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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 014/30/08

SPONSOR Garcia, MP LAST UPDATED _____ HB 508

SHORT TITLE UNM Land Grant Studies Program SB _____

ANALYST Escudero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$25.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates To: SB61

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
 Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)
 University of New Mexico (UNM)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 508 appropriates \$25.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico (UNM) for expenditure in FY09 to develop a Land Grant Studies Program in coordination with the UNM School of Law, Center for Regional Studies, and the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$25.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY09 shall revert to the general fund.

A request was submitted by UNM to the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) for review, but is not included in the Departments funding recommendation for FY09.

The HED's evaluation table of FY09 Research and Public Service Projects provided to the LFC

classifies this project as a “size of budget request not well support” project. Reasons for this classification decision are not provided. (LFC Report 07-20, Higher Education Department Review of Selected Research and Public Service Projects, January 12, 2008, Table 4, p76.)

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to HED, during the 2007 Regular Session, HB164, UNM Land Grant Studies Program, was introduced. The legislation requested a \$300,000 appropriation from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of UNM for expenditure in FY08 for the institution to fund the creation of a Land Grant Studies Program. Concerns from the Land Grant Committee were expressed during a meeting on August 23, 2006 and include: the shortage of lawyers trained in land grant law, and the inability of UNM to translate land grant documents from Spain and Mexico due to financial resources. HB164 was not signed into law; therefore HB508 has been introduced during the 2008 Regular Session requesting \$275,000 less in appropriations for the creation of a Land Grant Studies program. The Land Grant Committee revealed a preference for the Land Grant Studies program to be interdisciplinary.

Funding will be utilized for the following purposes:

- Provide land grant communities access to University resources;
- Educate UNM students about challenges to land grant communities;
- Document research and materials useful to community land grants; and
- Provide internship opportunities for UNM students.

According to DCA, that land grants remain an important part of New Mexico’s present day culture and political landscape and are based on 350-plus years of land grant traditions. Such a program developed at UNM is certainly a worthy pursuit and could have substantial long-term benefits. The program would benefit not only the academicians but also people in (mostly) Northern New Mexico who still claim or research individual/tribal/communal land grants.

The present day importance of land grants is shown by Senators Domenici’s and Bingaman’s request a few years back (2002 or 2003) to have the General Accounting Office produce a bi-lingual report about the communal land grants in Northern New Mexico.

The Center for Southwest Research (UNM Libraries) and the UNM Law Library have significant research holdings in land grant, land and water rights topics. The Center for Regional Studies (UNM) would be a companion program. Programs in place at the University of New Mexico and elsewhere in the state such as the Institute of Public Law, Institute for Public Policy, Institute for Social Research (all UNM) would supplement and enhance the Land Grant Studies Program.

Language in the bill does not specify deliverables – such as development of a curriculum, which department at UNM such a program would reside in and just how the program would be sustained.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP OR RELATIONSHIP

As stated by HED, HB508 is a companion bill to SB61, UNM Land Grant Studies Program, requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$125,000 from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of UNM for expenditure in FY09.