Report to the Provost from the Disabilities, Inclusion and Accessibility Working Group (DIA)

Office of the Provost

September 2021

Please note: This report has been formatted for accessibility, including the use of headings and page numbers which are compatible with most screen reader software, extended image descriptions, image alt-text and in-text hyperlinks. See NYU IT’s online Document Accessibility portal for more information.
CONTENTS

1. Mission Statement (p3)

2. Introduction to 2020-2021 Achievements (p5)

3. Partners, Projects, Progress
   Information Technology (p7)
   Facilities and Management (p8)
   Wasserman Center (p10)
   The Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity and Strategic Innovation (p13)
   Moses Center for Student Accessibility (p18)
   Steinhardt (p19)
   Disability Allied Law Students Association (p21)
   Jennifer White-Johnson (p23)
   Center for Disability Studies (p24)

4. Where are they now?! Keeping tabs on DIA Alumni... (p30)

5. Future Directions (p35)

DIA Co-Chairs and Members List 2020-21 (p36)
Appendices (p39)

This is the second report of the DIA Working Group, the first report was submitted in September 2019.
Mission Statement

In response to a request from NYU Provost Katherine E. Fleming, The Disabilities, Inclusion and Accessibility Working Group (DIA) was established in 2016 with the aim of coordinating initiatives to make New York University campuses inclusive and accessible for all people, regardless of physical, cognitive or sensory ability. The working group has over thirty voluntary members (see p36) drawn from diverse departments and programs across NYU, including teaching faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students and professional staff, incorporating people with mobility, hearing, visual, sensory, and neurological impairments.

From 2016-2021 the group has been co-chaired by co-Directors of the NYU Center for Disability Studies, Faye Ginsburg, Professor of Anthropology (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) and Mara Mills, Associate Professor of Media, Culture and Communication (Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development), and Karen Nercessian, (NYU Associate Vice Provost, Strategy and Chief of Staff). Beginning in Fall 2021, Ginsburg and Mills are cycling off and Dr. Karen Jackson Weaver (Associate Vice President of Global Faculty Engagement and Innovation Advancement), and Dr. Kristie Patten (Vice Dean of Academic Affairs, Steinhardt), will be replacing them as co-directors of DIA along with Karen Nercessian.

Building on the strengths of NYU’s vibrant and growing disability community, DIA has been engaged at many levels of University life. The working group’s primary approach has been to promote the creation of a more welcoming infrastructure for disabled people on our campuses, and to build relationships between NYU academic departments and on-campus resources (such as the Moses Center for Student Accessibility and the Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity and Strategic Innovation), as well as student groups (such as the Disability Student Union), professional departments (such as Human Resources and the Registrar), and other facilities and community organizations. In all activities, DIA encourages collaborative practice and community consultation to galvanize innovative initiatives which support universal inclusion.

DIA completed its three founding goals in 2019. These were to:
1. Formulate a statement of intent that reflects the University’s overall policy on, and commitment to, accessibility.

2. Provide recommendations to the University Senate Ad Hoc Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

3. Provide recommendations for a better integrated platform for the Center for Disability Studies and the Disability Student Union as well as the Office of Equal Opportunity and the Moses Center for Student Accessibility.

Alongside these objectives, DIA established a robust social network that has enhanced understanding of disability, encouraging many other positive gains through collaboration with NYU departments and programs. These gains have been primarily in the areas of: expanding services, raising awareness, connecting accessibility coordinators across different units, creating better technological access, improving training, modifying access, creating new channels of communication and reporting about accessibility on campus, creating better signage, surveying facilities and advancing accessible research and scholarly practice. A summary of 2019 DIA projects and other achievements can be found in the 2019 Provost’s Report.
Introduction: Celebrating Another Two Years Building Inclusive Futures

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent reorganization of NYU teaching, learning, professional, and recreational activities to remote platforms, has both heightened the importance of DIA’s mission for accessibility and provided a catalyst for accessibility-related projects. For example, comparing academic years 2019-20 to 2020-21, the NYU Moses Center for Student Accessibility reports an increase of 42% in registration in their programs. From the design of online learning systems, to physical infrastructural enhancements and cultural initiatives across global NYU campus, DIA co-directors and partners have been engaged in taking steps to ensure NYU activities continue in a way that is accessible for all during some of the saddest months in America.

Building on the achievements listed in our first report in September 2019, this report, compiled with partner programs and departments, describes some of the most important projects undertaken between September 2019 and September 2021. These include:

• Important modifications to University buildings, including (long overdue) ramps for The Sasaki Gardens at Washington Square Village, where many faculty and students live; at The Center for Ballet and the Arts Studios, Cooper Square; and at the NYU Public Safety offices, along with others (see below);

• Vital digital accessibility affordances for Zoom teaching and learning, such as live transcribers and ASL, quickly put in place by our exceptional team at NYU IT, under the visionary leadership of Kitty Bridges, NYU’s Associate Vice-President for Digital Accessibility;

• Formulation of a ground-breaking Undergraduate course entitled, “Disability Justice and Radical Inclusion,” exploring the implications and meaning of having a disability in global contexts;
• Initiation of several COVID-19 and disability justice targeted research projects, including a $618,490 NSF Standard Grant, obtained by Prof. Mara Mills, Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp.

• A variety of cross-department collaborative events, ranging from book talks and film screenings to professional workshops, designed to stimulate critical discussion and co-envision the accessible and inclusive future we all deserve;

• Facilitating Visiting Scholars and Fellows programs to ensure cross-pollination of ideas with other scholars and universities; and

• Working to prepare students to meet the challenges of the “new normal” work environment, including virtual job searches.
 Partners, Projects, Progress

Information Technology

NYU IT (IT) conducted substantial work to enhance digital accessibility over the last two years. One of the largest impact tasks was advocating for and implementing Automatic Live Transcription feature into the Zoom online video conferencing platform, a service which now makes captioning and transcription available for the entire NYU community. This will support remote instruction and remote work for those requiring captions or transcripts, in addition to live captioning where provided as an accommodation, but also assists people who learn best when provided multiple ways to interact with video-based content. NYU IT produced documentation and training to support the broad use of this new technology.

