

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.B. 691  
By: Eltife  
Higher Education  
4/12/2013  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

In the fall of 2010, Texas A&M University--Texarkana (TAMU-Texarkana) took several major steps in its transition from a small upper level institution to a comprehensive regional institution. In addition to relocating to the new Bringle Lake campus, TAMU-Texarkana enrolled its initial freshman and sophomore students. In fall of 2011 the first campus residence hall opened. Over the last three years, downward expansion has changed the scope of the institution, from a mostly commuter upper-level institution to a four-year institution with a residential student population.

Virtually all research on enhancing student retention and graduation rates at four-year institutions states that increasing student engagement on campus is key to improving student success. TAMU-Texarkana has significantly expanded curricular and co-curricular campus activities including new academic-based student organizations, student honors and research colloquiums, study abroad opportunities, a student leadership summit, and expanded student life programming, including athletics. EAGLE Athletics presently includes men's and women's club sports teams in soccer, tennis, golf and cross country, as well as a women's dance team. In order to transition club sports into full intercollegiate sports, student government called for a student referendum to add an athletics fee. A referendum was held during spring of 2012 and the athletics fee was student approved by an 10 percent margin with over 55 percent of the student body voting in the referendum. In addition to student support, an athletics council, composed primarily of faculty, has been created, along with a local community advisory committee.

As proposed, S.B. 691 amends current law relating to an intercollegiate athletics fee at Texas A&M University--Texarkana.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter E, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.53975, as follows:

Sec. 54.53975. INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS FEES; TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY--TEXARKANA. (a) Authorizes the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System to impose an intercollegiate athletics fee on each student enrolled at Texas A&M University--Texarkana. Prohibits the fee from being imposed unless approved by a majority vote of the students participating in a general student election held at the university for that purpose.

(b) Prohibits the amount of the fee from exceeding \$9 per semester credit hour for each regular semester or summer session unless the amount is increased as provided by Subsection (c).

(c) Authorizes the amount of the fee per semester credit hour to be increased from one academic year to the next only if approved by a majority vote of the students participating in a general student election held for that purpose or, if the amount

of the increase does not exceed five percent, by a majority vote of the legislative body of the student government of the university.

(d) Requires a student enrolled in more than 12 semester credit hours to pay the fee in an amount equal to the amount imposed on a student enrolled in 12 semester credit hours during the same semester or session.

(e) Authorizes a fee imposed under this section to be used to develop and maintain an intercollegiate athletics program at the university.

(f) Provides that a fee imposed under this section is in addition to any other fee authorized by law and prohibits it from being considered in determining the amount of student services fees that may be imposed under Section 54.503 (Student Services Fees).

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2013 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.