



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

**Faculty Committee on the Global Network
Thursday, October 19, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m
President's Conference Room, Bobst Library**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETING

Eliot Borenstein, FAS (Russian & Slavic Studies) *Co-Chair*
Martin Klimke, NYU Abu Dhabi, *Co-Chair*
Sylvain Cappell, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences
Una Chaudhuri, FAS (English) and Tisch (Drama)
Lindsay Davies, Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee
Chris Dickey, College of Global Public Health
Alexander Geppert, NYU Shanghai
Guido Gerig, Tandon School of Engineering
Sam Howard-Spink, Continuing Contract Faculty Senators Council
Dale Hudson, NYU Abu Dhabi
Rachel Law, Student Senators Council
Heather Lee, NYU Shanghai
Yaw Nyarko, Provostial At-Large Appointee
Todd Porterfield, Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Gail Segal, Tisch School of the Arts
Mal Semple, Global Sites
Scott Sherman, School of Medicine
Paul Smoke, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
Allison Squires, Rory Meyers College of Nursing
Carol Sternhell, FAS (Journalism)
Jiawei Zhang, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

MEETING NOTES

Election of co-chair

Eliot Borenstein explained that no one on the committee had volunteered to be co-chair, or nominated another member. Una Chaudhuri then nominated Martin Klimke, newly added NYU AD representative and a former committee member. She added that she and Borenstein think it would be wonderful to have co-chair leadership from the portals, as faculty there are increasingly important to the committee's conversations. Chaudhuri's nomination was seconded by multiple committee members. Klimke told the committee that he thinks the committee has always done excellent work in terms of trying to understand and shape, as well as disseminate information about the opportunities and challenges of the GNU and that he would be honored to accept the nomination. Chaudhuri noted that while Klimke replaced former NYU AD representative Kevin Coffey, Dale Hudson has recently done a lot of work to engage NYU AD faculty focused on questions of coordinated hiring/P&T questions. She thanked Dale for his efforts.

Borenstein called the committee to vote on Klimke for co-chair, which was unanimous (none abstaining). He thanked Chaudhuri again, with another committee member specifically citing the great deal of written material Chaudhuri has drafted in the last few years.

AD Visa situation

Borenstein updated the committee on the two faculty members recently denied visas to teach in NYU AD, and President Andrew Hamilton's written response to a letter from faculty. A committee member shared that faculty in the Journalism Department are also drafting a letter in response to the situation, after President Hamilton forwarded them his letter. Borenstein shared that one of the professors in question, Arang Keshavarzian, would be willing to speak to the committee. He noted that some faculty have called for protests or a boycott of any NYU AD-related activity.

One committee member said that many faculty are upset because President Hamilton has not spoken out strongly about this issue. Another member noted that academics with ties to African nations discuss the US's own visa restrictions similarly to how we are discussing the UAE; currently, permanent US residents are afraid to travel to Africa and those in Africa cannot get visas to attend seminars here. Faculty need to find a way to discuss this without excepting the US. He knows that in Abu Dhabi, many people are denied visas. His understanding is that it does not have anything to do with academic freedom.

Another committee member does not see NYU as in partnership or conversation with Abu Dhabi's government; instead, NYU has a line to them and believes their leadership has been working hard to maintain an open connection. Another member noted that he has been there 27 times, and likens NYU AD to something between a state university and NYU. In running a center there, he negotiates with the Abu Dhabi government frequently, and thinks it is better to avoid extensive debates on academic freedom in favor of diplomacy and a desirable outcome. The more NYU faculty engage in a visible boycott, the more we lose.

