

NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Subcommittee Chair Report

Meeting: 10/16/2025

Submitted by: Kristian Finlator

Committee Attendance: 9 committee members attended; 2 were absent

Guests: Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Tony Marin

I. 16:03 Agenda Approved

II. 16:04 cGPA Discussion with Visitors Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Tony Marin reviewed the proposal to reduce the minimum high school cumulative grade point average (cGPA) for admission to NMSU undergraduate studies from 2.75 (current minimum) to 2.5 (proposed new minimum). The reasons given are as follows:

- The cGPA was increased from 2.5 to 2.75 in 2016 to improve retention. However, the one-year retention numbers for the class entering in 2016 did not permanently increase either in comparison to previous classes or in comparison to UNM, which retained its cGPA minimum of 2.5.
- NMSU has since made many other investments to improve retention: added a retention specialist in each college; improved complementarity between central- and college-level retention efforts; added financial literacy training, considered degree progression issues; improved responsiveness to the “disenrollment list;” and collaborated with the NMSU Foundation to address student hardships including food and housing insecurity. It is hoped that, with these changes in place, the expanded pool of students should be able to succeed.

After this initial presentation, discussion followed.

- Senator Burkardt suggested adding “requirements for initial courses,” citing concern that pre-requisites are disappearing.
 - Dr. Marin responded that NMSU had a “University Transition Program” in the early 2000s through which students with weak cGPAs were required to take University 150. Re-instating this could create conflicts with CPOS requirements, imperiling federal financial aid. He offered to track these students and bring back data. Interim Provost Reddi noted the conceptual similarity between University 150 and the ongoing A&S “Aggie Jump Start” program.
 - From this, the idea emerged of creating department-specific versions of University 150 that would alleviate tension with CPOS requirements. Dr. Marin noted that HEST, Engineering, and ACES are already thinking about this; that he leads the CPOS team; that Aggie Jump Start is supported by his office; and that he’s interested in this pursuing this.
- Senator Aguirre noted that DACC’s class sizes are capped at 24, which tightens faculty-student relationships and supports cohort-building. Similarly, Senator Burkardt advocated for more Freshman Seminar classes at NMSU-Main.
- Interim Provost Reddi noted that the steady increase in NMSU’s four-year graduation rate since 2009 may be due in large part to improvements to curricular complexity, tutoring, and other support channels that have been grown intentionally, particularly since 2016.
- Senator Burkardt, who is a Scholarship Chair, cited concern that scholarship loss owing to early weak GPAs may drag down retention. For example, the Opportunity Scholarship requires students to maintain a 2.5 college GPA. Students who slip up in one class can lose it either through a weakened GPA or by dropping the class to preserve their GPA, only to lose the scholarship anyway because they are now enrolled in too few courses.

NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Subcommittee Chair Report

- Dr. Marin is concerned about this. NMSU now sends out financial aid award letters in March rather than July to give students more time to plan. He is also trying to improve coordination between the NMSU Foundation, NMSU itself, and its colleges. Aid needs to be re-targeted toward students who exhaust support from the Lottery or Opportunity funds.
- Senator Burkardt proposes a “what if” feature enabling students to understand financial aid implications of their decisions. It is difficult for students to get appointments with Financial Aid, faculty often have inaccurate ideas about financial aid (with adverse consequences for students), and only 20-30% of the students she oversees (Physics) actually fill out the Scholar Dollar documentation that opens them up to aid.
- Dr. Marin acknowledges this problem and is addressing it.

16:44 After this discussion, the committee agreed to support the proposal. Concerns regarding financial aid and its impact on retention were re-iterated.

16:52 In the final few minutes, the committee suggested ideas for future discussions.

- Senator Lynch raised the issue of AI use on assignments in the classroom. Senator Rice noted that the Teaching Academy has effective workshops on this problem.
- Senator Burkardt wants more discussion of how to bring back students who lose scholarship support.
- Senator Finlator proposed a discussion on developing a University-wide, uniform set of options regarding the availability to students of their own internet-enabled devices while in the classroom for adoption into syllabi, analogous to the current AI options.
- Senator Aguirre wants to see that proposed changes to ARP 4.46 are followed through to completion.