

NYU Prague Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, November 19, 2019, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST

Global Programs Conference Room, 383 Lafayette St. Room C06

Attendees

- Jiri Pehe (NYU Prague Site Director)
- Eliot Borenstein (FAS; Senior Academic Convenor for the Global Network)
- Peter Rosendorff (FAS - Politics)
- David Schroeder (Steinhardt)
- Matteo Marciano (NYUAD - Music)
- Tom Ertman (FAS - Sociology)
- Gwyneth Bravo (NYUAD)
- Carol Sternhell (FAS - Journalism)
- Stephanie Baer (Steinhardt)
- Nancy Morrison (Global Programs)
- Janet Alperstein (Global Programs)
- Tyra Liebmann (Global Programs)

Meeting Minutes

Eliot Borenstein facilitated the meeting on behalf of the chair, Peter Rosendorff. There was one new member, Stephanie Baer, who replaced David Schroeder.

Janet Alperstein from Global Programs discussed affordability at the sites, highlighting some key scholarships offered by the Office of Global Programs as well as some leadership scholarships that students should be encouraged to apply to (e.g. Gilman, Boren, Critical Language Scholarship). The committee discussed that while NYU Prague was one of the more affordable sites, it is still critical to support students around issues of affordability.

Nancy Morrison from Global Programs continued the conversation focusing on sustainability. Global Programs has been in conversation with the Office of Sustainability around this issue. Discussions with NYU Prague have taken place over the last three years, with the goal of understanding what each site is doing in terms of consumption and energy.

Jiri Pehe, Site Director at NYU Prague, discussed new curricular developments and activities at the site, as detailed in his Site Director's Report (see attached). In particular, Jiri Pehe highlighted the significant changes in the composition of the student body at NYU Prague; most notably, fewer Stern students chose NYU Prague for the Spring 2020 semester. NYU Prague has expanded their music faculty with some additional courses in music education. Additionally, there are improved collaborations with local institutions to increase opportunities for local immersion, developments to increase internship participation, and a newly founded diversity committee for students to learn more about diversity issues in the Czech Republic. NYU Prague hosted a series of workshops in radio broadcasting that replaced a course that used to exist. These workshops were organized by Bob Cameron, BBC correspondent, who helps out with the student run blog: NYU Prague Now.

Eliot Borenstein discussed a new funding opportunity for joint scholarly academic events or conferences between portal faculty and a site. Supported events will be held at a site and are designed to engage site directors, NYU faculty, site students, local faculty and experts and the community around a scholarly topic of choice. The program aims to advance the research, scholarship, and creative work of NYU faculty in a global context and help raise awareness that the sites are, in addition to being study away destinations, hubs of intellectual activity. There will be a forthcoming announcement that explains the initiative in more detail.

The meeting concluded with a conversation between Tom Ertman, FAS, and Stephanie Baer, Steinhardt, about opening up the course 'Cultures and Contexts' to Steinhardt students.



Site Director Report: NYU Prague

Curriculum

The number of students at NYUPr in the spring semester 2019 was comparable to that of the spring semester 2018. We had 126 students, with a strong Stern cohort. Our main “pathway” programs (the Music Program and MCC in particular) continued to do well. The curriculum of the Music Program, in particular, keeps expanding, especially in the areas of Music Education and Conducting.

Our Assistant Director for Academics Vanda Thorne worked on several new academic initiatives. One of the top priorities was a new course on Brain and Behavior, which required obtaining laboratories. The course will be offered for the first time in the Spring Semester 2020.

NYU Prague has continued its academic activities focused on faculty development, particularly in the area of best teaching practice. We organized a faculty workshop with Carol Robbins (Stern STEP program) about fostering student learning. In collaboration with NYU Shanghai’s Center for Teaching and Learning, we also started an email group for NYU Prague faculty, which provides additional educational materials.

NYUPr also continued working closely with the Tisch Film Department on improving our cooperation with Prague’s Film Academy (FAMU). The Tisch team has visited Prague every semester for the past two years. A new Steinhardt course “Sound Design”, which was launched in the Fall 2018 as a joint collaboration between our Tisch-FAMU and Music students, is doing well.

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

Our new Assistant Director for Student Life, Yveta Kenety continued developing our already extensive program of extra-curricular activities with an expansion of programming dedicated to embracing diversity. In the spring 2019 we organized a number of panels, guest lectures and other events that add to the educational experience of our students in Prague. The same is true about trips that we organize for our students in the Czech Republic. During our trips and events, we bring the NYU students together with local students to learn together and share their perspectives.

