

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education

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BILL: CS/SB 1320

INTRODUCER: Education Committee and Senator Cruz

SUBJECT: Postsecondary Fee Waivers

DATE: February 4, 2020

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Bouck	Sikes	ED	<b>Fav/CS</b>
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

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**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/SB 1320 requires each state university to waive specified fees for a graduate student who has a 0.25 full-time equivalent appointment or greater as a graduate assistant, graduate research assistant, graduate teaching assistant, graduate research associate, or graduate teaching associate.

The Board of Governors of the State University System estimates the fiscal impact to the state universities to be between \$14 million and \$28 million annually.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2020.

**II. Present Situation:**

***State University Student Fees***

Florida law provides that all students enrolled in college credit programs at state universities will be charged fees, except students that are exempt or those whose fees are waived.<sup>1</sup> In addition to tuition charges, the law specifically allows a state university to assess fees, which include:

- A financial aid fee that cannot exceed five percent of the tuition and out-of-state fee.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1009.24(1) and (2), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1009.24(7), F.S. The State University System (SUS) average resident graduate student financial aid fee 2019-2020 is \$17.94, nonresident is \$45.18. Board of Governors, *State University System of Florida, Tuition and Required Fees (Fees), 2019-20 (January Update)*, available at <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019-2020-SUS-Tuition-and-Fees-Report-January-Update.pdf>.

- A Capital Improvement Trust Fund fee as established in law.<sup>3</sup>
- A student activity and service fee.<sup>4</sup>
- A student health fee on the main campus and on any branch campus or center.<sup>5</sup>
- A separate athletic fee on the main campus and on any branch campus or center.<sup>6</sup>
- A technology fee of up to 5 percent of the tuition per credit hour.<sup>7</sup>

### *Fee Waivers*

Florida law provides for waivers from specified fees to certain students who meet identified criteria.<sup>8</sup> Some waivers are mandatory,<sup>9</sup> while others are permissive.<sup>10</sup> Each university board of trustees is authorized to waive tuition and out-of-state fees for purposes that support and enhance the mission of the university. All fees waived must be based on policies that are adopted by the university board of trustees pursuant to Board of Governors regulations.<sup>11</sup>

Typically, graduate assistants receive tuition waivers and some form of compensation from universities, but fees associated with enrollment are not necessarily waived.<sup>12</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill requires each state university to waive specified fees for a graduate student who has a 0.25 full-time equivalent appointment or greater as a graduate assistant, graduate research assistant, graduate teaching assistant, graduate research associate, or graduate teaching associate. The waiver includes the:

- Financial aid fee;
- Capital Improvement Trust Fund fee;
- Student activity and service fee;
- Student health fee;
- Athletic fee; and the
- Technology fee.

The required fee waiver may decrease the student fees that certain graduate students are required to pay and may incentivize additional graduate students to seek appointments for which these fees are waived.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 1009.24(8)(a), F.S. The SUS average graduate student Capital Improvement Trust Fund fee is \$6.32. Fees, *supra* note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1009.24(10)(a). The SUS average graduate student per credit hour activity & service fee is \$14.67. Fees, *supra* note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1009.24(11), F.S. The SUS average graduate student per credit hour health fee is \$8.44. Fees, *supra* note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1009.24(12), F.S. The SUS average graduate student per credit hour athletic fee is \$11.97. Fees, *supra* note 2. Law provides that that the sum of the activity and service, health, and athletic fees a student is required to pay to register for a course may not exceed 40 percent of the tuition established in law or by the Legislature in the General Appropriations Act. Section 1009.24(4)(d), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1009.24(13), F.S. The SUS average graduate student technology fee is \$12.69. Fees, *supra* note 2.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1009.26, F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1009.26 (5), (7)-(8), (12)-(14), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1009.26 (1)-(4), (6), (9)-(11), (15)-(16), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1009.26(9), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Board of Governors, *2020 Legislative Bill Analysis* (Jan. 9, 2020), at 1.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2020.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Florida university graduate students with a 0.25 full-time equivalent appointment to a position specified in the bill would not be required to pay certain fees, resulting in a lower cost of education for such students.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Graduate student fees as specified in subsections 1009.24(7)-(13), F.S., average approximately \$72 per credit hour across the State University System. For a full-time graduate student, that means the average fees per academic year are around \$1,728; a half-time graduate student would pay approximately \$864 per year. With just under 16,300 graduate students across the system with 0.25 or greater full-time equivalent appointments as graduate assistants, graduate research assistants, graduate teaching assistants, graduate research associates, or graduate teaching associates, the fiscal impact to the state universities is estimated to be between \$14 million and \$28 million annually.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Board of Governors, *2020 Legislative Bill Analysis* (Jan. 9, 2020), at 2.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 1009.26 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Education on February 2, 2020:**

The committee substitute removes from the fee waiver required in the bill the state university miscellaneous fees and the distance learning course fee established in s. 1009.24(14) and (17), F.S.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.