

2006 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE FORM

BOG/SUS ISSUE: Technology Funding



PROPOSED STATUTORY LANGUAGE: *Attached*

1. Change Needed: Section 1009.24(12), Florida Statutes

Additional sources of revenue must be identified in the short and long run to meet the technological needs associated with higher education at our state universities. The 2006-2007 Legislative Budget Request includes \$5.9 million for technology. Another potential source is a student fee that would be used by universities to address their individual technology needs. This fee would enable each university to plan for a steady, predictable revenue stream to fund the increased technology so essential to efficiently and effectively preparing graduates to compete in the 21st century.

It is further proposed that this fee remain outside of Bright Futures. The establishment of, and any subsequent increase in, the technology fee would be recommended by a technology fee committee at each university, at least one-half of whom would be students appointed by the student government association. The remaining committee members would be appointed by the university president.

2. Current Condition:

Technology costs to support a modern, relevant post-secondary education have skyrocketed. Growth in demand for Internet bandwidth, computer labs, classroom media technology, web-based self-service, disk space for student coursework, wireless networks, administrative systems necessitated by devolution in juxtaposition to unfunded student FTE growth and budget cuts have significantly eroded campus technology budgets. State universities are struggling just to keep technology services and facilities up-to-date and maintain adequate infrastructure in areas such as security. Additionally, many universities have been forced to cut or severely curtail support services to students.

Factors creating the demand for technology funding include:

- Sharp increases in enrollment added to the university system over the past several years, and even more student enrollment increases predicted for the next few years, place a great strain on technology facilities, support and services.
- The business community demands current, high-tech trained graduates to help them maintain their competitive edge in the global economy.
- Demands for instructional infrastructure and upgrades are essential for high quality and secure educational services.
- The demands of a post 9-11 world for information and research security.

- Constant upgrading of technology tools and support are essential to keep pace and maintain alignment with the state's needs.
- Students demand high-skill job training, which enables them to obtain high wage jobs; this requires universities to maintain best practices in technology access and support.
- Additional institutional costs for administrative systems required by devolution.
- Expanded research infrastructure, including high performance networks and computational facilities
- Additional information systems required for institutional planning, evaluation, and accountability such as data marts

The 2006-2007 legislative budget request approved by the Board of Governors in July, 2005 included a technology issue that would provide \$5.9 million. These funds would be utilized for technology issues as determined by the boards of trustees. Some examples of technology improvements which clearly enhance the educational services to each student include:

- Improve and support course management software with a full-scale training program for faculty implementing this service in all their classes.
- Provide campus site licenses for common software needed by all students – like Microsoft Office, Virus Scanning, Secure web services and more.
- Further funding for the Wireless Campus initiative – with the longer term goal being that all outdoor and indoor spaces are covered by a wireless LAN to support the mobile computing needs of our students
- Facilitate academic units that have an emphasis on laptop and portable computing -- and provide infrastructure to support the power of broadband access
- E-portfolios to assist students in promoting their skills and securing career opportunities
- Provide more web-based services, such as, Schedule of Courses, the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues as well as other key university publications in web-friendly formats
- Improve support for student technology---for example, building Technology Centers (a “Virtual Union”) in existing buildings, with expanded Help Desk facilities work group environments for collaborative learning, private study carrels, and close proximity or access to a food service facility---locations might include residence halls, health centers, libraries, recreation centers, and existing computing labs
- Continue expansion of bandwidth capabilities throughout campus and off campus sites-- to support video streaming and video conferencing
- Seek private/public partnerships to provide low cost or discounted broadband access to students in their local service areas
- Provide adequate network based disk storage for students in support of their coursework and allow them to back-up their critical data in a secure disaster resilient manner

3. Rationale for Change:

Funding requirements for the class size amendment and slowed growth in state lottery receipts have significantly diminished educational funds. Concurrently, universities are experiencing tremendous and growing demand for student access and services. Additional funding is necessary so that universities can adequately address the technology needs of students, faculty, and staff.

4. Fiscal Impact:

There will be approximately 7 million student credit hours (SCH) generated in the 2005-2006 school year. Thus for every \$1 per SCH technology fee, \$7 million would be generated.

Note: Section 1009.23(10), Florida Statutes, authorizes the Community Colleges to establish a technology fee that cannot exceed \$1.80 per SCH for resident students and not more than \$5.40 per SCH for non-residents students.

5. Justification for BOARD OF GOVERNOR'S Priority (if applicable):

The Board of Governors recognizes the importance of having adequate technology and has included a line item request for technology funding in its 2006-2006 Legislative Budget Request. The line item request would address some of the historically unmet needs while a technology fee would provide a reliable source of funding for university technology needs into the future.

6. Link to BOG Strategic Plan:

This issue addresses Goal D, building world class academic programs and research capacity. Having adequate technology resources is crucial for establishing and maintaining world class academic programs.

7. Proposed Statutory Language:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to higher education finance policy; amending s. 1009.24, F.S.; authorizing a technology fee for state universities; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. A new paragraph (s) is added to section 1009.24, subsection (12) to read:

1009.24 State university student fees.--

(12) Each university board of trustees is authorized to establish the following fees:

(s) A technology fee. The amount of the initial fee and any subsequent increase in the technology fee must be recommended by a technology fee committee, at least one-half of whom are students appointed by the student government association. The remainder of the committee shall be appointed by the university president. A chairperson, appointed jointly by the university president and the student government association, shall vote only in the case of a tie. The recommendations of the committee shall take effect only after approval by the university president, after consultation with the student government association, with final approval by the university board of trustees. An increase in the technology fee may occur only once each fiscal year and must be implemented beginning with the fall term. The technology fee shall not be included in any award pursuant to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program as set forth in s. 1009.531, F.S.

Section 2. Except as otherwise provided, this act shall take effect July 1, 2006.