In addition, they realized a number of service enhancements and milestones:

2020:

- Development of Best Accessibility Practices for Remote Instruction/Work guidelines for the community.
- Confirmation, following Department of Education Office of Civil Rights’ testing, that the University’s Resolution Agreement has been closed. NYU is no longer subject to monitoring due to our work in improving digital accessibility across campus. NYU’s commitment to digital accessibility remains strong going forward, and there have been no changes in emphasis or direction.
- Completion of “fast-track” accessibility compliance assessments of high-profile COVID-related and NYU Returns-related platforms (e.g., BioReference, CVS COVID Test Scheduler, Kettlespace, Optum Employee Assistance Program enhancements, RedCap, SmarterProctoring).

2021

- Onboarding two new captioning service vendors for University partner use for virtual events, presentations, conferences, etc.
• Launch of “PDF Cleanup initiative.” All schools were asked to reduce their use of PDF documents, which can often be inaccessible, both prospectively and through a review of existing PDFs. Schools have so far committed to removing or remediating 60% of the thousands of documents found. This number is expected to increase over the next academic year. NYU IT is brokering and funding vendor remediation of the remaining documents to ensure documents on our websites are accessible.

• Ensuring that virtual graduation platforms met University digital accessibility standards.

• Implementing the Blackboard Ally platform within NYU LMS (Brightspace) for faculty and students. This tool enables faculty to identify the accessibility grade of documents they want to include in the Brightspace Learning Management System, and lets students request different and more accessible formats for documents.

**Facilities and Management**

NYU Facilities staff have been vital stakeholders within the DIA network. Building on their long list of achievements in 2019, they have made the following improvements to our University campus during the past two fiscal years:

• **Automatic Door Openers.** Installing automatic door openers at the following locations:
  - 75 3rd Ave - 3rd North Dorm (at the 11th and 12th Street entrances)
  - 80 Lafayette – Lafayette Street Dorm
  - Academic Research Center - ARC Center
  - Armory Apartments – Faculty Housing
  - Coral Towers Dorm – Student Housing
  - Washington Square Village – Faculty Housing (installed sliding doors)
  - KMEC - Stern School
  - Meyer - FAS
  - Pless Annex - Steinhardt
  - Shimkin - Stern
- Alumni Hall Dorm – Student Housing
- 14 Washington Place – Faculty Housing
- 8 Washington Place – Academic Site
- 411 Lafayette St – Academic Site

- **Warren Weaver Hall.** Replacing and modifying the existing side doors and automatic door openers at main entrances to make it ADA compliant.

- **Washington Square Village (WSV) Faculty Housing.** In addition to the automatic sliding doors at WSV, installing two new wheelchair lifts (opposite the main building entrance), one at 1 WSV and one at 4 WSV.

- **Public Safety Office, 561 LaGuardia.** Installing an access ramp at the front entrance, including an automatic door opener.

- **Brittany Hall Dorm – ADA Improvements.** Modifying 22 student rooms for increased accessibility: 13 received communication upgrades, 8 received mobility upgrades, and one room received both mobility and communication upgrades. Mobility upgrades include reconfigured room layouts, and enlarged bathrooms with roll-in or transfer showers, compliant fixtures and grab bars. Communication upgrades include new "doorbell" systems consisting of strobe light, transformer and activator tied into the fire alarm system. Other spaces: Cellar and first floor restrooms enlarged to meet ADA clearances, and the ramp in the first-floor lounge was re-sloped.

- **Othmer Hall Dorm – ADA Improvements.** Modifying 18 student rooms for increased accessibility: 11 received communication upgrades, 6 received mobility upgrades, and one room received both mobility and communication upgrades. Mobility upgrades include reconfigured room layouts, and enlarged bathrooms with roll-in or transfer showers, compliant fixtures and grab bars. Communication upgrades include new "doorbell" systems consisting of strobe light, transformer and activator tied into the fire alarm system. First floor all-gender restroom enlarged to meet ADA clearances. Security desk and Resource Center modifications to include lowered ADA height countertop.
• **Lipton Hall Dorm – ADA Improvements.** Modifying 10 student rooms for mobility upgrades. Bathrooms were enlarged with roll-in or transfer showers, compliant fixtures, and grab bars. Cellar and first floor restrooms modified to meet ADA requirements. Cellar ramp re-sloped. Student mailboxes lowered to ADA height.

**Wasserman Center for Career Development**

The Wasserman Center for Career Development empowers students and alumni to succeed at every stage of their career by creating opportunities for them to develop the skills, experiences, and connections they need to thrive in a dynamic global economy. Through individualized coaching, career education workshops, and employer events, students explore career options and expand their networks.

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly and drastically impacted the college recruitment landscape. Traditional in-person career development and recruitment activities such as career fairs, on-campus interviews, networking events, and employer presentations across the country were replaced with webinars and virtual meetings. Adapting to these new conditions, the Wasserman Center has been supporting students through a variety of synchronous and asynchronous online resources designed to meet the diverse set of needs of NYU students:

• **Working to prepare students to meet the challenges of a virtual job search,** including factors such as: barriers for networking and building personal connections; new interviewing techniques in virtual settings; and a need for increased flexibility amidst a challenging job market. A priority has been to ensure that all students have access to the services and resources that will help them to be successful.

