

NYU Florence Advisory Committee Meeting Attendance

*Monday, November 13, 2017, 11:30am New York / 5:30pm Florence
19 Washington Square North, Global Seminar Room (GSR)*

Attendees

- Deb Willis - Faculty Chair (Tisch)
- David Forgacs (FAS - Italian Studies)
- Hallie Franks (Gallatin)
- Gail Segal (Tisch)
- Brendan Hogan (Liberal Studies)
- Momette Broderick (FAS – Art History)
- Kevin Thom (FAS – Economics)
- Rebecca Morton (FAS - Politics; NYU Abu Dhabi)
- Bruce Edelstein (NYU Florence)
- Virginia Cox (NYU Florence)
- Ellyn Toscano (NYU Florence)
- Francesco Arneodo (NYU Abu Dhabi)
- John Robertson (NYU Shanghai)
- Eliot Borenstein (Senior Academic Convenor, Global Programs)
- Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)
- Janet Alperstein (Global Programs)

Introductions and Announcements

The meeting commenced with introductions of committee members. Eliot Borenstein announced the release of a report by the Faculty Working Group on Global Learning Objectives (GLO). The GLO Working Group first convened in October 2016 for the purpose of having a faculty-driven conversation about global learning objectives. Comprising 17 faculty members from across the university, the committee met 8 times during the 2016-2017 academic year.

In May 2017, the committee issued a report on its findings (available on the NYU website [here](#)). The report articulates proposed learning objectives for study away for students across all disciplines so that the University can ensure program alignment and begin to measure its success in meeting these objectives.

The report was discussed at the Fall 2017 site directors meetings, and in Spring 2018 it will be featured and discussed in a series of "global conversations" among faculty convened by Professor Eliot Borenstein, a member of the Working Group and the Senior Academic Convenor for the Global Network. As a leading institution in global education, NYU is well positioned to be advancing thinking and practice in this area, as well.

Site Director and Academic Director Report

Ellyn Toscano (Site Director) and Virginia Cox (Academic Director) went through their report, which was distributed in advance, making note of several highlights.

Curricular Development:

- The Physics pathway that was introduced in Spring 2017 did not have sufficient enrollment in Spring 2018 (only 5 students) to proceed. The Physics Departments from New York, Abu Dhabi and Shanghai met in early November to revisit the pathway in the hopes of attracting more students. One proposal is to transfer it from Spring to Fall, with the first offering in Fall 2018.
- Virginia Cox briefly mentioned the introduction of several new courses, including two two-credit courses (History in the Headlines and Digital Sketchbook) that will begin in Spring 2018, as well as two courses set to begin next fall (Econometrics course and Business of Entertainment, Media, and Technology).
- Beginning in Fall 2018, NYU Florence will be offering two Core courses each semester -- one in Cultures and Context and one in Expressive Culture. The Expressive Culture course in the spring will focus on the relationship between artistic production and intellectual culture in the Italian Renaissance (replacing the course on Renaissance Theater offered by the Italian Studies department), and the course in the fall will focus on Opera.
- The Committee discussed possible solutions to under-enrolled courses. The Committee agreed that there should be a process for reviewing chronically under-enrolled courses so as to be responsive to student needs and to maintain elasticity in the curriculum. However, implementing major changes can be challenging due to the employment landscape in the EU. It was noted that cross-listed courses and Core substitution courses are more likely to have steady, healthy enrollments. The Committee also recognized that some courses have low enrollments due to a niche academic focus but are otherwise highly rated by students.
- Virginia Cox noted that the Italian Department is looking into alternative structures to bring back the graduate (MA and PhD) program to NYU Florence. The department has discussed a single semester program, or possibly partnering with other departments and/or schools to create an interdisciplinary program.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

- The site continues to work issues in equity, diversity and inclusion, introducing a new course, Black Italia, that focuses on the historical links between Italy and Africa and the past and present experiences of African-descent people in Italian society. The course has received enthusiastic midterm feedback from students.
- After receiving multiple applications at the site for a student leadership role focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion, the site created an EDI student committee, which meets with Ellyn on a weekly basis.

- Several members of the NYU Florence community (9 faculty, 6 students, and 2 administrators) attended a conference in Brussels sponsored by the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup.

Program Evaluations and Data Packet

Janet Alperstein led the Committee through the data packet, noting that there continues to be an imbalance in the enrollment between fall and spring semesters, a phenomenon that several sites are still experiencing.

Ellyn Toscano and Virginia Cox went through the Program Evaluations. The site has made several changes to orientation week and they were pleased to see that these improvements were reflected in the evaluation responses. It was proposed that Liberal Studies frosh who spend their entire first year at NYU Florence be exempted from the orientation requirement in the spring; the Committee agreed this would be a good idea, but thought they should still be included in social events during orientation week.

The site would like to work on improving the evaluation response rate to ensure that it is representative of the entire student body. In particular, the Committee discussed ways in which to solicit feedback from students regarding academic programming, such as possibly adding a preamble to the program evaluations encouraging suggestions and giving examples of changes that have come about based on student feedback. The Committee also suggested sending out the the program evaluation from Ellyn or Virginia's email address, perhaps with a tailored message.

The Committee also discussed ways in which the program evaluation may better capture and evaluate the strength and quality of the program. NYU Florence was rated less academically challenging than many of the other global sites, though the Committee wondered if this was the most effective question to be asking and whether other factors could be at play. For example, the trend for the last few years is that students are studying away earlier in the career, thus requiring more courses to be geared towards sophomores. In addition, many students take a higher percentage of electives than major courses while studying away. How do these trends impact the curriculum and the perception of its difficulty? The Committee noted that a comparable question is not asked in New York, making it difficult to derive value from the responses given. The Committee suggested convening a focus group or exploring whether additional research data may allow us to better understand student responses to this question.

Next Steps

- Global Programs will look into providing data that may provide insight to students' responses to academic questions on the program evaluations.