

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 603

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .200402.1

Short Title: Change Common Convenience College Name

Sponsor(s): Senators Carlos R. Cisneros and Richard C. Martinez

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 27, 2015

Bill Summary:

SB 603 amends provisions in higher education law to change the name of “Northern New Mexico College” to “Northern New Mexico University” for common convenience.

Fiscal Impact:

SB 603 does not contain an appropriation.

Substantive Issues:

According to a news release dated January 27, 2015, Northern New Mexico College’s board of regents voted unanimously to change the institution’s name to Northern New Mexico University upon recommendations from the institution’s Academic Affairs Committee.

According to the institution’s administration, the name change:

- reflects the institution’s depth and breadth of academic offerings; and
- puts the school on equal status with its sister schools, such as Western New Mexico University and New Mexico Highlands University.

Northern New Mexico University currently offers 13 bachelor’s degree programs and “has expanded to offering post-baccalaureate opportunities via partnerships in recent years.”

Background:

According to Northern New Mexico University:

- the school began as The Spanish-American Normal School at El Rito in September 1909;
- the initial primary function of the school was the training of teachers for the state’s Spanish-speaking population;
- the school was added to the Constitution of the State of New Mexico as one of 10 state educational institutions when New Mexico became a state in 1912;
- in 1953, the Legislature changed the school’s name to the Northern New Mexico State School and implemented a secondary curriculum;

- in 1959, the institution’s Board of Regents renamed the school to Northern New Mexico College, at which point the institution continued to teach grades 7-12 along with a new college curriculum;
- in 1969, the high school curriculum of the school was transferred to a newly created public school district, and the curriculum at the college was limited to technical-vocational course offerings;
- in 1970, the college’s board of regents again renamed the school as the New Mexico Technical-Vocational School;
- under the name New Mexico Technical-Vocational School, the institution expanded its curriculum and faculty and developed its Española campus;
- a 1976 task force recommended that the University of New Mexico-Northern Branch at Santa Cruz be dissolved and its academic course offerings be combined with those of the New Mexico Technical-Vocational School, and soon thereafter the institution’s board of regents renamed the school as Northern New Mexico Community College;
- in 2004, the Legislature approved Northern New Mexico Community College to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in education; and
- in 2005, legislation was enacted to permit the school to offer four-year degrees in any programs deemed necessary and appropriate, at which point the institution was again renamed Northern New Mexico College.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SPAC

Related Bills:

SM 100 “*Northern NM University Day*”