

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/26/08

SPONSOR Rawson LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NMSU School Science Teacher Enhancement SB 101

ANALYST Cox

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$300.	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
New Mexico State University (NMSU)
Department of Public Education (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 101 appropriates \$300,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU) for expenditure in FY09 to pay for a science education enhancement and K-12 teacher outreach program. According to NMSU, the appropriation would be used to match a \$1,500,000 grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI). The funds will assist NMSU in the effort to recruit students into an Undergraduate Research Scholars Program at the University.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year shall revert to the General Fund.

The HED's evaluation table of FY09 Research and Public Service Projects provided to the LFC classifies this project as a "would not oppose if funding available" project. Reasons for this classification decision are not provided. (LFC Report 07-20, Higher Education Department Review of Selected Research and Public Service Projects, January 12, 2008, Table 4, p74.)

NMSU notesThe Howard Hughes Medical Institute expects institutions that receive a grant to provide some matching monies. NMSU has committed to providing a \$300,000 match but the money will have to come from the severely strained resources of the College of Arts and Sciences. Help from the state would ensure that match monies are available and would demonstrate New Mexico's commitment to improving science education.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HHMI grant is awarded to only 50 research universities after a competition that occurs once every four years and NMSU uses the grant to improve science education in the state of New Mexico.

The grant funds:

- Curriculum improvement;
- Hands-on instruction in research laboratories;
- High school biology outreach; and
- Continuing education for science teachers in the state of New Mexico

NMSU will use the HHMI grant to:

- Directly fund the laboratory and field research efforts of 54 undergraduate students every year; 44 undergraduate students in the first year of funding;
- Pay many of the expenses associated with revamping the introductory biology sequence at NMSU;
- Cover the cost of employing 50% of the student peer leaders who teach the workshops that students in introductory biology are now required to attend;
- Underwrite the cost of a mobile molecular biology laboratory that will travel the state providing high school students with a first-rate introduction to DNA isolation and analysis; and
- Pay for refresher courses for science teachers and will help pay for the immersion courses associated with the new Master of Arts in Teaching Science degree

This request was submitted by NMSU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review, but is not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY09.

PRC/bb