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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Cervantes DATE TYPED 02-09-05 HB 295

SHORT TITLE NMSU Info & Communication Technology Program SB _____

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$158.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the appropriation for New Mexico State University in the General Appropriations Act.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico State University (NMSU)
New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 295 – Making an Appropriation for the Bachelor’s Degree Completion Program in Information and Communication Technology at New Mexico State University – appropriates \$158,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure in FY06 to pay for the bachelor's degree completion program in information and communication technology. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

NMSU indicates that the NMSU College of Engineering, Department of Engineering Technology is implementing a distance baccalaureate-degree program in Information Technology (IT).

This degree completion program – junior and senior years – is designed to provide an attractive educational path to a baccalaureate degree for graduates of two-year institutions.

NMSU further suggests that the high demand for IT professionals in the workforce, the large pool of prospective students, the contribution the program's graduates will have on the state's economic development, and delivery in distance education format are all compelling reasons for NMSU to offer this program. The NMSU Info and Communication Technology degree completion program supports New Mexico's efforts to facilitate articulation and transfer from two-year higher education institutions to four-year degree programs that support economic development in our State.

NMSU adds that this program strongly addresses two critical barriers limiting economic development in New Mexico:

- graduates will assist in the development of New Mexico's currently inadequate information technology and communication infrastructure; and
- the degree program addresses the critical demand for a highly educated technical workforce.

The degree additionally targets a critical area of study in that it allows educational access to students throughout the state, and efficiently makes the two-year institutions full partners by their providing the first two years of education for tomorrow's technical workforce.

CHE indicates that this request was approved by the NMSU Board of Regents in the amount of \$158,000 and submitted to CHE for review; however, this program was not recommended for expansion by the CHE at this time.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$158,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

CHE suggests that it is committed to the adequate and equitable support of necessary instructional, student services, and academic support initiatives for all students in New Mexico. Activities to be funded in this proposal are start up costs for the implementation of a new degree program and will generate revenue from the Instruction and General (I&G) higher education funding formula within the General Appropriation Act when students begin enrolling in the program.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMSU advises that the existing faculty of NMSU's College of Engineering, its Department of Engineering Technology and Advisory Committee and other community stakeholders have all collaborated to develop the curriculum and courses for this distance degree completion program. The appropriation in this bill will be directly applied to educational services delivered to students in the NMSU Info and Communication Technology program. Administrative cost of this distance degree completion program will be absorbed by NMSU's College of Engineering.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to the appropriation for New Mexico State University in the General Appropriations Act.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

NMSU indicates that the New Mexico Department of Labor forecasts that Computer Support Specialists will be the fastest growing occupation in New Mexico from 2000-2010 at a change of +85 percent during this ten-year period with an average of 330 annual job openings. As is expected, other job categories related to IT are also forecast to be among the fastest in growth.

NMSU anticipates that the need for information technology professionals will be long term as businesses find they must adopt continuously advancing technology to remain competitive. Many government agencies are being required through legislation to incorporate current computer-based technology (e.g., voting equipment and the modernization of law enforcement agencies).

Occupational Title	% Change	Annual Openings
Computer Support Specialists.....	85%	330
Network & Computer Systems Administrators	71%	90
Miscellaneous Computer Specialists	49%	90
Computer Systems Analysts	42%	110
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	68%	20
Database Administrators.....	53%	30

Graduates of the program will have the knowledge and experience to design, implement and manage a variety of information systems. The program’s graduates will enter the workforce with titles that include Systems or Network Administrator, Project Manager, Database Administrator, and Computer Support Specialist. The IT curriculum has been designed to provide the junior/senior years for associate degree graduates with delivery by distance education primarily using the Internet and CD/DVDs.

NMSU observes that its College of Engineering Department of Engineering Technology already has working relationships with two-year institutions around the state and in El Paso including Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Deming, Espanola, Grants, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and Farmington. Community college educators and students at El Paso Community College’s campuses, NMSU-Alamogordo, NMSU-Carlsbad, NMSU-Grants, Dona Ana Branch Community College, Northern New Mexico Community College, Luna Community College, Albuquerque T-VI (largest student population in New Mexico even including 4-year institutions) have been enthusiastic about the availability of this degree completion program.

The CHE notes that as student credit hours are generated for the Bachelor’s degree completion program in information and communication technology, the program will begin to general fund-

ing through the I&G funding formula. The start up funding of the program should be reduced by the same amount of funding generated by the I&G funding formula.

BFW/njw