

**SUBJECT:** Intercollegiate athletic fees at The University of Texas at Arlington

**COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 6 ayes — Rangel, F. Brown, Farabee, Goolsby, J. Jones, Morrison  
0 nays  
1 present, not voting — E. Reyna  
2 absent — Cuellar, Wohlgemuth

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, Local and Uncontested Calendar, April 15 — 30-0

**WITNESSES:** None

**BACKGROUND:** In 1998, The University of Texas at Arlington student body voted in favor of a \$7.75 per semester-credit-hour fee for intercollegiate athletics. The student body also voted to dedicate this fee separately from student services fees. Current law places a \$150 cap on the total amount of compulsory student services fees that may be assessed to one student in one semester.

**DIGEST:** SB 149 would allow the University of Texas System board of regents to impose a mandatory intercollegiate athletics fee at UT Arlington if approved by a majority of the students voting in a general student election. The fee would not count toward the legislative cap limiting mandatory student service fees.

The intercollegiate athletics fee initially could not exceed \$7.75 per semester credit hour. The student government legislative body could raise the fee by five percent each year. The student body would have to vote in a larger increase. The board of regents could prorate the fee for a summer session.

The student body had approved a fee within the \$7.75 limit at least two years before the effective date of the bill, the board could impose the fee without calling an additional student election.

The fee could be applied beginning with the fall semester 1999. SB 149 would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 149 would allow the UT System Board of Regents to implement the \$7.75 per credit hour fee dedicated to intercollegiate athletics that the student body already has approved. If SB 149 is enacted, the UT Arlington student body plans to seek a reduction in the student services fee by \$3.75 per semester credit hour since that fee no longer would be used to finance athletics programs.

SB 149 is necessary to allow the students at UT Arlington to carry out their wishes to support their athletic program. The intercollegiate athletics fee is completely a student-driven initiative to improve student life at UT Arlington.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

Allowing UT Arlington to get around the Legislature's mandated \$150 per semester limit on mandatory fees would be a mistake. Another per-semester-credit-hour fee would increase the cost of higher education. Some students at the university already have difficulty paying for their tuition and fees and other educational expenses. This measure would force all students to pay the athletic fees regardless of whether they support UT Arlington teams.