A committee member noted that this response letter was not easy for President Hamilton to write. If faculty push too hard now, it might be a mistake. This committee could take a position to support the individuals denied visas, but a boycott would not be helpful; it would emphasize the wrong things. Another member said his experience in his department has led him to believe that being a Shia Muslim plays a role in visa denial. He also noted that many faculty seem to have a misperception about NYU AD. He was involved in its establishment and ran a faculty delegation to Abu Dhabi. At the time, he pushed NYU administration to get more explicit assurances of academic freedom, but was well aware that what they got was not very explicit. President Emeritus John Sexton typically spoke loosely and optimistically, but Cheryl Wills of the Office of General Counsel was less expansive about faculty's academic freedom and said there was no explicit legal guarantee of it. There were general statements about how everyone involved had an interest in the project's success, but he remembers being dissatisfied at the time.

Another committee member agreed that a boycott was premature. While we can compare the US's own visa rules, the US allows more and better ways to appeal decisions than does Abu Dhabi. However, this does not mean that the committee should not make a statement. Another member pointed out that NYU has always been clear that faculty were not automatically protected from visa denials. For faculty to say that this is an infringement, without being more specific, is irresponsible because it impacts student learning.

Klimke said that NYU AD faculty had invited and wanted those two colleagues to visit and are just as disappointed as colleagues in New York about the situation. This issue was discussed at length at the most recent meeting of the NYU AD faculty council. He said there were two misconceptions in the debate about these two cases, including: 1. That there would be growing constraints on academic freedom in NYU AD classrooms, which is not true. 2. That there would be restrictions on campus events, which is not true (rather, only public events go through a formal approval process). In addition, language portraying NYU AD as a tarnish or stain on NYU's brand has not been perceived well among colleagues in Abu Dhabi and caused considerable frustration. They feel that such discourse as well as the idea of a boycott ran counter to all the efforts to establish connectivity and faculty ties across NYU, facilitate curricular and research collaboration, create an integrated (governance) structure for all parts of NYU, etc. At the same time, there is a strong sense that the debate about mobility in the GNU has not sufficiently taken into account the reality of national visa regimes in all three portals as well as the sites. The Global Mobility Report pushed for by this committee a few years ago and published in 2016 was an effort to gain a better

understanding of the situation and realistic expectations about the extent of global mobility. Borenstein responded that he believes the Report will be updated each year.

A committee member brought NYU SH into the conversation, saying that to his knowledge, no visa denials like these had occurred in Shanghai. This is perhaps an occasion for NYU SH to learn from Abu Dhabi, because eventually something of this sort will happen. Another member pointed out that in the past, a faculty member was denied access to NYU SH over politics. She agreed this is a learning opportunity for NYU SH, but suggested developing a “toolbox” of resources for faculty on both ends. The governments in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai are different, but faculty need to know to whom they should speak in these situations. Students, too, have had problems going to different destinations in the network. She agrees with other committee members that this is a diplomatic challenge involving how governments deal with global flow. It is different to look at it as a question of academic freedom.

A committee member in Abu Dhabi said that when he interviewed for his position, he was told NYU AD would be an academic “free zone,” but was skeptical of this. Publications on this from New York had many unintended consequences. In some ways, the situation with faculty member Andrew Ross actually worked against NYU AD workers. Borenstein admitted that some faculty in New York speak out without fully knowing a situation. In terms of crafting a statement, New York faculty are the most difficult to address. Those calling for a boycott will hear these explanations and brush them off, but this committee is for the whole global network, not just New York. In that way, the committee can have a particularly important voice here. If the committee crafts a statement, it will be slower than other responses to President Hamilton’s letter, so once the committee knows what it wants to say, it should start circulating it.

A committee member pointed out that this is a cultural teach-in opportunity. Many New York students do not know what students abroad go through or what studying, teaching, or working abroad is like. She encounters a lot of misinformation. Another member supported Klimke’s idea of using this as an opportunity to clarify realistic expectations and figure out what principles to stand by and draw lines around. The statement should bring in rhetoric of realistic expectations, and contexts of diplomacy and academic freedom. It must be more nuanced than “us versus them.” Borenstein added that they should insist that if anyone is talking about the portals, portal faculty should be involved. A committee member pointed out that shifting the conversation away from these individuals could result in neglecting them, but how do we acknowledge them and then shift to a discussion of expectations? Borenstein suggested that the committee admit this will happen again. Another committee member asked if the mobility report includes statistics on gender or race. Borenstein replied that a lot of information is lost in the report, i.e. people who stop mid-process, etc. A committee member said it seems like the motivation behind a boycott might be separated into two reasons: 1. to put pressure on the AD government to change its processes, and 2. frustration among faculty who were not consulted. Is there another way to deal with these concerns besides a boycott, which is counter to our goal of intellectual connectivity?

