#### **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.

P4: 120 credits is typical at my school. None of our students would qualify just because it’s 128. Other than that, the website looks pretty easy to read. The biggest question would be when is it coming out? A lot of people were thinking that this is for also graduate students, like in a grad STEM program, but after reading this, I can see it’s not unless they’re going for a certificate. It does go over it, but this has to be applicable for people that change degree programs halfway through, correct? The only time we’d have someone qualify for it is if they’re going to do over 120 total. Is there someone where there is a more descriptive list of the healthcare programs, like would it includes something like lifestyle coaching? Just a list of what VA would consider healthcare.

**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?

P4: No, just about the 120 credits.

1. Are some of the undergraduate STEM degree programs at   
   \_\_\_\_\_\_School Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 128 credit hours or more?
2. Do you have any questions about the benefits Veterans will receive?
3. Do you have any thoughts on the way the information is presented?
4. 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.]

P4: I don’t know what this CIP code. Actually, I think I know what this is. Is this supposed to be a mail-in form?

P4: The form looks pretty easy to follow, honestly. I think it looks pretty good.

**Opportunities for Improvement**

1. What question do you think Veterans would have as they complete the application process?

P4: Nothing honesty is challenging. Do you have a list or website that has a more in-depth qualification for STEM programs?

1. 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?

P4: Students sometimes need to retake courses when they fail the first time, so they will end up exceeding 120 credits.

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.