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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/9/06

SPONSOR Tsosie LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE UNM Native American Studies Program SB 477

ANALYST Lewis

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

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

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 477 appropriates \$285,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for a Native American Studies Program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$285,000 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.

As of 2/9/06, the SFC substitute for SB 415 (State Agency Expenditures) includes \$75,000 to fund faculty positions in Native American Studies.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the Higher Education Department (HED) and the Indian Affairs Department (IAD), Native American Studies (NAS) at UNM was founded more than 30 years ago; but not until the 2004-2005 academic year could students major in Native American Studies. Native American Studies is an interdisciplinary program designed to introduce students to the basic factors that underlie the distinct difference between Native societies and the larger American society.

There are three major components to the NAS program: academic, research and community. The new Bachelor of Arts degree in Native American Studies includes four distinct, but inter-related curricular strands:

- Indigenous Language and Education;
- Indigenous Arts and Literature;
- Indigenous Leadership and Self-determination; and
- Indigenous Cultural and Environmental Studies.

HED and IAD note increasing interest in Native American Studies, with rapidly growing enrollment. There are now 291 students enrolled in 25 courses for the spring semester. Approximately 130 students are NAS majors. There are currently three half-time faculty and one full-time faculty member in the Native American Studies program. The NAS faculty is developing a Master's Degree in Native American Studies which they intend to propose within the next two years.

Funding of \$285,000 is being requested for the following:

- hiring of four additional full-time faculty positions, one for each of the four curricular areas described above;
- a program manager to oversee and implement grants and programs; and
- general operating costs to operate the Native American Studies Program.

IAD notes that it has partnered with UNM's NAS program to assist Native American students and communities through several initiatives. The expansion of the NAS program would allow UNM to compete with other universities, such as the University of Arizona and UCLA, which have established Native American Studies programs.

HED adds that "it is not known why funding from student credit hour production has not followed the creation of new faculty lines for this program." The Native American Studies Program was included in UNM's 2006 legislative priorities submitted to the HED for review, but it was not on the list of HED's funding recommendations.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

According to HED and IAD, American Indian students continue to have the lowest representation in higher education and make up less than 1% of college enrollment nationwide. HED has documented the achievement gap between higher education enrollments of American Indian students and the state's population. New Mexico's American Indians constitute approximately 10 percent of the state's population and 7.5 percent of undergraduate enrollments. The gap of approximately 2.5% persists, with increases in undergraduate enrollments due to system growth rather than improved participation rates.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

According to HED, failure to enact SB 477 would severely hinder UNM's ability to institutionalize the Native American Studies Program. HED adds that, according to NAS faculty member Dr. Beverly Singer, not enacting this appropriation would send a huge message of failure on behalf of UNM and the state.