**GIBCT Colmery Act Veteran Discussion Script**

*April 11, 2019*

**Welcome and Opening Remarks (5 minutes)**

*[When the participant is ready, the moderator will begin the session with the following introduction.]*

Thanks for joining us today! My name is [name], and I also have two colleagues on the line, Amy and Cindy. They are observing and taking notes. We work with a team at the VA that is enhancing a website called VA.gov and we're interested in speaking with you today about the Education section of the website.

We’d like your thoughts on what aspects of the pages work well and where we might make improvements to make things even easier for Veterans.

Before we start, I’d like to mention a few logistical details:

* We are interested in hearing your honest opinions. We are in no way testing your knowledge or ability. Our goal is to be sure that application meets Veterans’ needs, so we are interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish. We welcome your feedback.
* If for any reason you want to pause or stop the session at any time, just let me know. I'd be happy to do so.
* By testing the site thoroughly, we hope to ensure that it’s written in a thoughtful way and gives Veterans all of the information they need to make informed decisions.
* Do you have any questions so far?
* Lastly, we generally record sessions, in case we need to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately.

Are you comfortable if I record the audio as we talk today?

Great! I'm going to turn on screen and audio recording now. Once it's on, I'll ask again, as we like to have your verbal consent

[The meeting host will begin audio and screen recording.]

Are you comfortable if we record the audio and screen movements today?

**Warm-up Questions (5 minutes)**

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

Applied to gi bill benefits? Yes.

Used gi bill before? Yes, it’s fantastic.

We understand you may be interested in using VA Education benefits.

1. What factors are most important to you as you look as schools? I was looking for schools that accept the yellow ribbon, and I usually look into schools that have a veterans office or has someone that can help me with problems or issues if I need to.

Used the va site before? No.

1. Do you happen to know which Education benefits are you eligible for?
2. Would you expect the VA website to offer any resources to help you decide which school to attend? If so, what type of resources would you find helpful?
3. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience?
4. What would you hope to learn by using a GI Bill Comparison Tool?
5. What factors would you like to compare about schools or institutions?

Okay, now we're going to look at the va.gov website and walk through a few scenarios.

**Think Aloud**

While you are going through the site, we ask that you please think aloud and vocalize your thoughts and decisions. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn. We are interested in your first reaction to each page, as well as what you are thinking as you engage with each page. If you have questions about what information needs to go in a particular field, it’s likely that many other Veterans will too. This may seem strange at first, but it helps us understand what you are thinking and helps us so much with our work.

**Scenario #1 (10 minutes)**

Do you have a dream school? Using the GI Bill Comparison Tool, how would you find out what benefits you would receive at that school?

I’d put George Washington University. The first thing when I was typing George Washington University, I saw George Washington University \_\_\_, GWU \_\_\_, different campuses. I picked the main one. My main thing is that the other ones, most of the time they have a particular program at their campuses. That’s why I picked the main one.

[search results] at the bottom, I see GWU. Now that I pull it up, I see GWU Ashburn. It wasn’t in the initial results [search suggestions]. [she selected Ashburn campus] I’m in it. It’s telling me the GI Bill payments. Scrolling down the page, I chose Undergrad programs, division of schools. They have the school of nursing, which is also undergrad, which I’m attending right now. This school is special. They don’t have the same character as the other schools, as the university. I wouldn’t know which one to choose because it’s an accelerated program, unless I speak with someone from there. I’m trying to find the zip code of the school. When I put the zip code of the class, it’s 20147, but the city that’s being displayed is Warrenton, VA, but it’s actually Ashburn, VA.

It actually tells you the student outcomes of the university, which is great to know. Now I’m down to the 10 student complaints.

Entering zip code thoughts, what would happen? Maybe for the housing purposes, the bah purposes, that was my first thought. Nothing changed putting in the zip code. Actually, the housing allowance changed. When I saw on the main campus, the housing changed.

Now I’m in the complaints, the student complaints. Financial issues makes me worried a little bit. Refund issue, I can see why people would put a refund issue. Historical information, since 2016, they had 90 people taking it [using gi bill]. It’s very important to me. With the degree you’re going for, you want to make sure they have accreditation. So credit for military training, it says no, which is kind of negative, but I’ll feel like they’ll take some because right now, in the nursing program, they did take some of the concentrations from the military training. As a veteran, you don’t necessarily have to have your first degree before applying to the program. That’s exceptional to that program probably, but unless you call somebody to talk to, you wouldn’t know. They have a stem program. It’s good that it has a facilty institution code right there. I’m thinking those are the codes for the school? I don’t know what they’re for.

Please talk aloud and let us know what you are thinking as you explore the site.

*[After the particpant has explored the site and shared thoughts aloud.]*

1. What are your first impressions? I like that everything that you need is on one page. Even though you have to scroll down, you don’t have to click to go to different parts. It has a summary. If you go for a general degree, this is very good, but if you’re going to specifics [specific program], it’s not specific to the school that you may want.

I don’t know if it’s possible to include the special programs or to have a link. They do have a link to the school website. If you’re going to specific programs in the school, the benefits might be different and this is where you need to go.

1. What information on these pages is the most important to you? They give you a snapshot of what you’re looking for or looking at, but they do have a good snapshot.
2. What is confusing or unclear? Why?
3. How trustworthy and reliable do you consider this information to be? Very reliable and trustworthy. It’s funny because when I applied, they told me they do yellow ribbon too. I could just go on the website and verify what they have instead of calling. I don’t know how this information could get to veterans. The old ebenefits was confusing. I like this one better.

