



Student Government Assembly
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Letter of Support for NYU Shanghai Student's Appeal for Spring 2023 Study Away

Date: September 23, 2022

To: NYU Senior Leadership Team

Dr. Andrew Hamilton, *President*

Dr. Georgina Dopico, *Interim Provost*

Jeffrey S. Lehman, *Vice Chancellor at NYU Shanghai*

Dr. Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Provost at NYU Shanghai*

John G. Robertson, *Associate Provost at NYU Shanghai*

CC: Concerned Parties

Nancy Morrison, *Vice President for Global Programs*

Sherif Barsoum, *Associate Vice President of the Office of Global Services*

Dr. Kerry Barrett, *Associate Dean of Global Programs, New York University*

Dr. Linda Mills, *Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice Provost for Global Programs and University Life*

David Pe, *Dean of Students at NYU Shanghai*

Subject: NYU Shanghai Student's Appeal for Spring 2023 Study Away

Dear Leadership Team of New York University,

We, as members of NYU Shanghai's senior class, urge you to lift the existing policy requirement that we return to Shanghai in the Spring of 2023. While we all once looked forward to returning to our home campus, we believe that doing so at this time does not align with the needs of our class. Rather, this requirement works to our detriment.

In writing this appeal we hope to provide ample time for both NYU Shanghai and NYU Washington Square Park administrators to prepare academic accommodation and legal support for us to graduate comfortably outside of China.



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I. Our Experience

As a class, our time at NYU has been largely defined by the pandemic. When we matriculated into NYU Shanghai in 2019, none of us could have anticipated we would be facing the third year of a pandemic; however, the ability to participate in Go Local and extend our study away has greatly contributed to our success so far, and we thank the administration for their support during this time. **We are now requesting the same privilege as the Classes of 2021 and 2022 to graduate outside of Shanghai given our Class was the last one to enroll in NYU Shanghai pre-pandemic.**

As you may be aware, on September 20th, 2022, students and supporters gathered to discuss the detrimental financial, emotional, and physical impacts of the current policy on our Class.¹ Points made during the town hall expressed our Class' communal sentiments on issues regarding our return to Shanghai, including the unpredictability of China's COVID-19 policies (e.g. lockdowns, quarantine, constant PCR testing, fever ward experiences), the subsequent lack of aid from the school administration when facing those situations, risking and limiting post-grad prospects and connections respectively by leaving our current location(s), and the unstable flight costs that are far from the regular prices we signed up for.

We need the NYU administration to grant us the ability to focus on our lives beyond NYU Shanghai, to not risk subjecting ourselves to disorderly and unpredictable lockdown policies, potential financial ruin, and the loss of countless job opportunities. The Class of 2023 has adapted to the aforementioned university policies, including study away, and is firm in our belief that a final additional study away semester will alleviate those additional stressors.

II. Feasibility

While Student Mobility highlights the re-allowance of our student visas to return to China, we urge the NYU administration not to be ignorant of additional factors affecting students outside of the mobility variable. Graduating outside of Shanghai is perfectly feasible and should not be a requirement for us to finish our respective degrees. The most recent "Spring Semester" announcement from NYU Shanghai's Vice Chancellor Lehman stipulated that students who have not yet used two semesters for study away can do so in the following semester and that eligible students can choose to complete their final semester online.² With this in mind, we fail to see how our inability to return to Shanghai would be detrimental to the campus as

¹ [Seniors Town Hall](#)

² [Spring Semester](#)



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NYU Shanghai has shown to be able to make adjustments to their study away requirements and allow students to graduate outside of Shanghai for two years now.

