

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION BY THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO AMERICAN INDIAN TASK FORCE.

WHEREAS, according to the performance effectiveness report released by the council of university presidents in November 2008, the retention rate in fall 2008 for returning Native American freshman students at the university of New Mexico main campus was sixty-eight and nine-tenths percent, the lowest of all other ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, according to the official enrollment report by the university of New Mexico's office of the registrar, the statistics regarding Native American students correlates to those findings in the performance effectiveness report; and

WHEREAS, the statistics could be attributed to the lack of awareness Native American students have about student services specifically targeted to assist them; and

WHEREAS, in February 2006 the university of New Mexico American Indian task force developed a working paper outlining specific priorities and recommendations regarding American Indian retention at the university of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, that task force provided a list of recommendations to the university of New Mexico, many of which

have yet to be implemented, including:

A. maintaining a directory of Native American programs that would be a guide to Native American programs, projects and initiatives offered at the university to better serve Native American students;

B. agreeing to a long-term commitment on the part of the university to improve its service to Native American students, faculty, staff and New Mexico Indian communities;

C. establishing a centralized location to track and disburse funds coming to Native American students in the form of tribal scholarships and financial assistance programs and to house a financial aid advisor knowledgeable about scholarship programs available to tribal members and processes to gain access to that aid; and

D. designating an advisor for freshmen and transfer students and creating a mandatory Native American orientation program for incoming freshmen and transfer students to better acquaint them with the university of New Mexico main campus and Native American programs, scholarships and organizations; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico's board of regents has broad authority for "control and management" of the university, as stipulated under Article 12, Section 13 of the constitution of New Mexico, and pursuant to that authority should develop a state-tribal-institutional partnership to

address the range of issues that impact Native American students attending the university of New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, the higher education department strategic priorities and goals specifically outline under:

"Strategic Priority

1: Increase student access and success,

Goal 1.3: to "Raise the minority representation in higher education to be reflective of the state's population"; and

Goal 1.4: to "Improve the minority participation and graduation rates in graduate and professional programs";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the Indian affairs department be requested to convene meetings of representatives of the university of New Mexico board of regents, the office of the provost, the division of equity and inclusion, the secretary of higher education, the Indian Affairs department and the tribal higher education consortium to further study the strengths and weaknesses of services and programs provided to Native American students at the university of New Mexico and to report those findings to the interim Indian affairs committee, the higher education department and the university of New Mexico board of regents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university of New Mexico report its progress on implementation of the recommendations of the university of New Mexico American Indian task force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of Indian affairs, the secretary of higher education, the chair of the tribal higher education consortium, the chair and each member of the university of New Mexico board of regents, the provost of the university of New Mexico and the director of the division of equity and inclusion at the university of New Mexico.