

# NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Subcommittee Chair Report

**Meeting:** 3/12/2026

**Submitted by:** Kristian Finlator

**Committee Attendance:** Seven committee members attended; three were absent

**Guests:** none

## I. 16:02 Quorum Established and Agenda Approved

With no official business, Student Success discussed the items on its agenda.

## II. Requesting Data from the Colleges on Graduate Student Admission

KF shared a draft letter requesting information from four academic colleges asking whether their academic units admit international graduate students without guaranteed graduate assistantships (GAs); the draft letter was appended to the agenda. No room for improvement was identified, and all senators present agreed to have their names on the signature line.

Following approval by the subcommittee, on March 13th, Chair Finlator sent the letter to the following administrators:

- ACES: Dean Flores
- Business: Associate Dean Widner, cc'ing Dean Ashenbaum
- Engineering: Prof. Al Aqtash, cc'ing Dean Jáuregui
- A&S: Dean Pontelli

## III. Community College Transfers

Having dispatched the issue of the letter quickly, the Student Success opened up a free-form discussion of the relationship between Community Colleges and Main Campus. The following observations were made:

- Sen. Aguirre confirms that many CC students indicate a plan to transfer to Main Campus, but she does not hear back from them subsequently as to whether they complete the switch.
- Ideas that were mentioned included:
  - enhancing communication between Main Campus and branch campus advising units;
  - having Main Campus faculty visit branch campuses to discuss transferring opportunities;
  - formalize establishment student cohorts who transfer to create an anchor community that can enhance belonging
  - more visits by Main Campus representatives to branch campuses. Sen. Aguirre remembers a visit by a Dean or Assoc. Dean from Main Campus/Business to DACC occurring years ago; that has not happened since.
  - Sen. Burkardt recalled that one Provost candidate described how, at a different institution, the Main Campus advising makes themselves available over Zoom to the branch campuses to help students understand the process of transferring.
- Sen. Oskey (faculty at NMSU-Grants) recalls trying to get an online BA in IT using the tuition waiver, but transferring to Global was difficult. He had to go through Branch Campus **and** Main Campus advising to get this done. Both offices recommended going through NMSU-Online, but it turned out that tuition waiver documents differ between NMSU-Main vs. NMSU-Online, and this was not sorted by the census deadline, so Sen. Oskey withdrew. It would be nice to have more Main Campus faculty or advising rep's come to visit Branch Campuses; in the last years, only Chancellor Torres & President Ferme have made the trip.
- Sen. Burkardt offered that students who are on scholarship support on one campus may encounter particular difficulty enrolling for credit in courses taught by another campus, and Chancellor Torres may have particular ideas about this.

## IV. 16:50 Adjourned

# NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Subcommittee Chair Report

## Template Letter to College Deans

Dear Dean \_\_\_\_\_,

The NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Committee has grown concerned that a fraction of international applicants are admitted into graduate programs at NMSU without a guaranteed assistantship (GA). This practice is not predominant, but neither is it isolated: according to a communication from Graduate College Dean Koodali, of the approximately "530 graduate international students in Spring 2025, about 465 had Graduate Assistantships, i.e. 88%."

International graduate students who enroll without guaranteed GAs confront a host of administrative burdens and the risk of financial instability. For example, international students without employment at NMSU cannot obtain a social security number (SSN). Without a SSN, they cannot sign an apartment lease or open a bank account. Moreover, many entities, including health insurance exchanges, use SSN as a form of identification or as proof of lawful presence in the US. The problems that students without a SSN confront create friction in their personal lives that impedes academic progress and puts them at a disadvantage with respect to their peers.

While the argument for discontinuing the practice of admitting international students without a guaranteed GA is clear, it is equally clear that doing so is not simple because the practice is "baked into" some departments' programmatic structures. For these reasons, the Student Success Committee respectfully requests your assistance in understanding better what the practice is across our campus, and what would be required to change it.

Could you please gather from those of your units that offer graduate degrees information regarding the following points and forward it?

1. Does your program offer guaranteed GAs to all incoming graduate students, or to all incoming international graduate students?
2. If yes, then how many hours of support are offered during the academic year and during the summer, and for how many years is support guaranteed?
3. If no, then:
  - o What extra support does your program offer to international graduate students who enroll without a GA?
  - o what would enable your program to discontinue the practice of admitting international graduate students without a guaranteed GA?

Our subcommittee's last meeting is April 16, 2026, so receiving information by then would help us to start our conversation before the summer break. If that is impossible, however, we will understand the need for more time.

thanks in advance,

Kristian Finlator, Tawny Aguirre, Rodrigo Obregon, Dejan Magoč, and Eric Oskey for the NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Committee