

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC 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: Higher Education Committee

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BILL: CS/SB 684

INTRODUCER: Higher Education Committee and Senator Oelrich

SUBJECT: Community College Student Fees

DATE: February 22, 2007

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

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Harkey</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>HE</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>HI</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

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## I. Summary:

The bill gives discretionary authority to each community college board of trustees to establish a fee for transportation access. The transportation access fee, which is not limited, would be in addition to other currently authorized fees charged by a community college board of trustees.

This bill amends section 1009.23 of the Florida Statutes.

## II. Present Situation:

Section 1009.23, F.S., authorizes community college boards of trustees to charge certain fees. Fees are charged for college credit instruction leading to an associate in arts degree, an associate in applied science degree, an associate in science degree, and for noncollege credit college preparatory courses as specified in statute. Fees are authorized for tuition and out of state fees; technology; student financial aid; activities and services; capital improvements, technology enhancements, and equipping student buildings. In addition, a community college board of trustees is authorized to establish user fees (lab fees, parking, library, facility and equipment use, etc.) and fines which shall not exceed the cost of the services provided and shall only be charged to persons receiving the service.

The estimated state average of community college resident tuition and required fees for 2005-06 for a full time equivalent (FTE) student placed Florida 35th in the nation at \$1,915. The national estimated average was estimated at \$2,481.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Education information based on a Washington state tuition study.

Both the Bright Futures Scholarship Program<sup>2</sup> and the Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program<sup>3</sup> cover certain fees. According to the Department of Education, the Bright Futures Scholarship Program covers a fee if it is assessed to all students at the institution. The Prepaid College Program community college plan covers the activity and service fee and the technology fee in addition to the registration fee<sup>4</sup>. The Florida Prepaid College Board may approve contracts for additional community college fees delineated in s. 1009.23, F.S.<sup>5</sup>

Under s. 1009.24(12)(p), F.S., state universities are authorized to charge a fee for traffic and parking fines, charges for parking decals, and transportation access fees. According to the Florida Board of Governors, six state universities charge a transportation access fee. The university and the amount of the charge per credit hour in 2006-2007 are as follows:

- University of Florida \$4.81
- Florida State University \$6.00
- University of South Florida \$2.25
- University of West Florida \$1.80
- University of Central Florida \$5.84
- Florida Gulf Coast University \$7.00<sup>6</sup>

As an example of how a university may use the transportation access fee, the University of Florida and the City of Gainesville entered into an interlocal agreement as part of a growth management 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 the Gainesville Regional Transit System to provide students unlimited access to the city bus system, and the university contracts for bus service. It is estimated that approximately 50,000 riders per day, when school is in session, use the bus system and that 73 percent of its daily riders are university students. A committee of students and administrators determines which routes and service will be included in each annual contract. The higher the number of routes and level of service requested, the higher the cost. In general, busy stops are serviced every 10 to 15 minutes. Most stops are visited at least every 30 minutes. Routes are designed per student requests to visit specific apartment and condominium complexes, businesses and university sites. In addition, there is an intercampus route allowing students to travel from one part of campus to another. In general, hours of service are from 6:00AM to 2:00 AM.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill authorizes each community college board of trustees to establish a transportation access fee. There is no limit to the amount of the transportation access fee.

<sup>2</sup> ss. 1009.534-536, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> s. 1009.98, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> In s. 1009.97(3)(g), F.S., *registration fee* is defined as the tuition fee, financial aid fee, building fee, and Capital Improvement Trust Fund fee.

<sup>5</sup> s. 1009.98(2)(a)2., F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Florida Board of Governors, Office of Planning and Institutional Research

The bill has been filed primarily at the request of Santa Fe Community College to enable its students to participate in an existing transportation network with the City of Gainesville Regional Transit System and the University of Florida. The effect of the proposed statutory change, however, would be a general change to the statutes providing discretionary authority to any community college board of trustees to charge a fee for transportation purposes. The type of transportation related activities paid for by the fee would be decided by the local board of trustees.

In the specific case of Santa Fe Community College, the college believes that by participating in the existing contract between the university and city, it will reduce the congestion and parking problems facing the college and provide students a relatively inexpensive and viable option for travel.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

#### **V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

Should a community college board of trustees choose to charge a transportation fee, there will be increased revenue to the institution. The fee is not limited; thus a per-credit-hour charge could vary by institution. Because the fee is discretionary and not limited, the amount of revenue the fee would actually generate is indeterminate.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

To the extent a community college board of trustees decides to charge a transportation access fee, the cost per credit hour to the student of attending the community college will be increased.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The cost to government is indeterminate because the fee is not limited. A new fee assessed to all students at a community college would result in an increase in the cost to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

The amount of income community colleges might receive from the transportation access fee is indeterminate because the fee is discretionary and it is not limited.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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## **VIII. Summary of Amendments:**

None.

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