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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/09/09
 LAST UPDATED 02/17/09 **HB** _____

SPONSOR Pinto

SHORT TITLE Navajo Language Research & Teaching **SB** 446/aSIAC

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$97.5	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates HB 621

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)
 Public Education Department (PED)
 Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SIAC Amendment

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee amendment adds research in the Navajo language, in addition to teaching, to the intended use of the proposed appropriation.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 446 appropriates \$97.5 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for a program of teaching of the Navajo language.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$97.5 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 not submitted by UNM to the HED for review and is not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY10. The HED does not support efforts to provide non-formula funding for programs, services or projects funded by the formula. 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 IAD notes that:

The UNM Department of Linguistics offers B.A, M. A., and Ph.D. in linguistics, with concentration in Native American languages, and as a part of their Native American languages program, instruction is offered in beginning through advanced Navajo language. The Navajo program courses include Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Navajo language, Medical Navajo, Written Navajo, Creative Writing and Advanced Reading, and Navajo Linguistics. UNM reports that since the program moved to the Linguistics Department, enrollment has increased and a minor was established in Navajo language.

The UNM Navajo Language program provides a resource to teach, disseminate, research, and preserve the Navajo language. The use and teaching of Navajo and other Native American languages have been affected by past US federal Indian education and assimilation policies that discouraged the speaking of Native languages and the practice of traditional ceremonies. As a result, many Native languages have disappeared. SB 446 would provide funding to UNM Navajo Program so that it may continue to preserve, research, and teach the Navajo language to students in New Mexico.

According to the PED, one of the provisions of the Indian Education Act amended in 2007 ensures the maintenance and revitalization of native languages; and that native language bilingual programs are part of a school district's professional development plan.

DUPLICATION

Senate Bill 446 duplicates House Bill 621

GH/mc:mt