

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE FACULTY ASSEMBLY

Monday, February 28, 2022, 12:30 – 1:45 PM

Convened online via Zoom

Minutes submitted by Faculty Assembly co-chair, David Grier

ATTENDANCE:

Ismail Alatas (Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies), Emilia Barbiero (Classics), Brigitte Bedos-Rezak (History, Humanities Co-Chair), Olivia Birdsall (Expository Writing, Contract Faculty Co-Chair), David Bosch (Psychology), Mosette Broderick (Art History), Andrew Caplin (Economics), Marissa Carrasco (Psychology and Neural Science), Ida Chavoshan (Liberal Studies), David Cregar (Expository Writing), Ernie Davis (Computer Science), Elena Ducci (Italian), Emanuelle Ertel (French), Juliet Fleming (English), David Grier (Physics, Science Co-Chair), Guillermina Jasso (Sociology), Mary Kililea (Biology and Environmental Studies), Andrea Krauss (German), William McGrath (Buddhist Studies), Fred Myers (Anthropology, Social Science Co-Chair), Yoel Ohayon (Chemistry), Ryan Pevnick (Politics), Vincent Renzi (College Core Curriculum), Juliet Stanton (Linguistics), Gennady Estraiikh (Hebrew)

N=25

The meeting was called to order 12:30 pm

HOUSEKEEPING

- Minutes of the December 6th meeting

The minutes were approved and will be posted on the Faculty Assembly web site.

- Upcoming Meetings

3/21 Clay Shirkey

4/11 Evan Chesler, Dean Suzuki or Lynn Kiorpes

5/2 President Hamilton

REPORTS from Representatives to University and FAS Committees

- Graduate Program Committee (Juliet Fleming)

No report was provided.

- Undergraduate Program Committee (Carol Sternhell)

The Committee has not met.

- Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee (Fred Myers)

The Committee has not met.

- Faculty Committee on the Future of Technology-Enhanced Education (Esteban Mazzoni)

No report was provided.

- Faculty Committee on the Global Network (Mosette Broderick)

The Committee met but does not yet have results to report.

OLD BUSINESS

Faculty members who previously held the title of Senior Language Lecturer have had their titles converted to Clinical Associate Professor. According to University Guidelines, some of those Clinical Associate Professors are eligible for promotion to Clinical Professor. FAS, however, has not permitted those faculty members to apply for promotion. The Faculty Assembly has drafted a letter of concern that is linked here:

- [Letter of concern for Antonio Merlo re: Contract Faculty promotions](#)

Rather than discussing this letter, the Faculty Assembly instead received a report on recent developments from ongoing discussions with Dean Merlo. After discussion, the Faculty Assembly concluded that progress is being made on this matter, although the current Administration position regarding these promotions still is not consistent with University Guidelines. At the same time, the Faculty Assembly recognizes that the finances required to fully implement the faculty promotions under discussion currently may not be available. This matter will be revisited at future meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Visit from Linda Mills (Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice Provost for Global Programs and University Life) and Gigi Dopico (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs)

Questions previously submitted by the faculty:

1) We have heard that FAS has summarily closed 7 summer programs at abroad sites, replacing clinical faculty with adjuncts with no notice or review. Is this information accurate? If so, how were these decisions made? Are there opportunities for FAS to be involved in these decisions (which often impact our programs and students)? Are there any future plans to close/open sites? How can we provide feedback?

LM: We have not closed 7 summer programs. There has been a change in how summer programs will be administered. Decisions were made in consultation with the participating schools. The issue: last summer students showed increased interest in opportunities to study abroad. Students wanted to know why programs were divided by school, department and program. In response, Global took over control of all summer programs so that students would have a single point of contact. This also creates opportunities for schools to provide courses that currently are lacking. The study-abroad program now is supported by the Financial Aid program, which further facilitates students' access.

Students studying abroad have higher rates of graduation and other improved markers of success. This program consequently is considered to be a high priority.

Global does not make decisions on course offerings, but makes recommendations. Examples include requesting departments to provide more core courses at abroad sites.

Graduate students no longer will be authorized to teach courses at global sites, but will participate in other ways. At least one department was hard-hit by this change. Opportunities

will be created for masters and doctoral students to participate in global sites, as long as these activities are consistent with their doctoral programs.

FA: What about Paris?

LM: Paris is an exception. Currently, there is no pathway for NYU faculty to teach in France during Fall and Spring terms. This is a matter of French labor law. Faculty members who work full-time in Paris can continue to teach there.

FA: The Liberal Studies program in Paris was eliminated and the faculty members were laid off, all without faculty consultation.

LM: This decision was made in collaboration with the Dean of Liberal Studies, although not the French Department, with the goal of cutting costs. The Global program had been tasked with saving \$13M, and the cost saving of closing the Liberal Studies program in Paris accounted for a significant fraction of that goal. Complementary reorganizations in Sydney similarly contributed to addressing budgetary concerns created by the pandemic.

2) What can you tell us about the proposed revision to course evaluations?

GD: A CSFC report on course evaluations was submitted to the Provost in 2018, and led to the formation of a Committee whose charge was (1) to mitigate bias of all types in student course evaluations (2) to ensure that course evaluations provide useful information and (3) to increase student response rate.

