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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/04/09

SPONSOR Hamilton LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB 449

SHORT TITLE WNMU Web-Based Criminal Justice Program SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Haug

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$260.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 449, with the emergency clause, appropriates \$260.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of Western New Mexico University to maintain and expand an internet based Criminal Justice Program.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$260.0 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 WNMU to the HED for review, but is not recommended for funding for FY10, regardless of whether 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.

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.

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.

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.)

The HED state:

WNMU's Criminal Justice Program offers students the opportunity to prepare for careers in law enforcement and corrections. Students learn about the practical aspects of work in these fields.

The program has been expanded to offer a bachelor's degree for working police officers and the unexpected Border Patrol Agents at the federal level. The University targets New Mexico students, but is bringing in transfer students from Arizona and Texas. The Criminal Justice Program offered six online courses for the first time in the fall of 2007, and began with more than 20 students enrolled in those courses. Based on the demand, the program estimated future enrollment of up to 100 students within a very short time.

According to the Dean of the Extended University at Western, the expectation for growth to 100 students in three years instead grew to 120 students with declared majors in eighteen months. The formula funding has not kept up with the unexpected growth. The declaration of emergency in the bill reflects the need by the southwestern area of the state due to the tremendous economic down turn with the copper mines laying off hundreds of people. Many of the displaced miners and the growing border patrol employees have expressed an interest in the online, criminal justice program as a delivery method that addresses their travel and distance limitations.