

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R9949 SOS-D

S.B. 847
By: Hughes
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The University of Texas at Tyler (UT-Tyler) and a number of other public institutions of higher education have statutory guidelines for the imposition of student fees in general and recreational fees in particular. These statutes typically set the maximum allowable recreational fee and require student approval for the initial imposition of the fee and any subsequent increase over a particular threshold, usually 10 percent. For example, the Texas State University System may assess a recreational activities fee if approved by a student vote at the system institution. The fee may not be increased by more than 10 percent each year without student approval in an election called for the purpose of considering the fee increase, and the maximum fee may not exceed \$100 per semester (Section 54.538 of the Education Code).

Similar guidelines apply to UT-Tyler. Students had to approve the initial imposition of a recreational facility fee and must approve any increase in the fee (in contrast to other public institutions of higher education that usually can increase recreational fees by 10 percent before student approval is needed).

Students at UT-Tyler have expressed interest in improving recreational facilities and programs but cannot vote under current law to increase their recreational facility fee beyond the statutory maximum of \$40 per semester, which is lower than most other colleges and universities (for example, statutory maximums of \$75 for the University of North Texas, \$75 for UT-Arlington, \$120 for Stephen F. Austin, \$125 for Texas Women's University, \$75 for the University of Houston, \$175 for the Texas A&M System, and as mentioned above, \$100 for the Texas State University System).

S.B. 847 would not authorize any student fee increases at UT-Tyler. It would only allow the student body to increase its recreational facility fee above \$40 if a majority of students voted in favor of the fee increase.

As proposed, S.B. 847 amends current law relating to the student recreational facility fee at The University of Texas at Tyler.

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 Section 54.5341(b), Education Code, to provide that, unless a higher amount is approved under Subsection (f), the amount of the student recreational facility fee may not exceed certain amounts.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 54.5341(b), Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with fees imposed for the 2019 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.