III. Issues and Challenges

A. Availability and Costs (Flights, Quarantine, & Otherwise)

As of September 23rd 2022, one-way flights from our home countries to China range from \$5,634 to \$7,000, compared to the \$3,900 expense in a round-trip estimated in the cost of attendance we acknowledged when matriculating into NYU Shanghai in 2019. This comes as opposed to the current estimate of \$5,904 reflecting the current flight price changes. Additionally, those of us who don't have plans to stay in China after graduation would have to purchase a ticket outbound for a similar price which is a significant additional expense considering the current high flight costs. **This strays far from the estimated budget of \$1,950 for each semester's travel.**³

While NYU Shanghai has offered *one-way* flight prices ranging from \$4,500 to \$6,000 as well as travel grants for up to \$1,500, that would leave us to pay prices ranging from \$3,000 to \$4,500 (*one-way*), which still exceeds the NYU Shanghai's estimated cost for travel expenses that we initially signed up for (\$1,950 for flights per semester).⁴

In many countries, a significant number of flights and connections have been suspended. This forces students from these countries to buy multiple flight tickets, which, under the current airline prices, further escalates the issue.⁵ **Even if we secure a flight ticket, flights to China are known to be canceled on short notice.**⁶ With the requirement of two pre-flight PCR tests in place, this may cause a student to stay on full alert and arrange a daily test for a few days in a row before the flight can finally happen.⁷

³ The university currently does not provide financial accommodations for the mandatory 10-day quarantine hotel and food cost thus increasing the expense that students have to cover.

⁴ [Dean Pe, \[Internal Memo\] 7.8 Phase 2 Fall 2022 Flight/Travel Information](#)

⁵ [Dean Pe, \[Important\] JFK Flight 8/19 00:15am - Please Read](#)

⁶ [Dean Pe, \[Important\] Another JFK Flight and Visa Update - Please Read](#)

⁷ [Dean Pe, Fwd: \[Internal Memo\] 7.15 Visa/Travel Updates](#)



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B. Central Quarantine & Shanghai Restrictions

The university cannot guarantee that another lockdown will not happen mid-semester. COVID-19 continues to have a high transmission rate and the situation in the PRC remains unstable with rapidly evolving restrictions.⁸ Several cities in China have experienced an uptick of domestically-transmitted COVID-19 infections, risking our last semester being moved online thus jeopardizing career opportunities and students' well-being.⁹ The lockdowns in Shenzhen, Chengdu and Qingdao serve as proof that the situation is always subject to change. The recent updates from October 7, 2022 show that 50 students received red codes and were sent to 7-day hotel quarantines due to being a close contact.¹⁰ Not only is this unforeseen quarantine extremely disruptive to these students, but the precautionary closing of the Academic Building further disrupts students' studies. There has been a big increase in compound lockdowns, quarantines, and fences being put up around Shanghai.¹¹ Buildings who are close-contact have to undergo a 2 day lockdown in addition to 5-day daily testing. On the other hand, with the required PCR testing within 48 hours every two days, students are left mentally and physically drained while awaiting results. Although we understand that our peers have already adapted to this condition, we could not foresee such requirements when applying to NYU Shanghai, and should not be expected to comply with them when there is a better solution for our mental and physical health.

Although officially, the lockdown in Shanghai lasted for two months, some students were in their apartments facing a lack of medical access and food insecurity for more than 80 days. While NYU Shanghai has limited grounds to work on during government-imposed lockdown, students cannot be expected to go back to China while lockdown is still an imminent risk and with the university not having safety mechanisms in place to help students through lockdowns.¹²

There is a lack of aid for students in quarantine. **Students who have been sent to the fever ward have been left on their own to navigate the hospital system.** Students with dietary restrictions were not being given nutritious food during quarantine. Many of the students who have experienced these issues fear being forced back into similar situations.¹³

⁸ [Health Alert -- U.S. Mission in China, Beijing \(October 12, 2022\)](#)

⁹ [\[In Shanghai\] Return to Campus from the Break Updates 2022.10.6](#)

¹⁰ [\[In Shanghai\] Further Update](#)

¹¹ [Increase in lockdowns & restrictions](#)

¹² The school administration and Health & Wellness failed to keep in touch with all NYU Shanghai students in-site at the time, a precedent that worries our Class if another lockdown were to occur.

