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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/22/08

SPONSOR B. Sanchez LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE UNM Land Grant Studies Program SB 61

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$125.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

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

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 61 appropriates \$125.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico to develop a land grant studies program at the University of New Mexico.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$125.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2009 shall revert to the general fund.

This request was submitted by UNM to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review, but is not included in the Department's 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 supported" 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

UNM states that New Mexico's Hispano land grants have been largely ignored in university courses, research, and professional training. The state's two dozen land grant boards of trustees have struggled with planning and legal issues, and the residents of land grants and the trustees themselves often have not had access to higher education. This program seeks to begin correcting these shortcomings by:

- Create internship opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, including those in the Law School and the community and planning programs to assist land grant boards;
- Attract master's and doctoral students to write theses on issues of current significance to land grants or to dedicate their professional work after graduation to provide services for land grants;
- Provide documentation services and access to UNM archival material on land grants for researchers and land grant boards of trustees
- Bring together faculty, students, and community leaders from land grants under one program to help develop a critical mass of activities supportive of community land grant needs;
- Serve as a catalyst for existing research and teaching activities at UNM and other institutions of higher education to expand the network of land-grant focused university work; and
- Engage community land grant residents in the educational opportunities offered by UNM.

UNM notes that this bill is supported by both the Interim Committee on Land Grants and the University of New Mexico priorities for the 2008 legislative session.

According to the HED, during the 2007 Regular Session, SB236, 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. SB236 was not signed into law; therefore SB61 has been introduced during the 2008 Regular Session requesting \$175,000 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.

The DCA states 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.

GH/mt