PROTOCOL GUIDE

Focus Group for the Student Participants

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A.   INTRODUCTION: <u>Purpose of the Focus Group</u>:

Greeting: "Hello. My name is Keri Stephens. Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study. Let me start by telling you a little more about what we'll be doing. As you may know, the United States Census Bureau counts the population in the U.S once every 10 years. The way the count occurs is currently through a paper-based survey. The study focuses on college students, how you use communication technologies, and your perception of participating in a survey.

I just want to remind you that I'm only asking for your thoughts and opinions and there are no right or wrong answers. Your feedback will be very useful for helping make sure that college students will be counted correctly. Your participation in this focus group is very important because it will help the Census Bureau in improving their future operations."

Do you have any questions before we begin?"

B.   INFORMED CONSENT (please provide a copy of consent form- need a signed consent form)

"Before we start, I would like you to read over the document in front of you. This document explains a little bit about this focus group and provides information about your rights as a participant. The study has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget, OMB (the office assists the President in supervising its administration in Federal agencies including the US Census Bureau). Our session today is completely confidential. Any names you provide will never be used in our reports, and all of the information you provide will be completely confidential. Also, your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can decline to answer any particular question. Please feel free to ask me any questions at any time. Once you have finished reading the document, please sign it."

C.   GUIDE TO FOCUS GROUP

1) Goal 1: Obtain background information on past experience with surveys in general.
2) Goal 2: Explore ways that new communication technologies can be used to encourage survey participation.

D.   QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Icebreaker: obtain background information on how students use communication technology
        "First, I would like to ask you about how you use, send and received information (communication) on a daily basis. What communication device do you typically use? Probes – email, Facebook, twitter, computer, laptop, cell phone, landline, postal mail

Goal 1: Obtain background information on past experience with surveys in general.
    1. How often are you asked to complete surveys and did you complete any of them?

a. Probe: Let's talk about the range of surveys you complete e.g. marketing, consumer instructor survey, opinion, political
2. What surveys do you actually complete and why?

Goal 2: Explore ways that new communication technologies can be used to encourage survey participation.

3. Generally, how do you find out about a survey?
   Probe:
   Did you find out at the same time when you receive the survey or did you receive an advance letter, email messages, text messages or phone calls?

4. Through what modes do you receive information about participating in the surveys?

5. Through what modes do you receive reminders about the surveys?

6. Is there an ideal and appropriate way for you to receive a survey?
   Probe: following a link in an email, delivered to your mobile phone, postal mail, speaking on your mobile phone, in person

7. Give me an example of a survey you completed using that mode that worked very well or did not work well
   Probes:
   - What is it about the survey that convinced you to participate or discourage you to participate?
   - What messages were communicated that encouraged/discouraged your participation?

E. FINAL COMMENTS?
8. Are there any comments concerning surveys or communication technologies that you would like to share?

F. DEBRIEFING

Thank you very much for talking to me today. I will use what you have told me today to help write a detailed report for the U.S. Census Bureau. As I mentioned before, I will not use any names in this report. This report will discuss how communication technologies might be used to contact and survey college students in the future. The report is important because the U.S. Census is used by many government agencies and social service organizations to determine a number of things that directly impact communities.