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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/24/08

SPONSOR Begaye LAST UPDATED 1/25/08 HB 169

SHORT TITLE NMSU Digital Pathways Education Program SB _____

ANALYST Cox

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files
New Mexico State University -NMSU

Responses Received From
New Mexico State University (NMSU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 169 requests an appropriation of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for expenditure in fiscal year 2009 to support the digital pathways distance education program.

Distance learning is a concept that enables students to receive education via a computer at remote and/or distant locations.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation is not included in the HED's funding recommendation for FY09.

The appropriation of one hundred fifty thousand dollars contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2009 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

While many New Mexico Pueblos and Reservations are beginning to rebuild their economic infrastructure with increasing employment opportunities, there is a significant lack of American Indian college graduates to fill professional management positions. As a result, Tribal industries, government, education, and health care systems need community members with professional degrees to meet the immediate and long-term needs of their communities.

Digital Pathways project, funded through NMSU and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, seeks to further American Indian educational efforts by developing a recruiting and mentoring network and supporting students as they earn degrees. This project has successfully addressed the following: 1) Using American Indian mentors to work with tribes and SIPI (Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute) to identify, recruit, and mentor American Indian students. Mentors are shared between Acoma and Laguna; Cochiti and Santo Domingo; and the pueblos of the Eight Northern Indian Pueblo Council (Nambé, Picuris, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Santa Clara, Tesuque, and Taos). 2) Partnering with SIPI to develop a pipeline for students to earn baccalaureate degrees after completing an associate degree with SIPI. 3) Developing online programs in high need areas as described by New Mexico's American Indian Nations. 4) Coordinating these efforts with the New Mexico Tribal Higher Education Commission acting as advisory council. 4) Holding an annual conference of tribal leaders, participants, and community members to address program effectiveness, progress, and issues.

This legislative request will extend mentoring to the Navajo Reservation and offer scholarships to Native students in Digital Pathways. American Indian students who attend SIPI pay no tuition, so transitioning to NMSU could be a financial hardship: Diné tuition (425/semester) is below NMSU's (\$2,226/semester). Additionally, we recruit non-traditional, place-bound (living in their native communities) students with fewer opportunities for scholarships.

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