**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? I have used the benefits before, and I actually have used this tool, as well, before.
2. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience? [see above]
3. What factors are most important to you as you compare schools or institutions? Proximity to home, affordability, the quality of the program that I was interested in.

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.

Alright, so, that’s good. I assume that’s the gi bill I’m using, and that I have 100% of the benefit. Type of school, that’s right. Does it matter in the scenario if I’m doing it online or both? [She clicked search field and later the search button].

[SRP] I like to hit view details, but I like to just make sure just in case it only applies to certain people, I just like to view details so I know what I’m getting myself into.

[profile] So, in this scenario, I assume I live in California. If I’m getting in-depth, I’d do a google search to make sure that tuition is accurate. For me, as a reservist, if we don’t rate 100% of the bill, I want to make sure that number is right, so that when I do rate, I know how much of the difference I’m left with. I don’t think I’m a yellow ribbon recipient. I would leave the scholarships blank. I would like to go in person, I might do both. [T lets her know these are active fields] [She tried out in person and online, then looked at her benefits panel]. Only when I do online does it change at all. Ok, so the housing allowance does change, that’s good to know. And it’s good to know that those buttons work and they change that. That’s definitely important. I understand the VA’s reasoning behind it, but at the same time I’m just a normal person and I would make the assumption that the VA wouldn’t change because regardless of if you take classes online or in person[---?].

[T told her to go back to in person] I apologize for the lag, but it’s probably because I’m doing this from Iraq.

Where will you take the majority? I’m looking at this other one [she picked extension option]. [She went back to second dropdown after T asked her to look at it]

[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?

I’m probably going to go back up and I would probably hit the back button because I remember that all 4 of them were right there. I’m interested in getting my housing answered? So I see that it’s right there [in SRP]. I still like to look at the details [clicked view details]. So now that I know that online makes a difference, for me, some of the schools that I was looking at, only offers online programs. So that’s a concern of mine now that I know the housing is online.

T: thoughts on process? It’s great! Super easy. It’s right there, black and white, super easy.

T: anything confusing? I have my own personal questions about the calculator because of my own pursuits. I really like how you have the options down there of how you’re taking classes because that affects your benefits.

**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?

Still at Davis? I’m going to assume it falls under this one [Davis profile]. I’m going to guess it falls under this category, and see if it shows up here [extension dropdown]. Technology center, looks like that’s it. Ok, and looks like, ooh, I get more money [benefits panel]. Interesting.

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

**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?

Ok, so I don’t see it there [extension dropdown]. I might click there, see if that works [she clicked on Other]

T: how’d you find a zip code? Google, or hopefully I’d know it.

**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? Super easy. Easy.

[T asked her to keep exploring the page for things related to housing.]

Oh, well that’s really convenient [school locations]. So it pulls from the main university, whatever the main university is, it can pull from their satellites and tell you what you’re going to get there. That’s really nice.

T: thoughts on bold? I’m guessing I can click on these three [hyperlinks], not click on this one [black Davis]. Oh, because I’m in California, Davis. The other ones are because I don’t have those up above.

T: what if you clicked the blue ones? I’m guessing it would take me to that page so I can see the benefits there.

I like this because it has all the breakdowns, so that’s nice. When I searched University of California, I got 4 main ones, the 4 big ones. If I didn’t know that they had satellite campuses, this is nice that it breaks them down like that.

[11:19] What do they mean by majority [107 tool tip] ok, but where I’m taking it doesn’t affect…the only reason it affects my bah is because it’s for that specific area. I would be interested in knowing where it changes, the percentage. If I’m taking 75% of my classes at a main campus, and my bah is 2000 for that area. I’m going to assume that I’m going to get the 2000 instead of at an extension campus. I’m going to assume that I’m getting 2000 because I’m taking the majority at the main campus, but I’d like to know the magical percentage. One semester I might be at the main campus. It’s at an extension campsu the next semester, and when I watch my bah drop substantially, then I’ll at least know.

[T asked about online tooltip] [she clicked on link and explored that page with mha rates]. Ok, so that’s not what I was thinking. What’s going through my head is, if I’m doing them from my house, but I don’t remember in the tool putting in a zip code. If I switch to online only, it’ll ask me, where does it think I’m taking my classes, where does it think I’m living?

C: why did you use the tool in the past? Using it currently to see how much housing allowance I would get when I go back. [said she’s interested in housing as a graduate student, thinks the tool is geared more for undergrad students.].

*[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!