

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SJM 25

**51st Legislature, 2nd Session, 2014**

**Tracking Number:** .195392.1

**Short Title:** Study UNM Bridge to Success Eligibility

**Sponsor(s):** Senators Michael Padilla and Linda M. Lopez

**Analyst:** Travis Dulany

**Date:** February 18, 2014

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**Bill Summary:**

SJM 25 requests that the Higher Education Department (HED):

- examine or study the:
  - eligibility requirements for the University of New Mexico's (UNM) Bridge to Success scholarship program and any proposed changes to those requirements;
  - eligibility requirements and any proposed changes to the requirements of similar programs in other higher educational institutions; and
  - effects of any proposed changes to the eligibility requirements, including student achievement and well-being, particularly with respect to students who come from underrepresented and disadvantaged communities; and
- present any findings and recommendations to the Legislative Education Study Committee by November 1, 2014

**Fiscal Impact:**

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

**Substantive Issues:**

According to a UNM news release dated October 16, 2013:

- to assist students who depend on financial aid, UNM has traditionally offered a "Bridge to Success Scholarship" of \$1,000 for students in their first semester with a 2.5 high school grade point average (GPA) in order to assist in tuition costs until the student qualifies for the Legislative Lottery Scholarship;
- as part of an overall restructuring of UNM financial aid, the Bridge to Success Scholarship for students entering the university in fall 2014 will increase to \$1,500, but the student must have a 3.0 high school GPA **and** a composite ACT score of 23;
- a new program, the "Success Grant," will be implemented and require a 2.5 high school GPA and the filing of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- the UNM Enrollment Management Division initially planned to distribute the Success Grant to students with a 3.0 GPA, but decided to award the grant to students with a 2.5

for one more year in order to communicate these changes to future students and families;  
and

- the decision to restructure these merit scholarships came after a year of consideration, and the changes are in line with the goals of the UNM 2020 strategic plan to increase retention and graduation.

The scholarships mentioned in the UNM press release compare with the “Opportunity Scholarship” offered by New Mexico State University, which requires:

- enrollment in a minimum of 12 new credit hours at the Las Cruces campus in the first regular semester immediately following graduation from a New Mexico high school;
- New Mexico residency;
- a 3.0 high school GPA **or** 21 composite ACT score; and
- a FAFSA submitted by March 1.

The bill analysis from HED points out that the Bridge to Success scholarship program is governed by the UNM Board of Regents, and higher education institutions’ operating budgets are required to use 3.0 percent for scholarships as determined by the institutions’ boards of regents or governing boards.

**Committee Referrals:**

SRC/SEC

**Related Bills:**

SB 141 *Limit Lottery Scholarship Tuition Increases*

SB 146 *Lottery Tuition Rates & Definitions*

\*SB 150 *Lottery Scholarship Solvency*

\*SB 327 *Lottery Tuition Fund Act & Solvency*

\*CS/SB 347 *Lottery Tuition Scholarship Fund Solvency*

\*SB 379 *Lottery Tuition Fund Solvency*

SM 23 *Tribal College Lottery Scholarship Exclusion (Identical to HM 37)*

HB 145 *Lottery Scholarship Changes*

\*HB 254a *Lottery Scholarship Solvency*

\*HB 263a *Lottery Scholarship Changes*

HB 348 *Legislative Lottery Tuition Waiver Act*

HM 37 *Tribal College Lottery Scholarship Exclusion (Identical to SM 23)*