

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

C.S.H.B. 1277  
By: Perez (Miles)  
Higher Education  
5/11/2019  
Committee Report (Substituted)

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

H.B. 1277 authorizes a wellness and success center fee at the University of Houston-Downtown. The fee may not exceed \$150 per student for each long semester, \$75 per student for summer sessions that are longer than 8 weeks, and \$50 per student for each summer session less than 8 weeks. The revenue from the fee will be deposited in an account called the University of Houston-Downtown Wellness and Success Center Fee Account. The committee substitute states that the ballot proposition for an election under this subsection must clearly state the amount of the proposed fee increase and describe the reason for the proposed fee increase.

The University of Houston-Downtown is a 100 percent commuter campus and there are no operating residence halls available to students. Because of this, there is a lack of student and faculty connection along with an operating academic success center. These things are important to the improvement of graduation rates. The fee would be used for the construction of sports and recreational facilities as well as student support spaces and student support services. There have been no new fees created in the last 35 years at the university. The proposal was offered as a student referendum and passed with overwhelming student support; 74 percent of the students who voted supported the fee.

C.S.H.B. 1277 amends current law relating to authorizing a wellness and success center fee at the University of Houston-Downtown.

### **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 54.5402, as follows:

Sec. 54.5402. WELLNESS AND SUCCESS CENTER FEE; UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN. (a) Authorizes the board of regents of the University of Houston System (board) to charge each student enrolled at the University of Houston-Downtown (UH-Downtown) a wellness and success center fee. Authorizes the fee to be used only for the purpose of financing, constructing, operating, maintaining, improving, and equipping a wellness and success center and for operating student wellness programs at UH-Downtown.

(b) Prohibits the wellness and success center fee from being charged unless the charging of the fee is approved by a majority vote of the students enrolled at the university participating in a general student election held for that purpose.

(c) Prohibits the amount of a fee charged under this section from exceeding:

(1) \$150 per student for each regular semester;

(2) \$75 per student for each summer session of eight weeks or longer; or

(3) \$50 per student for each term of the summer session of less than eight weeks.

(d) Requires revenue from a fee charged under this section to be deposited to the credit of an account known as the UH-Downtown Wellness and Success Center Fee Account.

(e) Authorizes the board to increase the amount of a fee charged under this section, except that the board is prohibited from increasing the amount of the fee to an amount that exceeds by more than 10 percent the amount of the fee charged during the preceding academic year unless the amount of the increase is approved by a majority vote of students enrolled at the university participating in a general student election held for that purpose. Requires the ballot proposition for an election under this subsection to clearly state the amount of the proposed fee increase and describe the reason for the proposed fee increase.

(f) Provides that the wellness and success center fee is not considered in determining the maximum amount of student services fees that may be charged under Section 54.503 (Student Services Fees).

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.