

NYU Florence Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

*Tuesday, October 30, 2018, 8:15-9:30am New York / 2:15-3:30pm Florence)
Bobst Library, President's Conference Room (1218)*

Deborah Willis (Faculty Chair, Tisch)
Kevin Thom (FAS - Economics)
Mosette Broderick (FAS - Art History)
Rebecca Morton (FAS - Politics; NYU Abu Dhabi)
Delia Baldassari (FAS - Sociology)
Hallie Franks (Gallatin)
Janet Alperstein (Global Programs)
Eliot Borenstein (Senior Academic Convenor, Global Programs)
Peter Holm (Global Programs)
Linda Mills (Global Programs)
Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)
Taylor Westbrook (Global Programs)
Brendan Hogan (Liberal Studies)
Bruce Edelstein (NYU Florence)
Giampiero Gallo (NYU Florence)
Perri Klass (NYU Florence)
Ellyn Toscano (NYU Florence)
Larry Wolff (NYU Florence)
Gail Segal (Tisch)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Linda Mills from the Office of Global Programs proposed a toast to NYU Florence Site Director Ellyn Toscano and her last SSAC meeting, thanking Ellyn for all the work she has done to help grow the Florence site, nurturing this remarkable asset in our global network.

SITE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ellyn Toscano, Site Director of NYU Florence, stated that this has been a mostly normal semester, noting a few challenges associated with the large population of visiting students from Wake Forest and Duke (77 students) and seeking ways to better integrate the visiting students into the campus community. Programming attractive to visiting students has been proposed to the provost at Wake Forest, which will better integrate visiting students as well as help balance some of the apparent difference in means between the NYU and Wake Forest students.

Committee members discussed a recent New York Times article detailing an NYU student's experiences with racism while traveling around Italy in 2013. In response to incidents like these

and the November 2015 listening session, Global Programs has worked closely with the Black Student Caucus, and other student groups, to develop pre-departure orientation elements that encourage students to reflect on their expectations as it relates to identity and openly ask questions and discuss what they may experience during a semester studying away.

Efforts are continually underway to ensure that students are aware of issues around race and identity in Italy and are provided a space to discuss and reflect on these issues. In particular, committee members mentioned that Liberal Studies freshman are required to read a memoir by a Senegalese Italian called "I Was an Elephant Salesman." Additionally, a Senegalese activist in Florence led a discussion with the students at the beginning of the semester on race and immigration in Italy. Each site has identified an administrator and faculty member who serves as a resource to students, staff and faculty, both in the affirmative sense and should issues arise. Angelica Pesarini, NYU Florence lecturer, serves in this role. In addition to teaching Black Italia, a course that takes an intersectional analysis of racial identity in Italy, Angelica participates in site orientations, serves on key Florence-based committees and is a resource to students, staff and/or other lecturers around questions or issues of identity, diversity, belonging, and equity.

40% of students studying away visit counselors as compared to New York where only approximately 20% of undergraduate students go to counseling. Providing appropriate counseling and wellness resources for students is a high priority for the university.

INCOMING SITE DIRECTORS

Perri Klass and Larry Wolff are the incoming Site Directors for NYU Florence and stated that they have already had some great conversations over the last couple months with faculty members, committee members in New York, faculty in Florence, and Global Programs staff to think about how they are planning the transition to the director roles in Florence. They stated that they are first and foremost faculty and are keenly aware of the importance of faculty engagement. Although they are newcomers, they are thankful for all advice and suggestions they have been receiving.

The overarching goals Perri and Larry hope to pursue in Florence include creating new offerings, devising new ways into Florence for students, raising the profile for different student populations, and helping students pursue academic goals that resonate with Florence's local resources. They also hope to continue strengthening ties to local academic institutions and the faculty network, continuing high quality, impressive and scholarly public programming and integrating it into the academic life of the site, and enhancing the international scholarly profile of NYU Florence in conferences, lectures, fellowships, residency or other ways. There is also great interest in exploring how to connect NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai to Florence as well as what it means to integrate the NYU global network across New York, Florence, Abu Dhabi and Shanghai.

Perri and Larry announced that they will be in Florence for the last faculty meeting of this semester, as well as spring orientation, spring break and again for “The Season,” transitioning to full time teaching and living at NYU Florence as of Fall 2019. Larry and Perri are co-teaching a course at NYU Florence next year. Additionally, Linda Mills, Nancy Morrison and Dennis Clark will rotate through Florence for various periods of time in Spring 2019, using the time to connect more closely with NYU Florence and support the staff.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Ellyn Toscano (Site Director) discussed evaluations; there was a 47% response rate last Spring, with upperclass students less likely to fill out evaluations versus first year students. While course evaluations focus on academic experiences, the program evaluation questions around housing, health, and wellness (i.e. “Did you know how to get urgent care?”) cover the entire study away experience.

“Would you recommend this site to a friend?” had a high response rate with over 90% of NYU Florence students reporting that they would recommend the site to a friend, with the exception of visiting students (67%) as their experience differs from NYU students. The new team will stay attuned to enhancing the experiences of visiting students.

One surprising finding was that only about a third of students reported that they visited a museum or a gallery. Larry Wolff suggested investing additional resources to support more students visiting museums. Faculty member Bruce Edelstein explained that all access cards for state museums formerly provided to students are no longer available. It was shared that while a great deal of programming for museums and other cultural institutions is organized through Student Life, students often prefer to travel rather than stay in Florence for these kinds of activities. Gail Segal (Tisch) noted that two local film festivals also engage students.

DATA PACKET

Janet Alperstein (Global Programs) discussed the data packet. She shared that Florence enrollment is relatively balanced between Fall and Spring (with an approximately 20 student difference). Visiting student numbers are much higher in Fall semester than Spring. When looking at the students’ academic “level,” one must be mindful that these distinctions are based on credits; given this, many sophomores show up as first years due to the number of credits they have. In terms of Spring enrollments, sophomore numbers are steady while juniors have crept up. In Fall, sophomore enrollment is down but all other students are up.

When looking at students by major, Janet clarified that, for Tisch and Steinhardt, it is easier to identify while CAS is more complicated since CAS students are often undeclared or have changed their major. When looking at students by minor, one must note that many students do not declare their minor until right before they graduate. However, they may have been inspired to work towards a minor through courses they pursued during their study away experience such as when they took an art history course in Florence.