

# NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Subcommittee Chair Report

**Meeting:** 4/16/2026

**Submitted by:** Kristian Finlator

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

**Guests:** Dr. Tony Marin, Associate Vice President of Student Success; Marissa Fowler, Director of Academic Advising and Student Support

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

### II. 16:04 Update on CPoS Compliance

The Student Success Office began implementing support for tracking compliance with federal CPoS requirements in December 2024, and finished in September 2025, although the relevant federal regulations were instituted in 2018. The effort completed with “relatively little impact on students.” For federal purposes, full-time student status is 12 credit-hours; for NM financial aid (Opportunity/Lottery Scholarships), 15 credit-hours per term are required. Non-compliance could cost the NMSU system nearly \$200 million.

CPoS checking software interfaces with mynmsu and alerts students when their enrollment is non-compliant. Hence the new software may have the side-effect of keeping students “on track,” improving degree completion times.

Students are permitted to take courses outside their major (minors, “exploration”), but, for students on federal financial aid (Pell, SEOG, work-study, loan), these should mostly be added after enrolling in the 12 credits that establish full-time status and enable full federal support. However, if students are full-time but only enroll in fewer than 12 credits within their major, federal support is pro-rated. For example, if a student is enrolled in 12+ credits but only 9 are within their major, their federal support will be 9/12 of the maximum.

The Student Success office tracks the number of students who are out of compliance and contacts them. Similarly, the Graduate College follows up with federally supported graduate students whose coursework may be out of compliance. 20/4522 undergrads and 2/283 graduates were in incomplete compliance in Spring 2026. Both numbers reflect significant direct intervention by Student Success and the Graduate College. A slight issue is that variable credit courses (master’s thesis, doctoral dissertation credits) don’t fit into the system yet; Drs. Marin & Fowler are looking at this.

Senator Burkardt suggested designing a “What-if” feature online that would enable students to project how their current or available support would respond to different enrollment decisions. Dr. Marin responded that this would be too complicated given the array of support instruments available (federal, state, private).

### III. 16:34 Update from Senator Aguirre on ASNMSU

Sen. Aguirre attended ASNMSU on 4/5/2026. Sen. Aguirre updated ASNMSU on the International Graduate Student Task Force; passed on that many students reported in a survey that a grocery van for bringing students from campus to area grocery stores would be useful; and informed them that Cole Village is being demolished. An ASNMSU member informed Sen. Aguirre that efforts to bring back the grocery van are in the works.

### IV. Surveying the Academic Colleges on International Graduate Student Support

Sen. Finlator shared a draft writeup detailing how responding academic units offer financial support to incoming international graduate students. Senator Burkardt observed that (i) the Departments with the largest graduate programs (such as Engineering) appear to offer less support; and (ii) Master’s programs appear to offer less support than PhD-granting programs. Sen. Finlator indicated that this document will be shared with the International

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Graduate Task Force, which includes Dean Koodali, as well as with the heads of the academic units that sent up the information from their academic units.

**Submitted by:** Kristian Finlator

**Committee Participation:** NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Committee

### **Motivation**

In spring 2025, Graduate College Dean Koodali obtained from Dean Marlatt and Associate Dean Hout (HEST) a detailed breakdown of how much guaranteed support each academic unit offered to incoming international graduate students. In fall 2025/spring 2026, the International Graduate Task Force, convened at the request of Interim Provost Reddi, identified the lack of guaranteed financial support for incoming international graduate assistants as a possible weakness in NMSU's new status as an R1 institution. In response to this concern, the Faculty Senate Student Success committee sent a letter to the Deans of the other academic colleges requesting summary information from their units analogous to the information provided by HEST.

### **Method**

The Faculty Senate Student Success committee drafted the letter shown below 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

All four colleges graciously responded before the final Student Success meeting, enabling the committee to study the results. Full results are included in the table below.

