**GIBCT Colmery Act Sec 107 Veteran Discussion Script**

*July 24, 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 the VA.gov website and we're interested in speaking with you today about the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

The GI Bill comparison tool allows Veterans to learn about education programs and compare benefits by school. We’d like your thoughts on what aspects of the website 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 things:

* 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. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish. We welcome your feedback and look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.
* 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.
* 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.
* 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.

1. Have you used VA Education benefits in the past, or are you interessted in using them in the future? Yes, I have.
2. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience? I don’t think so.
3. What factors are most important to you as you compare schools or institutions? Definitely the cost, I did want to be in Washington, DC, but there’s 6 different schools in Washington, so that didn’t narrow it down too much. The other one was, I guess a good program for what I wanted to do, which was international affairs. My brother never really had too much of an issue with using the benefits. I didn’t go and talk to any of the veterans offices.

Okay, let's go ahead 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. Sharing your thoughts aloud may seem strange at first, but it helps us understand what you are thinking and give us valuable information.

**Prototype**

Okay, now we're going to look at the va.gov website and walk through a few scenarios. All of the sceanrios we look at are going to focus on housing allowance benefits. So while there will be a lot of interesting information on the screen, we're really going to focus in on determining housing allowance.

Just so you know, this is a prototype, rather than a real website. We create mock-ups like these and share them with Veterans in sessions like this to be sure we have everything right before we code the actual website. You'll notice that only certain links have been activated and you’ll not need to enter any data. When you click a field, text will appear automatically.

<https://bahdigital.invisionapp.com/share/EXIAAV8QGY3#/screens/296016673>

**Scenario #1 (10 minutes)**

Let's say you're interested in going to the University of California at Davis. Using the GI Bill Comparison Tool, how would you determine how much money you'd receive to help pay your rent while taking classes at the University of California at Davis?

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

|| So I would start from the top. I would click my military status, and pick my, whatever gi benefit I have available. I would probably have to click learn more for the cumulative post 9/11 question because as a dependent, I’m not sure how that’s calculated. For school, type of institution, I would leave schools, then in person only. [she searched right away]

And you said University of California Davis? So then I would just click on that one that pops up. So the housing allowance is 2,121 a month. I would get tuition, and the book stipend.

[Profile. T tells her to look at left column.]

I might toggle eligibility details, in-state student, yellow ribbon, change it to yes. I don’t think I have any scholarships. I would expect the stuff in the gray box to update [as she makes changes]. I’m not sure what a kicker bonus is, so I’d have to click learn more for that. School calendar, I’m not sure what that is. Is that if there’s a difference for schools that do semesters or trimesters? Maybe do part-time in the enrolled category.

Ok, then it looks like it has a nice checklist. Ther’s a kicker bonus, then did you use your post-9/11…? I’m not sure what the question is getting at, but it’s 2019 so I’d probably say no if I was going to school for the 1st time. [she skipped by the campus question initially]

[she scrolled down] Ok, so there’s a veteran program…There’s stuff about retention rate, graduation rate, salaries and retainment, kind of interesting. [she stopped at school locations] Then it has all the locations and the differences in the estimated housing for the different locations of UC. That’s kind of interesting because you can compare where you want to live depending on the cost. One complaint, that’s interesting. I’d want to click on that to see what the complaint is about.

Then institutional summary, accreditation, it doesn’t offer independent study or credit for military training. I like to see how many veterans, dependents that have received benefits at this institution, that’s kind of cool, and the total money.

[T asked her to scroll back up and read 2nd scenario]

[After the particpant has explored the calculator fields and benefits panel]

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. What are your first impressions of the process of determining your benefits?
2. What aspect of the page or the process might other Veterans find confusing or unclear? Why?
3. [If calculator fields were not used] Is there a way to make the estimate even more specific to your particular situation? [If calculator fields were used] What would make the process of refining the benefits estimate easier?
4. Would you expect to receive the same benefits if you were to attend University of California in another city?