A committee member said that faculty frustration might be that leadership has not spoken out about this. Another committee member said she does not think people are very serious about the boycott, but feel they must get involved if Abu Dhabi is banning people based on religion. Another committee member shared that he knows other Shia faculty who did get visas; who does and does not receive visas seems arbitrary, or even that it depends on whichever official is on duty.

Borenstein said that the response from the committee should acknowledge that this is a terrible situation, and that US restrictions are similar, but not an excuse. A committee member suggested that if the committee intends to argue that visas are denied based on religion or race, etc., they must collect data to support that claim. Borenstein pointed out that if the government were restricting academic freedom on campus, they would not be worried about letting people into the country.

Klimke suggested that Global Services visit the committee to tell them how they are collecting data for next year’s mobility report. Can they include race, gender, religion, etc.? Also, NYU AD faculty have felt in the past that there was misinformation and misrepresentation of them and their work in Abu Dhabi. He would suggest listening more closely to portal faculty when these situations occur. Dale Hudson has been

in the process of organizing listening sessions in Abu Dhabi scheduled for November and the committee should invite selected members of tenured and tenure-track faculty to one of its future meetings.

A committee member asked how this relates to our goals of global education at a higher level - what are we trying to do with global programs? In 2002, all NYU programs were in Europe, but many at the University decided that was not right. Now, we have established programs in places with very different cultures. This inevitably leads to issues (for example, with the LGBTQ experience in Ghana). While we do not wish to present the US as the ideal, our engagement with the UAE is a way to influence that country for the better. If we boycott NYU AD, who are we helping?

Borenstein suggested that a few members of the committee draft a statement that says that while the committee will not support a boycott and encourages realism about mobility, it will always support certain values, including academic freedom. It will stress that New York faculty should make an effort to be in touch with portal faculty. A committee member suggested the statement should recognize the frustration of angry faculty and should not let University leadership off the hook. Klimke agreed, and said that this situation will most likely happen again across the GNU and that faculty should expect an institutional procedure or protocol that offers a variety of different options to address such cases (e.g. by drawing on other parts of the GNU, technological means, etc.) so that mobility across the GNU will not be primarily determined by changing visa regulations beyond the university's control. The committee should develop a framework for such a response. Another faculty member said that she is less concerned with messaging than in developing tangible plans for when faculty are denied visas. How can we harness the technological possibilities in the classroom to make the network more connective?

Borenstein and Klimke agreed to start a draft letter to circulate. Committee members were encouraged to send in language to be included in the letter. Borenstein asked whether this should be a letter to the entire NYU community, as sending out a message via Email Direct means clearing an extra bureaucratic hurdle. A committee member confirmed that the Provost can approve such a message. Another committee member suggested the committee have a meeting or part of a meeting dedicated to devising such a plan, but not mention it in the letter. Perhaps this could be done at the same meeting where OGS visits.

Listening session update

Hudson and Klimke will be conducting a listening session at the NYU AD faculty forum on November 12. It will be an opportunity for all faculty to voice their concerns about connectivity, and not just "Both/And." There will also be a confidential box for comments. At the November 14 committee meeting, they have invited tenured Abu Dhabi faculty to speak to the committee. Borenstein noted that recent discussions of coordinated hiring at the portals have frequently turned into discussions of portal governance. The committee should not shy away from this topic. Klimke agreed.

Borenstein thanked committee members, and especially Una Chaudhuri for her service as co-chair. At 10 am, the meeting ended.