

NMSU Faculty Senate Student Success Subcommittee Chair Report

Meeting: 9/18/2025

Submitted by: Kristian Finlator

Committee Attendance: All 11 committee members attended

Guests: Colin King, Krysta Quinonez, Ermelinda Quintela, and Jake Nevarez (Books4Success); Deputy Provost James McAteer

I. 16:03 Complete College: Deputy Provost McAteer apprised the committee of the Complete College America Accelerator Project. This 5-year assessment of student success, initiated at President Fermé's request, begins with a survey of University stakeholders. Student Success committee members were urged to complete their survey by Monday 9/20. Chair Finlator sent several reminder emails to the committee about this task.

II. 16:08 Books4Success: Colin King, Krysta Quinonez, Ermelinda Quintela, and Jake Nevarez gave a short presentation on the proposed Books4Success Equity Access textbook purchasing program. Among other things, Mr. King noted that Follett already has launched 400 "Access" programs similar to this one around the country; cited evidence supporting that textbook access increases course completion rates; and repeated that (at least when implemented within an opt- out modality) the vast majority of students remain within the program. He also cited the existence of evidence that student outcomes at DACC have improved following adoption of their Access program, but the evidence itself was not shared. Q&A followed, and then closed discussion by the committee. Highlights from the Q&A and the Discussion include:

- Senator Burkardt shared concern that a per-credit hour cost would not make sense for students who take classes with no required materials. The opt-out option is helpful, but there was concern that many students are not yet savvy enough to use it.
- Relatedly, many senators felt that an opt-in modality would be better than opt-out.
- Follett has not recently shared their actual internal estimate regarding the cost per credit hour of books and materials at NMSU, so it was difficult for the committee to assess whether the proposed cost actually represented a savings for the students. Mr. King indicated willingness to share that number and the modeling behind it. This is critical to programmatic transparency.
- Senator Aguirre shared from her personal experience that Follett's program at DACC was fine following some initial hiccups. However, other senators were aware of anecdotal reports of poor customer service in cases when a class's materials were not available at the start of the term, reflecting technical issues. This triggered concern that there would be little accountability for Follett if their systemwide program failed somehow. Results from an actual satisfaction survey of DACC or NMSU-A faculty (who use a similar program) would be helpful. Senator Aguirre suggested collecting preliminary feedback from Faculty Senators from DACC.
- Much of the motivation for Books4Success derives from anticipated improvement in student outcomes, but no actual metrics from DACC or NMSU-A were shared that demonstrate improvement. Follett has not coordinated with the NMSU Dean of Students office to align the program design with actual known student outcome / achievement gap issues, but they appeared open to engaging in such conversation.
- Senator Burkardt shared grave concern that Follett still seems to anticipate a Spring 2026 adoption timeline despite the abundance of concerns, and despite the even graver challenges of facilitating textbook adoptions within a totally new system by then.

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The committee then held two votes on questions related to the Books4Success presentation.

1. Are the motivations for the proposed program clear and compelling? 5 no, 1 yes
2. Are plans for implementation, assessment, and optimization/modification clear? 5 no, 1 abstention

In summary, senators felt that Follett has not explained why NMSU needs Books4Success, they have not justified its cost, they have not demonstrated that analogous programs at DACC and NMSU-Alamogordo are successful, and they have not laid out clear plans for accountability and assessment.

III 16:59 Adjourned

IV Followup

- Student Success has drafted and submitted a resolution asking NMSU to perform its own analysis of the cost that typical undergraduates pay for textbooks and materials before committing to Books4Success or any other Equity Access textbook purchasing program.
- In a followup vote, a Google Form was drafted asking all Student Success Committee members to vote on the following question:

“Based on the information that Student Success has received on 9/18/2025 and the discussion that followed, do you recommend that NMSU implement Follett's proposed *Books4Success* program without further changes?”

Possible answers were “Yes,” “No,” and “Abstain.” Of seven respondents, six voted “No” and one voted “Abstain.” Hence, the Student Success committee recommends against adoption.

Based on the information that Student Success has received on 9/18/2025 and the discussion that followed, do you recommend that NMSU implement...ooks4Success program without further changes?
7 responses

