

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Higher Education Committee

BILL: CS/SB 622

INTRODUCER: Higher Education Committee and Senator Oelrich

SUBJECT: Transportation Fee/Santa Fe College Trustees

DATE: March 4, 2009 **REVISED:** _____

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

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS..... Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

This bill would authorize the Board of Trustees of Santa Fe College to establish a transportation fee.

This bill amends s. 1009.23, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Community College Fees

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, a baccalaureate degree, and for college preparatory courses as specified in statute. Fees are authorized for tuition and out-of-state fees; technology; student financial aid; activities and services; and capital improvements, technology enhancements, and equipping student buildings. In addition, a community college board of trustees is authorized to establish user fees (for lab, parking, library, distance learning, 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. A community college may not charge any fee except as authorized by law.¹

On February 16, 2009, the Santa Fe College student government adopted a resolution petitioning the Florida Legislature for a statutory amendment to permit the Santa Fe College Board of Trustees to implement a transportation fee. The resolution proposed that the transportation fee could increase the frequency and length of service of two existing bus routes, add a new route, and provide free ridership on all regular Gainesville Regional Transportation System (RTS) routes for anyone with a valid Santa Fe College ID card.

University Transportation Fees

Under s. 1009.24(112), F.S., state universities are authorized to charge a fee for traffic and parking fines, charges for parking decals, and transportation access fees. 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 RTS 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 assist RTS in determining 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 served 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 6:00 am to 2:00 am. According to the Board of Governors, the current transportation access fee at the University of Florida is \$6.11 per credit hour.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill would authorize the Board of Trustees of Santa Fe College to establish a transportation fee. The fee is not capped. The bill amends a provision relating to community college user fees but the bill doesn't reference the transportation fee as a user fee. The bill does not specify that the fee must be used for transportation access; presumably, the proceeds could be used for any purpose related to transportation.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

¹ s. 1009.23(12), F.S.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Students at Santa Fe College would have to pay the transportation fee unless the fee was paid by a financial aid or prepaid program. Both the Bright Futures Scholarship Program² and the Florida Prepaid College Program³ cover certain fees. According to the Department of Education, the Bright Futures Scholarship Program covers a fee if it is calculated as part of the cost per credit hour or 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 as well as the registration fee.⁴ The Florida Prepaid College Board may approve contracts for additional community college fees delineated in s. 1009.23, F.S.⁵

The fee is not capped and it is not indexed to tuition. The RTS estimated a cost to Santa Fe college students of \$5.54 per credit for the proposed transportation enhancements. The RTS cost analysis included costs for enhanced frequency on two bus routes and the addition of one new route.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The amount of revenue the fee would generate for Santa Fe College is indeterminate.

The cost to government is indeterminate. If the fee is charged to all students, there would be an increased cost to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

² ss. 1009.534-536, F.S.

³ s. 1009.98, F.S.

⁴ 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.

⁵ s. 1009.98(2)(a)2., F.S.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Higher Education on March 4, 2009:

The Committee Substitute corrects a drafting error in the bill.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

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