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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1-25-06

SPONSOR Garcia, M.J. LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NMSU & UNM Native American Center SB 71

ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$600.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 99

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

SB 71 appropriates \$600,000 from the general fund to the Higher Education Department to cover a portion of costs to build and plan Native American centers at the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University. Any unexpended or encumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 will revert to the general fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$600,000 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

Native American students continue to have the lowest representation in higher education and comprise less than 1% of college enrollment. A report compiled by the New Mexico Higher Education Department regarding the recruitment and retention of Native American and Hispanic students documented the achievement gap between higher education enrollments of American Indians and the state's population. New Mexico's Native Americans constitute approximately 10% of the state's population. And, Native Americans account for approximately 7.5% of undergraduate enrollments on average. Increases in undergraduate enrollments have been due to system growth rather than improved participation rates and a gap of approximately 2.5% persists.

There are approximately 470 Native American students enrolled at New Mexico State University (NMSU) main campus, and nearly 485 at state-wide extensions. There are more than 1,500 Native American students enrolled at the University of New Mexico. Both Universities have entered into similar Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with a majority of New Mexico's Tribal governments to partner in addressing issues negatively impacting Native American college students. In these MOUs, both the Tribes and the Universities acknowledge the need for culturally sensitive services in order to retain Native American Students. Centers specifically established to serve Native American students will help address the need for culturally sensitive services. SB 71 would assist in retention of Native American students to finish college through offering additional support services.

Currently, there is no Native American Center at UNM. The vision of a center is currently being developed. As of this date there exists no formal plan to implement what the mission and goal of such a center would be. According to Pam Agoyo, Director of UNM American Indian Student Services, a center at UNM would be similar to what is being constructed at New Mexico State University. New Mexico State University intends to construct a Native American Cultural Center (NACC) on the main campus in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The NACC initiative reflects New Mexico State University's long commitment to, and successes in, working with Native Americans. The NACC will provide space necessary to support efforts by NMSU administration, faculty, and student services to recruit, retain, educate, and graduate Native American students. It will provide a central location for the efficient administration and operation of several programs for Native American students and peoples that require cooperation and communication between different groups at NMSU and various indigenous communities. In keeping with the university's land-grant mission, focus on diversity, and emphasis on outreach services, the Center will provide opportunities for all NMSU students and New Mexican citizens to learn about Native American histories, cultures, and societies through educational programs, outreach activities, and cultural events at the new facility.

Proposed Building Costs:

The proposed cost of construction of the NACC is six million dollars (\$6,000,000). Funds are being sought from alumni, individual donors, corporations, and foundations. The Native American Cultural Center will provide much needed space supporting NMSU's efforts to recruit, retain, and educate Native American students. The NACC will provide a central location to promote efficient communication and coordination of programs essential to American Indian higher education. Activities at the NACC will illuminate the rich heritage of American Indians in the state and region. The Native American Cultural Center concept is developed to share the vibrant cul-

ture of the southwest indigenous people with students and the university community. Although enrollment and retention rates for Native American students improve at the upper-class levels, and are helped by the influx of transferees from tribal and community colleges, the inability to retain freshmen is particularly troublesome. An initial negative experience will often discourage these students from ever again pursuing higher education.

In pursuing development of the Native American Cultural Center, as well as continued and expanded services of the American Indian Program, NMSU hopes to greatly increase the Native American freshman retention rate, and provide quality experiences for all of its Native American students. NMSU also hopes that the Native American Cultural Center will serve as a positive model for other colleges and universities that serve Native American students, and may face similar challenges to those experienced by NMSU.

SB71 was not included in UNM's nor NMSU's 2006 legislative priorities nor was this included in the list of priority capital projects submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review. Consequently, the program was not recommended by NMHED at this time.

The appropriation sought in this bill is not listed as New Mexico State University Board of Regents approved legislative priorities for the 2007 fiscal year.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

SB71 is not clear in outlining the relation NMHED will have in administering funds to UNM and NMSU. SB71 is not specific how the funding will be distributed, whether this is an equal amount between UNM and NMSU or portioned out. Also, UNM is unclear about the physical construction of what such a center would look like while on the other hand NMSU seems to be further along in planning. The two institutions, along with NMHED, will need to articulate what the funding appropriations will cover.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

It is unclear whether this appropriation is intended for a capital outlay project or to establish and/or continue programs and services. The American Indian Program director states that this appropriation is for construction of a building at NMSU and development planning of a similar building at UNM, however, the director was not aware of what amount of this appropriation was to be apportioned to UNM, and subsequently to NMSU.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

In the event this legislation is not enacted, funding of these cultural centers would necessitate other sources of funding for their construction, planning, and operation.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Is this appropriation required for program operation costs, or for building costs?

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