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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/13/17

SPONSOR Morales/Smith LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE WNMU as the Public Liberal Arts College in NM SJM 22

ANALYST Chilton

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates House Joint Memorial 14

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Western New Mexico University (WNMU)
Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Memorial

Senate Joint Memorial 22 would designate Western New Mexico University (WNMU) as the state’s “public applied liberal arts and sciences university. It would recognize WNMU’s attention to combining liberal arts and sciences education with career preparation – thus the term “applied.” The preambles in the bill indicate the many ways in which WNMU has melded an “applied liberal arts and sciences focus.”

If WNMU were to be awarded this designation, notice of it would be transmitted to the president of that university.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal impact.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

WNMU seeks this designation because it “has the potential for national recognition, especially increasing [its] standing to become a member of the prestigious national Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC).” COPLAC generally allows for only one member institution in each state; currently 29 states are represented. New Mexico is not, although Colorado is represented by Fort Lewis College.

According to WNMU,

SJM 22 aligns with statewide and HED initiatives, including institutional identity; workforce and career preparation; general education reform; meta-majors; retention; time-to-degree; and reduction of excess hours.

The key word in the plan is "applied." Students' primary purpose in coming to Western is to prepare for a job. Surveys of employers consistently indicate the foundational skills needed for success include communication, critical thinking, adaptability, teamwork, and ability to make practical application of knowledge. These are basically liberal arts and sciences competencies. Consequently, the underlying concept of the curricula plan is to "merge" career training with the foundations of liberal education. This applied outcome not only meets the short-term goal of employment but also carries out a university's obligation for long-term life success: to educate toward self-knowledge in the context of human history--local and global; to establish a foundation and habit of lifelong learning; and to nourish social and ethical responsibilities for productive citizenship.

If WNMU receives this designation and becomes a member of COPLAC, it is likely that no other New Mexico institution of higher learning would become a member of COPLAC. COPLAC's director, in a telephone conversation, indicated that only about half of member institutions have been designated as the public applied liberal arts and sciences institution by their state legislatures.

DUPLICATION of House Joint Memorial 14.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

WNMU would not receive the designation, but still might apply for membership in the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges.

LAC/jle/al