

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 30

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO DEVELOP
RECOMMENDATIONS ON REDESIGNING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM TO
FOCUS ON TARGETED EXCELLENCE AT EACH PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.

WHEREAS, Article 12, Section 11 of the constitution of New
Mexico specifies the state educational institutions, including
the university of New Mexico, New Mexico institute of mining
and technology, New Mexico state university, western New Mexico
university, eastern New Mexico university and New Mexico
highlands university; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the universities and northern New
Mexico college, there are branch community colleges and
independent community colleges, for a total of twenty-four
public post-secondary educational institutions offering higher

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1 education courses at more than sixty sites and offering similar
2 degree programs in essentially the same location; and

3 WHEREAS, over the last two decades, the state has made
4 educational opportunity a funding priority through factors in
5 the higher education funding formula and through several
6 important financial aid packages; and

7 WHEREAS, this policy of access to higher education was
8 engendered by the need for an educated work force to compete
9 with other states and countries in the global work force market
10 and by the need for targeted professions, notably those in
11 health-related fields, to work in underserved rural areas of
12 the state; and

13 WHEREAS, this commitment to access, however, has not
14 improved graduation rates and, more importantly, has not met
15 the needs of high-technology industries looking to relocate;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, in the prevailing fiscal climate, this priority
18 of access over quality is no longer sustainable, and the
19 current configuration of higher education must be changed; and

20 WHEREAS, the current economic crisis offers the state an
21 opportunity to redesign the higher education system by making
22 it more streamlined and more responsive to the needs of the
23 state, the work force, the taxpayers and the students; and

24 WHEREAS, the budget shortfall brings into sharp focus the
25 fact that the state can no longer afford the unbridled desire

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1 to be everything to everybody, and it cannot afford to have any
2 public post-secondary educational institutions being, as the
3 old saw goes, "jack of all trades, master of none"; and

4 WHEREAS, a redesigned higher education system, with a
5 renewed commitment to academic rigor and preeminence, as well
6 as coordination of disciplines and degrees across institutional
7 lines, can focus on building programmatic excellence, with both
8 two- and four-year institutions specializing in the particular
9 academic or work force areas at which they excel, rather than
10 providing scattershot programs that do not serve the ultimate
11 needs of students to be appropriately trained or the needs of
12 taxpayers to receive value for their taxes;

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
14 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Governor Martinez be requested to
15 convene a higher education work group to include the presidents
16 of the six state universities; one former regent of each of the
17 universities; one representative of the branch community
18 colleges; one representative of the independent community
19 colleges; and the secretaries of higher education, finance and
20 administration and information technology; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor name the chair of
22 the work group; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group:

24 A. identify:

25 (1) the academic and work force areas in which

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1 each public post-secondary educational institution excels and
2 in which areas the institution should be focusing to foster
3 preeminence; and

4 (2) ways to coordinate disciplines and degrees
5 across institutional lines to provide students with better and
6 more focused degree programming that makes graduates
7 competitive in the state, national and international work force
8 market;

9 B. consider the relationships between universities
10 and their branch community colleges and consider the
11 relationships between other two- and four-year institutions;
12 and

13 C. develop criteria for the higher education
14 department and the department of finance and administration to
15 evaluate:

16 (1) the efficacy of each institution's
17 mission, whether its academic and work force courses and
18 degrees support that mission and whether the mission should be
19 focused more narrowly on areas in which the institution excels;

20 (2) the necessity and cost of duplicate degree
21 or program offerings by multiple institutions, particularly in
22 the same geographic area;

23 (3) the need for and effectiveness of off-
24 campus instruction at each institution and the need for
25 alternatives to building brick-and-mortar campuses, such as

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1 distance learning or inter-institutional agreements;

2 (2) the proliferation of branch campuses, in
3 derogation of the 1998 laws limiting branch campuses, and the
4 need to close or consolidate campuses and eliminate duplicative
5 academic offerings;

6 (3) administrative structures and finances at
7 institutions, particularly in relation to their missions and
8 academic affairs;

9 (4) the strengths and weaknesses of each
10 institution's academic programs and identify programs that
11 should be eliminated or consolidated and degrees that should be
12 discontinued or emphasized by another institution;

13 (5) institutional efforts to recruit and
14 retain highly qualified faculty in the academic or work force
15 areas in which the institution has or can develop preeminence;
16 and

17 (6) other factors that the work group
18 identifies for evaluation;

19 D. consider New Mexico's changing demographics and
20 institutional statistics, including:

21 (1) current and projected enrollment,
22 including enrollment for each institution, campus, degree or
23 certificate program of the institution;

24 (2) graduation rates per institution, campus,
25 degree or certificate program and length of time to graduation;

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1 (3) graduation rates for recipients of lottery
2 tuition scholarships, college affordability scholarships, loan
3 for service programs and other state financial aid;

4 (4) the assigned or natural geographic area of
5 responsibility for each institution; and

6 (5) work force development needs by economic
7 and geographic sectors; and

8 E. study the higher education funding formula and
9 the factors that need to be changed to encourage excellence
10 instead of proliferation and preeminence instead of mediocrity;
11 and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group make
13 recommendations to the governor by November 1, 2011 on a new
14 design for post-secondary education in New Mexico that is based
15 on academic excellence and the preparation of graduates who can
16 meet the challenges of the twenty-first century; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations include a
18 list of duplicate academic programs and branch campuses that
19 should be closed or consolidated, with an emphasis on those
20 programs and campuses duplicated in the same geographic area;
21 and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group recommend the
23 process and timing to be followed for closure or consolidation
24 of campuses and programs; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governor make

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1 recommendations, including statutory changes, to the second
2 session of the fiftieth legislature by January 1, 2012 on the
3 redesign of the higher education system and on a new higher
4 education funding formula, including the identity of campuses
5 recommended for closure or consolidation and the elimination of
6 unnecessary duplicate degrees; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
8 transmitted to the governor; the secretaries of higher
9 education, finance and administration and information
10 technology; and New Mexico's six university presidents.