

SUBJECT: Recreational facility fee at the University of Texas at Dallas

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Rangel, Goolsby, Kamel, Reyna, Rodriguez

0 nays

4 absent — Gallego, Harris, Moreno, Ogden

WITNESSES: For — Franklyn G. Jenifer and James H. Sanders, University of Texas-Dallas

Against — None

DIGEST: HB 815 would authorize the board of regents of the University of Texas System to charge students enrolled at The University of Texas at Dallas a recreational facility fee, starting in the fall of 1995, with approval of student voters. The fee could be used to finance, construct, equip, operate, maintain, or improve student recreational facilities or programs.

The fee would be capped at \$25 per student per regular semester or 12-week summer session and \$16.67 per student per eight-week summer session until the fall semester of 1998. After that time the fee would be capped at \$40 per student per regular semester or 12-week summer session and \$26.67 per student per eight-week summer session. The recreational facility fee could not be charged or raised without approval of a majority of the students voting in a general election.

The fee could not be counted against the statutory maximum of \$150 per semester in student-service fees that a student may be charged.

The board of regents would be permitted to pledge the fees collected against bonds the board issues and apply the fees to pay off the debt incurred from the issuance of the bonds.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

UT-Dallas does not have a adequate recreational facility, and its over 8,000 students need and want one. The students use a building that has been partially converted into recreational areas, some of them in hallways. An election was held in the fall of 1994 in which the students approved a recreational fee to build a facility that better suits their needs.

The students and faculty want to hold graduation ceremonies in a facility on campus, rather than renting a convention center as they do now, and to have intramural basketball on campus, rather than renting the gymnasium at a local middle school. With the fee this bill would authorize, the school could built and maintain a gym, racquetball facilities and swimming pool.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

No apparent opposition

**NOTES:**

The Legislature Budget Board estimates that the proposed fee would generate \$518,000 beginning in 1996, increasing to \$906,000 in 1999, when the proposed facility is expected to begin operation. Debt service on the facility is estimated at \$710,000 each year beginning in 1997, with operating expenses starting at \$236,000.

The companion bill, SB 501 by Cain, was considered by the Senate Education Committee and left pending on March 8.