Attachment IV

Focus Group Protocols

Focus Group Protocol for

Students Planning to Attend a 4-Year Institution

WESTAT MODERATOR'S GUIDE

SCORECARD WEBSITE FOCUS GROUP

FOR COLLEGE-BOUND HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS (PLANNING TO ATTEND 4-YEAR COLLEGES)

(November 15, 2012)

INTERNAL INFORMATION ONLY

Study Purpose: To capture the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of consumers regarding the Scorecard website's content, design, and functionality. To collect feedback on web content and a new website the U.S. Department of Education created.

Intended Outcomes: Feedback from respondents will improve, enhance, or confirm the content and design decisions of the College Scorecard website (version 1).

ROADMAP OF ACTIVITIES PLANNED

Categories of Information to be Covered	Approx. Time Set Aside
Welcome/Ground-rules/Self-Introductions	10 minutes
Issue 1. Warm-up and Opening Questions	5 minutes
Issue 2. College Scorecard Content	35 minutes
Issue 3. College Scorecard Design	10 minutes

Issue 4. Content, Design, and Functionality of the College Scorecard Site	25 minutes
Issue 5. Wrap up/False Close	5 minutes
Total Time Allotted	**90 minutes**

A. Acknowledgment: I want to **thank you** for coming this evening and for fitting this session into your busy schedules.

B. Intro: My name is _____ and I work for Westat, a social science research firm in Rockville, MD. This evening, I will be the moderator for this 90-minute group discussion. Our purpose today is to discuss the content, design, and functionality of a new website created by the U.S. Department of Education to help students in their college search and selection process.

Agenda: During our time this evening, you will be doing several things, e.g., participating in a free-flowing conversation intended to spark the sharing of different points of views, reviewing documentation, and helping me compile and organize lists of information pertaining to the discussion.

C. Key Characteristics about the room we are in:

    a. <u>Mention mikes and taping.</u> The session is being recorded to enable me to write an accurate report, not of who said what but "what was said."
    b. <u>Mirror for Observers:</u> Colleagues from Westat to take notes and our clients from the Department of Education.

D. Guidelines: In order to make this an efficient session, here are some guidelines:

    a. Please talk one at a time.
    b. Talk in a voice as loud as mine.
    c. Avoid side conversations with your neighbors.
    d. I need to hear from everyone; however, you do not have to answer every question.
    e. It is OK to piggyback on someone else's comments.
    f. Work for equal "air time" so that no one talks too little or too much.
    g. Allow for different points of view. There are no wrong answers.

E. Self-Introductions: Please introduce yourself to the group by telling us:

    a. Your first name (only).
    b. Your favorite subject or hobby.
    c. Your favorite food.

ISSUE 1. WARM UP AND OPENING QUESTIONS

[5 minutes]

1. At what point are you in the college search process? That is, have you started? If so, have you narrowed down your list or are you still adding to it?

2. What **websites** did you or are you currently using to look for information when trying to decide which colleges to apply to?

    PROBE: Where, on the internet, did you collect most of your information?
                          Do you go to the college websites directly?
                          Where else?

3. During your search, what type of information have you found regarding the affordability and value of a potential college or university?

    PROBE: What does a college's affordability and value mean to you?

ISSUE 2. COLLEGE SCORECARD CONTENT

[35 minutes]

As I mentioned in the introduction, the U.S. Department of Education has created a new resource called "College Scorecard." The College Scorecard website is intended to help students and families identify colleges that are well-suited to their needs, priced affordably, and consistent with their career and educational goals. Using this website, students will be able to quickly and easily find more about a college's key indicators of affordability and value so they can make informed decisions about where to apply and ultimately enroll.

There are many sections of this new website that I would like you to discuss. However, instead of showing the website to you in its entirety, I first want to hear your reactions to certain sections in isolation. Therefore, for this part of the discussion, I'll ask your feedback specifically on the content presented only, instead of how the site looks or functions.

MODERATOR NOTE: Activity #1—Turn on projector. The PowerPoint presentation should already be loaded and ready. For each information category, read aloud the information on the first slide and then ask questions 1 – 6.

Cost: *The average net price for undergraduate in-state students is $14,852 per year. Net price is what undergraduate students pay after grants and scholarships (financial aid you don't have to pay back) are subtracted from the institution's published tuition and fees.*

Graduation Rate: *53.1% of full-time students received their bachelor's degree within 6 years. Graduation rate data are based on students who enrolled full-time and have never enrolled in college before – about 63% of students new to VCU each Fall.*

<u>Loan Default Rate:</u> *5% of borrowers defaulted on their Federal loans within three years of entering repayment.*

<u>Median Borrowing:</u> *Students at VCU typically borrow $18,039 in Federal loans for their undergraduate study. The Federal loan payment over 10 years for this amount is approximately $207.59 per month. Your borrowing may be different.*

<u>Employment:</u> *The U.S. Department of Education does not have this information. Before you enroll, ask VCU to tell you about how many of its graduates get jobs, what kinds of jobs they get, and how much they typically earn.*

1. **Text.** What does this information tell you about this prospective college or university?

