



**Faculty Committee on NYU's Global Network**  
*Tuesday, December 11, 2018, 8:30am-10:00am EST*  
*PCR (Bobst Library, 1218)*

ATTENDANCE

**Eliot Borenstein**, Co-Chair, FAS (Russian and Slavic Studies)  
**Martin Klimke**, Co-Chair, NYU Abu Dhabi  
**Ana Abraido-Lanza**, College of Global Public Health  
**Sylvain Cappell**, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences (Mathematics)/  
Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Senators Council  
**Hallie Franks**, Gallatin School of Individualized Study  
**Alexander Geppert**, NYU Shanghai  
**Nicolas Graf**, School of Professional Studies  
**Wen-Jui Han**, Silver School of Social Work  
**Benjamin Hary**, Global Sites  
**Sam Howard-Spink**, Continuing Contract Faculty Senators Council (Steinhardt School of Culture,  
Education, and Human Development)  
**Deborah Kapchan**, Tisch School of the Arts  
**Gavin Kilduff**, Leonard N. Stern School of Business  
**Jung T. Kim**, School of Medicine  
**Matthew Kleban**, FAS (Physics)  
**Kristie Koenig**, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development (Occupational Therapy)  
**Heather Lee**, Assistant Professor, NYU Shanghai  
**Marilyn Moffat**, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development  
**Alexander Nagel**, Institute of Fine Arts  
**Yaw Nyarko**, Provostial At-Large Appointment (FAS Economics)  
**Daniel Perkins**, Division of Libraries  
**Marianne Petit**, Tisch School of the Arts  
**Deepak Saxena**, College of Dentistry  
**Allison Squires**, Rory Meyers College of Nursing  
**Carol Sternhell**, FAS (Journalism)  
**Peter Voltz**, Tandon School of Engineering  
**Paul Wachtel**, Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee (Stern)  
**Jiawei Zhang**, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

Guests (all NYU Abu Dhabi):

**Federico Camia**, Associate Professor and Program Head of Mathematics  
**David Cook-Martin**, Professor and Program Head, Social Research and Public Policy  
**John Coughlin**, Program Head, Legal Studies; Global Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies and  
Law  
**Laila Familiar**, Lecturer of Arabic Language; Member, Faculty Council Steering Committee  
**Maya Kesrouany**, Assistant Professor of Literature and Arab Crossroads Studies; Member, Faculty Council  
Steering Committee  
**Nathalie Peutz**, Program Head and Assistant Professor of Arab Crossroads Studies

**Mark Swislocki**, Associate Professor of History; Chair, Institutional Review Board

**Jeffrey Timmons**, Associate Professor of Political Science; Chair, Faculty Council Steering Committee

**Tomi Tsunoda**, Program Head; Assistant Professor of Practice of Theater; Chair, Arts & Humanities Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEIC) Committee

**Anthony Tzes**, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Program Head of Electrical and Computer Engineering

**Deepak Unnikrishnan**, Lecturer, Writing Program; C-FSC Senator

## **MEETING MINUTES**

On December 3, 2018, in response to the arrest and eventual release of British graduate student Matthew Hedges in the UAE, members of Faculty Democracy held an ad hoc public discussion on academic freedom in the global network. As few faculty from the portal campuses were able to participate in the conversation, Eliot Borenstein and Martin Klimke invited several faculty colleagues from Abu Dhabi to join the committee meeting for an open discussion. The committee members introduced themselves and welcomed the faculty guests from NYU Abu Dhabi.

The faculty in Abu Dhabi were grateful for the opportunity to speak to the committee, especially since these types of discussions do not always include the perspectives of faculty in Abu Dhabi. The faculty spoke in general of a feeling of disconnect between New York and Abu Dhabi with regards to the perception of academic freedom and ideas on productive ways to address real issues faced by the faculty from throughout the global network. Mark Swislocki noted that, in the many years he has served as chair as well as member of the Internal Review Board (IRB), he is not aware of any instance in which research has been restricted or canceled, despite many projects covering topics that may be perceived as politically sensitive. David Cook-Martin also agreed that he was not aware of bans or censored areas of research. Clearly, if one wanted to study labor camps, there might be some concerns, but there are several projects dealing with local and regional migration, labor, social movements and protests that have been completed successfully. In particular, David Cook-Martin noted that access to migrant workers can be challenging and sensitive and yet there has been a robust program of study in this area, especially in consideration of worker's vulnerable position and related human subjects considerations.