Over 25% of our students again participated in our non-credit internship program, working in prestigious organizations such as Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty as well as with children in local schools, people of the minority Roma ethnicity, and organizing events for refugee families. We also continued working with EUSA, which organizes mainly internships for credit.

We continue to offer extracurricular workshops in radio broadcasting that produce the high quality PragueCast podcast, led by the local BBC correspondent, and we also continue to produce a student-run blog, NYU Prague Now! For the second semester we organized a literary evening where students could share their original works. Our music students finish

off every semester with top quality final concerts in local venues; they also performed with a Czech choir at a UNICEF benefit event.

University Priorities

We have developed new initiatives in the area of diversity. Associate Director Thea Favaloro, who serves as a liaison for developing various initiatives in the area of **diversity**, has worked with a diversity committee that includes our professors, staff and students. NYU Prague students visited Western Bohemian University to meet with Czech students and debate issues pertaining to diversity. We also continue working locally with several Czech organizations that promote and discuss diversity, in particular ROMEA, an NGO organization focused on Roma and human rights issues in the Czech Republic, the Organization for Aid to Refugees and the Terezin Initiative Institute which is documenting the Holocaust victims.

One concrete outcome of cooperating with local organizations was a March 2019 conference on women in leadership positions which we organized jointly with the Czech NGO Business for Society. The conference was attended by Stern business students, faculty from local universities, diplomats and representatives of many multinational corporations such as Coca Cola, Vodafone and Microsoft. Site Director Jiri Pehe also gave a keynote speech on the benefits of diversity in the workplace at a conference organized by Business for Society for representatives of major corporations located in Prague.

The IDBE committee has continued working with the student IDBE fellows to offer new programming in the fall semester, including events such as the Human Library, where students could meet locals from different minority groups (Roma, LGBTQ, Vietnamese, African). The committee has also planned two discussions about minorities in the Czech Republic, one, called “diversity university”, which was conceived as a full day of events, including a discussion, film screening and tour of Prague’s “Little Hanoi”, and a follow up discussion in March.

As in past semesters, we have organized several cultural immersion trips which focus on identity and diversity issues such as the trip to Ostrava where students visited an NGO which works with Roma.

We also organize over 15 trips which expand the students’ education, including trips to former Holocaust sites (Terezín, Lety u Písku). And we organized a trip to Jachymov, which explored the history of communist political prisoners. This event connected NYU students with a local NGO organization as well as Czech university students to join a research project.

Local Issues and Staffing

There were several new hires in the Spring 2019: several new faculty members were appointed in the Music Program—two new faculty for the new courses “Fundamentals of Conducting” and “Foundations of Music Education” as well as new faculty members for new sections of the already existing courses “Music Theory II” and “Aural Comprehension II”. We also have several new private music teachers. A new faculty member for the CORE course “Brain and Behavior”, which opened the Fall 2019 semester, has also been appointed. We also welcomed a new wellness counsellor this fall, Lea Micic.

In the summer of 2019, we worked with the owners of the Male Namesti 2 building (Academic Center) to renovate the entrance way on the ground floor and create a “student hub” on the first floor. In addition, in response to the fact that students use student lab computers less and less, we reduced the number of computers in what we used to call the student computer lab and made it into a multi-function lounge/study area.

Evaluations

NYUPr continues to receive above-average evaluations for its Orientation Program, extra-curricular activities, student life in general, and housing. The evaluations of our academic program are comparable with other sites, with 93 percent of our students stating that they would recommend NYUPr to their friends. Some 91 percent of our students were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their overall experience. Most of our courses continue to be highly rated.

We continue to take steps in the following areas to improve:

Increasing academic engagement

- Organize additional training for our faculty, to ensure that their classes are academically more rigorous and challenging.

Connecting better with students

- Continue cooperating closely with student representatives (SCC Ambassadors, Student Council officers, etc.) to get better feedback.
- Improving service to students.
- Search for innovative ways to improve the quality of academic and student life advising.

Increasing immersion in the local community

- Our RAs, who are Czech students, organize workshops, trips and other events with local Czech universities to increase opportunities for NYU and Czech students to interact.
- Find more opportunities for students to volunteer and engage with the local community.

Increasing opportunities to discuss diversity

- Develop new projects in which we focus on discussing issues of diversity in the Czech context.
- Expand programming focusing on diversity throughout the semester and evaluate the outcomes.