

global PERSPECTIVES

MOLDIR MOLDAGALIYEVA

Moldir Moldagaliyeva had to navigate being both a student and a mother of three children when she started her master's program at MSU in 2020. Her classes, like her son's (who was in first grade at the time), were online.

"It was a bit challenging time because it was not only about my academic transition, but it was also a transition for my family," Moldagaliyeva, said. "It was also about balancing graduate school workload and being a mom."

"And usually, when a woman -- a mother -- is an international student, [there's] also shifts in the power dynamics in the family, because your husband, who used to work in your home country, cannot work here because he's in dependent status."

Navigating these changes can be challenging for international student parents, especially mothers, Moldagaliyeva said. So, in order to help students in that transition, she started working on a project called Moms Spartans in 2023. Moldagaliyeva interviewed student mothers in order to research their needs and challenges.

"Most of the moms share that they need some support to feel that you are not alone who is struggling and to feel that there are some other moms who are ready to help and support them," she said.



"They also talked about the lack of information [about resources available to student parents] when they just came to the U.S."

In 2024, Moldagaliyeva said she was working to organize all the information about available resources for student parents. She hopes to be able to distribute this information to students during orientation or as part of their admission package. She has launched her peer mentorship program this semester as a pilot project.



“[The project] pairs new or incoming student parents with more experienced student mothers, and they can meet monthly to share some resources, tips or just support each other,” she said. “So, this project is a pilot study, and we will see how it works and what will be the people’s feedback on that.”

Moldagaliyeva also worked as an Orientation Assistant in 2023, helping fellow international students with questions about the academic and cultural transition.

“We had some in-person meetings in August during some Coffee Hour [events] to chat and know more about each other,” she said. “So, it was about sharing, supporting, providing resources and being one among the first group who would welcome them here at MSU, and to create the first associations regarding MSU.”

Moldagaliyeva said making connections -- “being open to make friends from different countries, being open to learn about different cultures” -- is important.

“I would encourage people to talk to each other, ask questions if they don't know what to do or what the resources available out there, some other people may help you,” she said. “It's all about sharing knowledge and supporting each other.”

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By: Ayushya Gautam

