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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/7/06

SPONSOR Stapleton LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB 641

SHORT TITLE UNM African-American Studies Program SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Lewis

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	100.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB 421 (UNM African-American Studies Program)

Relates to SB 549 (UNM African-American Student Services)

Relates to HC 937 (Capital Improvements in Albuquerque – including \$25,000 to purchase and install information technology for the African-American Studies Program at UNM)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Office of African American Affairs (OAAA)

Higher Education Department (HED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 641 appropriates \$100,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for the African American Studies Department for:

- 1) programs for high school students and university freshmen to help them bridge the academic achievement gap and prepare them for university coursework in the field of African American studies;
- 2) fellowships and assistantships for graduate and postdoctoral students; and
- 3) a distinguished lecture series in African American studies.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The State Office of African American Affairs (OAAA) supports HB 641, and notes that UNM's African American Studies Department is in need of funding to provide educational training, internships for students and to be able provide teaching fellowships and assistantships for African Americans who are seeking advanced academic degrees with an emphasis on African American Studies.

The OAAA further states that additional funding is needed to support comprehensive projects and programs geared towards closing the academic achievement gap between African American students and non-minority students. To accomplish this, the African American Studies Department must be financially able to offer freshmen and high school students the opportunity to prepare themselves with basic academic classes, seminars and related preparatory activities.

Finally, the OAAA supports the initiative to secure distinguished African Americans to present a series of lectures in the area of African American Studies to UNM students and the community.

According to the Higher Education Department (HED), the African American Studies Program at UNM was championed by the Black community in Albuquerque and established in 1970. It is a multi-disciplinary degree-granting program that offers courses that illuminate the literature, history, and culture of the African or Black Diaspora. Upon graduation, participants should have developed strong research, writing, and interpersonal skills. The Charlie Morrissey Research Hall, a repository of documents about Black people of the Southwest, has documents, books and archival artifacts which document the presence of Africans and African Americans in New Mexico and the Southwest.

Citing the Education Commission of the States, HED defines the achievement gap as the disparity in academic achievement separating economically disadvantaged students and students of color from less disadvantaged students. Below-par achievement of minority students nationally remains one of the most pressing problems in education. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are much more likely than white students to fall behind in school and drop out, and much less likely to graduate from high school, achieve a college or advanced degree, or earn a middle-class living. A variety of factors affect the achievement gap including students' racial and/or economic background, their parents' education level, their access to high-quality pre-school instruction, school funding, peer influences, teachers' expectations, and curricular and instructional quality.

This appropriation was not on the list of priority projects submitted by UNM to the HED for review and was not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY07.