LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS

Bill Number: HB 283 **52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015**

Tracking Number: .199143.1

Short Title: UNM Manufacturing Engineering Program

Sponsor(s): Representative Jason Carl Harper

Analyst: James Ball **Date: February 16, 2015 (revised)**

Bill Summary:

HB 283 makes an appropriation to provide auxiliary faculty and staff as well as support for the operations of a microsystems clean room for the Manufacturing Engineering Program (MEP) at the University of New Mexico (UNM).

Fiscal Impact:

$200,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of UNM for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

UNM states in its analysis of HB 283 that the request in the bill was not presented to the Board of Regents for approval as part of the university's budget process.

Substantive Issues:

According to UNM, the expansion request in HB 283 will enhance the goals of the MEP, which include:

- providing manufacturing resources, courses, and degrees for graduate level engineering and computer science students;
- sustaining research and projects;
- interacting with community colleges and high schools;
- interacting with the manufacturing industry;
- supporting general economic development; and
- diversifying and institutionalizing primary resources.

UNM also notes that high-tech facilities are needed to write competitive proposals, and to attract the best faculty and students who require hands-on fabrication capabilities such as that provided by clean room facilities. Other major universities around the country are in a race to build well-equipped interdisciplinary facilities that house science, engineering, mathematics, and bioscience teams. HB 283 will support MEP's effort to be competitive in that race.

UNM further states that small, high-tech companies will be the source of job growth in the next decade. Consequently, regional economic development will instead come from the startup and

growth of small high-tech companies that can utilize the prototyping capabilities typical of the clean room facility. Clean rooms, however, are very labor intensive operations. The clean room at UNM is one of the most complex facilities on campus, requiring a highly-trained staff and operational support.

Background:

UNM also notes that the microsystem sector is growing at about 15 percent every year. This growth is driven to a large extent by the unprecedented demand for smart phones. Both technicians and engineers are needed for this growth. The MEP clean room facility prepares both technicians and engineers for these kinds of jobs.

The clean room program also hosts a Central New Mexico Community College dual credit and enrollment course that is open to high school students in Albuquerque Public Schools. These types of courses expose high school students to the possibility of high-tech science, technology, and math careers, as technicians or engineers.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

None as of February 14, 2015.