**Scenario #2 (10 minutes)**

Let say you signed up for the GI Bill last April so you could take a couple of classes at your local community college. After taking the classes, you decided that you'd like to get a degree in engineering. The two schools you are considering are University of Florida and Florida State. You'd like to maximize your benefits. Using the site, how would you decide which school offers you the greatest benefits?

[she searched UofF first] So I’m still a veteran, right? I’m still using the 9/11. [search results] I have the UofF, Gainesville, Fl. My other option was FSU, you said? I would have to go into…actually it does give me a little summary. [she typed in FSU from the search results page]. The tuition is 100% at FSU also, and the monthly is 1,300 for the housing, and the books are 1000. I’m actually going to click on the link to see a little more information to see if they have the yellow ribbon and all that. This one, I don’t know if they have yellow ribbon. It doesn’t say anywhere on the website. It doesn’t say this school has yellow ribbon. That would be helpful, especially from using the Post 9/11. The tuition here isn’t high, maybe that’s why.

*[After the particpant has explored the prototype and shared thoughts aloud.]*

**Section 510 Follow up questions**

1. What are your thoughts on the contents of the gray box on the right? The first thing is it estimates your benefits. I see the information to determine how much your tuition is going to be. When I click on the link that says “learn more” about the yellow ribbon, it just tells me what the yellow ribbon is, but it doesn’t give me a list of the schools that accept yellow ribbon. That would be good information. School calendar, if you’re going to be full-time or part-time, I like that. I don’t know what the kicker bonus is so I’d have to learn more about it. Did you use your p9/11 before jan 2018? I don’t know why they’re asking that. [she then read the learn more] ok, I get why they’re asking about it.

[gray box] I’d like to know how much out of pocket I’d have to pay. It’s telling me how much housing allowance I would get, the book stipend I would get. Total paid to you, I don’t understand it. I don’t get the max amount about it [?]. The other numbers make more sense. I don’t see where the 12k is coming from. Oh, ok. I think I get it now. It’s a breakdown of your housing and your book stipend. It could be broken down some. Maybe switch it? Like have the estimated benefits per term, then have the total.

1. What are your thoughts on receiving an estimate vs. an exact amount for your housing allowance? I don’t mind getting the estimate because I know sometimes numbers are not always fixed. They change, so having an estimate, as long as the differential is not huge, like 500, the estimate is a starting point.
2. What are your thoughts on the questions on the left? How they might be useful?
3. If logging in would give you a more precise estimate, would you take the time to do so, or is the estimate sufficient? Yes, I would do that.
4. What are your thought on the 2nd to last question on the left ("Did you use your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit before January 1, 2018?")?

**Section 107 Follow up questions**

1. If you chose a large state school with campuses in multiple cities, would you expect the housing allowance to be the same or different for each campus? We actually were talking about that. Even for GWU, it is a little different for somebody taking their classes in DC vs Ashburn. It’s $100 and some change difference. As long as your main campus zip code is this, that’s what they pay you for your housing allowance. It could go either way.
2. How would you decide which campus you'd like to attend?
3. What are your thought on the last question on the left ("Will the majority of your classes be on the main campus?")?
4. Let's look at the results page for a moment. As you think about large schools like the university of California, would you expect to see a card for each University or one for each branch of a university? One page for every campus? So the first thing you see is the page for the campus, right? So the question that asks you will the majority of your classes be on the main campus? I think starting on the main page like this is good. It will go by what the school submits to the VA. Maybe move the question. Before you give the estimate, ask where your main courses will be, then estimate the benefits.

**Scenario #3 (2 minutes)**

[If the participant is eligible for multiple GI Bills] How would you use the Comparison tool to determine which GI Bill to apply for?

Have an actual comparison table that would compare the general gi bill benefits, at least a summary of them. Then maybe a list that will give you a chart of schools that accept yellow ribbon.

[search results] when I search the school, the page just says 8 search results. [T. says to look at the checkbox for yellow ribbon] That’s good to have. I didn’t see it initially. Overall, it’s very good. They have the link to the school…

**Follow up questions**

1. What are your thoughts on the process of comparing GI Bill?
2. What was easy and did you find challenging?
3. What would make the process of comparing GI Bills easier?

**Post-Task Interview (5 minutes)**

Now that you’ve had a chance to explore the site, I’m going to ask you a few final questions. Some of these questions I’ve already asked you, but I want to ask them again, now that you’ve seen the website.

* What do you like most about this website?
* What enhancements or features would you recommend to improve the overall usefulness of this site?
* Would you use this website in real life? Why or why not? Yes.
* Would you recommend this tool to your friends? Why or why not?
* On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, how would you rate the tool's ability to give you the information you need to make a decision on which school to attend based on the benefits you'll receive? I’ll give it a 5 because I feel like just browsing through here kind of narrows my, makes my job a little less complicated. Ok, now I’m down to 2 schools. I just have to call them. It makes my decision easier. The other thing is just getting that information from the va, the office, because when you call the school, they’ll probably say they have the benefit, they’re trying to help you, but getting it from this website, you can tell them, ok I was on the va website. It’s very helpful.
* On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, how likely are you to use a tool like this? 5. I would use it if I had to go back to school again?
* Assuming you had access to all three, would you prefer to view a site like the comparison tool using a desktop, tablet or mobile? I’m old school. I like to have it on the computer. It would be good to have it on the phone, but I feel it would be too small to be able to scroll on it.
* Do you have any additional thoughts or comments you'd like to share?

**Thank-You and Closing**

*[The moderator concludes each session by thanking the participant for their time and for offering his/her opinions and suggestions.]*

Thank you very much for taking the time to give us your feedback today. We really appreciate your help!