### **Summary of Results**

- Of 31 responding academic units, 14 offer guaranteed support. There is at least one such unit in each academic college. Of those that guarantee support, most guarantee to all incoming graduate students regardless of origin, although a couple (Anthropology and Geography) have an informal or formal tradition of only admitting international students when funding is available. Of those units that do not offer guaranteed support, most are occasionally able to offer GA support, but do not guarantee it.
- No unit guarantees summer support. This means that, even in units with guaranteed GAs, no graduate student can count on an income exceeding 50% FTE for nine months. Chemical Engineering suggested that summer support would be helpful.
- Many departments write that they explicitly inform admitted students that funding is not guaranteed, and in some cases (including Sociology and Social Work) it appears likely that this prevents some admitted international students from enrolling.
- Several units expressed (or appeared to imply) concern that requiring the ability to guarantee GA support for incoming international graduate students would create two separate admissions standards. Although none mentioned it explicitly, this is reasonable as hiring decisions are subject to Title IX: if an argument could be made that equally qualified applicants to a graduate program are being passed over owing indirectly to their national origin, that could expose NMSU to legal liability.
- The constantly changing balance between grant support and TA support introduces further complexity into the question of guaranteeing GA support because (i) the grant cycle and the graduate admissions cycles don't match, so faculty sometimes must project in spring whether a pending grant will be funded by fall in order to hire a student on it, and (ii) departments don't know how much TA support they will have in future years.

- Physics mentioned that flexibility to carry over unused I&G or Foundation funds from one fiscal year to the next would be helpful, as would increase contribution from Central to start-up (because that would free up SURF funds for GAs).

In light of these results, it may be worthwhile to plan for how NMSU could best increase support for international students, should funding emerge. While academic year funding is always an issue, summer funding and health insurance appear to be more universal concerns. The cost of supporting a graduate student at 20 hrs/week for 12 weeks of summer is roughly \$7200 ([https:// hr.nmsu.edu/documents/Grad-Assistant-Salary-Table.pdf](https://hr.nmsu.edu/documents/Grad-Assistant-Salary-Table.pdf)). Meanwhile, the cost of health insurance for an entire year (GEO Blue, High-Cost, just student, 2025-2026) is \$1950 ([https:// iss.nmsu.edu/insurance/health-insurance.html](https://iss.nmsu.edu/insurance/health-insurance.html))

There are roughly 365 international graduate students at NMSU. Covering their health insurance premium throughout the year would cost roughly \$712k whereas supporting all of them throughout the summer at 0.5 FTE would cost \$2.6 million. As many students will have summer support or wish to travel home over the summer, the actual additional cost to offer full-summer employment would probably come in under \$2.6 million. Nonetheless, it appears likely that assistance with health insurance would be helpful to more, and almost certainly cheaper.

### 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

Overview of GA Support for International Graduate Students at NMSU

Academic Unit	College	level of support (0,1,2) = N/A, possible, guaranteed	comments on current status	suggestions
Nursing	HEST	0	"In general, the SON does not have any international graduate students because they need to have a U.S. RN license to be admitted. On the rare chance that there is a non-resident working in the U.S. as a RN, they do not attend graduate school expecting to be funded."	
Kinesiology	HEST	2	"We only accept students when we have funding available."	
Sociology	HEST	1	"We admit international students with and without GA funding. We give them the same consideration as we give all of our other applicants. We have very few GAships available. So, we award on a competitive basis. If we offer funding to international students, we always try to offer them 20 hours so we can ensure that they have the highest chances of securing their I-20s and getting their VISAS. If we don't offer them a GAship, we clearly state that in their acceptance letter. We know that most of them will not be able to attend. Over the years we have never had an international student attend our MA program without funding." [1 or 2 both defensible]	
Public Health Sciences	HEST	1	"We admit qualified students but let them know that funding is not guaranteed and that they will hear about any offered package closer to the start of the program."	
Social Work	HEST	1	"We admit them and then send them information about the potential for a GAship in social work, but also provide the information through the Graduate School and other potential sources of funding. This year we admitted about 10 international students and were only able to award two new GAships in social work to incoming students (we awarded two to current international students who were continuing on in the program). Many will defer their admission for a year in hopes of a GA being available the following year."	
Borderlands and Ethnic Studies (BEST)	HEST	0		
Communication Disorders	HEST	1	"We only rarely have international students, but when we do admit them, we make it clear to the international as well as our domestic students that GA-ships are not guaranteed. All graduate students have to apply for GA-ships separately from their application to the program."	
Counseling and Ed Psych	HEST	2	"We guarantee 10 hours of GA to all of doctoral graduate students for their first three years of their program, as the fourth year they should be going to internship. This is regardless of international status."	
Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership (TPAL)/ Ed.D., Educational Administration	HEST	1	"Typically, the majority of applicants in these programs are not international students and are practicing teachers or administrators in the U.S. who are not in need of assistantships. Our admittance letters indicates that we cannot guarantee funding for those accepted. No international students were accepted in the last cycle for these programs."	
TPAL/Ph.D., Educational Administration	HEST	1		
TPAL/Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction, One-Time Early Childhood Cohorts	HEST	1	"Rhianna Thomas worked with ECECD to secure funding to pay for a cohort of C&I doctoral students to complete a fast-track 2 year program. The funding paid for tuition and fees for two years, and students are now finishing course work this summer. No assistants were requested by this cohort and none were international applicants. Please note - those that cannot complete in 2 years can remain in the program though their funding for tuition will cease at the end of the two-year mark. We do not anticipate doing this again unless ECECD provides funding again."	
TPAL/Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction, One-time Cohorts	HEST	1	"Since this program is offered online we don't typically see many international students apply since we cannot guarantee 6-credit hours of in person instruction. We don't guarantee funding for any of the students accepted into this program but provide a GA application that faculty can utilize when selecting a GA."	