Course evaluations should not be the only way that teaching is evaluated, but rather should be part of a more holistic approach to evaluating teaching.

The Committee worked on a set of draft questions, which will be tested and refined with the goal of creating a uniform questionnaire. This process is intended to eliminate overall qualitative questions, which tend not to be useful for faculty members to improve their teaching. Questions will focus on specific aspects of teaching effectiveness. Additional points that the Committee considered include

- Increasing student response rate
- Faculty use of evaluation data
- Use and reporting of evaluation data, including departmental reporting and accreditation needs.
- Ways of celebrating and recognizing excellence in teaching.
- Faculty oversight of the evaluation process.

FA: What is the timeline for rolling out updated course evaluations?

GD: NYU is working to procure a new platform because the existing platform does not provide the required features, and is reaching its end of life. The likely new platform will be Explorance Blue, which has desirable features, including the capability for faculty to incorporate their own questions into the evaluation. This process should continue into the late Fall.

FA: The draft of the new questionnaire is absolutely fabulous.

FA: Has the Committee consulted with faculty members who are experts in bias?

GD: Yes, the Committee reached out to the schools to solicit advice from subject experts. The Committee recommends the formation of a Faculty Advisory Committee to provide oversight of the updated evaluation process.

3) What is the current state of the University's response to the pandemic?

GD: All areas of higher education were affected by the pandemic. The Administration has worked with all units to respond effectively, including introducing remote teaching, hybrid teaching, and a large number of public health initiatives. This includes managing students' expectations in line with NYU's accreditation as an in-person institution. Some students require extra support, as do some faculty.

FA: Can we provide additional access to hybrid and remote courses for students who are abroad? This would enable students to complete course requirements while participating in study-abroad programs.

GD: We agree that remote access to courses will facilitate students to complete their degrees while participating in study-abroad programs and for students who would benefit from courses that are offered in remote campuses. Success in this program requires strong advising.

FA: Graduate students or other qualified personnel could provide local support for students who are taking courses remotely.

LM: During the pandemic 1200 students were taught by study-away faculty. This can facilitate an increase in the proportion of students who have study-away experiences. The current goal is for 70% of students to participate. This new possibility is one of the silver linings in the pandemic.

FA: To make this work well, NYU should dedicate a few more people to organizing courses, such as core courses, to maximize the freedom for students to travel to Global sites. Remote course offering could inspire New York-based students to travel to remote sites.

FA: A lot of the sites are strongly influenced by pathways considerations. Perhaps a committee of people who were interested in Global could review proposals for curricular initiatives, along the lines of a Curriculum Committee.

LM: That sounds like a great idea, whether such a committee acts as a gatekeeper or an advisory body. This kind of discussion contributed to the success of the revamped program in Sydney.

FA: Is there a curricular equivalent of the GRI (Provost's Global Research Initiatives)?

LM: A new program requires five students to express interest. In the past such initiatives were driven by individual faculty members. Now, the emphasis is on departmental support for new programs. This can require older programs to be discontinued.

3) We have noticed a rise in letters of accommodation from the Moses Center, some of which seem to make unwarranted requests --such as allowing students to take classes on ZOOM throughout the semester. Can you offer any insight into the Moses Center's policies, and students' access to and use of the Moses Center?

FA: Many students do not want to return to in-person classes for a variety of reasons.

LM: Every year, there has been a 20% increase in the number of students requesting accommodations. These include new types of requests that were not seen in the past. The most rapidly growing class of requests involves mental health. The pandemic has increased peoples' sense of exceptionalism and their preference for personal services. There is an ongoing process to determine what accommodations are reasonable.

GD: There has been an increasing rate of students requesting remote options for their courses. NYU is accredited for in-person teaching because of the additional challenges involved in providing in-person instruction. NYU also is legally required to provide accommodations for students who meet established criteria. That being said, the Moses Center will not require faculty members to provide hybrid instruction, for example, if that is not practical. Moses will explore different options for accommodations that will work for a particular class.

FA: How long will remote-teaching accommodations be offered? Will this option be removed when the pandemic comes to an end?

LM: Physicians are supporting students in their search for accommodations. This may not be linked to the pandemic. We can work with the Moses Center to find accommodations for students that are most suitable for each course.

GD: A school's or central educational technologist can provide support for remote accommodations, without requiring faculty members to work out all of the solutions themselves.

FA: Shouldn't there be a distinction between health-based requirements for student participation and curricular requirements for a course.

GD: Providing certain classes or sections of classes online would address students' needs for remote-access accommodations without necessarily requiring formal accommodations. One possibility would be to provide more online courses over the summer term so that students can take courses while traveling or working.

LM: Many students took leaves of absence during the pandemic. Statistics show that students who take a leave of absence are at increased risk of not graduating or not graduating on time. This is why NYU initiated the Go-Local program so that Chinese students could complete their coursework at NYU Shanghai.

There was not enough time to address additional questions posed by the Faculty Assembly:

4) What is the role of Global in the future of the university?

5) The Global site meetings began robustly but are now perfunctory at best. Can these be rejuvenated?

6) Are there any updates on Visa issues for international students?

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm