## Academic Visit to New York City

April 22 – May 1, 2025

As part of its mission to strengthen international academic cooperation and promote interdisciplinary dialogue on peace, ethics, and reconciliation, Prof. Dr. Ralf K. Wüstenberg and Dr. Zeina Barakat of the European Wasatia Graduate School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Europa-Universität Flensburg conducted a strategic academic visit to New York City from April 22 to May 1, 2025. The visit, made at the invitation of academic colleagues in the United States, included high-level meetings and lectures at institutions known for their leadership in interfaith engagement, social justice, and academic excellence.



The delegation was received by the City University of New York (CUNY), Queens College, the Bronfman Center for Jewish Life at New York University (NYU), and Union Theological Seminary. At each institution, Prof. Wüstenberg and Dr. Barakat presented the mission, research agenda, and pedagogical framework of the European Wasatia Graduate School, emphasizing its focus on relational ethics, interreligious dialogue, and transformative approaches to peace and conflict resolution.

On April 23, Dr. Barakat delivered a public lecture at the CUNY Graduate Center, introducing her book Envisioning Reconciliation: Signs of Hope for the Middle East. The lecture engaged the audience in a discussion of reconciliation strategies grounded in relational ethics and community-based dialogue. Alongside this, both scholars presented the work and goals of the Wasatia Graduate School, initiating a fruitful exchange with CUNY faculty and students on future academic cooperation.

On April 30, Prof. Wüstenberg delivered a lecture at the Graduate Center titled “Lessons from Dietrich Bonhoeffer: 80 Years after His Execution by the Nazis.” The talk explored Bonhoeffer’s theological resistance to tyranny and its contemporary relevance for moral courage and public ethics.

The delegation’s visit to Queens College included a formal reception by President Frank H. Wu. They met with members of the faculty and delivered a guest lecture to students on ethical leadership and the role of faith communities in advancing social justice. Discussions highlighted the possibility of future collaboration, including joint programming and the establishment of a Scholar-in-Residence initiative.



At the Bronfman Center for Jewish Life at New York University, Prof. Wüstenberg and Dr. Barakat held an in-depth meeting with Rabbi Yehuda Sarna to discuss the role of Jewish-Christian-Muslim cooperation in academic peacebuilding. The Bronfman Center expressed particular interest in the Wasatia Graduate School and is considering sending Jewish graduate students to participate in the program in Flensburg.

Further engagement at Union Theological Seminary included a productive meeting with Prof. Su Yon Park, focused on shared interests in theology, ethics, reconciliation, and peace studies. The conversation opened promising pathways for faculty exchange, joint research projects, and collaborative teaching formats.

Each of the institutions visited demonstrated strong interest in building long-term partnerships with the Wasatia Graduate School. Possibilities for collaboration include joint doctoral supervision, student and faculty exchange, guest lectureships, and shared academic programming. During discussions with the President of the CUNY Graduate Center, Prof. Joshua Brumberg, a proposal emerged to draft a Letter of Intent to formalize institutional cooperation.



This visit represented a significant step forward in the internationalization of the European Wasatia Graduate School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, reinforcing its commitment to fostering academic excellence, intercultural understanding, and ethical engagement in addressing global conflicts.