



Research and Graduate School Digest

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DECEMBER 2019

Success in Research Tied to Success in Graduate Programs

It is uncommon for one person to serve both as Vice President for Research (VPR) and as Dean of the Graduate School, which President Floros asked me to do last year. But it sends a clear message that our success in research, scholarship, and creative activity is tied to our success in graduate programs.

As VPR, I largely have the responsibility of directing research policy and managing research administration at the University. In contrast, as dean of the graduate school, I am expected to be knowledgeable about national and global trends and initiatives in graduate education and am ultimately responsible for recruitment, admissions, and academic progress of graduate students.

For me, the common denominator is the faculty, scholars and artists who guide and mentor graduate students that perform much of the research, scholarship and creative activity at NMSU. What makes my dual role as VPR and Dean of the Graduate School both challenging and rewarding is that I, for the most part, do not directly supervise, evaluate, tenure or promote. Deans, department heads and directors do that. I can, however, influence through training programs. I can also provide incentives by contributing to start-up funds, matching funds, seed programs, graduate assistantships and the like. When asked, I give advice and counsel derived from many years of experience.

In today's highly competitive graduate education space, providing students with a livable stipend, tuition remission, and affordable health care is a must to recruit the best. I am working with the President, Provost and Vice President of Finance and Administration to find internal funding sources that can be used to support graduate student stipends and also pay for their tuition and health care. I also instituted the policy, now in effect, that if you have a graduate student in a proposal budget, you must, unless the sponsor does not allow it, include tuition and health care costs.



VP for Research and Dean of Graduate School, Luis Cifuentes

Research expenditures, both STEM and non-STEM (humanities and social sciences) is a key performance indicator (KPI) for Goal 2; Elevate Research and Creativity. To that end, and to ensure competitiveness for future graduate enrollees and success of current graduate students, I am asking that you work with your college or institute leadership to seek and capture any and all funding sources that support graduate education. We encourage, in fact applaud, seeking graduate fellowships even when they do not pay for overhead (indirect costs), which most do not. The Office of the VPR and Dean of the Graduate School is ready to assist as needed.

Nursing Assistant Professor's Research to Help Rural Hispanic Adults Living with Urinary Incontinence

Stress and urgency urinary incontinence negatively impact the quality of life for a number of people in the US. These symptoms are particularly widespread among Hispanic women affecting their mobility and social function.

This is why Dr. Lori Saiki, Assistant Professor of Nursing at NMSU aims to conduct research to help Hispanic women who live with stress and urgency urinary incontinence in rural areas.

According to Dr. Saiki, more than 40% of Hispanic women and 18% of Hispanic men report suffering from these urinary conditions, making life specially challenging for Hispanic residents living below poverty levels and low access to healthcare in the border region in southern New Mexico. "The goal of this study is to implement a community-based, culturally relevant bladder health promotion "train-the-trainer" program for promotoras," states Dr. Saiki. "My study will also assess the effectiveness of the program in reducing urinary incontinence symptom severity and improving quality of life for rural, Hispanic adults living in southern New Mexico."

This pilot study is funded by the Mountain West Clinical Translational Research Infrastructure Network.

For more information please contact Dr. Saiki at Lsaiki@nmsu.edu.



Dr. Lori Saiki teaching a nursing class

Federal Funding Reminder

With ongoing federal appropriations debates, the Office of Research Administration, in consultation with Lewis-Burke Associates, recommends that Principal Investigators regularly communicate with their program officers to prepare for both best and worst case scenarios: impact to proposal timelines and deadlines, opportunities for supplemental funding, preparation for a continuing resolution or shutdown, and generally how program officers are considering funding for the coming months and year.



Research Administrators Roundtable

The Office of Research Administration hosted its first Research Administrators Roundtable last month. The event brought together approximately 30 professionals working in pre-award administration from throughout the NMSU system. The roundtable discussed plans for effective collaborations between units in support of the research aims of the NMSU LEADS 2025 strategic plan. The group will meet at least quarterly to exchange best practices and coordinate a cohesive approach to services offered to Principal Investigators and other researchers.



