

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SB 324

**52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015**

**Tracking Number:** .199111.1

**Short Title:** NMHU Native American Social Work Institute

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Benny Shendo, Jr. and Others

**Analyst:** James Ball

**Date:** February 24, 2015

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**Bill Summary:**

SB 324 makes an appropriation to create the Native American Social Work Studies Institute (the Institute) at the Albuquerque campus of New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU). The purposes of the Institute are to:

- invigorate the social work system for Native Americans; and
- prepare social work professionals for work in Native American communities, both on and off reservations.

The Institute is to serve as an incubator for the development of a Native American core sequence of social work courses by:

- identifying methodologies and practices across Native American programs;
- identifying elements of practice for development of coursework;
- serving as a repository for information on Native American life ways and practice;
- establishing a six-member curriculum committee comprising Apache, Navajo, and Pueblo social workers; and
- identifying and fostering development of Native American faculty for the program.

**Fiscal Impact:**

\$120,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of NMHU for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

**Fiscal Issues:**

According to the Higher Education Department (HED), this request was not submitted by NMHU to HED as part of the annual budget review process.

**Substantive Issues:**

HED notes that the need for mental health practitioners and social workers is a crucial national and statewide issue. The Institute would assist Native American communities in developing a social work system designed for their specific needs.

**Background:**

HED states that NMHU has an established social work program at the Las Vegas campus. The Institute could benefit more students statewide due to its central location.

**Committee Referrals:**

SIAC/SEC/SFC

**Related Bills:**

HB 280 *NMHU Native American Social Work Studies* (Identical)