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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR R S Martinez **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/2/09
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** 410
SHORT TITLE WNMU Occupational Therapy Master's Program **SB** _____
ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$213.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 410 appropriates \$213.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of Western New Mexico University for a master's of occupational therapy degree program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$213.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2011 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states that this request was submitted by WNMU to the HED for review, but is not recommended for funding for FY10, regardless of whether the State's fiscal picture improves.

The LFC Appropriation Recommendations, Volume II, pages 364-365 states:

The committee has concerns about the growth of research and public service projects within the higher education budget, as well as the alignment of these projects with state

goals and strategic plans. The committee also continues to have significant concerns about accountability and performance outcomes for these projects.

The committee recommendation reduces funding included in the HED request by varying levels from FY09 funding amounts for research projects, public service projects and P-20 pipeline projects focusing on students.

With respect to special projects, higher education institutions advanced 114 proposals for new projects and expansions at a total general fund cost of \$54 million during the HED budget request process in fall 2008.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

The Executive Budget in Brief notes that over the years more than 300 RPSPs have been created, accounting for a large portion of institution budgets. The current RPSPs were reviewed while considering the relevance of the project to the core mission of the institution, the community benefit and the outcomes associated with each project. (Budget in Brief and Policy Highlights, P 9-10.)

The HED states:

The current undergraduate WNMU Occupational Therapy Program provides a curriculum to bridge the skills of the Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant to the master's level entry Occupational Therapist. Emphasis is placed on rural and regional health care and an appreciation of lifelong learning with evidence-based skills for the art and practice of occupational therapy in current and future health care environments. The mission of the program includes emphasizing the critical study of occupation within the person, environment and occupational domains of the occupational therapy process. In addition, the program utilizes current technology and innovative formats for delivery, which incorporate the virtual context and allows students to maintain a personal context with work and family life while pursuing advanced education.

The proposed funding included for WNMU is not a duplication of any other program being offered at a New Mexico institution of higher learning. The only other Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy offered in New Mexico is at UNM. The program at UNM is an entry level degree program that does not allow occupational therapy assistants to utilize a career ladder to move up to the master's level. The Master's of Occupational Therapy is distinctly different and aims to supply the needs to keep up with the demand for occupational therapists.

GH/mt