

NYU Sydney Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 28, 2017, 11am

383 Lafayette St, C-08

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Attendees

- Aurora Wallace (Steinhardt – MCC)
- Conor Brady (Global Programs)
- Fred Myers (FAS – Anthropology), *Committee Chair*
- Gbenga Ogedegbe (School of Medicine & Global Programs)
- Jennifer Gerdes (Global Programs)
- Jini Kim Watson (FAS – English)
- John Burt (NYU Abu Dhabi)
- Lamar Sanders (Tisch – Film & Television)
- Linda Mills (Global Programs)
- Malcolm Semple (Site Director)
- Marion Wrenn (NYU Abu Dhabi)
- Mehmet Darakcioglu (Gallatin)
- Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)
- Peter Holm (Global Programs)
- Sonali McDermid (FAS – Environmental Studies)

Global Learning Objectives Report

The Faculty Working Group on Global Learning Objectives (GLO) 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 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.

Fall 2017 Site Director Report & Program Evaluations

Mal Semple gave an overview of the site director report and fall program evaluations, which were distributed to the committee in advance of the meeting. Mal noted that the site was particularly encouraged to see improvement in two areas they had been focusing on for the past year: (1) students found their experience more academically challenging and (2) were more satisfied with their housing arrangements. Additionally, 98% of students said that they would recommend the study away experience at NYU Sydney to a friend.

Mal then turned to the site's efforts with regards to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This semester, NYU Sydney is one of three Global Academic Sites hosting a Global Equity Fellow as part of a pilot program. The Global Equity Fellow is an undergraduate student attending NYU Sydney for the semester who has demonstrated a sustained commitment to NYU's values of EDI. The Sydney fellow has been focused on expanding the offerings of "Breathing Room," a safe space for students to have discussions often related to EDI and their personal experience. One of the sessions this semester focused on the non-binding vote on Gay Marriage in Australia.

Fred Meyers, Mal and others discussed possible ways to connect the Indigenous Studies department at University of Technology Sydney (UTS) with NYU Sydney students.

The conversation then focused on NYU Sydney's enrollment, with Mal noting that an advantage of Sydney is its small size, resulting in students feeling less siloed by their respective majors and better integrated, both academically and socially. A continuing challenge for the site is the fall/spring enrollment imbalance. This fall NYU Sydney is hosting 50 students, its largest fall cohort, and this spring it is also anticipating its largest spring cohort at 150 students.

Jini Kim Watson and Mal discussed how to best advise English majors who are considering studying away in Sydney. Mal spoke about the various aspects of the program that make it a unique and strong choice for students in the discipline.

Returning to the question of the fall/spring enrollment imbalance, the committee noted that some of the reasons for the imbalance could be that fall is a key time for certain majors, some students don't want to be away from the states for Thanksgiving, and students may be looking to escape winter in New York.

Mal also pointed out that they only have a handful of NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai students studying in Sydney for a full semester; NYU Abu Dhabi does host a J-Term course in

Sydney each January. One challenge facing a subset of these students, particularly Chinese nationals, is with obtaining the type of visa NYU Sydney students utilize. Another challenge is that in the Spring, 106 of the 150 students are sophomores. Abu Dhabi and Shanghai students tend to study away as juniors and therefore need different course offerings.

The committee then discussed students responses to program evaluation questions about co- and/or extra-curricular programming at NYU Sydney. Almost 90% of students said that the quality of the programming was “good” or “excellent”, but the majority of students said they attended NYU-sponsored lectures, readings, and/or discussions at the academic center “sometimes” or “infrequently.” Mal explained that part of the discrepancy between these two answers might be that these activities usually take place in the community, not at the academic center, which was the focus of the first question, but he also said that student attendance can be challenging.

The group then discussed whether or not Sydney should move away from classes being held once a week for 3 hours instead of holding class twice a week for 1.5 hours each. Mal noted that the structure really depends on the course and that making this switch could be difficult due to scheduling difficulties with the size of the site and that most faculty teach at other universities in addition to NYU Sydney.

Continuing on with why students might choose to study in Sydney, it was noted that students often have a desire to meet requirements in more than just their major so Sydney’s limited number of courses can make students less likely to select it.

Potential Courses and Minors at NYU Sydney

The question of creating a minor in Anthropology was raised, but the sentiment was that there isn’t enough student interest to make that viable. Along these lines though, it might be interesting to have a publication of all the minors that could be achieved, or at least partially, by studying at NYU Sydney.

Another committee member asked if more CAS core courses could be added to draw more student interest, with perhaps adding “Cultures and Contexts” to the current offering of Expressive Cultures. The Core Curriculum Committee would need to consider this.

Another possibility could be a Creative Writing minor. The only course at the site right now is the introductory course and interested students may have already taken that. The committee asked if they could look at how many students have taken the Creative Writing course prior to coming to Sydney.

Still thinking of Creative Writing, there’s also a Comedy Screenwriting course that’s only open to Tisch students right now. The committee asked if it could that be opened to other students, but the unique structure of that program makes it harder for other students to take it.

At the Spring 2017 Sydney SSAC, the committee discussed the possibility of having documentary filmmaking in Sydney. Linda Mills reported that in Fall 2018 there will be a documentary course using smartphone technology in Paris that could become the basis for a course at multiple sites.

The question of Liberal studies students coming to Sydney was raised. However, Liberal Studies tends to encourage students to go to non-English speaking sites.

Another potential avenue could be Politics. The department's interest in Sydney might be something to explore.

Finally, thinking about the unique context of Sydney and the interests of Environmental Studies, Anthropology, MCC, and others in Sydney, the committee proposed creating a cross-disciplinary minor for each site that focused on the themes already present in those courses. For Sydney, it could be a minor in Australian Studies. Conor will look into this further and see if there were existing minors that could fit as well.

Next Steps

- Create a publication of all the minors that could be achieved, or at least partially, by studying at NYU Sydney
- Consider if another CAS Core Course would be possible in Sydney
- Find out how many students have taken the creative writing course prior to coming to Sydney
- Explore Politics interest in NYU Sydney
- Explore the possibility of a cross-disciplinary minor