**Assistant VP for Research,
Alisha Giron**

Program Evaluation, Survey Research, and Data Analysis Services

We are excited to remind our readers of a unique resource at NMSU's College of Health and Social Services. Crimson Research partners with local and national agencies to submit grant proposals and provide program evaluation, survey research, and other applied research services. Crimson Research is led by Dr. Joe Tomaka, Professor of Public Health and Vice Chair of the NMSU Institutional Review Board. He has extensive experience in leading funded research and program evaluation projects in the area of public health. Since joining NMSU in 2013, Dr. Tomaka has mentored a number of faculty and organized grant clubs to better prepare faculty in writing effective proposals in the area of public health.

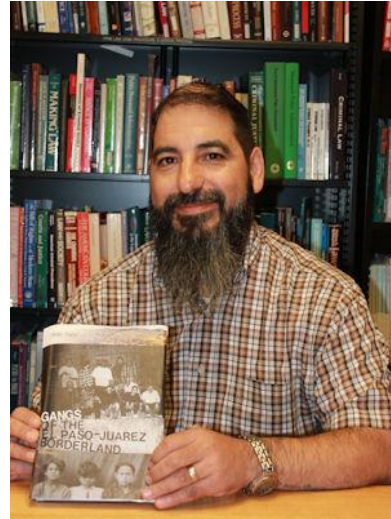


**Professor of Public Health and
Director of the Crimson
Research, Joe Tomaka**

For more information about Crimson Research visit <https://publichealth.nmsu.edu/crimson-research> or contact Dr. Tomaka at tomaka@nmsu.edu.

Book Signing

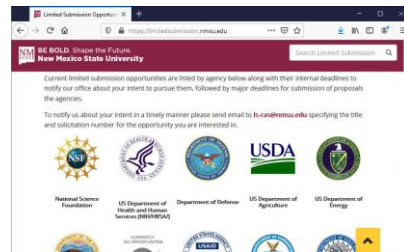
Associate Professor Mike Tapia is holding a book signing event on Sunday December 15th at the NMSU Barnes & Noble from 2 – 4pm for his book *Gangs of the El Paso – Juárez Borderland*. As on-site copies of the book could be scarce, readers are encouraged to order a copy online: <https://www.amazon.com/Gangs-El-Paso-Juárez-Borderland-History/dp/0826361099>. Other book signing events are scheduled on Tuesday December 17th at Barnes and Noble at the Fountains at Farah (Cielo Vista Mall area) in El Paso from 6 – 8pm and on Saturday Dec. 21 at COAS Bookstore in Downtown Las Cruces from 1 to 3pm.



Criminal Justice Associate Professor and the author of *Gangs of the El Paso-Juárez Borderlands*, Mike Tapia

Limited Submission Funding Opportunities

The Office of Research Administration Services lists limited submission funding opportunities at <https://limitedsubmission.nmsu.edu>. We encourage NMSU faculty and staff to periodically visit the site and if they are interested in any of the opportunities to please inform us by sending email to ls-ras@nmsu.edu. As a reminder, the site is only accessible on campus. Accessing the site using off-campus computers require first downloading and logging in through NMSU's VPN at <https://vpn.nmsu.edu>.



GRADUATE SCHOOL

What is Financial Capability and How does it Impact Student Debt and Social Mobility?

Financial literacy and wellness programs are offered by many universities to support the economically and educationally disadvantaged and often first-generation college students, along with students who have very little to no experience about financial education. In reviewing recent articles and participating in a recent pilot Financial Capability conference sponsored by the NMSU Graduate School through an NSF grant, it was established that of necessary importance is educating students about financial capability and the lifelong impact it has on their future. The conference offered workshops on “Job Offer to Retirement: Capitalizing on Benefits and Financial Opportunities” “Cognitive Bias in Financial Decision Making” “Financial Capabilities (How family history impacts financial decision-making).” Financial capability incorporates financial literacy and wellness. In order to understand the differences between each of these financial concepts, the following are definitions of each of the concepts.

