

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R1085 MM-D

S.B. 507
By: Miles
Higher Education
3/18/2019
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 507 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 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 that voted supported the fee.

As proposed, S.B. 507 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 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 the University of Houston-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 the fee charged under this section from exceeding \$150 per student for each regular semester, \$75 per student for each summer session of eight weeks or longer, or \$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 University of Houston-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 may not increase 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.

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

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