¹³ [Student Testimonies](#)



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C. Post-Graduation Prospects

Senior students should have the ability and privilege to focus on job prospects and post-graduation plans by having a stable environment outside of Shanghai. Many of us will have interviews to undergo during winter break and should be focusing on our post-grad applications. The extensive amount of time needed to make the move back to Shanghai for just one semester (i.e. preparing flights, COVID-19 testing, travel documentation, quarantine policies, layover procedures, etc.) prevents us from taking advantage of any prospective opportunities for at least a month before the classes start date. We deserve to have certainty for one last semester of where we will be, which will **allow us space to apply for graduate schools and jobs without excess stress and financial burden.**

Jobs and opportunities in post-COVID Shanghai have exponentially decreased due to extensive lockdown measures; this especially affects international students who do not have an adequate legal framework provided to work in China. Because of the extensive availability of networking pools, job recruitment, and research opportunities in our current locations, allowing us to stay will be greatly beneficial to our post-graduation prospects. Some of us already have jobs (i.e. financial security) outside of China that we would have to give up if going back to Shanghai. Besides being a source of financial relief, these opportunities are going to be pivotal in helping us obtain the required experience to find career opportunities after graduating. We deserve a chance at a stable career where we are located and where resources are readily available instead of risking future prospects should we return to China, where the job market is experiencing an oversupply of skilled labor that affects us on top of all the other difficulties.¹⁴

A majority of our student body has spent most of their university career abroad. Being forced to go back to Shanghai will greatly disrupt their life as they will have to readapt to a city that they have not operated and sought opportunities in for up to three years while we have established communities and opportunities in our respective study-away locations.

¹⁴ Most students CDC panels are conducted in Chinese and feature job opportunities for seniors requiring Chinese fluency, which for many is inaccessible. Additionally, it is difficult to develop a network adequately in China with our class spending less than 5 months there on top of current COVID-19 restrictions.



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D. Mental Health

The mental health struggles and strain that come with traveling to China, quarantining, testing, and possible lockdown measures are detrimental to students' well-being. Students in Shanghai during the lockdown have experienced first-hand what it was like to be powerless, scared, and vulnerable. Students who were trying to go back to Shanghai knew how stressful it is to worry about where they would be next semester. Students have to endure unnecessary stress on top of academic and career pressure. Testimonies from students who were in Shanghai during lockdown show mental and physical impacts due to ongoing stress-related factors. While the university is offering those students the option to apply for accommodation through The Moses Center, we fail to see how that solves the issues a lockdown can bring. Such testimonies should be used as preventative warning signs of what students **should not** be subjected to, given the lockdown's proven ability to negatively affect students' mental and physical health.

Only granting the exemption to those who have a written diagnosis is dismissive and insensitive to students already struggling with their mental health, considering how hard it is to reach out and get help in the first place.¹⁵

The availability of mental health services is limited and navigating the mental health system is nerve-racking for students who have no experience in doing so. Therapy in-campus has limited appointments because of a demand overload and while many NYU Shanghai students at the New York campus tried to access off-campus therapy resources, they could only find a therapist after looking for two months even after seeking help from NYU NYC's Health & Wellness office.¹⁶ Class of 2023 students residing in New York have limited access to in-network therapists under our GeoBlue insurance coverage. Although GeoBlue can cover out-of-network therapists, therapists have been unwilling to accommodate it because of complications in registering outside of GeoBlue's network.

¹⁵ Student X suffers from Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Adjustment Disorder following the pandemic; this diagnosis took five months to diagnose. Many students might be struggling with other mental health issues that are not easily and quickly diagnosed.

¹⁶ Class of 2023 student's process towards receiving care: Waiting 10+ business days for a response from Health & Wellness; contacting individual providers to confirm insurance coverage; scheduling enough appointments to receive a diagnosis and proper accommodation(s); and going through multiple external psychiatric evaluations outside of therapy with a testing provider they had to look for.



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Losing job and career opportunities caused by the sudden move and adaptation to a new environment will cause a huge amount of mental and financial strain due to the amount of time and energy spent building those aspects in the cities we stayed in the most. **Many of us don't feel safe in post-COVID China anymore and our families do not wish this for us either;** families don't want us back in Shanghai to risk being exposed to harsh quarantine sanctions, limited mobility, and the inability to leave Shanghai. The process of going out of Shanghai in the past semesters is almost as hard as getting in, with students being stranded outside of the airports without food and water.

E. Physical Health

Student testimonies about their time in Shanghai throughout the pandemic have shown inaccessibility to various services (including medical) in Shanghai because of the widespread fear of foreigners. Medical access for fever-reducing and allergy medicines is denied for students even for cases such as throat infection that is not related to COVID-19; students are forced to wait until their infection has gone down without being able to see a doctor which could take one week or longer.

Access to medicine even outside of lockdown is difficult because fever patients are sent to the fever ward of a public hospital and left with no instructions and no information on how to advance throughout the process. Additionally, access to trans healthcare is currently unreliable.

The rising case of Monkeypox, in which Chinese officials warned against touching foreigners for the fear of contracting the disease. This would exacerbate the already stringent restrictions and further reduce the quality of care received from health officials.

IV. Conclusion

Ultimately, we want our last semester of college to be a positive, productive experience, for all members of the Class of 2023. This goal is simply not feasible under the current policy mandating the students' return to Shanghai. After years of constant anxiety over future semester plans and the uncertainty of returning to Shanghai, the Class of 2023 deserves a chance to prepare for our lives beyond NYU with a final study away extension. We have come so far as to want to celebrate our graduation with our family and friends, which will not be possible if we have to go back to Shanghai. We respectfully ask that you further consider the academic, career, and health benefits that come with lifting the requirement for seniors to graduate in Shanghai and implore you to lift the mandate.



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We have seen that New York University has the global resources to support our request, and would like one more extension of these resources. We find our solution implementable in all logistical senses. Most students facing the aforementioned uncertainties already have the proper documentation to continue their studies at an NYU global site. For students without this documentation, the procurement process will be much smoother given enough time to plan for our futures.

We hold great regard for this administration, and you have our gratitude for the understanding that both NYU and NYU Shanghai have shown us by implementing Go Local programming and an extension of study away privileges. We understand that times are difficult and disruptions have occurred for everyone at NYU, and we ask that you extend us grace one last time as your graduating seniors. We all appreciate and thank you for your time, attention, and hard work.

Jordan Hubbard, Global Student Council Vice-Chair, and Members of NYU Shanghai Class of 2023



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V. Appendix A, Endorsements

A. Students, NYU Shanghai Class of 2023

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2. Alchevska, Bisera (ba1484)
3. Alvarez, Ariana (ata386)
4. Begali, Aibike (ab8637)
5. Bhojwani, Suzie (sb7038)
6. Bienkowski, Bartosz (bmb540)
7. Bin Abdullah, Abraiz (aba417)
8. Black, Khayla (knb360)
9. Boghossian, Samuel (ssb637)
10. Brisson, Marcos (mjb965)
11. Calderaro, Gabriel (jcd529)
12. Chan, Kaitlyn (kjc548)
13. Chen, Daiana (chend21)
14. Chen, Shiyi (sc7825)
15. Chonoolal, Niel (ndc338)
16. Christensen, Carter (cc6412)
17. Cuellar, Isabella (ic1104)
18. Dai, Yuntong (yd1563)
19. Dalmau Minguet, Valentina (vdm253)
20. Dagan, Elena (ed1905)
21. Dardafaa, Zineb (zd771)
22. De Grancey, Sandra (adg578)
23. Di Nicola, Alessandra (adn341)
24. El Bekkali, Brahim (beb414)
25. El Mansari, Nour (nem367)
26. El Ounani, Adib (aeo308)
27. Elwood-Dieu, Kai (ked407)
28. Elysia, Aishya Rannan (are337)
29. Erendzhenova, Engel (eme320)
30. Fan, Sicheng (sf3198)
31. Fok, Maria (mwf270)
32. Francis, Melissa May (mmf507)
33. Ganbold, Bayarjargal (bg1949)
34. Goh, Lucas (zwg210)
35. Grobys, Aline (ag7138)
36. Guan, Xiaoyi (xg890)
37. Guerrero, Daniela (dmg676)
38. Gupta, Ishaan (ig1082)
39. He, Susan (sh5432)
40. Howard, William (wjh327)
41. Huang, June (jh6663)
42. Huynh, Daisy (anh422)
43. Indovino, Ludovica (li478)
44. Jacobson, Sophia (scj309)
45. Jarrett, Nicholas (naj314)
46. Jiang, Lai (lj1312)
47. Jung, Heidi (hj1320)
48. Kattan, Mike (mk6993)
49. Kennedy, Eliza (ek3227)
50. Kim, Lina (sk8229)
51. Kim, Nicole (nsk379)
52. Kinninger, Tony (cak596)
53. Korsakaitė, Rasa (rk3636)
54. Krukauskas, Henrikas (hk2883)
55. Kumar, Aaditya Raj (ark635)
56. Lai, Hong (shl689)
57. Liang, Qi (lq504)
58. Lim, Koc Heang (kh1445)
59. Li, Yifei (yl6985)
60. Liu, Oscar (lxl213)
61. Lyu, Xin (xl3141)
62. Machado, Guilherme (gm2695)
63. Malaga Sanchez, Andres (arm912)
64. Mata-Hernández, Abigail (amh1040)
65. Matamoros, Camila (cm4915)



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68. Mukherjee, Ninad (nm3288)
69. Nair, Tara (tln245)
70. Nelson-Rowntree, Julien (jnr382)
71. Ng, Trisha (tkn236)
72. Niedermeier, Andy (adn342)
73. Oh, Mickey Yegyun (yo637)
74. Oury, Antoine (vpo204)
75. Owen, Hannah (hlo210)
76. Pacheco, Julia (jmp1042)
77. Park, David (dp2960)
78. Parra Silva, Andrea (aps627)
79. Paul, Sarah (snp379)
80. Paragas, Enrico David (edp316)
81. Peng, Qingyu (qp274)
82. Pezzulli, Isabella (imp287)
83. Radonjanin, Luna (lr2495)
84. Rankovic, Stefan (sr5324)
85. Risal, Sagar (sr5178)
86. Rodriguez, Dagla (dr2917)
87. Ruffolo, Nina (ncr293)
88. See, Megan (mes1028)
89. Shao, Zihan (zs1542)
90. Shi, Brandon (bs3930)
91. Shirky, Leo (ls186)
92. Shiryayev, Almadi (as12936)
93. Sim, Jake (js11674)
94. Sinfuego, Karrel May (kms1002)
95. Stuart, Amanda (ans676)
96. Su, Tommy (tjs528)
97. Sy, Russel (rgs361)
98. Tanaka, Rintaro (rt1983)
99. Te, Tamilyn (ttt316)
100. Tervaniemi, Linda (lmt483)
101. Truchan, Elise (edt267)
102. Van Keer, Benoît (bvk212)
103. Vanichkachorn, Joshua (jsv287)
104. Virgint, Stanley (sv1702)
105. Wang, Anran (aw3919)
106. Wang, Jieyi (jw6195)
107. Wang, Yuting (yw4554)
108. Wang, Yunyi (yw4553)
109. Wen, Shengli (rw2423)
110. Wong, Valeria (vfw208)
111. Xu, Jinghao (jx1241)
112. Xintong, Xie (xx964)
113. Yan, Sharon (sy2779)
114. Yang, Ziyi (zy1564)
115. Yang, Shizhao (sy2821)
116. Yao, Lillie (ly1350)
117. Yap, Isabella (tiy202)
118. Ye, Leonardo (ly1283)
119. Yu, Lifan (ly1164)
120. Zhang, Yanqi (yz5611)
121. Zhao, Jiashi (jz4058)
122. Zhou, Yanxin (yz6212)
123. Zhu, Qianyu (qz1086)