Nathalie Peutz, who also served on NYUAD's IRB, concurred that she had no knowledge of research being restricted or influenced by the university or the government. Having helped to set up the Arab Crossroads Studies major, Nathalie Peutz affirmed that neither she nor any of the other faculty in the program have experienced their research projects, course syllabi, topics of instruction, or choice of guest lecturers for the luncheon series having been restricted or censored. Although the case of Matthew Hedges is disconcerting, Nathalie Peutz noted that self-censorship may be a more pervasive challenge and one that impacts academic environments in all countries (and for various reasons, including the positionality of untenured or contract faculty). Guarding against self-censorship would be more effectively addressed through collaboration with colleagues in New York, rather than criticism.

Another colleague added that while the topic of academic freedom is important and worthy of discussion, it seems that this topic is used as a means to vilify Abu Dhabi and maintain a distance with the Abu Dhabi faculty. In addition, this topic often overshadows other matters that have even greater professional impacts on faculty in Abu Dhabi, such as not being affiliated or associated with departments in New York.

Jeffrey Timmons added that Abu Dhabi often is held to a different standard than New York. For example, NYU New York is generally not considered responsible for government actions in the same way that NYU

Abu Dhabi is, such as when students or faculty encounter immigration issues. When a situation does arise, the Abu Dhabi faculty noted that it can often be more effective to address it privately than with public statements. Mark Swislocki added that this approach may lead to a perception of complacency and the assumption that a climate of fear exists when, in fact, it does not. Furthermore, it was stated that if and when faculty in New York do react to a situation, it can be challenging for faculty in Abu Dhabi to respond and provide an alternate viewpoint in a productive way that does not come across as defensive or reactive. The faculty at NYU Abu Dhabi would welcome the opportunity to open more channels of communication with faculty throughout the global network so that everyone is fully engaged as part of the NYU community. Furthermore, they would be happy to engage with their colleagues in these internal discussions and to be more proactive in providing data and personal experiences that may highlight a different perspective.

Although the social sciences and research are often given primacy in these discussions, Deepak Unnikrishnan urged the committee to also consider the stakes involved for the art and the humanities and the different ways in which these disciplines engage with the city and community. Tomi Tsunoda concurred, noting that theater and the arts rely heavily on bringing in external professionals, making them vulnerable to a range of immigration issues, both in the United States and the UAE. In addition, as public-facing disciplines, theater and art are constantly expanding outwards and challenging boundaries, which can be controversial regardless of location. Laila Familiar added that, as the arts and humanities focus more on cultural engagement, these disciplines require faculty to be mindful and respectful of the communities in which they operate, and that this intercultural competency should not be mistaken for naïveté.

The committee thanked the faculty in Abu Dhabi for joining the meeting on such short notice and for providing their perspective on these matters, which they found to be enlightening and not always heard in New York. The committee agreed with the importance of opening up dialogue between the campuses and more directly and regularly engaging with faculty in Abu Dhabi so that individual incidents are not exaggerated or used as a pretense that supports other narratives and assumptions.

Furthermore, greater and more open dialogue would provide a forum for faculty throughout NYU to collaborate and build on the successes of each campus. For example, John Coughlin noted that NYU Abu Dhabi's Legal Studies program and the students who continue to become lawyers may help to positively influence the legal system in Abu Dhabi in the future. Deborah Kapchan noted that the exceptional diversity of students at NYU Abu Dhabi has tremendous educational potential, and that students in Abu Dhabi are often more adept at navigating difference and fostering enriching, yet respectful, class discussions. Faculty in Abu Dhabi may have non-traditional ideas on how to foster these types of discussions in the comparatively less diverse classroom settings in New York. Similarly, faculty in Abu Dhabi are eager to learn from their colleagues in New York about the protocol and processes entailed with building a university.

To help initiate this dialogue, the committee suggested bringing in other faculty committee members from the C-FSC and T-FSC to broaden the conversation. In addition, the committee would like to explore the possibility of organizing a series of joint conversations and forums for the NYU community in the next academic semester that would be open to and actively include faculty from all three degree-granting campuses in the university's global network.