

Bill Brief for Senate Bill 27 – An Act to revise and repeal certain tuition rates at institutions governed by the Board of Regents

What does this bill do?

- Senate Bill 27 removes statutory references to self-support tuition rates that are associated with off-campus delivery of public university coursework.
- It maintains authority for the setting of tuition and fee rates with the Board of Regents, as provided in SDCL 13-53-6.

Why is this necessary?

- The history of self-supported tuition rates dates to a time when course delivery at public universities looked quite different than it does today. The nature of course delivery, the technologies involved, and the type of students served have changed dramatically.
- The basic premise has been that self-support tuition rates are charged to non-traditional students who do not attend classes on campus.
 - In the early days, this included correspondence courses, as well as the special delivery of unique courses requested by an employer or a company for delivery at an off-campus location.
 - As the popularity of off-campus delivery methods grew, the self-support rate came to be applied in a much broader fashion.
 - For the most part, it is charged at off-campus centers (Community College for Sioux Falls and Black Hills State University-Rapid City), as well as to courses delivered through the internet and by other distance technologies.
 - This special self-support tuition rate, which includes costs of instruction and delivery for the off-campus course, was set because these courses were not supported by the Legislature through appropriations of state general funds. Hence, the term: “self-support rate.”

What has changed?

- The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the forefront the considerable challenge in attempts to draw a clear distinction between on-campus and off-campus delivery in this modern day and age.
- Many courses have shifted to a hybrid model, utilizing a mix of on-campus and off-campus delivery. Further, more students are also taking distance-delivered courses while attending in-person classes on a university campus. The distinction between “off” and “on” campus delivery has blurred considerably.
- Removing the statutory differentiation of a “self-support rate” provides the Board of Regents with the necessary flexibility to appropriately categorize various course delivery methods and set those rates accordingly.