B. Parents, NYU Shanghai Class of 2023

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53. Yu, Hua (yuhua@scut.edu.cn)

54. Zhu, Lin

C. Students, Non-NYU Shanghai Class of 2023

1. Beydoun, Aya (ab8909) - NYU Law Student

2. Lambert, Avery (arl8612) - International Student Affairs Committee member, NYU Stern School of Business

3. Park, April (jp6722) - International Student Affairs Committee member, NYU Liberal Studies Core Student

4. Meehan, Lisa (lkm9142) - NYU Law Student

5. Cabrejos, Maxi (lmc771) - College of Arts & Science Student

6. Zhang, Boyuan (bz2228) - Tisch School of the Arts Student

7. Durand, Oscar (ojd2381) - Tisch Graduate School of the Arts Student

8. Espinoza, Reynaldo (rae7876) - NYU Stern Student

9. Lee, JiJi (jl11733) - Student Government Assembly Senator at-Large representing Women of Color

10. Krukauskas, Henrikas (hk2883) - Alternate Senator at-Large representing Baltic & Eastern European Students

11. Olukoga, Leila (lbo2010) - NYU GLS Student

12. Qasemi, Jeff (jsq2003) - NYU Shanghai Student

13. Tarek, Soaib (srt9780) - President NYU Muslim Students Association, NYU CAS Student

14. Harake, Rafi (rh3207) - Ahlul Bayt Chair MSA, Multifaith Advisory Council, Secretary Lebanese Club, NYU CAS Student

15. Hussain, Daniyal (dh3144) - NYU CAS Student

16. Huang, David (dh2748) - Tisch School of the Arts Alumni

17. Khan, Akbar (ask9095) - Stern School of Business Student

18. Diagana, Safiatu (sd2575) - NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing Student

19. Khan, Yusra (ysk9760) - NYU Liberal Studies Student

20. Epley, Olivia (ose209) - NYU Gallatin, Senator-at-Large for Students Facing Disability, Mental Illness, and Accommodations

21. Naseem, Safa (sn3175) - NYU GSAS Student

22. Tellez, Enya (ebt4239) - Silver Undergraduate Senator, Student Government Assembly

23. Fazili, Nida (nnf9488) - NYU CAS Student

24. Chan, Katrina (kyc9801) - Student Government Assembly, SPS Graduate School Senator



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26. Siddique, Shuayb (srs940) - NYU
Tandon Student
27. Uddin, Shehnaz (su2061) - NYU
CAS Student
28. Alam, Nausheen (na2984) - NYU
Gallatin Student
29. Mohammed, Abubakar (amm9946) -
NYU SPS Student
30. Claypool, Lennon (Lic236) - NYU
Silver School of Social Work
Student
31. Nimaga, Zaran (zn392) - NYU
College of Arts and Sciences Student
32. Semega, Niouma (ns3202) - NYU
College of Arts & Sciences Student
33. Diallo, Hadja (had9929) - NYU
Liberal Studies Student
34. Anwar, Nurul (nha1) - NYU Gallatin
Graduate Student
35. Eshete, Sumia (sae8953) - NYU
College of Arts and Science Student
36. Seck, Adja (afs8993) - NYU Liberal
Studies Student
37. Ahmed, Tasnim (ta1743) - NYUAD
Undergrad Student
38. Perry, Reham (rp3017) - NYU
Graduate Student School of Global
Public Health
39. Ahmed, Hijab (ha2490) - NYU XE:
Experimental Humanities & Social
Engagement Student
40. Abdullahi, Ruweida (ra3572) - NYU
CAS Student
41. Ouedraogo, Mariam (mmo9098) -
NYU Stern Student
42. Hanne, Aicha (ah4341) - NYU
Shanghai Alumni
43. Zakir, Tasneem Mansur (tmz9228) -
NYU Law Student
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