

NYU Florence Site-Specific Advisory Committee Meeting

December 3, 2013 (8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. EDT)

IN ATTENDANCE

- Virginia Cox (CAS – Italian Studies)
- David Darts (Steinhardt)
- Bruce Edelstein (NYU Florence)
- Chris Flinn (CAS – Economics)
- Hallie Franks (Gallatin)
- Giampero Gallo (NYU Florence)
- Allyson Greene (Tisch)
- Brendan Hogan (Liberal Studies)
- Ken Silver (CAS – Art History)
- Ellyn Toscano (NYU Florence)
- Josh Tucker (CAS – Politics)
- Deb Willis (Tisch)

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The committee considered whether to appoint a faculty chair, a question that the Faculty Advisory Committee on NYU's Global Network had raised. Committee members discussed multiple options (e.g. Global Programs continues to chair given its collective knowledge and participation among committees; two faculty co-chairs; no chair is needed) and ultimately agreed that no faculty chair is currently needed, and Global Programs should continue its organizational role. The Committee will revisit the topic in the future.

CURRICULUM DISCUSSIONS

Members were reminded that over the next few months, global curriculum discussions will be conducted within schools, since all courses at our sites are sponsored by departments and schools. These conversations will give committee members the opportunity to review the history of course offerings in their departments at the global academic centers. While every course/instructor at the global sites has been approved by a department or school on the Square, it is useful to have a process for reviewing course offerings on a consistent basis; also, departmental leadership changes frequently, and meticulous records of reviews have not been kept. The Office of Global Programs will now keep a detailed log of all Global course reviews.

After the global curriculum discussions take place in each school, the SSACs will be able to discuss academic synergies between schools and departments at the Sites.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The committee discussed the online assessment tools currently used by the Office of Global Programs, e.g., course evaluations, program/site evaluations, and evaluations of the pre-departure orientation process. Any concerns that are surfaced during this process are addressed, in coordination with the Square.

At the request of faculty, Global Programs is preparing an analysis for the Committee comparing overlapping questions among the evaluations. Committee members were reminded that they are a) welcome to customize school-specific course evaluation questions and b) Global Programs reaches out to facilitate individual school requests. Stern, for example, has added a standardized question to all of its course evaluations.

Committee members suggested the following be considered as the evaluation restructuring moves forward:

- A comment box should be added to each question to allow students the opportunity to elaborate on their designations.
- A “not applicable” option should be added to each question or where appropriate.
- Wellness programs should be incorporated and assessed in the evaluations.
- Mandatory zero-credit orientation programs should also be evaluated. [It was clarified that these courses receive independent course evaluations and best practices are discussed among sites.]
- The effectiveness of pre-departure advising should be evaluated.
- Student connectedness to the home portal campus while studying away should be evaluated.
- Evaluation fatigue remains a concern that could hamper student response rates and response quality.
- The verbiage “partner experience” is cryptic and should be revised to better translate to students.
- Extra-curricular offerings should also be evaluated.

The Committee was reminded that quantitative data for all global course evaluations are accessible through the NYU Florence Site-Specific Advisory Committee website.

ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIPS

The Committee discussed the academic relationships at NYU Florence and noted that academic relationships with Italian institutions and organizations have developed historically both through NYU Florence and through NYU departments.

A historical overview of external partnerships with NYU was provided. In the past, the majority of partnerships existed with schools of a different rank, resulting in “one-directional student exchanges” to NYU. Changes have been implemented to strengthen the academic caliber of partnerships and exchanges, and now 90% of NYU’s exchanges are with institutions of equal or higher ranking.

Bruce Edelstein and Giampero Gallo elaborated on the effectiveness of having Italian students in courses with NYUF students, and offered to develop a model for maximizing student exchanges with partner universities to share with the Committee. Committee members generally agreed this integration is immensely beneficial to students, but looked to further discuss questions such as student admissions. The Italian Studies graduate exchange program was mentioned as one example of such an effective exchange.

NYU Florence colleagues noted that Italian institutions are adding courses in English, creating more opportunities for NYU students to study directly at Italian universities.

SITE STAFF

Ellyn Toscano provided the following overview of the staff in Florence:

La Pietra Corporation (LPC)

- Rapaccini Carlo, Associate Director, administers overall responsibility for LPC and estate facilities management. He oversees on-campus and off-campus maintenance, ITS services, and budget. He ensures compliance with the Italian laws regarding safety and security.
- Nicholas Dakin-Elliot, Horticultural Associate, manages La Pietra's gardens and landscaping.
- Valentina Urr, Financial and HR Coordinator, manages Budget and Accounting for LPC as well as human resources.

NYU Florence Administration

- Barbara Bonciani is the Assistant Director for Operations and Human Resources, handling general administration and strategic planning.
- Elisabetta Clementi is the Assistant Director for Budget and Accounting and handles administrative coordination of summer and intersession programs.
- Sabrina Melillo is the Coordinator for Immigration and Facilities, assisting with immigration for students, faculty, and personnel. She also works to secure off-campus housing for students and faculty, and handles insurance-related matters.
- Mary Barbera, Assistant Director for the Office of Student Life, oversees health, wellness, and safety support services, including preventative programs among student life programming.
- Academic staff include: Lisa Cesarani, Assistant Director for Academic Affairs (also faculty); Bruce Edelstein, Coordinator for Graduate Program and Advanced Research (also faculty); Renata Carloni, Italian Language Coordinator (also faculty); Megan D. Metters, La Pietra Policy Dialogues Coordinator; Scott Palmer, Coordinator for Instructional Technology and Digital Initiatives (also faculty). Along with Nicolo' Conti and visiting NY faculty, these members make up the Academic Advisory Committee.

NEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WEBSITE

The Office of Global Programs and the Office of the Provost are developing a website to help students understand the academic policies that are in place at the Global Academic Centers. In some instances (e.g., attendance), the Centers have policies that do not exist on the Square. Other policies (e.g., pass/fail) may simply vary by school, an issue that the Undergraduate Deans

are now exploring. Committee members were asked to review the draft website and to provide feedback.

GLOBAL CURRICULUM AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FUND

A draft of a new Global Curriculum and Faculty Development Fund (GCFDF) was shared with the committee. This fund will provide grants of up to \$5,000 to global faculty who propose to work with faculty and departments on the Square to improve existing courses or to undertake other projects that will promote faculty development and collaboration in connection with teaching. The new grant will launch in spring 2014. In the meantime, the Square's longstanding Curriculum Development Challenge Fund (CDCF) has generously earmarked three grants for global faculty for this transition year. The deadline for global faculty who are interested in applying for a CDCF grant has been extended from mid-December to January 10, 2014 at the request of another SSAC. Committee members were asked to let Global Programs know of any further suggestions for improving the draft of the new fund.

NEXT STEPS

- Committee members will get back to Global Programs with any suggestions/revisions they have for (a) the assessment surveys (especially additional or different questions for the overall program/site evaluation), (b) the draft of the new Global Curriculum and Faculty Development Fund, and (c) the new academic policies website.
- Giamperro Gallo and Bruce Edelstein will prepare a model for integrating Italian students into NYUF for discussion at the next meeting, likely to occur in early March 2014.
- Global Programs will provide the Committee with an analysis of overlapping student assessment questions.