

## NYU Florence Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 31, 2017 8:00-9:15 am

President's Conference Room (Bobst 1218)

### ATTENDEES

- Deb Willis (Tisch - Photography)
- Virginia Cox (Academic Director, NYU Florence)
- Ellyn Toscano (Site Director, NYU Florence)
- Brendan Hogan (Liberal Studies)
- Ann Morning (FAS - Sociology)
- Rebecca Morton (NYU Abu Dhabi; FAS - Politics)
- Gail Segal (Tisch)
- Francesca Tarocco (NYU Shanghai)
- Chris Flinn (FAS - Economics)
- Hallie Franks (Gallatin)
- David Forgacs (FAS - Italian Studies)
- Momette Broderick (Art History)
- Eliot Borenstein (Russian and Slavic Studies; Senior Convenor)
- Linda Mills (Vice Chancellor, Global Programs and University Life)
- Nancy Morrison (Vice President, Global Programs)
- Janet Alperstein (Academics, Global Programs)
- Jaci Czarnecki (Student Services, Global Programs)
- Libby Perkowski (Global Programs)

### INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

As the global network continues to evolve and play an increasingly significant role in contributing to NYU's academic mission, and in response to suggestions from two key faculty committees, the University created new part-time faculty leadership roles related to global academic and faculty planning and conducted open searches to fill them. Coming out of that process, senior faculty members from five schools (i.e., Arts and Science, Global Public Health, Medicine, Shanghai, and Tisch) have taken on new roles over the past year:

- Associate Vice Chancellors for Global Network Academic Planning: Professor [Olugbenga \("Gbenga"\) Ogedegbe](#) (School of Medicine and College of Global Public Health) and Professor [Marianne Petit](#) (Tisch School of the Arts and NYU Shanghai)
- Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Network Faculty Planning: Professor [Zvi Ben-Dor Benite](#) (Faculty of Arts and Science)
- Senior Academic Convenor for the Global Network: Professor [Eliot Borenstein](#) (Faculty of Arts and Science)

Faculty members should feel free to reach out to Gbenga, Marianne, Zvi, or Eliot with comments or questions about the global network at any time.

## **CURRICULAR UPDATES**

Virginia Cox, Academic Director at NYU Florence, noted several curricular developments:

- The new Physics pathway is off to a strong start and completed a successful trip to CERN.
- Social and Cultural Analysis, which will be the sponsoring department for the new Black Italia course, is in the process of appointing an instructor for the course.
- The Italian department has approved a new language program that will have a more socio-linguistic and historical focus. It is currently being reviewed by the curriculum committee.
- Virginia will be teaching a new course on “Cultures and Contexts,” which will satisfy a CORE requirement and has been approved for up to 40 students.
- Chris Flinn has referred Virginia Cox to several faculty at University of Florence who teach Economics courses conducted in English, which may be a promising collaboration in the future.
- Virginia has begun to meet with smaller groups to further develop the thematic clusters discussed at the curricular planning meeting in February. In particular, the European and social activism/media clusters are the most viable in the near-term. The Committee was enthusiastic about developing these clusters further, such as possibly incorporating photojournalism into the activism cluster and sociology into the European cluster, using Italy as a lens through which to view contemporary issues throughout the EU.
- Documentary Film: NYU Madrid offers a model whereby the Journalism department offers a documentary film class for non-Tisch majors, which would allow more students to develop media literacy skills without having to build the infrastructure for an applied film course.

The Committee discussed the various ways to approach curricular development. Some courses are added or modified based on the popularity of existing courses at the site. For example, the idea for a thematic cluster around organized crime sprung from the popularity of the “Politics of Organized Crime” course offered by the Sociology department. Similarly, student energy for volunteering at NYU Florence was the impetus behind the activism cluster. Other courses are added in anticipation of student interest, which is often necessary for more vertical majors. Various committees have been looking into ways to increase the accessibility of study away from an academic perspective and ensure that the curriculum aligns with the academic needs of the student body. In this respect, developing an academic identity for the site will help students navigate the various study away opportunities and identify the one(s) that are the best fit with their academic needs.

## **SITE DIRECTOR REPORT, PROGRAM EVALUATIONS & DATA PACKET**

Ellyn Toscano, Site Director for NYU Florence, presented an overview of the cultural and co-curricular activities at the site:

- The site hosts activities almost every evening, which has been instrumental in creating a dynamic and productive energy on campus. The site is working to more closely integrate these activities into coursework offered.
- 54 students have volunteered to organize La Pietra Dialogue events, where they learn valuable skills such as interviewing and event production and also formed lasting bonds through the alumni group for LPD volunteers.
- Several students also juried for short films in the film festival.

Ellyn Toscano reviewed the program evaluations for Fall 2016, noting the following:

- In general, NYU Florence falls in the middle for most metrics measured by the evaluation. A relatively high percentage of upperclass students indicated that they would not recommend the site (17%), though this may be localized to a specific student cohort, as other cohorts (e.g. frosh) responded favorably to this question. The site will look into conducting focus groups to better understand the motivations behind these results.
- The site has also restructured global orientations, shifting many of the more informational sessions to video format that students can watch on their own time, making orientation more dynamic and shorter. In addition, they have used videos more to communicate important information during the semester, to which students have responded well. The amphitheater, which was recently opened on campus, provides a space where students can gather in a large group, which has facilitated student cohesion.
- The site did well in terms of satisfaction with housing, though commuting can sometimes be a challenge, especially when many clubs meet and LPD activities take place in the evening after most students have returned home for the day. The site is looking into incorporating a midday common hour into the schedule when these activities can take place, or perhaps hosting some of these meetings and events downtown so as to engage more students.
- It was noted that homestays are becoming increasingly popular among students.
- The Committee noted that the evaluation does not have many questions pertaining to the academics at the site and, the questions they do have are more quantitative than qualitative.

Janet Alperstein did an overview of the data packet with the Committee and noted that more students are studying abroad in the sophomore year, even in the fall semester. This is a trend that can be seen across the global network and may, in part, be due to student desire to be in New York to during internship recruitment, which has shifted to earlier in the academic year.

## **EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PAPER**

Virginia Cox encouraged all members to read her EDI paper, in which lecturers at NYU Florence describe how they integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into their course. Participation in the study was voluntary, though it was noted that given the nature of the sites, the faculty are already typically invested in diversity and cross-cultural issues. The Committee was complimentary of Virginia's approach and encouragement of lecturers to be intentional in the content they assign, and wondered if this exercise might be done at other sites, as well.

## **AY17-18 REMINDERS**

The Committee was reminded to please notify the academics team in Global Programs if your department has any course changes for the AY17-18 year. If you will be on sabbatical at any point next year, please also notify the staffer of who has been nominated to represent your department.