

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SJR 7

50th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2012

Tracking Number: 187968.1

Short Title: Northern NM State School Regents, CA

Sponsor(s): Senator Richard C. Martinez

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 3, 2012

Bill Summary:

SJR 7 proposes that the Constitution of New Mexico be amended to require that one member of the Board of Regents of the Northern New Mexico State School (NNMSS) be a student at that institution, who will serve a two-year term. SJR 7 also deletes outdated language providing for staggered terms at newly appointed boards of regents.

Fiscal Impact:

According to the Fiscal Impact Report from the Legislative Finance Committee, an estimated additional operating budget impact of \$104,000 reflects the experience of the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of placing a constitutional amendment on an election ballot.

Substantive Issues:

Except for financial transactions, NNMSS is permitted by statute to use the name Northern New Mexico College (NNMC).

Since 2005 NNMC has been offering four-year degrees and properly belongs among the state's four-year institutions of higher education. The proposed amendment would permit a student member on the Board of Regents, which is required for all other four-year colleges and universities.

Background:

The following is a brief summary of the history of NNMC from its website.

In the early 1900s the New Mexico Territorial Legislature determined that a facility was needed as a "normal school" with a primary function of training teachers for the state's Spanish-speaking population. The Spanish American Normal School (SANS) at El Rito opened its doors in September 1909.

When the New Mexico Territory applied for statehood in 1912, the state constitution identified SANS as one of 10 educational institutions that would be supported by the state. SANS provided both secondary and postsecondary educational programs.

In 1953, the Legislature changed the name of the institution to Northern New Mexico State School and, mandating that the institution provide training not available in public schools, implemented a secondary school curriculum. Six years later, the Board of Regents renamed the school Northern New Mexico College. The college continued to teach grades 7-12 along with the new higher education curriculum. By 1961, NNMC was offering two-year college programs in business education, general studies, and selected vocational programs.

In 1969 the high school curriculum was transferred to a newly created public school district and the curriculum at NNMC was limited to technical-vocational course offerings. One year later, the Board of Regents again renamed the school the New Mexico Technical-Vocational School (NNMTVS) to indicate the change in course offerings. Operating under its new name, NNMTVS expanded its curriculum and faculty and developed a campus in Española.

As educational needs in northern New Mexico evolved, educators and legislators identified a need for a more comprehensive delivery of educational services. In 1976 a task force recommended that the University of New Mexico-Northern Branch at Santa Cruz be dissolved and their academic course offerings be combined with those of NNMTVS. The Legislature accepted this recommendation and provided for the expansion of the institution's mission.

The Board of Regents accepted the new mission, renamed the institution Northern New Mexico Community College (NNMCC), and began combining existing programs, philosophies, and procedures in order to establish a comprehensive community college. The programs offered by the new institution included associate degrees in various academic and occupational disciplines, certificate-granting programs in occupational studies, special interest courses granting continuing education units, and other courses offered for no credit.

In 2004, legislative approval and accreditation was extended to NNMCC, permitting it to be the first community college to offer a four-year program, a bachelor's degree in elementary education.

In 2005, legislation was enacted to permit the college to offer four-year degrees in any programs deemed necessary and appropriate. NNMCC was then renamed Northern New Mexico College.

Related Bills:

None as of February 3, 2012.