

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 334

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .199491.1

Short Title: ENMU Nursing Program

Sponsor(s): Representative Bob Wooley and Others

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 16, 2015

Bill Summary:

HB 334 makes an appropriation for student scholarship support and faculty development for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU).

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of ENMU for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

The fiscal impact report from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) states that in recent years the Legislature has increased state-supported financial aid programs for nurses and practitioners in allied health fields. In FY 15 the Higher Education Department (HED) received \$867,300 for the nurse loan-for-service program, which represents a \$720,000 increase over FY 14. For FY 16, the LFC and executive recommendations maintain the FY 15 level of support. It appears that part of the appropriation in HB 334 would provide a financial aid option similar to that already offered by HED for nursing students.

According to HED, this request was not submitted by ENMU to HED as part of the annual budget review process

Substantive Issues:

According to ENMU, the BSN is one of the fastest growing programs at the university. The BSN program, however, is in urgent need of scholarship support and faculty development resources to meet the needs of nursing students, especially online students. In general, nurses are urgently needed to meet the rising demand for healthcare services that are increasingly available to the public as a result of the *Affordable Care Act*. ENMU believes that registered nurses (RNs), especially in rural New Mexico communities, can meet that need, if they are adequately equipped with the critical leadership and management skills typical of a person with a BSN degree.

ENMU further states that in order to maintain program quality and to respond to regional needs, as well as to address current and projected program growth in this critical field, additional scholarship funds are needed for BSN students and for program and instructional support.

Background:

ENMU reports that the BSN program experienced a 61 percent growth in student credit hour production in 2009 compared to the previous year. The program grew another 14.9 percent from 2009 to 2014. ENMU also successfully launched its Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program in the spring of 2013. ENMU's BSN program currently enrolls 197 RN students and 36 MSN students taught by three full-time and several resource faculty. In the fall of 2014, 45 students received their BSN degrees and seven students received their MSN degrees.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

SB 388 *ENMU Nursing Program* (Identical)