
Higher Education Committee

HB 2352

Brief Description: Concerning institutions of higher education services and activities fees.

Sponsors: Representatives Reykdal, Fitzgibbon, Zeiger, Kenney, Maxwell, Haler, Green, Jinkins, Sells, Moscoso, Ormsby, Pollet, Billig, Anderson, Probst, Lytton, Wylie, Ladenburg, Kelley, Angel and Hunt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs that services and activities fees committees at higher education institutions are not limited in the program or instructional activities they may consider and recommend to the governing boards and administration of their higher education institutions.
- Clarifies that revenue from service and activities fees must not be used to support general salary increases and faculty salary increments.
- Requires higher education institutions to post service and activities fees expenditure information on their website.

Hearing Date: 1/18/12

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Student Services and Activities Fees

In addition to tuition fees, students at institutions of higher education are charged services and activities fees also known as "S and A" fees. These fees are dedicated to fund student activities and programs as well as for repaying bonds and other indebtedness for facilities such as dormitories, hospitals, dining halls, parking facilities, and housing. Services and activities fees are not set by the Legislature, but state law requires that these fees may not increase faster than the rate of increase in tuition.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

State statute directs that a services and activities fee committee at each institution of higher education has responsibility for proposing to the administration and the governing board the program priorities and budget levels for that portion of program budgets that derive from services and activities fees. The student and activities fee committee must have at least a majority of student members.

Statue also directs the governing boards of institutions of higher education to give priority consideration to the recommendations of the services and activities fee committee. Student representatives from the services and activities fee committee and representatives of the college or university administration must have an opportunity to address the board before board decisions on services and activities fee budgets are made.

The services and activities fee committee is required to evaluate existing and proposed programs and submit budget recommendations for the expenditure of those services and activities fees with supporting documents to the college or university governing board and administration. The college or university administration is required to review the services and activities fee committee recommendations and publish a written response. This written response must outline potential areas of difference between the committee recommendations and the administration's proposed budget recommendations.

Summary of Bill:

Services and activities fee committees are directed to not be limited in the program or instructional activities they consider and recommend to the governing boards and administration of their higher education institutions to preserve educational program quality and the ability of students to complete their programs of study. Clarification is provided that revenue from service and activities fees must not be used to support general salary increases and faculty salary increments.

Institutions of higher education are required to post service and activities fees expenditure information on their website. By September 30 annually, each institution of higher education, in coordination with the services and activities fee committee, must post the expenditures of services and activities fees from the previous academic year. This information must be clearly visible and easily accessible. At a minimum, the services and activities fees budget information must include all the major categories of expenditure and the amounts expended in each category.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested January 16, 2012.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.