**Scenario #2 (10 minutes)**

Let say you're interested in checking out University of California at Irvine. Using the site, how would you determine how much housing allowance you'd receive if you attended UC Irvine?

From the top of the page, I would probably click search results, then go back down to the Irvine option, and then into the same spot, under housing allowance, $2928.

It’s really easy, especially how you have all the schools, at the bottom of the page, you have the comparisons for the locations. I can see somebody choosing based on that.

T: anything veterans would find confusing? I don’t think so. It’s a nice tool. I also like how you can edit the eligibility details. It reiterates what you put in and allows you to toggle it.... [5:21] That’s a nice view that you can toggle between in state and out of state.

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. [If the participant navigates to UC Irvinte via the Search Results Page or search box] Is there a way to access the UC Irvine page from the School Profile page?
2. What are your thoughts on the School locations section?
3. Why do you imagine that some are nested under others?
4. What benefit do you see in having a list like this?

**Scenario #3 (10 minutes)**

Let say most of your classess at UC Davis will be held across town at the UC Davis Technlogy Center. Using the site, how would you determine what amount of housing you'd receive?

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

I’d go back, I guess I would scroll down, stay on the page that I’m on. Ok, so it already has all of the university of California locations. It has the davis technology center right here, and it looks like it is $2997.

[T asked her why some schools are blue] It looks like the ones that are indented fall under the general school. Some of the schools may have different benefits overall.

T: you saw value in having a list like this? Oh yeah, definitely.

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. [If they use the campus calculator field] What are your thoughts on the question on the left ("Will the majority of your classes be on the main campus?")? [If they use the School Locations list] On this page, is there a way to make the benefits panel at the top update to show this housing amount?
2. What would you expect to happen if you selected "Other..."?
3. What would make the process of selecting a campus easier?
4. What is the difference between the short list in the drop-down and the longer list at the bottom?

**Scenario #4 (10 minutes)**

Let say you heard that the UC is offering a new cybersecurity program in Riverside, CA. The program is brand new, in fact, the first class of students to attend the program will start in September. Using the site, how would you determine what amount of housing you'd receive while taking classes in Riverside, CA?

[she tried clicking view more] I’d click on view more and I imagine it would show me a larger list of the schools, and it would have riverside listed in this middle column.

[T tells her that it’s not in the system yet] I would, if it didn’t pop up there, I would go back to search results, and re-enter this city/school/employer, maybe riverside California. [she was on the Irvine page earlier]

[T pointed her to Davis, then the campus question]. I would click on an extension campus, and I imagine that would update the benefits on the right. I do see extension campus, so I’d click on that, then select Other…Oh, ok. Yeah, I would put the riverside zip code there, and it looks like it came up. That wasn’t too bad. I didn’t immediately think of it because there are so many fields on the left. Not so many, more like more than 3. When you do have internet problems like me, it’s nice that you don’t have to load up a whole new webpage, which is nice.

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. What thoughts do you have on the process of determing your housing allowance for a location that is not in the list? It was very helpful. I knew pretty well about the 5 different schools that I wanted to go to. So it’d be easy for me to type in Washington, dc. That definitely would have been helpful because I would have assumed that all the schools would be the same since they were in the same city. In retrospect, it would have been nice to see the benefits for one of the schools that I didn’t go to.

[T asked her opinion on the 107 Learn More content] Ok, that’s helpful. It didn’t look like branch campus wasn’t an option. I wouldn’t have known the difference between that. I like the italicized part between operationally dependent and operationally independent.

C: thoughts on “how do you want to take classes?” tooltip [5:32]

A: you’d mentioned yellow ribbon earlier. I guess I don’t have that anymore. Now I have CH35 benefits. I’d used it before, but I don’t have it anymore. I was never really totally sure. I knew that it gave me more benefits, but I wasn’t sure what that entailed or why.

C: how would you find a zip code for a different location? I would google it and probably use a different tab.

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

**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!