Financial Capability, Financial Literacy, Financial Wellness

- Financial Capability – Access, Behavioral Factors, Social Influences, Emotions, (ABSiE) includes financial literacy, but adds access to financial services, behavioral factors, social influences, and emotions. It further involves capability as both the ability to act (i.e. internal capacities such as knowledge) and the opportunity to act (i.e. availability of products that are accessible, affordable and financially attractive, easy to use, and safe and reliable).
- Financial Literacy – Knowledge, Skills, Awareness, Understanding, (KSAU) refers to the knowledge and skills needed to make sound financial decisions. It includes gaining awareness and understanding of how money works and how to handle it responsibly. It generally includes topics such as how to create a budget, how to manage and pay off debt, and how to create savings for long-term goals, i.e., buying a home or building a retirement nest egg.
- Financial Wellness – CONTROL & FREEDOM, (C & F) is about a sense of security and feeling as though you have enough money to meet your needs. It's about being in control of your day-to-day finances and having the financial freedom to make choices that allow you to enjoy life.



Associate VP for Research and Graduate School Luis Vázquez

Financial Capability

What is obvious from these definitions is that financial capability incorporates literacy and wellness. However, what is missing from literacy and wellness is the social behavioral emotional family history of financial decision-making that has been deeply ingrained in the college student. The financial literature indicates that the most crucial components in understanding the college students' financial decisions are based on their family's financial history and the behavioral emotional impact it has on the college student's financial decisions when finding their way into higher education. Such factors include poverty, educational attainment, family relationships and home life.

I have had the privilege over the years to listen to many stories from students that included their history of poverty, being first generation students without knowing what to expect, sharing their financial aid to help support their families, having family siblings live with them at the university for better opportunities, working 2 and 3 jobs to make ends meet and sadly at times, dropping out of college in order not to get into loan debt. These are only a few of the themes from the stories from many that have been shared with me. Regardless of their circumstances, the students presented as being very intelligent, motivated, resilient and inspired with a very strong sense of pride. Some are amazing survivors in a higher education system that has not been the most compassionate at times to their circumstances. Several will graduate this December to embark on a journey that many were not sure would happen, but with great hope and support have reached their goal in transforming their lives for the future. What is interesting for many of them is that they have been paying it forward all their lives, including their time at NMSU. Paying it forward is something that many of us talk to our students about after they graduate. It's amazing to think for many with very little have given so much to others, while being in need themselves.

Social Mobility and Financial Capability

Social mobility is a phenomenon simply described as the extent to which people are able to change their circumstances of disadvantages and secure long-term improvements in their lives. For universities, social mobility is the extent a college or university educates more economically disadvantaged students (with family incomes below the national median) at lower tuition and graduates them into good paying jobs (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/>). Approximately 60% of our students come from lower income backgrounds with 19% coming from families with incomes of \$20,000 or less (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college->

mobility/new-mexico-state-university). There is a lot more information offered about New Mexico State University students social mobility indexes, but overall the university is well poised to make a great impact on the social mobility of several thousand students with a majority of them being underrepresented minorities and women. Overall, the following factors have been acknowledged to facilitate Social Mobility: motivation, achievements and failures, education, skills and training, geographic migration, industrialization, social capital, legislation and policies, modernization (use of technology and scientific knowledge).

Obviously, several of the facilitating factors for social mobility also converge with several factors of financial capability. The combination of these factors imply that considering a comprehensive approach in working with New Mexico State University students will increase the probability of increasing social mobility. For example, how to approach achievements and failures with students that may not be the best prepared for college, but have enormous motivation and potential; skills and training related to ever changing demands for workforce development, building social capital through mentorships and advising, creating internship opportunities with industry and agencies; reviewing university and legislative policies conducive to social mobility. There are many other examples that can be listed, but I believe we understand what kind of commitment is ahead of us to make social mobility synonymous with New Mexico State University. This effort will definitely take a collective effort of responsibility and accountability from administration, faculty, staff and students, along with collaborations with several units at New Mexico State University. The Graduate School looks forward to contributing and making Social Mobility a successful collective effort at New Mexico State University.