



Faculty Committee on NYU's Global Network
Thursday, November 12, 2020, 8:30am-10:00am EST

ATTENDANCE

Eliot Borenstein, Chair (FAS Russian and Slavic Studies)
Amy Bentley, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development (Nutrition and Food Studies)
Mosette Broderick, Faculty of Arts and Science (Art History)
Sylvain Cappell, Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Senators Council (Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences)
Scott Collard, Division of Libraries
Zhan Guo, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
Christian Haefke, NYU Abu Dhabi
Rohini Pahwa, Silver School of Social Work
Benjamin Hary, Global Sites (FAS Hebrew and Judaic Studies)
Maya Kesrouany, NYU Abu Dhabi
Gavin Kilduff, Leonard N. Stern School of Business
Jung T. Kim, School of Medicine
Robin Klar, Rory Meyers College of Nursing
Martin Klimke, NYU Abu Dhabi
Marilyn Moffat, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
Alexander Nagel, Institute of Fine Arts
Vasuki Nesiah, Gallatin School of Individualized Study
Yaw Nyarko, Provostial At-Large Appointment (FAS Economics)
Danielle Ompad, College of Global Public Health
Adedamola Osinulu, Liberal Studies
Marianne Petit, Tisch School of the Arts
Jon Ritter, Continuing Contract Faculty Senators Council (FAS Art History)
Shafer Smith, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences
Peter Voltz, Tandon School of Engineering
Paul Wachtel, Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee (Stern)
Joseph Weiler, School of Law
Yanyue Yuan, NYU Shanghai
Jiawei Zhang, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

Linda Mills, Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice Provost for Global Programs and University Life; Lisa Ellen Goldberg Professor

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting opened with Linda Mills providing a brief overview and update of NYU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Linda thanked the faculty for all that they are doing to continue to provide an education to students and recognized the important contributions of deans and schools, all have been instrumental in shaping NYU's safety planning, including our deans with specializations in health and health policy, Cheryl

Healton from the College of Global Public Health and Eileen Sullivan-Marx from the Rory Meyers School of Nursing.

The residence halls in New York are currently housing approximately 6,000 students (at roughly 50% capacity due to the university's need to de-densify our housing), and NYU is doing remarkably well in containing the virus.

Linda noted that the way the global network has been able to serve students around the world during this time of crisis has been a remarkable achievement. We have had to rebuild the global network during the pandemic in order to allow us to continue to engage students regardless of travel and immigration restrictions.

Many schools and departments are recognizing the benefits of virtual approaches to education, and are exploring how to incorporate them into the curriculum in the future in order to better serve their students. Some departments have also identified issues with Zoom, particularly related to freedom of speech and expressed concerns about their reliance on a single platform.

The deadline for Fall 2021 study away will be April 1 and we hope to have clarity about whether study away next Fall will be possible by late February. When study away resumes, we are anticipating increased circulation throughout the global network due to pent up student demand (particularly from NYU Shanghai and NYU Abu Dhabi).

Linda reiterated the significant financial challenges that lay ahead for the University and how the global sites, which are operating at around 10% capacity, are helping to address those challenges. University leadership has worked with the deans to identify areas that could provide sustained savings to the University so as to ensure the health and vitality of New York and the global network, both during the current crisis and beyond. The University needed to identify hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue and additional pandemic related costs and has worked hard to meet this need by taking steps including halting non-essential construction and capital projects, canceling non-essential travel, canceling annual merit increases and promotions, and implementing a hiring freeze for all but the most critical of roles.

At the global sites in particular, due to far-lower-than-typical enrollment, we have significantly reduced our course offerings, and also reduced costs by negotiating rent reductions, subletting unused space, returning unused student beds to landlords, declining to renew certain leases; cutting back on building support costs (e.g., heat, electricity, guard services); dramatically reducing all but essential student programming; and suspending programs with partner institutions. We have also made some staff reductions through attrition and non-renewal of fixed-term contracts.

At NYU Paris (as we did elsewhere), we did our best to identify areas where we could significantly reduce expenses without dramatically affecting our overall academic and research programs. As we went through this exercise, it became evident that closing Paris' LSFYA program (one of the most expensive programs we operate at any global site), would achieve the necessary savings, and that we could still accommodate students at the remaining three international sites (Florence, London, and Madrid) that host the program, and do so under far more sustainable financial models. Though this decision resulted in the elimination of five positions, critically, it allowed us to preserve positions for 52 other lecturers in Paris and maintain the intellectual vitality that NYU Paris has epitomized for decades.

And at NYU Sydney, the pandemic has exacerbated longstanding enrollment challenges (including an imbalance between Fall and Spring, and a mismatch between the size of our facilities and the number of students attending). Both are issues that we, in partnership with the Site-Specific Advisory Committee (SSAC),

have worked hard to address over the past few years. As a first step, we terminated the lease on our academic center, which was larger than our program requires (our lease required that we provide one year's notice, so we will depart the building in July 2021). Between now and then, we will work with many constituents, including the faculty on the Sydney SSAC and NYU Sydney leadership, to identify what options there may be for a modified program in Australia.

Linda emphasized that these have been very difficult decisions for the University and that individual cut backs should not be interpreted as a lack of support for a particular discipline or school. The first-year Liberal Studies programs are continuing at other locations in the global network, and GLS majors will continue to be able to enroll at NYU Paris for sophomore or junior year study away. More broadly, it was noted that academic diversification at the global sites has often served to introduce students in more structured majors to courses that they may not have been inclined to take at their home campus, particularly in the humanities and that these efforts will continue as always.

Members of the committee thanked Linda for joining the meeting and recognized the difficult decisions that the University has had to make. Several members also noted that many of their colleagues at other institutions are being profoundly affected by the pandemic through pay cuts, increased hours and/or furloughs -- outcomes that NYU has largely been able to avoid. Linda again expressed her appreciation to the committee and to the faculty as a whole for doing such incredible work during these difficult times.

The committee continued the conversation and agreed that, notwithstanding the discontinuation of the first-year Liberal Studies program in Paris and the space lease at NYU Sydney, the University seems very committed to the global network and the continuation of its programs. Eliot Borenstein noted that he has not yet received a response from his communication to Linda Mills and Dean Mostov, but that such coordinated responses often take time and may be delayed due to other pressing issues. [A response has since been received and circulated to the committee.]

Members acknowledged that over the last several years the University has put in place numerous structures to increase faculty engagement in the global network -- including this committee, the site-specific advisory committees (SSACs), and the appointment of full-time faculty members to site director positions -- though members felt that the role of faculty in decision making at the University still needs to be clarified and the issue of faculty governance addressed. In some of the committees, high membership turnover on the committees has made it challenging to hold meaningful conversations that carry from one meeting to the next and to garner active participation from the faculty.

The committee agreed to look at the SSAC structure more closely at the next meeting so as to develop suggested changes and/or guidelines for them to be more effective vehicles for faculty governance. Regarding concerns surrounding the Zoom platform, the committee agreed that having more than one supported platform would help to mitigate our dependency on one product, but agreed that it might be more appropriate for other faculty bodies at the University to spearhead the issue.