

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Higher Education Committee

BILL: SB 654

INTRODUCER: Senator Oelrich

SUBJECT: Student Fees

DATE: February 4, 2011 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	Matthews	HE	Pre-meeting
2.			TR	
3.			BC	
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

This bill authorizes each community college board of trustees to establish a transportation access fee. The fee may not exceed \$6.00 per credit hour. The fee would not be covered by the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

This bill amends ss. 1009.22 and 1009.23, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

College Fees

Sections 1009.22 and 1009.23, F.S., authorize community college boards of trustees to charge tuition and specified fees for postsecondary workforce education students and community college students. A community college may not charge any fee except as authorized by law. Community colleges do not have statutory authority to charge transportation access fees.

University Transportation Access Fees

Under s. 1009.24(13), F.S., state universities are authorized to charge transportation access fees. An example of how a university may use the transportation access fee can be seen in the way in which the University of Florida and the City of Gainesville entered into an interlocal agreement. The goal of the agreement was to mitigate the impact of university transportation related issues, specifically by taking cars off the road and by reducing the demand for on-campus parking. To accomplish this goal, the university has contracted with Gainesville's Regional Transportation System (RTS) to provide students unlimited access to the city bus system. At the end of October 2010, RTS had provided 9 million rides in the preceding fiscal year, amounting to a daily

ridership of almost 50,000. When school is in session, approximately 75 percent of the daily riders are university students. A committee of students and administrators assist RTS in determining which routes and service will be included in each annual contract. Through this negotiation, the level and frequency of service are funded through a fee that students and administrators agree upon. Service ranges from higher levels that provide a bus every 10 to 15 minutes to lower levels that provide a bus every 30 minutes. Several intercampus routes allow students, faculty, and staff to travel from one part of campus to another. In general, hours of service are from 6:00 am to 2:00 am. According to the Board of Governors, the 2010-2011 transportation access fee at the University of Florida is \$7.33 per credit hour. The university anticipates that the fee will increase to \$7.88 in August 2011.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill authorizes each community college board of trustees to establish a transportation access fee for postsecondary workforce education students and community college students. The fee could not exceed \$6.00 per credit hour. Revenues from the transportation access fee could only be used for the provision or improvement of access to transportation services for students. An increase in the fee could only occur once each year and would have to be implemented in the fall term. The fee would not be covered by the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

The bill requires a college's student government to hold a referendum every 5 years to approve continuation of the fee. However, the initial imposition of the fee does not require a student vote.

The fee could assist the college in mitigating the effect of transportation related issues by taking cars off the road and reducing the demand for on-campus parking.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Students at a community college that imposed the transportation access fee would have to pay the fee. The fee is capped at \$6.00 per credit hour.

C. Government Sector Impact:

According to the Department of Education, based on the 2010-11 FTE-1A Report, including workforce education students, the Florida College System estimates a total of 11,020,200 credit hours of instruction will be provided during the year. If all colleges in the system exercise this fee authority and assess the maximum of \$6 per credit hour, the estimated revenues would be \$66,121,200.

This is an optional fee to be approved by the local community college board of trustees. As with other authorized fees (e.g., parking, library, identification, transcript, technology, capital improvement), not all colleges assess all authorized fees or assess the maximum authorized amount if assessing the fee.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.