

**Abstract: NeSA202100oral-06: Cross-cultural Adaptation in a U.S. University:
The Experiences and Practices of International Students at New Mexico State
University**

Time: 2:00-2:12 PM

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When an international student comes to a US university, they face the challenge of balancing community versus individualism. Coming from their home countries, these students are now faced with a situation where they are the minority. Understanding and examining how they navigate this transition is very important. Some international students may find a community that they can join here, but that “community” is different since the students themselves have changed due to the experiences that each of these members have faced. This study examines the perceptions and experiences of a small cross-section of international students who studied at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Using ethnographic methods, I interviewed the students about the challenges that they faced and how they wish they would have prepared more before coming. They also reflect on the challenges faced in adapting to the US university and how they negotiated their transformation. Not only are test scores important in assessing international student success and retention. It is critical that we understand the stresses of day to day living both on and off campus, the process of adapting to the US academic environment, and the process of building social networks and community within the international student body on campus.