• **Providing career coaching virtually to accommodate a variety of time zones and student needs.** Additionally, through utilization of the Violet Network, students have been able to engage with and learn from over 10,000 NYU alumni.

• Reviewing all website content and external communications to ensure digital accessibility.
In addition to these steps taken, the Wasserman Center continues to advocate for increased accessibility when partnering with external career platforms and technology vendors.
A SPOTLIGHT ON COLLABORATION:

OGI x BeTogether Disability Inclusive Culture Initiative

The BeTogether program, an initiative of the Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity and Strategic Innovation (OGI), is comprised of ten committees that plan projects based on data collection from the 2018-2019 Being@NYU program. Of these ten committees, one focuses specifically on disability: the Disability Inclusive Culture BeTogether Committee (DICBC), co-chaired by Consultant for Disability Inclusive Culture, Michael John Carley, and Assistant Vice President of the Moses Center for Student Accessibility, Robyn Weiss.

In 2020, Weiss and Carley selected three Vice-Chairs to assist them: OGI’s Chandani Patel was selected to keep the committee’s Chairs on board with BeTogether and OGI guidelines; President of the Disability Student Union, Christina Beck, was chosen to ensure close communication with student leadership; and Kelle Colyer-Brown, Associate Director, OEO Accommodations & Accommodations Coordinator, was selected from NYU’s Office of Equal Opportunity. Further, to ensure as many NYU spaces as possible are represented, the Committee Chairs recruited approximately 25 additional stakeholders to serve as committee members, including students, administration, faculty, staff, and alumni from most of the major schools (see Appendix A for a complete list of Committee Members).

Drawing on this network, the Committee Chairs asked members to create 4-5 page proposals for projects to increase disability inclusive culture within NYU spaces with which they are familiar. This naturally progressed into small self-organized teams, which collaboratively worked to finalize around a dozen wonderful proposals of various scope to enhance disability inclusive culture throughout NYU; which are currently being reviewed by OGI.
Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity and Strategic Innovation (OGI)

Disability Inclusive Culture is integrally situated within the 6-hub structure of the Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation (OGI). In 2020, OGI was approved in conjunction with the Office of the Provost to hire a temporary part-time consultant, Michael John Carley, to focus on specific projects related to disability inclusive culture through the end of Summer 2021. OGI, in collaboration with partners, is currently moving forward to recruit for and fill the full-time Director of Disability Inclusive Culture position to manage and co-build a comprehensive portfolio. For this important role, the selection committee is in search of a person who is highly experienced in evidence-based practices, research, global understandings of disability inclusive culture and scholarship with faculty-centered collaborations, and someone who will effectively promote disability inclusive culture across NYU in service of our vast and globally diverse communities. The ideal candidate will have experience working within and across complex, decentralized, and large institutions, preferably within higher education, to lead, and build measurable internal and external collaborations and programs. The position description is hyperlinked for reference.

The following list highlights OGI events, programs, and publications centering disability inclusive culture experiences, practices, resources, and strategies. Collaborations and partnerships are key to co-creating, strengthening, and escalating disability inclusive culture across our NYU community, and beyond. The strong collaborative partnerships with the NYU Center for Disability Studies, the Provostial DIA Working Group, the Office of the Provost, the Moses Center for Student Accessibility, and other NYU institutes and programs have been critical to building sustainable disability inclusive culture initiatives. OGI continues to explore collaboration opportunities with global leaders in the field, and the new partnership with Tecnológico de Monterray in Mexico is one example that offers opportunities to expand global innovations in the area of disability inclusive culture.

Events and Programs:

- 8/5/2020: Reflecting on Our Understanding of Autism
In honor of the 30th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990, Michael John Carley, provided a special presentation reflecting on how our understanding of autism has continued to evolve over time. Carley addressed obstacles faced by adolescents and adults on the autism spectrum, as well as the myths surrounding their capabilities.

11/30/2020: Human Dignity, Disability, and Inclusive Culture in Global Higher Education

In recognition of Dec 3rd as International Day of Persons with Disabilities, New York University partnered with Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico) for a panel discussion to reflect on best practices and provide a space to reimagine the full realization of cultures of inclusion for community members with disabilities, with special emphasis on global higher education contexts.

Disability Zones: Supporting people with disabilities requires an understanding of the spectrum of disability status and ways in which ableism shows up in everyday practices at NYU and beyond. This session provided an overview of frameworks for understanding disability status in the U.S., examples of everyday ableism across global contexts, and research-based strategies for working in solidarity with the disability community to create a more disability inclusive culture at NYU and across higher education.

12/3/2020:

3/10/2021:
• **Events Page**

• **Promo Graphic**

• **Global Scholar and Innovators Series:**

The GSI Series spotlights artists, writers, leaders, innovators, legal scholars, scientists, and others whose work has often been path-breaking and foundational within their own disciplines and fields. These individuals also amplify interdisciplinary and intersectional global theories and research related to the institutional structuring of race, gender, sexuality, ability, geography, age, religious, national, carceral, and/or socioeconomic statuses, as well as other aspects of personal, national, and/or socio-cultural identities.

