

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SHB 2293

C 142 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Authorizing a technology fee at public institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Carlson, Jacobsen, Murray and Chopp).

House Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: In Washington, tuition fees for students attending most public colleges and universities are made up of two components, building fees and operating fees. Building fees provide part of the funding for facility repairs, renovations, and construction. Operating fees are used to provide part of the funding needed for instruction and institutional operations. Tuition rates for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 academic years are mandated in law. After the 1996-97 academic year, there is no statutory mechanism in place to determine tuition rates.

In addition to tuition fees, institutions of higher education charge students a services and activities fee (S & A fee). The fee supports student activities and programs. The fee may also be pledged for the payment of bonds used to construct dormitories, hospitals, infirmaries, dining halls, parking structures, and buildings that house student services, student activities, and the dean of students. The rate of increase in services and activities fees is limited by law. In any year, the fees may increase by a percentage that does not exceed the percentage increase in tuition.

In addition, governing boards may charge other fees. These fees include fees for short and self-supporting courses, deposits, rentals, and fines. The fees also include laboratory, gymnasium, health, and other special fees.

Western Washington University charges students a technology fee. Over the years, the Attorney General's Office has held that the only fees that an institution may charge to all students are tuition and services and activities fees. One recent exception to that ruling has been health fees.

The laws governing tuition and fees do not apply to students attending technical colleges.

Summary: With the written consent of its student government association, each of the public baccalaureate institutions may establish a student technology fee. The fee must be used exclusively for technology resources for general student use. Before establishing a technology fee, the institution must provide to the student government association a list of similar fees. The board and the association will ensure that student fees for technology are not duplicative. The student government association must approve an annual plan for expending revenue from the fee.

During the 1996-97 academic year, any technology fee charged to a full-time student may not exceed \$120; the fee will be prorated for part-time students. In subsequent years, changes in the amount of the fee must be approved by both the student government association and the institution's governing board. Annually, the student government association may abolish the fee by a majority vote. If the association votes to abolish the fee, it will not be collected during the term following that vote.

The technology fee is defined. It is a fee used to help pay for services to students that include access to the Internet and the World Wide Web, computer and multimedia laboratories and work stations, software, and dial-up telephone services.

Of any revenue raised by the fee 3.5 percent must be deposited in the university's local financial aid fund. Institutions may waive the technology fee for teaching and research assistants working 20 or more hours per week.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	89	8	
Senate	40	9	(Senate amended)
House	82	8	(House concurred)

Effective: March 25, 1996