

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R6990 TAC-F

S.B. 963
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S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The University of Texas at El Paso (UT-El Paso) is poised for continued growth over the next decade and has already reached a student population of over 19,800. Enrollment is expected to exceed 20,000 for the fall 2007 semester. The student leaders recognized the growing need for expanding the recreational facilities and worked with UT-El Paso to propose a fee increase during the 80th Legislature.

In fall 2005, the student government association (association) at UT-El Paso surveyed the student body to determine whether there was interest in expanding the existing facilities. The survey asked what type of new facilities students wanted and if they were willing to support an increase in their recreation fee to build and operate them. After analyzing the results, the association held a special election in spring 2006 on the issue of recreation facilities expansion. They proposed to increase the existing recreation fee of \$12 per semester to \$70 per semester in two increments. The \$12 fee would increase to \$20 for fall 2007 and to \$70 for fall 2009, with an anticipated opening of the new facilities in 2010. Sixty-two percent of students voted in support of the fee increase and 38 percent against such an increase.

As proposed, S.B. 963 authorizes an increased recreational fee for the costs for planning, constructing, and operating new facilities at UT-El Paso.

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 54.541, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (c) and adding Subsections (a-1) and (a-2), as follows:

(a) Deletes existing text specifying that the recreational facility fee should not exceed \$12 per student semester or summer session.

(a-1) Prohibits a fee imposed under this section (Recreational Facility Fee; The University Of Texas At El Paso) from exceeding \$70 per student for a term or semester of 10 weeks or longer or \$50 per student for any other term or semester.

(a-2) Prohibits a fee imposed under this section from exceeding \$20 per student for a semester or summer session before the 2009 fall semester, notwithstanding Subsection (a-1). Provides that this subsection expires September 1, 2009.

(c) Prohibits the recreational facility fee from being increased, rather than levied, unless the amount of the increase, rather than the fee, is approved, rather than set, by a majority vote of those students participating in a general student election called at The University of Texas at El Paso for that purpose.

SECTION 2. Makes the application of this Act prospective to the 2007 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.