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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Stapleton/Trujillo, L/ Garratt ORIGINAL DATE 1/29/2020 HB 63
LAST UPDATED _____ SB _____
SHORT TITLE Soft Skill Education Funding SB _____
ANALYST Hawker

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY20	FY21		
	\$4,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
University of New Mexico (UNM)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 63 appropriates \$4 million from the general fund to the University of New Mexico to develop a comprehensive statewide standards-based soft skill online learning program for middle school and high school students to prepare them to be career- and college-ready and a success in the workplace.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$4 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2021 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Soft skills, also referred to as workforce readiness skills, employability skills, or 21st Century skills are essential for employers and prospective employees. These skills, which include clear and effective communication, critical thinking, integrity, ethics and teamwork are crucial to success after graduation. Teaching soft skills is a focus across the education and workforce

systems in New Mexico. UNM believes the funding contained in this bill would result in a program which would have the capacity to serve nearly 13 thousand students.

According to HED, soft skills are currently taught in many community colleges as a part of trade or career pathway training or as a component of student success coaching. Additionally, soft skills are taught by various state partners funded under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2015. New Mexico's WIOA state plan can be found at this link: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/nm.pdf> .

HED notes UNM did not submit this request to HED for possible incorporation into the comprehensive higher education funding recommendation. HED has a formal process for reviewing earmarked budget requests for higher education institutions.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

This bill does not address performance measures. HED suggests that UNM should develop specific performance measures in conjunction with other workforce system partners, including Workforce Solutions Department, Public Education Department, HED, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other WIOA partners.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

UNM would need to purchase a comprehensive standards-based online learning program for middle and high school students. Additionally, professional development would need to be provided to staff so as to support the implementation of a soft skills curriculum. Allocation of the appropriation contained in this bill between acquisition and implementation staffing would be required for research and implementation oversight. It is estimated that at least one FTE would be required for effective implementation.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HED states if this bill were funded, it would be beneficial for New Mexico for UNM to share strategies and resources among workforce and education system stakeholders as appropriate to avoid duplication of available services.

VKH/al