20 slide shows, and digital flashcards on Quizlet. Our outstanding team of language lecturers continues their efforts to address in truly innovative and unique ways gender equity and a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This project is unmatched by anything available globally to date and has received excellent evaluations. This project will be part of a panel discussion at the Forum on Education Abroad's annual conference in March 2020.
- As mentioned in the Spring 2019 report, a new course, *Augmenting the Gallery*, had been introduced for Spring terms as a result of a meeting of representatives from Emerging Media academic departments at NYU Steinhardt, Shanghai, Abu Dhabi, Tisch, Tandon, Gallatin, SPS, CAS and NYU's Office of Global Programs. The course attracted 14 students in Spring 2019 and also the interest of a nationwide project (*Museum4Punkt0*) by seven major museums in Germany, who are testing and evaluating innovative applications of digital technologies in museums. They provided our students with use cases, met with our students outside class, and joined our final course presentations. We are currently collecting projects with them for our Spring 2020 students. The combination of art and humanities with modern technology has great potential as a focus area for NYU Berlin. Such interdisciplinary courses build a bridge to the city's other significant asset, "public history" – its museums and memorials, history tourism and general desire to engage with the past – and the existing NYU Berlin courses that explore these.
- In Fall 2019, we also welcomed the 6th Clive Davis recorded music cohort, which will finish their semester again with a concert on December 13. Known national and international artists have been guests in our courses for a modest flat fee, testifying to the growing reputation of our program.
- A faculty working group, formed in Spring 2019 under the auspices of the NYU Berlin Global Equity Advisory Council (EAC), is developing a workshop module in collaboration with the [Winckelmann-Institut](#) of Humboldt University and the [Barenboim-Said Academy](#). This workshop-prototype is envisioned to provide a forum to discuss existing syllabi, exchange experiences from the classroom, and stimulate growth in both research and teaching. Teaching methods and pedagogical discourses will also be discussed, especially ways to develop rigorous learning environments that represent a diversity of perspectives and approaches. Once finalized, this module will be made available to other interested institutions.

Other New Developments

Sustainability, Inclusivity, Affordability.

When organizing events, we have reduced the number of meat-based options and prioritize instead a broader range of organic, locally sourced meat-free options that cater to a spectrum of cultural preferences and religious needs and reduce our environmental impact. In close collaboration with our vendors, we have optimized buffet planning and managed to reduce food waste to almost 0%.

Community Engagement

- Continued cooperation with the [Berlin Kolleg](#) and integration of refugees at B1/B2 level into our extracurricular programming as well as joint initiatives with students of the *Kolleg's* general course program. For example, a reading with author Yoko Tawada is planned in December.
- The “Martin Luther King Jr. Fellowship” program for high school students in their final year of study (launched in Fall 2017) has expanded with regard to curricular components. Staff engagement in refugee support initiatives, such as [Unionhilfswerk](#), continue in the form of mentorship and an English tandem program.

Student Leadership

- Currently in its fourth iteration at NYU Berlin, the Global Equity Fellowship (launched in Fall 2017 as a pilot program) is conceived to empower students through community engagement and research and advance the values of IDBE. Our Spring 2019 fellow collaborated with representatives of several organizations/interest groups to conceptualize and moderate a panel discussion on German identities focusing on questions of gender, sexuality, race, and migration.
- The Student Leadership Lab, established in Spring 2014 as a forum for critical discussion, collaborative learning, and community building, and to allow students to share experiences, successes, and challenges they encounter within their initiatives, continues this semester with a number of notable projects: the arts and literary magazine *Aben(d)brot*, a repository of artistic reflection on contemporary cosmopolitan experiences; and student/faculty discussion groups on intersectional experiences of oppression and solidarity as well as climate justice. On the occasion of the 2019 Ally Week, the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, and the 40th anniversary of the German Christopher Street Day, we screened the documentary “[Audre Lorde—The Berlin Years](#),” followed by a student-led discussion exploring the intersectionality of race and sexuality. We are organizing a similar event in December.

Staff Training

Since Fall 2014, aspects of the university’s safe zone, diversity zone, action zone, and faith zone trainings have been incorporated into the onboarding schedules of new employees. Our most recent staff training focused on the theme of “storytelling” as a strategy to reflect on and respond to the complexity of Germany’s diversity discourse. Employees will also complete the “Beloved Community” training module, delivered by Melissa Carter (Center for Global Spiritual Life), and the annual workshop on building resilience in challenging professional contexts, offered by our Wellness Counselor. As part of our efforts to practice community learning, we have invited Dr. Duncan George (University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, Albion Centre) to deliver a lecture on “HIV, Ice and Loneliness—Contemporary Trends in Mental and Sexual Health,” which students, staff, and lecturers are invited to attend in November.

Public Programming

Our End-of-semester public concert of the course *Experiments in the Future of Performance and Production* at an established Berlin/German concert venue offers students an opportunity to meet with people from the music industry. Public exhibitions of works produced in the courses *Interdisciplinary Projects* and *Creative Experiments with Emerging Music Technologies* enable students to engage with local audiences and experience themselves as young professionals.

Co-Curricular Engagement

- The Milestones of Berlin's Communities is a series of seminars and faculty-guided walks designed to provide students with the tools to read and experience Berlin’s vibrant cultures and communities. The focus currently lies on Turkish, Jewish, and Vietnamese Berlin as well

as on Black Berlin communities. We will offer an additional walk on the experiences of LGBTQAI+ communities. Attendance of the “Milestones of Berlin’s Communities” series is required for students enrolled in the courses on “Transnational Migration” and “Global Connections: Berlin Spaces” as well as for MLK Jr. Fellows.

- We added new program components to existing learning journeys, including walks which discuss Hamburg’s (post)colonial heritage. We also created an entirely new format of a two-day retreat, which engages body and mind in a combination of workshop elements, yoga and wellness and introduces resilience strategies applicable to professional and personal contexts.

International conferences & Workshops Held Recently or Planned this Semester Include:

- May 18-19, 2019: **The Greek Revolution of 1821**, conference organized in collaboration with NYU’s Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia and the *Centrum Modernes Griechenland* of the *Freie Universität* Berlin.
- May 19-20, 2019: Transnational Jewish Studies Conference, **Maintaining Connections: Entanglements of American and European Jewries in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**, organized by the School of Jewish Theology, University of Potsdam and the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University.
- June 6-July 11, 2019: **Collapse: Climate, Cities and Culture**, international exhibition curated by Gallatin faculty.
- October 10-12, 2019: **Annual conference of the German Association of Motivation Psychology** (Motivationspsychologische Kolloquium), organized in collaboration with the University of Hamburg.
- October 16-18, 2019: **Neverending History: How did We Get to 2019 from 1989?** International conference organized in collaboration with NYU Prague and NYU Florence and sponsored by the GRI.
- Collaboration with the independent film festival [Around the World in 14 Films](#), 21.-30.11.2019 and organization of a panel conversation on **Film, Women, and Characters**.

Lecturer News in Brief:

Heiko Hoffmann, lecturer in popular music, co-curated an exhibition entitled “No Photos on the Dancefloor: Berlin 1989 – Today,” which was featured in major national newspapers and television channels; it had visitors queuing up for hours for the opening night. Elke Brüns, lecturer in German literature, branched out and published a popular book with a renowned German publisher (Reclam) on “Game of Thrones.” Lysann Zander, Social Psychology lecturer, published four articles on why male or female students consider dropping out of computer sciences degrees and how support networks in mathematics classes work among adolescents. All lecturers remained highly productive in terms of publishing and presenting at conferences. The list of their activities is too long to include here.