

SUBJECT: Raising certain student fees for the Texas A&M University System

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — C. Turner, Stucky, Frullo, Howard, E. Johnson, Pacheco,
Schaefer, Smithee, Walle, Wilson

0 nays

1 absent — Button

WITNESSES: For — Anthony Gacasan, Student Affairs Fee Advisory Board of Texas
A&M; Amy Sharp, Texas A&M Student Government; (*Registered, but
did not testify*: Gregory Cross, Texas A&M Student Government)

Against — None

On — Martha Dannenbaum and Tom Reber, Texas A&M University

BACKGROUND: Education Code sec. 54.507 authorizes the board of regents at the Texas
A&M University System to levy and collect from each student in any
system institution of higher education a compulsory group hospital and
medical services fee that cannot exceed \$75 per student for each regular
semester or \$25 for each term of each summer session. The fee can only
be used to provide hospital or other medical services to students registered
at that component institution.

Sec. 54.521(a) authorizes the board to set a fixed student fee for the
purpose of acquiring, constructing, renovating, operating, maintaining,
improving, adding to, replacing, financing, and equipping student center
facilities. The fee cannot exceed \$100 per student for each regular
semester or \$50 for each term of the summer session or any fractional part
of a session.

Sec. 54.521(e) Prohibits the board from increasing fees from one
academic year to the next unless the increase is approved by a majority

vote of the students at the affected institution participating in a general election called for that purpose, except that at Tarleton State University the fee may be increased by not more than 10 percent from one academic year to the next without holding an election. The fee may not exceed the maximum amounts provided by sec. 54.521(a).

Interested parties have called for certain student fees at the Texas A&M University System to be raised to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding student population.

DIGEST:

HB 3266 would raise the cap on, expand the purpose of, and rename the group hospital and medical service fee for the Texas A&M University System. The bill also would raise the cap on the Texas A&M System's student center facility fee and set parameters for raising the fee.

Student medical services fee. The bill would set the cap on the group hospital and medical services fee, renamed the "student medical services fee," at \$200 per student for each regular semester and \$100 for each term of each summer session.

The bill would expand the authorized purposes of the fee to include the financing, construction, operation, renovation, maintenance, or improvement of new or existing student medical facilities.

Student center facility fee. The bill would set the cap on the student center facility fee at \$200 per student for each regular semester and \$100 for each term of the summer session, or any fractional part of a session.

The amount of the fee could not be increased from one academic year to the next by 10 percent or more unless the increase was approved by a majority vote of the students at the affected institution. An increase of less than 10 percent would have to be approved by a majority vote of the board of regents after giving students an opportunity for public comment on the increase.

The bill would remove an exception for Tarleton State University that

enabled the institution to raise the fee by no more than 10 percent from one academic year to the next without holding an election.

The bill would apply beginning with fees charged for the 2019-2020 academic year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.