2. **Text.** What do you think about the clarity of the information?

    Probe: Would other students like you understand it? What about their parents? What, if anything, would you like to see changed about how this information is described?

3. **Icons/Graphics.** At first glance, what does the icon on the left mean to you?

    Probe: How would you describe it in your own words? Is it easy or difficult to understand? If not easy, what would make it easier? Does it accurately reflect the summary information provided? Would you be able to understand the graphic if there was no related text? Would you be able to understand the text without the related graphic?

4. **[If applicable] Statistics.** What about the statistics that are provided with this information. How would you interpret them?

    Probe: Do you think students like you would find these numbers easy or difficult to understand? What about parents of students like you? If not easy, how would you change them so they are easier to understand?

5. **Category title.** What are your initial thoughts regarding the category title for this information?

Probe: Does the title accurately reflect the information? If not, what, if anything, would you change about it?

6. What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

Probe: Is there anything missing within this category that you think is critical for the college selection process?

7. **Employment Only.** What is your reaction to the information on employment? What did you expect to see covered here? Would you be inclined to ask a prospective college for this information?

> **Probe:** What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

MODERATOR NOTE: Ask Q8 independently of the five categories.

8. If you were given the opportunity of adding just one more category of information on affordability and value that would be helpful to you, what would it be?

9. **More Information.** Before we move on, I have some additional information that I would like for you to review. Please turn over the colored sheet of paper in front of you. and follow along as I read aloud the directions.

Directions: The information below is more information about two of these five categories. You would be able to find this information on the website by clicking a "help" or "more information" link. We would like your assessment on how easy this information is to understand. Please take the next 10 minutes to read the information to yourself. While you are reviewing this information please do these three things:

> 1. Circle the information that is the most important to you;
>
> 2. Underline information that needs more clarity or is unclear to you;
>
> 3. Cross out the information that you do not think is critical to you.
>
> 4. When you are finished, pass your paper to me.

Cost. *Costs refer to the average net price for undergraduates at the institution for academic year 2010-11. The institution's average net price is displayed with an indication of how it compares with average net prices among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees. The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) defines institutional net price as "the average yearly price actually charged to first-time, full-time undergraduate students receiving student aid at an institution of higher education after deducting such aid." Data used to calculate average net price come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.*

Median Borrowing. *The median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study at the institution is displayed. The estimated monthly repayment amount is also displayed. The monthly repayment amount is displayed with an indication of how it compares with monthly repayment amounts among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees. Data used to calculate the median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). The estimated monthly repayment amount has been calculated using the Department's standard, extended, and graduated repayment calculator based on an interest rate of 6.8%. For more information about repayment calculators and interest rates, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about. Note that a student's actual borrowing and monthly repayment amount may be different.*

ISSUE 3. COLLEGE SCORECARD DESIGN

[10 minutes]

The information about this prospective University has been compiled by the U.S. Department of Education in a format that they call a "Scorecard." Each scorecard includes the five pieces of information about a college that we just discussed: Costs, Graduation Rate, Loan Default Rate, Median Borrowing, and Employment. However, please note that the information included in the scorecard may not apply to all students. The Department of Education urges students to contact the institution for more specific information about these measures. Here is what a scorecard for the Virginia Commonwealth University looks like on the Scorecard website.

> <u>MODERATOR NOTE:</u>   Ask participants to turn over the large piece of paper in front of them.

10. **Organization.** How well is this information for the five components organized? Is it in the appropriate order? What makes you say that? If not, what should be the first piece of information?

11. **Aesthetics.** Now, take a step back from the words and the pictures and look at this page as a whole. What do you think about the overall look of the page?

    PROBE: What do you like most? Is there anything you would change, and if so, how? What do you think of the color scheme used?

ISSUE 4. Content, Design, and Functionality of the College Scorecard Site

[25 minutes]

I am now going to show you what the homepage of the College Scorecard website looks like.

> MODERATOR NOTE: Turn on computer monitor and pull up the
>
> Scorecard site.

12. Where do your eyes go first? What catches your attention?

    PROBE: What would you click on first? What makes you say that?

As you can see, there are nine criteria that you can use to search for prospective colleges. Zip code, state, and size are simple and self-explanatory; therefore, I would like to hear your reactions to the other criteria. Let's start with "Region."

    o **Region**

13. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

14. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

15. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

    PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

    o **Degree and Major**

16. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

17. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

18. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

    PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

o **Campus Setting**

19. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

20. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

21. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

    PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

    o **Awards offered**

22. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

23. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

24. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

    PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

    MODERATOR NOTE: Ask the next question after you have gone through all four criteria.

25. Now looking at this page as a whole, what do you like most about it? What do you like the least? What makes you say that?

    PROBE: If you had an opportunity, what, if anything, would you change?

ISSUE 5. WRAP UP AND FALSE CLOSE

[5 minutes]

26. Would you be **inclined to access** this site to assist you in identifying colleges based on affordability and value? Would you be inclined to recommend the site to your friends? What makes you say that?

