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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/26/08

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE NMSU Pre-Freshman Engineering Program SB 90

ANALYST Cox

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$360.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files
 Department of Higher Education (HED)
 New Mexico State University (NMSU)
 State Department of Public Education (PED)

Responses Received From

Department of Higher Education (HED)
 New Mexico State University (NMSU)
 State Department of Public Education (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 90 provides three hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$360,000) to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU) for a summer pre-freshman engineering program to enhance recruitment and retention of freshmen engineering students.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The HED's evaluation table of FY09 Research and Public Service Projects provided to the LFC classifies this project as a "supports state priorities" 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, p74.)

This request was submitted by NMSU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review. Funding for this program in FY07 and FY08 was obtained via private grants and contracts. NMSU is now asking for General Fund appropriation to expand the program to additional students. It is not included in the Department's executive funding recommendation for FY09.

The appropriation of three hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$360,000) contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2009 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED states the following:

Begun in 1997, the NMSU Pre-Freshmen Engineering Program (PREP) is an intensive mathematics-based pre-college summer program that provides educational enrichment for approximately 200 achieving middle and high school students. Participants learn logic, algebraic structures, physics, and technical writing and participate in field trips that provide an opportunity for hands-on learning. This program seeks to stimulate interest of underrepresented students in the field of science, engineering, and mathematics. NMSU reports that over the past decade, over 800 mid-school and high school students from Hatch, Las Cruces, and Gadsden have successfully completed some level of PREP. Of those completing the survey, 136 of the students are currently in college and 100% of the students that finish PREP are high school graduates. Ninety percent of those in college are enrolled at NMSU. They are requesting state funding to continue this program in future years; expand access to the program to additional students; and include the Deming school district for students from Luna County and Alamogordo Public Schools in Otero County. They envision developing PREP into a statewide program in future years.

NMSU notes:

New Mexico needs to improve K-12 education and student retention in order to ensure a continuing pipeline for future leaders in the technical and engineering areas. Additionally due to various emerging environmental regulations, rural communities throughout New Mexico need to receive on-going training, education and outreach on the potential impact of the new regulations on their community. This bill would provide funds for expansion of the statewide K-12 program for middle and high school students, as well as rural communities throughout the state starting with Dona Ana, Luna, and Otero. The program would be delivered by New Mexico State University's College of Engineering-IEE/WERC Program.

HED has also noted:

This appropriation would expand the existing operating budget of PREP with the intention of enhancing recruitment and retention efforts of freshman engineering students. According to NMSU, the Pre-Freshman Engineering Program (PREP) that is administratively located at NMSU College of Engineering Institute for Energy and the Environment, will increase K-12 and community outreach and training programs statewide

PRC/nt