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| <b>LFC Requester:</b> | <b>Scott Sanchez</b> |
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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO**

**[AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov](http://AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov) and email to [billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov](mailto:billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov)**

*(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)*

**SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

*{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

**Date Prepared:** 02/11/2025 *Check all that apply:*  
**Bill Number:** SB325 Original  Correction   
 Amendment  Substitute

**Sponsor:** Pete Campos **Agency Name and Code Number:** 770-NMCD  
**Short Title:** Corrections Substance Abuse Counselor Ed. **Person Writing:** Anisa Griego-Quintana  
**Phone:** 505-479-2296 **Email:** anisa.griego-quinta@cd.nm.gov

**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

| Appropriation |      | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|---------------|------|---------------------------|---------------|
| FY25          | FY26 |                           |               |
| 0             | 500. | Recurring                 | General       |
|               |      |                           |               |

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate expenditure decreases)

**REVENUE (dollars in thousands)**

| Estimated Revenue |      |      | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|-------------------|------|------|---------------------------|---------------|
| FY25              | FY26 | FY27 |                           |               |
| 0                 | 0    | 0    | N/A                       | N/A           |
|                   |      |      |                           |               |

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate revenue decreases)

**ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)**

|              | FY25 | FY26 | FY27 | 3 Year Total Cost | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|--------------|------|------|------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Total</b> |      |      |      |                   |                           |               |

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:  
Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

### **SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

#### **BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis: Senate Bill 325 proposes the establishment of a post-secondary education program for an associate degree in alcohol and drug counseling for qualified inmates in all correctional facilities, with Luna Community College granting the degree and New Mexico Highlands University developing the curriculum and providing technical assistance. An appropriation of \$500,000 from the general fund to the Corrections Department is proposed for fiscal year 2026 and subsequent years to establish and administer the program.

Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of the fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

#### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

While the program could provide valuable educational opportunities for inmates, there are several fiscal concerns that need to be addressed:

1. Institutional Dependency: The bill ties the funding to a single institution, Luna Community College. Should Luna Community College be unable to provide the services for any reason, the current language does not provide flexibility for the Corrections Department to use the funds with another institution to continue the program. This could limit the program's sustainability and its ability to meet the needs of inmates across various facilities.
2. Technology Infrastructure Costs: The Corrections Department would need additional funding to work with the institution on the creation of a learning management system (LMS). All colleges use LMS for education, and the Corrections IT Department would have to collaborate with the college to implement this system across all prison facilities. The development and implementation of such a system could be both complex and costly, especially in a correctional setting.

Based on a recent quote for an LMS for Reentry, which will be used to estimate costs, not knowing the specifics of the learning institutions outlined in the bill. Also, assuming that no additional infrastructure is required to accomplish.

The cost was around \$625,000 that would license 2500 inmates/year, \$25,000 to maintain the LMS portal and an additional \$50,000 would be expected for staff training.

Based on the quote, the cost per inmate per year would be \$250.00

Based on 100 inmates, the cost of the LMS piece is projected below:

\$25,000 for inmate licensing/year  
\$25,000 LMS portal maintenance/year  
\$2,000 – training (calculated based on 100 inmates)

\$52,000/year projected for LMS, based on 100 inmates.

3. Staffing Requirements: The program would require additional funding in the 200s to hire more FTEs for class recruitment, program oversight, and coordination within the prison facilities. Current staffing levels are insufficient to support the added responsibilities associated with this program. This could result in the need for additional positions or external support to ensure the successful administration of the program.

4. Program Costs: The average cost of tuition and books for Luna Community College in 2024 was approximately \$1,634 for tuition and an additional \$1,554 for books and supplies. Based on these costs, the \$500,000 annual appropriation appears sufficient to cover tuition and books for approximately 100 students (potentially 10 inmates at each facility per semester), depending on the program oversight costs, which are not yet fully determined.

5. Potential Benefits of the Program: This program offers significant benefits, particularly for individuals with a history of incarceration. Research on evidence-based practices in substance abuse counseling has shown that counselors with lived experience are more effective in treatment engagement, reducing relapse rates, understanding cultural nuances, and tailoring interventions. Additionally, such counselors can inspire clients and foster a sense of possibility. Several inmates have previously taken similar courses, such as those at GCCF, demonstrating the potential for success in these programs.

6. Licensing and Supervision Needs: The graduates of this program will need to complete approximately 3,000 hours of supervision, which could be provided by behavioral health and substance abuse programs. Further discussions with the licensing board may be necessary to allow testing and licensure within correctional facilities. There should also be consideration of increasing inmate pay for those assigned to work within substance abuse programs to incentive participation and acknowledge their role in the program.

7. Ongoing Support and Training: Once graduates complete the program, the Corrections Department will need to help them find continuing education units (CEUs) and additional training to maintain their licenses. Additionally, there may be an agreement between Luna Community College and New Mexico Highlands University to allow these graduates to transfer their credits toward a social work degree once they are released, further enhancing their career prospects.

8. Concerns About Adequate Funding: While this program addresses a critical need for substance abuse counselors both within the Corrections Department and across the state, there are concerns that the \$500,000 appropriation will not be sufficient to fully cover all the associated costs. This proposal represents an opportunity to address an ongoing gap in the behavioral health and substance abuse workforce in New Mexico, but additional funding will be needed to ensure the program's success and sustainability.

The proposed program could provide valuable educational and career opportunities for inmates, there are significant fiscal and operational concerns that need to be addressed, including flexibility for alternative institutions, technology infrastructure, staffing, and the adequacy of the proposed funding. Further analysis and additional funding will be required to ensure the program's successful implementation and long-term impact.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

See above.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

See above.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

See above.

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

None for the Corrections Department.

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

None for the Corrections Department.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

None for the Corrections Department.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

None for the Corrections Department.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

Status quo.

## **AMENDMENTS**

None proposed by the Corrections Department.