

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 259

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .197840.1

Short Title: UNM Mentoring in Albuquerque Schools

Sponsor(s): Senator Jacob R. Candelaria and Others

Analyst: James Ball

Date: March 4, 2015

Bill Summary:

SB 259 makes an appropriation for a mentoring project at the University of New Mexico (UNM) for ninth-grade students in Albuquerque at:

- Atrisco Heritage Academy High School;
- Rio Grande High School;
- Robert F. Kennedy High Charter School; and
- West Mesa High School.

Fiscal Impact:

\$500,000 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:

For FY 16, HAFC CS/HB 2 & 4, the *General Appropriation Act of 2015*, includes a \$292,300 General Fund appropriation to UNM to support a student mentoring program (page 145, line 22); however, it is unclear if this appropriation will support the project of SB 259.

Substantive Issues:

The analysis of SB 259 by UNM interprets the mentoring program to be established as one that supports at-risk adolescents in their transition to high school and later continuation into postsecondary education. In this regard UNM advocates the establishment of programs that enable the integration of proven successful practices and strategies that promote students' early involvement in high school at the ninth-grade level.

According to UNM, the widening achievement gap among college students is based on substantial and persistent inequalities among low-income, minority, and first-generation college students. These barriers to success in college are carried forward by students from early high school experiences, including:

- low academic achievement;
- low educational attainment;
- perception of college unaffordability;

- higher risk for school failure due to cultural barriers; and
- lack of role models in the family or the community who attended college.

Background:

UNM also notes that although research has documented widely used policies to improve college enrollment – recruiting campaigns, campus visits, summer interventions, and credit-based transition programs – these initiatives are likely to be ineffective. Recent research documents attrition rates ranging from 10 to 40 percent among students who had been accepted for postsecondary studies and declared an intention to enroll after high school graduation. In addition, low academic success in mathematics, science, and engineering, and a lack of understanding of the ways that racial dynamics affect students’ perceptions of their earlier school experiences present multiple obstacles for higher education attainment.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 210 *General Appropriation Act of 2015*
SM 2 *College Students as 3rd Grade Reading Mentors*
CS/HB 2 & 4 *General Appropriation Act of 2015*
HM 6 *College Students as 3rd Grade Reading Mentors*