#### **Veteran 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?**

Let’s start with a few questions about your degree program.

**Educational background**

1. What type of degree are you pursuing?
2. How far through the program are you?
3. Do you have any interest in obtaining a teaching certification after you graduate?

**STEM Scholarship Overview**

Great, now I’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.

**Program Description Questions**

1. What questions come to mind as you read about the program?
2. Do you have any questions about the eligibility requirements?
3. Do you happen to know if your degree program requires 128 credit hours or more?
4. Do you have any questions about the benefits Veterans will receive?
5. Do you have any thoughts on the way the information is presented?

**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.]

**Opportunities for Improvement**

1. What question do you have about 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 might one face as they complete the process?
4. What recommendations do you have for improving the application process?

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.

**Questions to consider [Though we need to see what v.3.0 looks like]**

1. How would you prefer to indicate how much time you have left or how many credits you have completed?
2. Would you assume your total credits completed would include or exclude the current credits you are taking?
3. Would you rather enter a program name or CIP Code?
4. When in the application process would you prefer to enter direct deposit information?
5. What are your expectations around the question that asks if you may go on Active Duty while receiving the STEM Scholarship?