Academic Unit	College	level of support (0,1,2) = N/A, possible, guaranteed	comments on current status	suggestions
TPAL/Ph.D., Curriculum and Instruction, Face-to-Face Cohorts	HEST	1	"This program typically attracts the most international student applicants. For our upcoming cohort that will begin in 2025, our doctoral coordinator screened all applicants and then included faculty in zoom interviews. All applicants were asked during this interview if they needed assistance. The intent of the coordinator was to require that faculty support these students and prioritize the students even if they were not a fit. Since this had not been typical practice in TPAL we brought this to faculty during a department meeting to make a decision as a group. The consensus was that faculty who wished to keep their current GA could do so and those who wished to select from the current students could do so. We accepted 11 total students (including international students). Out of the 11 students 6 indicated they might be in need of assistance to our coordinator. To my knowledge, 6 out of 11 students are international students. The letter of acceptance to all students indicated that we could not guarantee financial assistance. We are currently working with TPAL faculty to determine who is willing to support a graduate assistant."	
ANTH	COAS	2	Anthropology does not offer guaranteed GAs to all incoming graduate students. For international graduate students, we do not admit international students without funding. For Fall 2026, Anthropology will have 1 international graduate student. That student is funded as a Graduate Research Assistant at 20 hours/week.	N/A
ART	COAS			
ASTR	COAS	2	All incoming graduate students are guaranteed RA or TA support.	
BIOL	COAS	2	Biology does not admit students unless they are given an RA, GA, or are on a training program (such as G-RISE). Our Biotech MS students are not guaranteed a GA, but they are almost always former NMSU undergrads, and in recent years these students have still be been awarded GA's.	N/A
CHEM	COAS			
CS	COAS	1	(1) Our department does not provide guaranteed GAs to incoming students, domestic or international. (2) We have four programs: MS in CS, MS in Bioinformatics, PhD in CS, and Data Analytics. (3) We generally do not offer GA for incoming students in DA. (4) We regularly offer four 10 hours GA for incoming students in MS CS, PhD in CS, or MS in Bioinformatics. However, some do not come. (5) There are students who come with full support, but those are students hand-picked by the faculty who have funding. (6) Most semesters, we have 2-3 students coming fully funded. (7) For Spring 2026, we have no incoming international students for the PhD or MS program in CS. Note: this is based on the ST-MJR list. There are two CS MS online students, and the rest are in Data Analytics whose first semester is Spring 2026.	
CJ	COAS	1	No guaranteed GAs. We have Graduate Student Organization to help them meet other graduate students and begin the process of creating community.	Specific funding for GA/TA positions for international students would be helpful. However, we don't take into account a student's citizenship or origin when admitting or not admitting students. We evaluate all students on the merits of their qualifications, completeness of application, and then consider them for an assistantship if we have TA positions open and if they apply for an assistantship. We don't have enough assistantships for all of the students we admit, so TA positions are awarded on a competitive basis. Should we only admit international students if we have a TA position for them?

