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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR McSorley **ORIGINAL DATE** 02/07/09
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____

SHORT TITLE UNM Research Service Learning Program **SB** 461

ANALYST Williams

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$200.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 461 appropriates \$200 thousand from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for the purpose of the research service learning program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2010 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The University of New Mexico requested expansion funding for this project in the Fall 2008 budget request process; however, the Higher Education Department did not recommend the request. HED states it would not oppose funding in FY10 for this project if the state's fiscal position improves.

HED discusses this program has strong collaborative relationships with community partners. The University of New Mexico intends to involve 1,500 students in community-based research and service through 75 courses from at least 18 departments. Significant emphasis will be placed on the New Mexico Plan to End Hunger. Further, UNM is creating a statewide distance learning program for a certificate in Community Engaged Scholarships.

The LFC appropriation recommendation for FY10, 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; projects that could be supported with fees, tuition revenues or grant funding; academic programs receiving start-up appropriations or other formula funding; projects with duplication; new initiatives; block funding and projects less than \$50 thousand.

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.

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 Executive recommendation reduces RPSP line item appropriations based on this criteria.

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.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

In the most recent academic year, 1,010 students participated in this program. These students contributed more than 35,000 hours in service and/or research to the community at a value of nearly \$300 thousand.

HED discusses anecdotal evidence that suggests students in the research and service learning program perform better in core coursework than other students. For example, according to HED, several courses typically taught in large (100-300 students) lecture format, such as Anthropology 130, Microeconomics, and Religious Studies, were taught in seminar format with enrollment caps set at 25 students. Instructors in these courses reported much higher pass rates and better student achievement.

UNM intends to start an analysis of student achievement, attitudes, persistence and success for the research service learning program.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The research service learning program participated in the establishment of the Rio Grande Valley Farmers' Guild to aid in revitalizing the South Valley economy with infrastructure and entrepreneurial support. The project is also involved in the Carbon-Neutral Food shed Alliance to meet environmental goals. The project also offers faculty development programs opportunities.

The program has applied for grant funding for program expansion and capacity building.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. What types of expenditures would this general fund appropriation support?
2. How would this funding interact with the higher education funding formula?
3. How are partners selected for the public service component of this program?
4. What types of best practice models are available in the area of student service learning?
How does this project compare?
5. What outcome data is available from other service learning initiatives?
6. How would performance outcomes be measured for this project?

AW/svb