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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/31/06

SPONSOR Gutierrez LAST UPDATED _____ HB 194

SHORT TITLE NMSU Undergraduate Research Program SB _____

ANALYST Earp

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$700.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
New Mexico State University (NMSU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 194 appropriates \$700,000 from general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU) to establish a campus-wide faculty-mentored undergraduate research program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$700,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This proposal was submitted to the Higher Education Department (HED) by NMSU as a compo-

ment of the university's "strategic research clusters initiative" which was ranked #5 out of 9 requests for special program expansion. However, this request was not included in HED's fiscal year 2007 funding recommendations to the Legislature.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The following are among the performance outcomes anticipated by NMSU:

- Recruitment of 100-200 undergraduates to the program in 2006 with the enrollment potentially growing each year by a similar amount until 500-1,000 students are involved in cluster-related research and associated research endeavors.
- Retention of undergraduate students will increase from 60% to greater than 80% for those in the program.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

NMSU would administer the proposed undergraduate research program. The university currently manages a similar program for graduate student research.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Information provided by NMSU states that intent of this legislation is to establish a coordinated, campus-wide undergraduate research program at NMSU that is closely tied to statewide cross-disciplinary technology initiatives and will supply the workforce required to propel the state into a position of national leadership in key sectors while increasing recruitment and retention of New Mexico's K-12 students. The initiative builds on New Mexico State's new research clusters and complements a graduate research program initiated last year. The goal is to leverage existing research and lottery scholarship funds to establish an undergraduate research enterprise that would support 100-200 students initially and evolve to 500-1000 students in five years (adding 100-200/yr), each working in a research team with faculty and graduate students. Involving students in research endeavors early in their careers establishes relationships with faculty, other students (graduate and undergraduate) with like interests, and staff members. By providing mentorship of faculty and graduate students in addition to engagement in meaningful research, such programs significantly increase student retention. Research has demonstrated that the retention rate for undergraduate students involved in mentored research programs is over 90%.

In summary, NMSU reports that this bill is part of the re-invention and integration of research and education at NMSU. The proposed program engages students and faculty in shared research activities that support students through their individual programs of study while leveraging existing resources to create a nurturing environment for undergraduates. Moreover, it creates a critical mass of expertise necessary for bringing additional research and development funds to New Mexico.