Academic Unit	College	level of support (0,1,2) = N/A, possible, guaranteed	comments on current status	suggestions
COMM	COAS	1	We don't guarantee all applicants will be admitted to an assistantship; we offer assistantships based on availability to the best candidates... We have had a few students arrive who were accepted without an assistantship, and they have all found assistantships in their first semester. Several student life programs and other academic programs have students who don't show up due to processing issues with visas and other problems. They have all found assistantships on campus.	The issue with only processing international students who are offered an assistantship is that those application deadlines are typically all at the same time. The graduate school would be overwhelmed (as it was in the past) if applications were not processed as they come in. Further, GA offers are committee-based. The entire committee would have to review all applications and make recommendations, something that Slate can't accommodate. It only has the ability to accommodate one person's review and recommendation. I understand accepting applicants without an assistantship can be problematic, but they are informed that an assistantship offer will be made at a later date. And, the graduate school would not be able to handle processing all of the recommendations in Slate at the same time. It has taken months for them to catch up when we had closer to 300 applications a year.
CMI	COAS			
ENGL	COAS	2	PhD: all incoming students are offered GA's (unless they do not need or want them). MA: we do sometimes offer admission without GA support, but I can't think of any international students that have come without support (Kerry/Brian, please correct me). GA's are 20 hours/week during the academic year; no summer support included in the offer, though we prioritize summer funding for international GA's each year, whether through teaching, Writing Center coverage, or other projects. PhD: 5 years of support MA: 2 years of support	N/A
GEOG	COAS	2	(1) This is not a formal departmental policy; however, in practice we typically only admit international graduate students when we are able to offer them a GA. For domestic students, we follow a similar principle, except in cases where applicants explicitly indicate that they are not seeking funding (for example, mid-career professionals enrolling in our graduate programs while maintaining external employment). (2) GAs are typically offered at 0.50 FTE during the academic year. Master's students are generally funded for two years, and PhD students for three to five years, depending on available resources (e.g., departmental allocations, Graduate School funding, or external grants). Summer support is not guaranteed and depends on available funding sources.	While we do not routinely admit international students without funding, there may occasionally be cases in which admission is offered without an immediate assistantship if funding decisions are still pending or if additional funding may become available. In such situations, we are considering more systematic use of waitlisting to indicate that an applicant's credentials are strong, but that funding is not currently available. It is also important to note that it is not always accurate to assume that all international applicants lack financial resources. Some applicants may be self-funded or supported through external sponsorships or family resources. Additionally, international students must demonstrate sufficient financial resources in order to receive an I-20, which provides an additional safeguard that students can meet the financial requirements associated with enrollment. Our general practice reflects an awareness that assistantships are often critical for international students' ability to enroll and succeed. Overall, our goal is to align admission decisions with available funding as closely as possible while maintaining flexibility to respond to changes in funding availability and to accommodate applicants with independent financial resources.
GEOL	COAS	2	Our department accepts only students (domestic or international) that have guaranteed support. We offer 50%FTE which is 20 hours/week but we are not systematically able to offer Summer support.	
GOVT	COAS			
HIST	COAS			
LANG	COAS			
MATH	COAS			
MUS	COAS			

Academic Unit	College	level of support (0,1,2) = N/A, possible, guaranteed	comments on current status	suggestions
PHYS	COAS	2	<p>[<b>MOSTLY</b>] We offer guaranteed GAs to all incoming Ph.D. students (domestic and international). We usually make a handful of such offers but have over a hundred applicants. [<b>BUT NOT ALL</b>] We DO NOT offer GAs to incoming MAP students. Most our MAP students are domestic, but it happens occasionally that one of our international undergraduate students wants to stay for another year to get an MS degree. (I remember three such cases in recent years. As we recruit more in Mexico for our undergraduate degrees, that number might increase.) For our Ph.D. students, we initially offer 20-hour GA support for one year (two semesters, not for the summer). After the first year, support is usually renewed if the student is making good progress towards their degree, has good grades and exam outcomes, and makes good progress in their research.</p> <p>Support cannot be guaranteed after the first year, since budgets fluctuate, but is usually available for good students. We do not guarantee summer support. Historically, TA funds from the graduate school could not be spent during the summer. This has changed recently, but increased SCH during the fall and spring semesters combined with declining TA lines does not allow us to reserve much of our TA funds for the summer. Besides, TA funds are supposed to be spent on teaching but we do not need so many TAs during the summer because our teaching load is much smaller.</p>	Several things would help: (1) Flexibility to carry over I&G GA funds from one fiscal year to the next. (2) Flexibility (with documentation in the Graduate Handbook) to spend I&G TA funds to support graduate research (i.e., use I&G funds for research assistantships, especially in the summer). (3) A significant increase, say, doubling, of our I&G GA funds. (4) Flexibility to carry over Foundation funds, such as professorships or scholarships, to the next fiscal year. (5) Instead of using our SURF account for startup funds, we could use it for RA support. We have done this in the past, but recently all our SURF funds have gone to startup. This would require a larger central contribution to start-up funds .
PSY	COAS	2	20 hours academic year, none during summer	
Civil and Environmental Engineering	ENG	1	<p>“No, although we try to do so [offer guaranteed support]. When we don't offer the student an assistantship, we generally do not offer any other support. To fully guarantee GA funding for an incoming graduate student, we would need to be able to see the future (accurately) in terms of what research and teaching assistantships will be available. The department budget includes an allotment for TA support, sometimes additional funds become available.</p> <p>Also, researchers have budget flexibility that can occasionally fund more students. If we do not have unfunded students in our programs, there are no students available to hire in these instances, and that is not a good situation for a department to be in. Another factor is that many of our graduate students end up declining TA positions if they are able to get an internship with a local firm. In those cases (multiple per semester) we often don't have anyone to fill vacant TA positions.”</p>	[Inferring from the submission] Ability to project TA position availability would be helpful; ability to hire students from out of the department would be helpful. [That last suggestion is hard to understand - any faculty member can hire someone from out of the department.]
Chemical and Materials Engineering	ENG	1	<p><i>Does your program offer guaranteed Graduate Assistantships (GAs) to all incoming graduate students, or to all incoming international graduate students?</i> No, we do not offer assistantships to all admitted domestic or international students. We admit a few more than we anticipate funding since it is possible that more funding may arrive before the fall semester starts and then these students who are already admitted are then provided offer letters.</p> <p><i>How many hours of support are offered during the academic year and during the summer?</i> This depends on the situation. For faculty that have RA funding, it will typically include academic year and summer funding. For TAs (this includes many GA offers as part of startup packages for new faculty), we can only offer academic year funding as we do not receive TA funding for the summer. For how many years is the support guaranteed? I was currently under the impression that the university would not allow us to offer more than 1 semester of funding. <i>What additional support does your program offer to international graduate students who enroll without a GA?</i> More GA/TA assistance ships from the university. Summer funding would always be appreciated.</p>	More GA/TA assistance ships from the university. Summer funding would always be appreciated.
Electrical and Computer Engineering	ENG	2	Yes, support during the academic year; summer support is provided through research awards. One-year guarantee. Note: summer support will decrease due to the new fringe benefits and IDC rate increases.	