• **4/14/2021: A Conversation with NYU Faculty and Students on Disability Inclusive Culture**

  o A conversation between NYU faculty and students on the topic of disability inclusive culture. Dr. Kristie Patten, Dr. María Rosa Brea, Cheyenne Leonard, and Christina Beck will discuss the past, present, and future of disability inclusive culture at NYU, as well as alignments and differences between student and faculty experiences. Join us as we reflect and offer pathways forward.

  o **Events Page**

  o **YouTube Page**

  o **Event Screenshots**

  o **Promo Graphic**

• **5/6/2021: A Conversation with Maryangel García-Ramos Guadiana**

  o Maryangel García-Ramos Guadiana, leader of the Diversity & Inclusion Office at NYU’s partner, Tecnológico de Monterrey (Mexico) is featured in a conversation moderated by Dr. Lisa Coleman, focused on the importance of creating a learning and workplace culture of disability inclusion.

  o **Events Page**

  o **YouTube Page**

  o **Event Screenshots**
• **Resources and Publications**
  
  o **Faculty Toolkit on Digital Inclusion**: This toolkit synthesizes key research in the fields of inclusive teaching, online teaching, and teaching and learning in order to provide faculty with concrete strategies they can incorporate into their teaching practice. Each section provides an overview, strategies, and further resources for each topic area. Faculty are guided to build inclusive classrooms and inclusive learning experiences by employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles to ensure all materials are accessible.

  o **Reimagining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at NYU**: Featured in NYU’s Compliance Matters, this article by Dr. Lisa Coleman, Dr. Karen Jackson-Weaver, and Monroe France provides a synopsis of the inauguration, structure, strategies, and key initiatives of the Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation. The Global Inclusion Officers Council (GIOC) and the BeTogether initiatives are spotlighted as two examples of data-driven and action-oriented university-wide global initiatives that levered the learnings of Being@NYU data toward transformational change in realizing global IDBEA at NYU.

  o **They Call it “Higher” Education article**: Featured in *Exceptional Parent*, this article by Disability Inclusive Culture consultant Michael John Carley spotlights the innovative leadership of Dr. Lisa Coleman, with an emphasis on her intersectional, asset-based, and strategies and practices that center Universal Design models to strengthen and scale up disability inclusive culture at NYU.

  o **OGI Newsletters**: OGI Newsletters create an accessible platform to circulate and spotlight resources to the global NYU community and beyond.
    
    • The OGI digest highlights the disability inclusive culture centered programs offered on the [OGI YouTube](#) channel, as well as theme-based playlists and “on demand” video recordings.
The OGI digest highlights current and previous programs, as well as asynchronous learning opportunities for the NYU community at socially relevant moments, offering timely, curated suites of resources.
The Moses Center for Student Accessibility

New York University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for all students. The Moses Center for Student Accessibility (CSA) works with NYU students to determine and implement appropriate and reasonable accommodations as well as access available Moses and University wide programs and resources to support equal access to a world-class education.

As always, with the support of their DIA allies, CSA successfully addressed the following needs over the last year:

- Successfully transitioning all services to a remote environment, including all one-on-one student meetings, accommodated exams and vendor support services.
- Ensuring the deaf and hard of hearing community have access to online learning by determining how to incorporate CART vendors (Communication Access Realtime Translation) and sign language interpreters into faculty’s online learning platforms; plus, providing training for faculty to use these services. From 2019-2021, approximately 151 classes and 49 students were provided with CART services (see Appendix B for further information).
- Successfully providing access to a significantly increased number of students with disabilities, locally and globally, during the pandemic. Historically, the Moses Center has averaged a 20-25% increase in student registrations each year. Comparing academic years 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 Moses saw an increase of 42% in registrations.
“The need for CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) doubled after the university transitioned to remote learning. Rochelle Mills, Senior Accessibility Specialist at the Moses Center, quickly learned how to incorporate CART vendors into faculty’s online learning platforms and invested significant hours into training vendors and faculty to ensure a seamless transition for deaf and hard of hearing students”

— Diane Raboud, Moses Center

Steinhardt

NYU Steinhardt faculty have been core partners in DIA events and projects throughout the year. While faculty are engaged at a number of levels, recent key contributions include the following:

- As of Spring 2021, **NYU Steinhardt is offering a ground-breaking Undergraduate course entitled, “Disability Justice and Radical Inclusion,”** exploring the implications and meaning of having a disability in global contexts. Available across Washington Square, Abu Dhabi and Shanghai campuses, the course is built around a series of key lectures by four disability activists who were recorded in 2020 as part of the NYU Center for Disability Studies’ annual events program (see below). The course introduced students to experts’ voices and vision, especially disabled activists, as they seek to advance disability justice and inclusion and demand systemic change in spheres of influence.
including education, politics, healthcare, the arts, culture, social welfare, and everyday life. It also examined how public (government) and private (outside of the government) policies and practices in these sectors affect the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and how international trends in disability and inclusion, local cultural beliefs, and biases influence inclusion.

- Steinhart’s newly formed **Digital Accessibility Working Group**, led by Senior Web Designer Chris Nichols, supports the School’s continued efforts to improve the accessibility of digital content. The Group’s focus this year is on the digital accessibility of external-facing content for people of all hearing, movement, sight, and cognitive abilities. The Group meets monthly and includes accessibility liaisons from departments, centers, and units at Steinhart.

- **NYU Metro Center Community Conversation on Disability Studies and Critical Race.** On May 6, 2021, NYU Steinhart’s *Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools* hosted a conversation with Dr. Alfredo J. Artiles, Dr. Subini Ancy Annamma, and Dr. David E. Kirkland on disability justice that recognized the importance of race and power. The conversation acknowledged the social constructions of both race and dis/ability as products of white supremacy. From the Western eugenics movements through organizations that seek to end dis/abilities such as Autism or Down Syndrome, dis/ability, like Blackness, has been positioned not only as abnormal but undesirable and worthy of extinction in society. While the history of people marked as raced is distinct from those marked as dis/abled, those experiences can, and often do, overlap.

