

NYU Florence Site-Specific Academic Advisory Committee
Inaugural Meeting: October 4, 2013 (9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.)

IN ATTENDANCE

Virginia Cox (CAS – Italian Studies)

David Darts (Art – Steinhardt)

Bruce Edelstein (NYU Florence - via phone)

Chris Flinn (CAS – Economics)

Hallie Franks (Gallatin)

Giampero Gallo (NYU Florence – via phone)

Allyson Green (Tisch)

Brendan Hogan (Liberal Studies)

Edward Sullivan (CAS – Art History)

Ellyn Toscano (Site Director – NYU Florence)

Deb Willis (Photography and Imaging – Tisch)

INTRODUCTIONS

On behalf of their departments/schools, members of the Florence Advisory Committee introduced themselves, their area of academic interest, and relationship to NYU Florence.

FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Linda Mills opened with background on the formation of the Site-Specific Advisory Committees (SSACs), which resulted from conversations with site directors, deans, departments, and faculty, as well as with the Faculty Advisory Committee on the Global Network and the GNU Initiatives Committee of the Faculty Senators Council. The SSACs are designed to promote discussions with faculty from

schools/departments that have academic partnerships in Florence and to foster cross-school communication in curricular and related global site planning. Meetings will be informal in nature in order to encourage discussion. The Office of Global Programs will supply whatever data is needed to help inform these conversations.

More information on the formation of the SSACs can be found here: <http://www.nyu.edu/global/global-academic-partnerships-and-affiliations/faculty-discussions-on-global-sites.html>).

SITE OVERVIEW

NYU Florence Site Director Ellyn Toscano provided a brief overview of NYU Florence for Committee members and elaborated on materials shared with the Committee in advance, focusing on: faculty, enrollment numbers, Liberal Studies program (freshman and pilot sophomore program), graduate opportunities, Global Research Initiative (GRI) work on site, facilities, the “La Pietra Dialogues” and its engagement with the community, La Pietra Trust compliance overseers. Professor Gallo also noted the video-conferencing capabilities on site which functions as a useful learning tool and possible cross-curricular resource.

COMMITTEE MEETING FREQUENCY

Committee members expressed slightly varied views on meeting frequency, but reached consensus that twice a semester would be appropriate, with possible subcommittees (to be defined in follow-up communication) and continuing one-on-one conversations occurring simultaneously.

ROLE OF COMMITTEE

Committee members expressed perspectives on the role of the committee and the following issues were raised and discussed:

- Vetting of global faculty and curriculum remain essential. The committee was reassured that course oversight is done on multiple levels and that departments and schools will continue the process in place of approving all

courses/faculty. Professional/personal relations among Square faculty and site faculty could be enhanced through this committee structure in order to promote appreciation for shared research and scholarly interests.

- Economies of scale should be considered when “right-sizing” a global site.
 - Both fixed costs (buildings, maintenance, etc.) and faculty investment should align with student enrollments. It is not enough to have quality programs and quality instructors; students must utilize those resources in order to benefit from them.
 - Departments are responsible for investing in sites, from curriculum, student and faculty perspectives and for directing students to the appropriate sites to study.
- A systematic understanding of site curriculum would be useful at the Square to ensure consistency, avoid redundancy, and help students graduate on time.
- The opportunity for cross-curricular collaboration is exciting and needs a forum; this committee could serve that function.
- Transitions back to the Square from study away sites, especially for full-year (Liberal Studies) students, are challenging and need to be considered.
- The Committee can raise the level of predictability of the student body studying away at the site by understanding enrollment trends and promoting academic pathways.
- NYU Florence faculty noted a comprehensive review of curriculum alignment was completed in December 2010 which will provide the Committee a useful tool for future curriculum work.
- The new, required Global Orientations course at NYU Florence created an opportunity to learn and engage the incoming class in a way that was not previously available.
- The Department of Art and Art Professions visited the La Pietra site this summer and evaluated the facilities used for these purposes as well as off-site facilities. As no indoor space at La Pietra or off-site facilities has been deemed appropriate for NYU's Art offerings, 3-week Art intensive courses will be offered outdoors on the La Pietra campus. These courses will be sponsored by the Department of Art and Art Professions, and taught by faculty in that department.

NEXT STEPS

In order to understand the experience of NYU Florence students better, the next meeting will sample data in the following areas:

- What courses did students take in Florence and what type of student studied at NYU Florence?
- How did students perform academically, before, during, and following their time in Florence?

These questions will allow for an informed discussion of how best to increase the predictability of the incoming classes and also how best to develop/modify cross-curricular coursework.