

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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Mary Schmidt Campbell, *Dean*

Memorandum to: Tisch Asia Community
From: Mary Schmidt Campbell
Re: The Future of Tisch Asia
Date: November 8, 2012

As you now know, I arrived in Singapore this morning and met with members of the Singapore government and have asked for a series of face-to-face meetings with members of the Tisch Asia community to be scheduled on Friday. With so many students and faculty away from campus at this time pursuing film projects, I have also decided to write everyone, knowing that the Tisch Asia community has been waiting since last year to hear about the future of the campus.

Tisch Asia has been a model of artistic and academic excellence, but it has also faced significant financial challenges that have required increasingly unsustainable subsidies totaling millions of dollars per year. For that reason, in spite of our pride in all that has been accomplished and built at Tisch Asia, we have come to the conclusion that we will need to close our campus in Singapore sometime over the next couple of years but no earlier than Summer 2014.

Before describing the reasons for our decision and the framework for closing, let me first and foremost say that we are committed to ensuring that each and every student will be afforded the opportunity to fulfill the requirements to earn his or her NYU Tisch School of the Arts degree, that we are committed to honoring the contracts we have with our faculty and staff and helping all our employees with this transition.

As many of you know, the Tisch School of the Arts and the Singapore government partnered in 2007 to create Tisch Asia under Singapore's Global School House Program. Tisch Asia was the only graduate arts program started under that initiative. Tisch Asia has been an unquestioned academic and artistic success, but it faced significant financial challenges and over time required larger and increasingly unsustainable annual subsidies from Tisch.

It was never contemplated that Tisch would need to subsidize Tisch Asia to the extent it has. Neither the leadership at Tisch, the leadership at NYU, nor the Economic Development Board of Singapore would have approved Tisch Asia going forward had it

been clear it would have come to the financial state at which it has now arrived, requiring such a large and ongoing level of subsidy. We project that the cumulative subsidy provided by Tisch to Tisch Asia will total over \$30M SGD by August 31, 2013 and will continue to grow. Not only is this far more than the plan intended, it is far more than Tisch can afford. Moreover, Tisch Asia's future prospects show even steeper financial challenges.

Because of its academic success and promise, representatives from NYU and the Singapore government worked hard and conscientiously over the past year to explore options that would sustain Tisch Asia without compromising the excellence of its program. Indeed, so widespread was the recognition of the value of Tisch's conservatory training, even as we worked on various options to financial sustainability for the graduate program, we were also discussing an expansion of Tisch's presence in Singapore through the creation of additional programs. Despite everyone's best efforts, we have now concluded that it is not possible to maintain Tisch Asia without, in fact, increasing the annual subsidy beyond what is an already unsustainable level.

We have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to be part of and contribute to Singapore's academic and artistic communities. As Alvin Tan, Assistant Managing Director of the Economic Development Board said, "*EDB continues to value the NYU partnership and recognises the quality of Tisch School of the Arts as a leader in arts training and NYU as a leader in global education.*"

As such we were committed to work with NYU to explore options to ensure the sustainability of Tisch Asia's operations, including the possibility of offering additional programs. EDB worked with various stakeholders to assess the costs and need for the proposed programs. Unfortunately none of these options were viable.

Notwithstanding the winding down of Tisch Asia's operations, EDB remains open to future collaborations with NYU and Tisch. We are discussing continued collaboration with NYU, including the possibility of supporting Singaporean students to study at Tisch in New York through Media Industry Scholarships administered by the Media Development Authority of Singapore."

We have decided the proper course is to suspend student recruitment and admissions to Tisch Asia immediately and develop plans for keeping the campus open at least through Summer 2014. This is the overall framework we will be following, but detailed planning will be developed with input from faculty and students as well as the Singapore government. During my visit, I welcome input from students, faculty and staff on next steps.

Having made this decision, we will be guided by three principles going forward:

- That our students will be able to complete their education and earn their degrees from Tisch. Most students currently enrolled will have an opportunity to finish their coursework in Singapore. Some may require access to resources afforded by the NY campus and other sites in the NYU global network. An academic team from New York

and Singapore will meet with each student individually to discuss a completion plan for them.

- That the contracts of all our faculty will be honored, giving them time to transition and search for new positions and professional opportunities. We recognize that many faculty have made Singapore their home and that we will need to assist them in making a transition.

- That the contracts of all our staff will be honored, and we will provide them with practical assistance to locate new positions.

This is sorrowful for all of us –Tisch Asia is a vibrant artistic and educational community, and we cannot help but be saddened by these developments. Our task now is to carry on with the same energy that has animated Tisch Asia since its first days, and ensure that the artistic and educational work that goes on in the coming months is of the same excellent quality that has marked Tisch Asia from the beginning.

We have additional challenges to face in the days ahead. I have full confidence, nonetheless, that with creativity and resilience we can meet those challenges in a way that honors each and every member of our community.