- The NYU Steinhart Web Team hosted **monthly digital accessibility trainings** led by members of the NYU IT Accessibility Team. These sessions were open to the entire School community and included topics such as: intro to digital accessibility, advanced digital accessibility, PDF remediation, alternatives to PDFs, accessible forms, video captioning, and how to test your digital content with a screen reader.
Disability Allied Law Students Association

The Disability Allied Law Students Association (DALSA) at NYU School of Law worked with DIA members and directors to coordinate a series of important events commemorating and reflecting upon the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. These events featured experts on disability law and incarceration, public health, poverty, and more:

- **Panel on Disability and Criminal Justice**, featuring Jamelia Morgan (Assistant Professor of Law at ICU), West Resendes (ACLU Disability Rights Project), and Stefen Short (Prisoners’ Rights Project at the Legal Aid Society), moderated by Deborah Archer (Professor of Clinical Law at NYU School of Law).

- **Panel on Disability and Poverty**, featuring Rebecca Cokley (Founder and Director of the Disability Justice Initiative at the Center for American Progress), Matthew Cortland (disability advocate), Rupa Valdez (Associate Professor at UVA and President of the Blue Trunk Foundation), and Britney Wilson (Staff Attorney at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice).

- Keynote Lecture, featuring Dr. Peter Blanck (Chairman of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University).

Additionally:

- DALSA hosted a virtual panel covering the current state of global disability rights law, focused on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and a comparison of the state of disability laws and protections around the world. Panelists included world-renowned activist Judy Heumann, Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo (Global Disability Advisor of the World Bank), and Michael Ashley Stein (Professor and Executive Director of the Harvard Law School Project on Disability). The event was moderated by Stephanie Ortoleva (Founding President and Legal Director of Women Enabled International).
• DALSA members Lucy Trieshmann and Maya Goldman founded The Breaking Point Project, a platform that shares the experiences of incarcerated disabled and/or chronically ill people, bringing those stories to life through art to advance prison abolition and inhumanity of the current criminal-legal system.

Jen White-Johnson, #BlackDisabledLivesMatter Artist Activist

The Tisch Drama Coalition for Disabled Artists (founded by drama student Caroline Riley), along with the Center for Disability Studies, sponsored a conversation with graphic designer/#BlackDisabledLivesMatter activist Jen White Johnson.

Background

• In solidarity with her 7-year-old Black Autistic son and in virtual protest with the Black disabled community, White-Johnson felt compelled to use her art to bring visibility to the fact that more than half of Black/Brown bodies in the US with disabilities will be arrested by the time they reach their late 20s. As she states, “we don’t see many positive stories or acts of #AutisticJoy and #CripJoy among Black/Brown bodies

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Left, the Black Disabled Lives Matter symbol combines a black fist, representing protest and solidarity, with the infinity symbol—which Autistic communities use to depict the breadth of the autism spectrum as well as the larger neurodiversity movement. Right, the symbol set beside the NYU Center for Disability Studies logo on a vibrant pink backdrop.
because that doesn't make headlines. To that end I wanted to create something that encompasses both the need to see Black and Brown disabled stories and the fight against racist narratives. ‘To Be Pro-Neurodiversity is to be Anti-Racist’ is a statement that carries a lot of truth, and it directly influenced my need to create the Black Disabled Lives Matter symbol.”

- The symbol has been instrumental in re-igniting much needed dialogue about black disability justice in 2021. The message has resonated with many within the disability community, and has been widely shared online, including by the Tisch School Of The Arts and the NYU Center For Disability Studies.
Center for Disability Studies

The activities of the Center for Disability Studies (CDS) for academic year 2020-21 were shaped by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in a number of ways. All public activities which focused on disability justice, the history of disability rights, and the growth of disability arts were held via Zoom to be sure that participants and attendees were safe. The CDS public program was also co-sponsored by the Office of Global Inclusion, The Grey Art Gallery, ACLS Scholars and Society Program, NYU Big Ideas program, and the Center for Black Visual Culture/Institute for African American Affairs.

Fall 2020 events:

• A conversation with Alice Wong and contributors to *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the 21st Century* (2020, Alice Wong, editor, Vintage Books), including Alice Wong (Director, Disability Visibility Project), Britney Wilson (Disability activist, civil rights lawyer, contributor to *Disability Visibility*), Reyma McCoy McDeid (National Center for Independent Living, autism self-advocate), and moderator: Alice Sheppard (wheelchair dancer/choreographer).


• CDS also co-sponsored an event with the LatinX Project: Demystifying Disability: Creatives and the Making/Musings of Latinx by Wilfredo Gomez, Ph.D Student, Criticism and Culture, University of Cambridge, Christ's College, NYC-based poet, artist and actor Jimena Lucero, self-taught, Queer Latinx visual artist with muscular dystrophy
**Raul B. Pizarro, Reveca Torres**, director of non-profit, BACKBONES, for people living with spinal injuries, and **Jorge Matos Valdejuli**, Assistant Professor and Librarian at Hostos Community College at CUNY

**Spring 2021 events**

- **Deafness and Hearing in the History of Science**, a reading and discussion of two new books: *Hearing Happiness: Deafness Cures in History* (2020, Chicago) by **Jaipreet Virdi** (Univ. of Delaware), and *Testing Hearing: The Making of Modern Aurality* (Oxford, 2020) edited by **Viktoria Tkaczyk** (Humboldt University, Berlin), **Mara Mills** (NYU) and **Alexandra Hui** (Mississippi State).
- Screening and Discussion of *Vision Portraits* (Rodney Evans, 2019, 78 minutes) with filmmaker **Rodney Evans** and performance artist/dancer/disability activist **Kayla Hamilton**.
- Reading and conversation about **Golem Girl: A Memoir** (2020, Riva Lehrer, Penguin Random House) with authors/artists/disability activists **Riva Lehrer** and **Sunaura Taylor**.
- **On Art, Disability, Deafness, Apologies and Other Matters**, a conversation with artist and writer **Joseph Grigely** and critic and curator **Emily Watlington**.
- Screening and conversation of **Crutch**, a documentary chronicling the remarkable life of renowned disabled dancer, **Bill Shannon**, in conversation with the film directors and dancer/activist **Jerron Herman**, in collaboration with the 2021 ReelAbilities Film Festival.
- **CDS also co-sponsored four events:**
  - The **Tisch Drama Coalition for Disabled Artists** (founded by Drama student Caroline Riley), a conversation with graphic designer/ #BlackDisabledLivesMatter activist **Jen White Johnson** (see above);
  - **NYU Metro Center Community Conversation** with **Alfredo J. Artilles**, Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Education, **Subini Ancy Annamma**, Associate Professor, Stanford
Graduate School of Education, and David E. Kirkland, Executive Director, NYU Metro Center (see above);

- **Circling Around Disability and Dance** with the NYU The Center for Ballet and the Arts (CBA), and the NYU Center for the Humanities, a conversation with the award-winning wheelchair dancer, choreographer, and activist Alice Sheppard in conversation with author and Director of the CBA Jennifer Homans.

- **Accessibility and Ableism** panel in stage design for Tisch Production & Design Studio Students, Tisch Drama Dept, with Joann Ferrara, the founder of Dancing Dreams; Becky Leifman, the founder of Co/Lab; Gregg Mozgala, founder/ Artistic Director of The Apotheae.

**Research: Disability Equity in the Time of COVID:** In addition to the CDS’ vibrant roster of events, in April 2020 the Center co-directors Faye Ginsburg and Mara Mills, along with Professors Rayna Rapp (Anthropology) and Arthur Caplan (NYU Langone Bioethics), received funding from an NYU COVID-19 Research Catalyst grant, for our project Disability Equity in the Time of Covid. This was launched with the additional support of four doctoral students who helped document the experiences of disabled New Yorkers - #BlackDisabledLivesMatter, adults with autism, those with chronic fatigue syndrome, and Black maternal mental health -- during the pandemic. We partnered with the NYU Tamiment Archives to create NYU Disability COVID Chronicles, a community memory collection. Ginsburg, Mills and Rapp and members of our group have published articles on their research ranging from Black maternal mental health during the pandemic to ME/CFS. In April 2021, Mills, Ginsburg and Rapp obtained a $618,490 NSF Standard Grant, Disability Expertise and Design Justice for Post-COVID Equity to expand and continue the project into 2023; they have hired additional graduate student researchers and plan to publish an edited book based on this work.

**Visiting Scholars and Post-Doctoral Fellows**
Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, CDS was fortunate to be able to have four remote Visiting Scholars, with whom Center directors met regularly via Zoom group meetings:

- **Visiting Scholars**
  - **Laura Mauldin** (Associate Professor of Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Human Development and Family Sciences, Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut), is working on a book on stories of spousal caregiving in the context of illness, disability, and aging, supported by a Social Science Research Council Rapid-Response Grant on Covid19 and the Social Sciences.
  - **Pooja Rangan** (Associate Professor of English in Film/Media Studies, Amherst College). With support from a 2020-21 ACLS Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship, Rangan carried out research for her new book, *Audibilities: Documentary and Sonic Governance*, that rethinks the humanist tenets of documentary speech and listening from the perspective of social theories of accent, disability, and abolition.
  - **Yan Grenier**, a post-doctoral scholar with a PhD in anthropology from Laval University, Quebec, is studying the mobilities of people with disabilities in relation to the physical ecology of urban assemblages and governmentalities, funded by the *Fonds de recherche du Québec Société et culture (2020-2022).*
  - **Alexis Kyle Mitchell**, artist and post-doctoral scholar (PhD in Human Geography, University of Toronto, 2020-22 SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship) to research and create an experimental film exploring intimacies and kinships built in relation to a multi-symptom, degenerative genetic disease called Myotonic Dystrophy.
Where are they now?! Keeping tabs on DIA Alumni...

Quemuel Arroyo
(MPA WG’20, BA CAS’12)
Currently servicing as the MTA’s first Chief Accessibility Officer. Working to redesign and enhance accessibility at the largest public transit organization in North America. Currently enjoying horseback, kayaking, sailing, and hot air balloon rides.

Bojana Coklyat
(MA Gallatin’20)
Bojana recently published the “Alt Text as Poetry” workbook, co-authored with artist/disability activist Shannon Finnegan, and currently works for the New York City Museum and Arts Culture Access Consortium. Additionally, she recently began working as associate producer and writer.
for a feature documentary film by Dog Green productions, which is sponsored by the American Federation for the Blind.

Donna has joined the Free Street Theater as an Operations Manager and Project Coordinator for their Cultural Asset Mapping program. Donna also works with Morten Group and ATSPIN Consulting as a Tech Facilitator, is an organizer for Support Ho(s)e, and a proud Chicagoan.

Cheyenne Leonard
(MA MCC’2021)
Cheyenne’s M.A. Thesis, on disability representation in film, earned the Barbara Haum award from the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication. During her M.A., she was also a recipient of the inaugural Women’s eNews Loreen Arbus “Accessibility is Fundamental” fellowship, writing articles on issues affecting the disability community, such as employment, city inaccessibility, and media representation. Cheyenne is currently an assistant at Kazarian/Measures,Ruskin & Associates in Los Angeles, one of the country’s leading talent agencies.

Johileny Merán
(BA CAS’19)

Johileny Meran is Program Coordinator at Mobility International USA (MIUSA), a nonprofit dedicated to advancing the rights of people with disabilities through international development and exchange. Johileny works on the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange to support students with disabilities interested in participating in purposeful travel (study, research, volunteering, interning, working) between the U.S. and other countries.
Sena Pottackal
(MA PS’20)

Sena has joined Current Global, a midsize PR firm to champion Accessible by Design, a commitment to make every piece of content created, curated, and published on behalf of itself and its clients accessible to audiences of all abilities. She leveraged insights from her MA thesis to help her company craft the PR industry’s first accessible communications guidelines. Sena and her colleagues presented research about their experiences of consuming content as people with sight, hearing, speech, and cognitive disabilities to inform audiences around the world about the importance of accessible communications. Sena also joined The NYU Alumni Association Board and will serve for the next three years.
Emily Lim Rogers  
(PhD, American Studies, ‘21)  
For Fall 2021 through Spring 2023, Emily will be the Mellon Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Disability Studies at Brown University, jointly appointed in American Studies, STS, and the Cogut Institute for the Humanities

Sunaura Taylor  
(PhD, SCA ‘2021)  
Sunaura is author of *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* (The New Press, 2017), which received the 2018 American Book Award. Since leaving NYU Taylor has become an Assistant Professor in the Division of Society and Environment, in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently working on her second book: *Disabled Ecologies: Living With Impaired Landscapes*. 
**Future Directions**

The DIA co-chairs and members offer heartfelt thanks to the Provost and her Office for the support and recognition which has galvanized the many successful projects noted in this report. Without this backing, we would never have been able to accomplish these projects. To conclude, we offer a few brief notes on exciting developments under way for 2021-22, and some of our hopes for the future:

**Crip Authorship: Book and Working Group:** NYU Center for Disability Studies Co-Director Mara Mills, and disability studies scholar Rebecca Sanchez (Fordham), are co-editing a handbook for NYU Press on Crip Authorship, a collection of essays from over 40 activists and scholars on theories and methods of research, writing, and multimodal/accessible publishing in disability studies and activism. This innovative methods collection addresses how disability theory and activism have reshaped many fields; the collection offers ideas about accessibility in research and multimodal publishing as well as crip genres and justice through writing. In August 2021, CDS held a remote gathering of the books’ contributors. Eric Zinner, editor at NYU Press, described the collection as “an impressive who’s who of disability studies.” CDS received a $5000 grant from the NYU Center for the Humanities to convene a Crip Authorship working group during 2021-22.

**Visiting Fellow, 2021-22:** Simi Linton, award-winning author, filmmaker, arts innovator and disability activist; founder of NYC Disability/Arts Consultancy; and Co-Director of Disability/Arts/NYC from 2016-2019. With $100,000 funding from The Ford Foundation, in 2021-22, The Center for Disability Studies will be hosting Linton and her new project, **Proclaiming Disability Arts!** exploring how disability arts are reshaping disability in the cultural imagination and increasing the cultural authority of disabled people, contextualizing Disability Arts in this period of moral reckoning with racism and privilege in cultural institutions, asking why so few institutions are grappling with the place of Disability Justice and Disability Arts in that reckoning. The book focuses on the excitement generated by disabled artists working
across all genres, and the evolution of Access as Artistry, the multidisciplinary practice of integrating access into artwork of all kinds.

**Looking to the future:** In addition to our usual work making sure that we have ramps, accessible doors, online learning, and remote access support for people with disabilities, we hope to work with emergency services to establish a plan to be sure that we have a clear protocol for how those with disabilities can be assured safety in emergency situations. We also plan to work closely with the Wasserman Center to enhance student placement to be sure that our graduating disabled students are able to find appropriate jobs. Finally, we look forward to seeing the work of DIA more fully integrated into the university. We would like to find support for an Accessibility Coordinator to train faculty, staff and students across NYU so that they understand best accessibility practices for classes and events across disciplines and platforms.

**DIA Co-Chairs, 2020-21:**
- Faye Ginsburg, David B. Kriser Professor of Anthropology, Co-Chair, Center for Disability Studies (FAS)
- Mara Mills, Associate Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication, Co-Chair, Center for Disability Studies (Steinhardt)
- Karen Nercessian, Associate Vice Provost for Strategy and Chief of Staff.