Academic Unit	College	level of support (0,1,2) = N/A, possible, guaranteed	comments on current status	suggestions
DED	BUS	1	Members of our department occasionally fund graduate students (including international students) with funds from grants endowed chairs.	Not sure I understand the question "what would enable your program to discontinue the practice of admitting international graduate students without a guaranteed GA"... Nothing is forcing us to admit, per se, but the practice of the admissions committee is generally to admit all qualified applicants, regardless of country of origin.
MGMT PhD	BUS	2	(1) All of our PhD students are offered 20-hour GA positions (domestic and international). We cap our new doctoral student enrollment based on the number of GA positions available. (2) The GAs are hired on a calendar-year basis, meaning they receive GA support over the summer. The GAs begin teaching in their second year. They are the instructor of record for one course each semester and teach one course over the summer.	
MA Economics	BUS	1	"No." [No guaranteed support]	Admission criteria are separate from GA considerations because we are greatly limited in number of GAs/GA funding. We apply the admission criteria in a nondiscriminatory manner regardless of international or non-international status.
MKTG PhD	BUS	2	We offer all incoming PhD students Teaching Assistantships @20 hours/week (.5 FTE) for the calendar year. We offer up to 4 years of support.	
MA-AST (Master's in Applied Statistics)	BUS	2	Our MS-AST program admits both domestic and international students. Each year, we admit around 30 students, while students are unlikely to enroll without financial support. During my time as director, all full-time students—except one—who joined the program were guaranteed funding at 15 hours per week (0.375 FTE) through our TA budget. This funding is provided for the fall and spring semesters and covers the standard two-year duration required to complete the program. While some students may obtain summer funding through TA or RA positions, such support is not guaranteed. The one exception was a student who joined in Spring 2025. He did not receive funding from our TA budget but was instead promised support upon admission by a faculty member in the College of Agriculture (Prof. Jinfa Zhang). In addition, we have a number of part-time students enrolled in the program. These students are typically already in the United States and generally do not receive funding.	
AST PhD	BUS	1	Things are a bit in flux for the PhD Applied Statistics (A ST) as we plan to divert funding from the MS A ST to the PhD A ST when we next admit. I'll answer for the first cohort of students, who joined in Fall 2024. For the first cohort, we did not [provide guaranteed GAs]. Five of seven students in the first cohort were employed when they joined the program, are pursuing the degree part time, and are self-funded. (One has tuition remission through her employer, UNM.) A sixth student, a full-time international student, interviewed with and was offered funding by the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) before joining. A seventh student, also a full-time international, joined without guaranteed funding. She was hired by OIA at the end of her first year.	
MAAC	BUS	0	(1) No; (2) N/A; (4a) No (4b) Not sure what it's asking (No).	
Number with guaranteed support		14		
Number with possible support		17		