#### **SCO STEM Discussion Script**

### Introduction

Thanks for joining us today! My name is [NAME]. I also have two colleagues on the line, <Name> & <Name>. They’ll be taking notes to ensure that we capture your feedback accurately.

As you’ve heard, we are working with a team at the VA that will be launching the new Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program in August. We’re interested in speaking with you today to get your feedback on the scholarship application process.

The scholarship provides up to 9 months of additional Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to qualifying Veterans and Fry Scholars who are seeking an undergraduate STEM degree, or those who have already earned a STEM degree and now want to obtain a teaching certificate.

The team is in the process of designing an online application form that Veterans can use to apply for the scholarship and we’d like to hear your idea to be sure the form is designed in a thoughtful way.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

**Recording**

We generally record our sessions, in case we need to confirm that we’ve captured people’s opinions accurately. **Are you comfortable if I record the audio as we talk today?**

* Great, I’m going to go ahead and start the recording.
* **Once it’s on, I’ll ask you if it’s okay one more time, as we like to have your verbal consent**. [Only if we use our WebEx] There will be a slight pause, then we’ll hear an announcement that the recording has started.

[Start recording]

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

**STEM Scholarship Overview**

Great, first we’ll share a link to the STEM Scholarship program description page on VA.gov. This will give you a little more background on the program.

<https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/fgib/stem.asp>

As you read through the description, we are interested in hearing any thoughts or questions you may have, or any thoughts or questions you think Veterans may have.

P5-P11 (5 school officials & a veteran):

Aerospace engineering is 128. The veteran is also in a Computational Math degree. Can you add them together or is it just one? Does it have to be a dual-degree to be over 128? Would dual-degrees even be eligible?

Are they consecutive 9 months [of funding]?

If someone has a dual degree, maybe have priority.

[They were concerned about “your post-secondary degree requires more than 128 semester (or 192 quarter) credit for completion in a standard, undergraduate college degree.

How many veterans are eligible per year?

When will the application first be available?

What about adding some information about the process of notification to make sure the student knows they’ve been awarded?

Our fall starts at the end of August.

**Program Questions**

1. What questions come to mind as you read about the program?
2. What questions do you anticipate that Veterans will have?
3. Do you have any questions about the eligibility requirements?
4. Are some of the undergraduate STEM degree programs at   
   \_\_\_\_\_\_School Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 128 credit hours or more?
5. Do you have any questions about the benefits Veterans will receive?
6. Do you have any thoughts on the way the information is presented?
7. Do you have any impression of the frequency with which students go on to obtain a teaching certificate after they graduate from a STEM program?

**Draft STEM Application Form**

Now, we’d like to take a look at an early draft of the application. A decision has been made to place the form online, so this paper form will NOT actually be used. However, it contains some questions that may be asked, so we thought it might be useful to share.

[Display Draft STEM Application v.3.0 in WebEx, rather than sending via email.]

Does the money go to the student or does it go straight to the school?

Part III: So this would be submitted at the same time the student applies?

What happens from when the student fills it out, it goes to the SCO. There might be a statement in there stating the SCO is expected to fill out the form within a certain timeframe.

School information should be on the SCO form, too.

**Opportunities for Improvement**

1. What question do you think Veterans would have as they complete the application process?
2. What questions on the form, if any, need more explanation or clarification?

**Overall Application Process**

1. What do you think about the overall process of applying for a STEM Scholarship?
2. What parts of the STEM Scholarship application form seem straightforward?
3. What challenges do you think Veterans will face as they completed the form?

Looks like we have 5-10 minutes left, so I want to pause and give my colleagues on the phone an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

[Additional questions from any observers on the phone]

Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. We very much appreciate your willingness to be part of our process. The insights you shared are very valuable and will help us ensure that the forms we design are easy to use.