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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019

Bill Number SB34 **Sponsor** Padilla

Tracking Number .211154.1 **Committee Referrals** SEC/SFC

Short Title Civic Leadership & Legislative Process PGM

Analyst Force **Original Date** 1/24/18
Last Updated _____

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 34 (SB34) appropriates \$250 thousand from the general fund to the board of regents of the University of New Mexico (UNM) for expenditure in FY20 to support a civic leadership and legislative process training program for high school students, with the unencumbered balance reverting to the general fund at the end of the fiscal year.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact report (FIR) from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) notes the appropriation is recurring and, contrary to the unencumbered balance language in the bill, colleges and universities do not revert unexpended balances at the end of the fiscal year.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

UNM indicates the appropriation will be used to support a program to bring at least 100 high school students from across the state to attend a week-long program on the UNM campus to focus on civic engagement and the legislative process. After the summer program, students return home to implement a service project that directly impacts their community. Finally, participants will visit the Roundhouse to observe the legislative process.

According to a review of the research, *Civic Engagement and Student Success: Leveraging Multiple Degrees of Achievement*, conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), connecting academic pursuits with community service and civic engagement is a reliable strategy for developing student knowledge and skills while fostering individual and organized collaborations to address pressing issues affecting our communities. Even incremental increases in student achievement can have great personal and community benefits. Civic engagement activities and academic achievement have statistically strong connections, yielding greater learning and increased graduation rates in both K–12 schools and postsecondary institutions. In fact, research shows civic engagement demonstrates positive

outcomes for all students but exponentially increase levels of student learning, retention, and graduation for students of color.

Comparable programs already implemented include the Boys State and Girls State programs, administered by the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, respectively. The programs put students in the positions of civic leaders for a weeklong immersive learning experience to train them for taking on civic leadership roles as they transition into adulthood.

According to AACU, the most effective variations of civic engagement include the three following essential elements: Intentional campus, community, and conceptual connections; Collaborative learning relationships between instructors, students, and community participants; and Integration into educational expectations and organizational performance. The UNM civic leadership program includes collaborative efforts among the university, students and state leaders; individual or small group home community service projects; and a focus on college preparation and readiness.

The UNM analysis indicates there is generally a low level of academic achievement among New Mexico students, including low graduation rates, low attainment of postsecondary degrees, and achievement gaps experienced by the state’s at-risk student population. The university also suggests New Mexico is experiencing a “brain drain,” with highly talented students leaving the state to pursue opportunities elsewhere; a focus on civic engagement and home-community service may help to influence more young people to stay and pursue careers and personal lives in New Mexico.

Additionally, the FIR from LFC indicates UNM has several programs designed to work with current and prospective students, with which this new civic engagement program might interface, such as minority student services, community-based education, and a student mentoring program. The Higher Education Department also has several programs, such as ENLACE and GEAR-UP that might work well with the program proposed by SB146.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- LFC
- UNM

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