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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/27/09

SPONSOR Heaton LAST UPDATED _____ HB 69

SHORT TITLE NMSU Pre-Freshman Engineering Program SB _____

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$360.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
 Public Education Department (PED)
 New Mexico State University (NMSU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 69 appropriates \$360.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University to support the pre-freshman engineering program to enhance recruitment and retention of freshman engineering students.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$360.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states that this request was submitted by NMSU to the HED for review. The Department would not oppose this project's funding for FY10, if the State's fiscal picture improves.

The LFC Appropriation Recommendations, Volume II, pages 364-365 states:

The committee has concerns about the growth of research and public service projects within the higher education budget, as well as the alignment of these projects with state goals and strategic plans. The committee also continues to have significant concerns about accountability and performance outcomes for these projects.

The committee recommendation reduces funding included in the HED request by varying levels from FY09 funding amounts for research projects, public service projects and P-20 pipeline projects focusing on students.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

With respect to special projects, higher education institutions advanced 114 proposals for new projects and expansions at a total general fund cost of \$54 million during the HED budget request process in fall 2008.

The Executive Budget in Brief notes that over the years more than 300 RPSPs have been created, accounting for a large portion of institution budgets. The current RPSPs were reviewed while considering the relevance of the project to the core mission of the institution, the community benefit and the outcomes associated with each project. (Budget in Brief and Policy Highlights, P 9-10.)

NMSU states that this request will serve as an expansion to the Institute for Energy and the Environment/WERC: A Consortium for Environmental Education and Technology Development's (WERC) Pre-Freshman Engineering Program (PREP) that is administratively located at NMSU College of Engineering and will increase K-12 and community outreach and training programs state wide. PREP recruits high-achieving pre-college students for a six-week academically intense, high school credit awarding, summer program. PREP offers the participants special courses in logic, algebraic structures, physics and technical writing. Problem solving seminars equip them with the necessary tools to complete pre-calculus/calculus in high school. Through field trips and career awareness seminars, students meet professionals who instill the fortitude to become the scientific leaders of tomorrow. Over the past decade, over 800 mid-school and high school students from Hatch, Las Cruces, and Gadsden have successfully completed some level of PREP. The requested funding will provide an opportunity to expand PREP to additional school districts and maintain the existing PREP in Dona Ana County.

The PED notes that this legislation would contribute to the performance measure of the percent of middle school students who achieve a level of Proficient or above on the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment (NMSBA) in math. In addition, this legislation supports Goal 1 of PED's *A Strategic Action Plan for Advancing Math and Science Education in New Mexico 2007-2010*: "Increase student interest, participation and achievement in math and science". This legislation supports recommendations in *NM Project 2012* which focus on using problem-solving, inquiry-based curricula.