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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Rodriguez **ORIGINAL DATE** 02/23/11
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____

SHORT TITLE Sign Language Interpreting Program Approp **SB** 488

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12		
	\$50.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 488 appropriates \$50,000 dollars from the General Fund to the Higher Education Department for a sign language program at Santa Fe community College.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$50,000 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 2012 shall revert to the General Fund.

The HED notes this request was not submitted by SFCC to HED for review. HED's funding request for higher education from November 2010 recommended a 3% reduction for all existing line item appropriations for FY12.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states:

The appropriation designated to SFCC by SB488 would help facilitate training to current and future students of sign language interpretation at SFCC and also around the state of New Mexico. The American Sign Language (ASL)/Interpreting Program at SFCC plans on expanding and updating technology in order to meet the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community.

According to the Chair of the program, SFCC would like to use the appropriation to implement the Interactive Technology for Sign Language Studies and Interpreter Training Programs through the purchase of Sony VIRTUOSO ASL software. This interactive technology suite, designed specifically for ASL and Interpreter Training applications, encourages interactive learning where students are participating, communicating, and getting more quality time to develop language skills through full interactive digital lab technology.

The University of New Mexico (UNM) currently utilizes a state-of-the-art laboratory for teaching signed language. The laboratory has 15 bays, each equipped with a camera, computer, microphone, headset, and VCR. Internet video communication will soon be available via computers to link the ASL laboratory with other institutions in the state, nation, and throughout the world. Should SB488 appropriate money to SFCC for interactive technology, students at institutions around the state could benefit from instructors at both UNM and SFCC through online communication.

GH/svb