

Associated Students of New Mexico State University

Department of Governmental Affairs

2014 Legislative Session Post-Session Report

The 2014 Legislative Session was a success for the students of New Mexico State University. While not every student initiative was approved, those with high priority including lottery scholarship solvency and securing funding for graduate assistantships passed. The Governor now has 20 days (until March 12, 2014) following the session to act on passed legislation.

2014 Legislative Priorities

- Resolve the Lottery Scholarship solvency issue
- Secure funding to increase the number of graduate assistantships
- Support funding to provide in-state tuition to international students pursuing STEM, Business, and Health degrees
- Support 3% compensation increase to faculty and staff
- Support NMSU administration's Instruction & General budget request
- Capital Outlay funding request

Lottery Scholarship Solvency

- The Legislative Lottery Scholarship will remain a full tuition award for at least two years.
- Additional revenues allocated to the fund include:
 - \$2.9 million appropriation from the general fund to the lottery tuition fund to address cash management issues in the fund and to provide full tuition for current recipients of the legislative lottery scholarship program
 - \$11.5 million appropriation from the general fund to the lottery tuition fund to supplement the legislative lottery scholarship program for FY 15
 - \$11 million appropriation from the student financial aid fund to the lottery tuition fund to supplement the legislative lottery scholarship program for FY 14
 - \$19 million per year fund transfer from the general fund through an existing excise tax to the lottery tuition fund to supplement the legislative lottery scholarship program for FY 16 and FY 17
- Eligibility and Length Changes
 - GPA: 2.5 (unchanged)
 - Minimum required credit hours to earn and maintain the scholarship: 15 per semester
 - Students who earn the scholarship will receive awards for 7 consecutive semesters after their qualifying semester
- Legacy Students: Students who have received the scholarship for three or more semesters after their qualifying semester
 - GPA 2.5
 - Minimum required credit hours to earn and maintain the scholarship: 12 per semester
 - Students who earn the scholarship will receive awards for 8 consecutive semesters after their qualifying semester
- If the additional revenues are not enough to award full tuition scholarships to every student, the Secretary of HED is empowered to reduce the award to a percentage of tuition.
- While ASNMSU is pleased that current students can rest easy knowing the lottery scholarship will remain for another two years, the association is concerned with the future solvency and sustainability of the scholarship and the lottery tuition fund. This year's solution is not a long term fix, and future students and elected officials will need to revisit this issue to determine a long term, sustainable approach to make the legislative lottery scholarship solvent.

Secure funding to increase the number of graduate assistantships

- The General Appropriations Act includes \$4 million to be utilized statewide as matching funds for faculty chairs and other endowments including graduate assistantships. President Maestas has been pushing the administration all year to work toward the goal of increasing graduate assistantships and Provost Howard recently said he wants to commit funding for this purpose.
- Each year, ASNMSU will identify increasing graduate assistantships through matching endowments as a top priority.

Support funding to provide in-state tuition to international students pursuing STEMH degrees

- Think New Mexico, a non-profit think tank, pursued this initiative because data shows international students are more entrepreneurial, and if tuition was more inexpensive, they would choose to attend New Mexico's universities and stay to start businesses.
- This bill did not make it to a vote in the senate.

Support 3% compensation increase to faculty and staff

- The NMSU administration has identified increasing compensation for faculty and staff as a top priority and requested a 3% increase.
- The General Appropriations Act includes funding for approximately 1.496% salary increase, and President Carruthers has indicated that there may be additional funding available for the university to provide an additional increase to meet 3%.
- ASNMSU will continue to work with administration to ensure NMSU's faculty and staff are fairly compensated because students deserve quality educators.

Support NMSU administration's Instruction & General budget request

- President Carruthers, along with every other 4-Year university president in New Mexico, developed a funding formula that increases efficiency, simplicity, and predictability of the higher education funding process.
- The Governor and Higher Education Department opposed the new formula.
- Due to the Higher Education Department failing to report their formula on time, the Legislative Finance Committee adopted the university proposed formula, and it is included in the university I&G budget request in the General Appropriations Act.

Capital Outlay funding request

- NMSU requested the following capital outlay projects:

Capital Outlay Requests Summary		
Campus and NMSU Priority	NMSU Funding Request	Actual Budget
NMSU-Las Cruces		
1. Jett Hall, Jett Annex, Rentfrow Hall and Surrounding Infrastructure	\$21,300,000	\$19,200,000
2. Information Technology Infrastructure and Replacement	\$6,421,000	\$0
NMSU-Alamogordo		
1. Advanced Technology Education Center Phase II	\$5,000,000	\$0
2. Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$4,350,000	\$1,000,000
3. Information Technology Infrastructure and Replacements	\$160,000	\$0
NMSU-Carlsbad		
1. Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$2,200,000	\$1,600,000
2. Information Technology Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$600,000	\$0
3. Child Development Center	\$4,000,000	\$0
NMSU-DACC		
1. Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
2. Information Technology Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$625,000	\$0
NMSU-Grants		
1. Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$1,363,000	\$1,300,000
2. Information Technology Infrastructure Upgrades and Replacement	\$566,000	\$0
3. Replace Child Development Education Ctr.	\$5,700,000	\$0

- The Jett Hall/Rentfrow Hall capital project was allocated \$19.2 million.
- ASNMSU spoke to several legislators regarding the Jett Hall renovations detailing the critical need to give the chemical engineering department necessary space and supplies to sustain its rapid growth.