

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE AND NEED FOR EXPANSION OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO TO INCLUDE A MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the state of New Mexico and the Indian nations, tribes and pueblos of New Mexico have a pressing need for college-educated Native American students who are prepared to assist in the positive educational, economic and social development and maintenance of their communities and the state; and

WHEREAS, the university of New Mexico's Native American studies program is an interdisciplinary program whose field of study explores the richness of American Indian cultures, examines the nature of historic and contemporary issues and prepares students to engage in careers and service to New Mexico Indian communities; and

WHEREAS, a major in Native American studies was approved by the board of regents for the 2004-2005 academic year, and the program has since had four graduating classes and has awarded over one hundred majors and minors, its students graduating in one of four concentration areas, with a focus on building native nations, leadership and community-based

research and development; and

WHEREAS, currently, there is increased interest in the Native American studies program, with enrollment growing from only seven minors during the 2001-2002 academic year to over one hundred thirty majors and minors during the 2008-2009 academic year; and

WHEREAS, the Native American studies program currently offers an average of twenty-six courses per semester through its core, adjunct and affiliated faculty; and

WHEREAS, the Native American studies program, in agreement with the university of New Mexico's extended university, offers courses in Native American studies at the university's branch campuses in Gallup, Taos, Valencia, Los Alamos, Bernalillo, Santa Fe and Farmington, where combined enrollments number over three thousand Native American students; and

WHEREAS, faculty have developed a proposal for a master's degree in Native American studies, unique among tier one universities in that its emphasis will be on indigenous leadership, self-determination and sustainable community development; and

WHEREAS, the master's degree will form the foundation for an equally unique doctorate degree in indigenous sustainable community development, which has also been proposed; and

WHEREAS, the Native American studies program at the university of New Mexico compares and even surpasses program offerings at other peer southwest institutions, such as the university of Arizona, Arizona state university, northern Arizona university and the university of Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, the program is at a critical juncture in its development, having reached its growth limit, given the current budget, and the development of a master's and, eventually, a doctorate program in Native American studies cannot be accomplished with current funding; and

WHEREAS, the high enrollment numbers in Native American undergraduate courses, and probable continued high enrollment figures, mean that future appropriations will be needed to augment faculty, staff and program development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the board of regents of the university of New Mexico and the higher education department be requested to recognize the need for continued support and funding for the Native American studies program at the university of New Mexico, as well as the need for expansion of the program to include a master's degree to provide future Native American undergraduate students with the opportunity to continue their higher education by pursuing a master's degree at the university of New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

transmitted to the board of regents of the university of New Mexico and the secretary of higher education.