**DIA members, 2020-21:**
- Susan Antón, Professor of Anthropology (FAS)
- Christina M. Beck, Bachelor's Student (Liberal Studies), President, Disability Student Union
- Kitty Bridges, Interim Chief Information Officer and Associate Vice President, Digital Accessibility/IT Policy & Compliance, NYU IT
- Michael John Carley, Consultant for Disability-Inclusive Culture, Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation
- Linda Chiarelli, Senior Vice President for Capital Projects and Facilities
- Laurence Coderre, Assistant Professor, East Asian Studies (FAS)
- Lisa Coleman, Senior Vice President for Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation and Chief Diversity Officer
- Kelle Colyer-Brown, Associate Director, Office of Equal Opportunity Accommodations and Accommodations Coordinator
· Stella Flores, Academic Associate Dean, Associate Professor, Department of Administration, Leadership, and Technology (Steinhardt)
· Tracey K. Gardner, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President
· Gregory R. Guy, Professor of Linguistics (FAS)
· Patricia Gentile, Clinical Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy (Steinhardt)
· Gregory Guy, Professor of Linguistics (FAS)
· Natalie Hidalgo, Associate Vice President, Campus Services & Safety
· Matthew Frank Holman, Bachelor’s Student (Tisch), NYU Connections
· Lauren Hough, Co-Project Director, ASD Nest, and NYU Connections
· Amy Hurst, Associate Professor, Occupational Therapy (Steinhardt)
· Associate Professor, Technology, Culture & Society (Tandon)/ Director, NYU Ability Project
· Karen Jackson-Weaver, Associate Vice President of Global Faculty Engagement and Innovation Advancement
· Joseph P. Juliano, Vice Provost for Strategic Planning
· Lauren Kehoe, Assistant Curator, Undergraduate & Instructional Services, (Libraries)
· Ashley Maynor, Director, Library Lab & Special Projects (Libraries)
· Anne Marie McLaughlin, Director, Continuity, Emergency Preparedness and Communications
· Andrew McMahan, Associate Vice President, Global Resiliency and Security
· Mary Liz McNamara, Associate Director, Moses Center for Student Accessibility + NYU Connections
· Lisa Megeaski, Associate Director, Office of the Treasurer
· Josh Murray, Assistant Dean, Communications and Information Technology (Tisch)
· Kristie Patten, Associate Professor and Chair of Department of Occupational Therapy (Steinhardt), NYU Connections
· Alfred Ng, Assistant Vice President, Facilities Management
· Chris Nichols, Senior Web Designer, NYU Steinhardt Web Team
· Marilyn Nonken, Associate Professor, Music and Performing Arts Professions
· Chandani Patel, Director, Global Diversity Education and Training at Center for Multicultural Education and Programs (CMEP)
· Anita Perr, Clinical Professor (Steinhardt)
· Marianne Petit, Associate Arts Professor; Associate Vice Chancellor for Global Network Academic Planning
· Maria Ramirez, Assistant Director, Faculty Development & Diversity (Steinhardt)
· Reggie Sanders, Learning & Development Manager, Human Resources
· Gracy Sarkissian, Interim Executive Director of the Wasserman Center for Career Development
· Brittany Schoepp-Wong, Associate General Counsel, General Counsel
· Charley Seckler, Bachelor’s Student (Steinhardt)
· Lucy Trieshmann, Co-chair of Disability Allied Law Students Association (DALSA)
· Beverly Watkins, Clinical Associate Professor of Epidemiology (GPH)
· Leigh Watts, Assistant Director, Community Outreach and Academic HR (Abu Dhabi NY Campus)
· Fountain Walker, Associate Vice President, Public Safety
· Robyn Weiss, Director, Moses Center for Student Accessibility
· Amanda Molina, Assistant to the Vice-Provost

***
DIA welcomes comments and feedback from NYU students, faculty and professional staff.

Please direct all correspondence to: accessibility.inclusion@nyu.edu

Thank you!
Appendices

Appendix A

NYU BeTogether Disability Inclusive Culture Committee

Committee Members 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robyn Weiss, Moses Center</td>
<td>Co-Chair, Moses</td>
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<td>Michael John Carley</td>
<td>Co-Chair, OGI</td>
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<td>Christina Beck</td>
<td>Vice-Chair, SGA</td>
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<td>Kelle Coyler Brown</td>
<td>Vice-Chair, OEO</td>
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<td>Chandani Patel</td>
<td>Vice-Chair, OGI</td>
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<td>Faye Ginsburg, David Kriser Professor, Anthropology, FAS</td>
<td>CDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mara Mills, Associate Professor, Media, Culture, and Communication,</td>
<td>CDS + Steinhardt</td>
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<td>Steinhardt</td>
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<td>Mary Liz McNamara, Associate Director</td>
<td>Moses Center</td>
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<td>Alaska N. McInnis, Assistant Director, Institutional Engagement,</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
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<td>Office of Financial Aid, University Enrollment Management</td>
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<td>Sangeeta Bhojwani, Associate Director, Dean’s Office Affairs &amp;</td>
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<td>Undergraduate Initiatives, Undergraduate College, Stern</td>
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<td>Iris Bierlein, Sr. UX &amp; Digital Accessibility Specialist</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
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<td>Lauren Kehoe, Assistant Curator User Experience, Division of Libraries</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
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<td>Eric Bross, Senior Web Director, Web Communications, University</td>
<td>Digital Space</td>
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<td>Relations and Public Affairs</td>
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<td>Kendall Corinne Boyda, Video Production Manager, Media Production,</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
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<td>University Relations and Public Affairs</td>
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<td>Stephanie Black Allen, Learning &amp; Development Manager, Learning</td>
<td>HR</td>
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<td>and Organizational Development, Human Resources</td>
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<td>Kitty Bridges, Associate Vice President for Digital Accessibility</td>
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<td>and IT Policy/Compliance</td>
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<td>Marshall Sunnes, Senior Digital Accessibility Specialist</td>
<td>Digital Space</td>
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<td>Patti Pearson, Tisch</td>
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<td>Kristie Patten, Vice Chair, Steinhardt</td>
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<td>Donna Gary</td>
<td>Graduated Gallatin Sch of Ind Study/Disability Studies</td>
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<td>Karen Nercessian</td>
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<td>Karen Ortman</td>
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<td>Jonathan Martinez</td>
<td>Global Sites</td>
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<td>Nicky Nenkov</td>
<td>Chair, SGA, Liberal Studies Program</td>
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<td>Hayden Barron Howard</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Taylah Bland</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
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<td>Ryan Campbell</td>
<td>SGA</td>
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<td>Lucy J Trieshmann</td>
<td>President DALSA, School of Law</td>
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<td>Cheyenne Leonard</td>
<td>Graduate Studies</td>
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<td>Brandy Serrels</td>
<td>Military Veterans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aisha Al Naqbi</td>
<td>Assistant Dean of Students and Director, Campus Life Initiatives</td>
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Office of the Provost, September 2021
Appendix B

Summary of Moses Center for Student Accessibility CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation) Services Provided.

2019-2020
Fall semester: 12 classes for 4 students
Spring semester: 29 classes for 9 students
Summer semester: 8 classes for 3 students
Total Classes: 49

2020-2021
Fall semester: 48 classes for 12 students
Spring semester: 42 classes for 12 students
Summer semester: 12 classes for 5 students
Total Classes: 102

For further information please contact Robyn Weiss (rew8@nyu.edu).