27. Do you think this type of information could affect the decisions you will make on which schools to apply to? How?

False Close

Thank you so much for being here tonight. Before we conclude, I need to step out for a few minutes to make sure we have everything ready for you.

Moderator checks with observers for one additional question to pose, time permitting.

Final close

Upon return, moderator will pose questions from observers, if any.

This concludes our discussion for tonight. Again, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy lives to be here with us tonight. The facility has your envelope ready for you. Please enjoy the rest of your evening and travel home safely.

Focus Group Protocol for

Students Planning to Attend a 2-Year Institution

WESTAT MODERATOR'S GUIDE

SCORECARD WEBSITE FOCUS GROUP

FOR COLLEGE-BOUND HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS (PLANNING TO ATTEND 2-YEAR COLLEGES)

(November 15, 2012)

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[5 minutes]

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2. What **websites** did you or are you currently using to look for information when trying to decide which colleges to apply to?

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   Do you go to the college websites directly?
   Where else?

3. During your search, what type of information have you found regarding the affordability and value of a potential college or university?

   PROBE: What does a college's affordability and value mean to you?

ISSUE 2. COLLEGE SCORECARD CONTENT

[35 minutes]

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<u>Employment:</u> *The U.S. Department of Education does not have this information. Before you enroll, ask VCU to tell you about how many of its graduates get jobs, what kinds of jobs they get, and how much they typically earn.*

1. **Text.** What does this information tell you about this prospective college or university?

2. **Text.** What do you think about the clarity of the information?

    > **Probe:** Would other students like you understand it? What about their parents? What, if anything, would you like to see changed about how this information is described?

3. **Icons/Graphics.** At first glance, what does the icon on the left mean to you?

    > **Probe:** How would you describe it in your own words? Is it easy or difficult to understand? If not easy, what would make it easier? Does it accurately reflect the summary information provided? Would you be able to understand the graphic if there was no related text? Would you be able to understand the text without the related graphic?

4. **[If applicable] Statistics.** What about the statistics that are provided with this information. How would you interpret them?

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5. **Category title.** What are your initial thoughts regarding the category title for this information?

Probe: Does the title accurately reflect the information? If not, what, if anything, would you change about it?

6. What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

> **Probe**: Is there anything missing within this category that you think is critical for the college selection process?

> MODERATOR NOTE: The following question is only asked for the Employment slides.

7. **Employment Only.** What is your reaction to the information on employment? What did you expect to see covered here? Would you be inclined to ask a prospective college for this information?

> **Probe:** What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

MODERATOR NOTE: Ask Q8 independently of the five categories.

8. If you were given the opportunity of adding just one more category of information on affordability and value that would be helpful to you, what would it be?

9. **More Information.** Before we move on, I have some additional information that I would like for you to review. Please turn over the colored sheet of paper in front of you. and follow along as I read aloud the directions.

Directions: The information below is more information about two of these five categories. You would be able to find this information on the website by clicking a "help" or "more information" link. We would like your assessment on how easy this information is to understand. Please take the next 10 minutes to read the information to yourself. While you are reviewing this information please do these three things:

1. Circle the information that is the most important to you;

2. Underline information that needs more clarity or is unclear to you;   3. Cross out the information that you do not think is critical to you.

4. When you are finished, pass your paper to me.

Cost. *Costs refer to the average net price for undergraduates at the institution for academic year 2010-11. The institution's average net price is displayed with an indication of how it compares with average net prices among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees. The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) defines institutional net price as "the average yearly price actually charged to first-time, full-time undergraduate students receiving student aid at an institution of higher education after deducting such aid." Data used to calculate average net price come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit* http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about*.*

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate displayed is for first-time, full-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who began at the institution. For primarily bachelor's degree-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2005 and seeking a bachelor's degree. For primarily associate's degree-granting institutions and primarily certificate-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2008. If the institution reports transfer out rates for first-time, full-time students, that rate is displayed as well. The percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time in Fall 2011 is also displayed. The institution's graduation rate is displayed with an indication of how it compares with graduation rates among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees. Data used to calculate an institution's graduation rate; transfer-out rate, if applicable; and percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about*.*

ISSUE 3. COLLEGE SCORECARD DESIGN

[10 minutes]

The information about this prospective University has been compiled by the U.S. Department of Education in a format that they call a "Scorecard." Each scorecard includes the five pieces of information about a college that we just discussed: Costs, Graduation Rate, Loan Default Rate, Median Borrowing, and Employment. However, please note that the information included in the scorecard may not apply to all students. The Department of Education urges students to contact the institution for more specific information about these measures. Here is what a scorecard for the Virginia Commonwealth University looks like on the Scorecard website.

> <u>MODERATOR NOTE:</u>   Ask participants to turn over the large piece of paper in front of them.

10.   **Organization.** How well is this information for the five components organized? Is it in the appropriate order? What makes you say that? If not, what should be the first piece of information?

11.   **Aesthetics.** Now, take a step back from the words and the pictures and look at this page as a whole. What do you think about the overall look of the page?

> **PROBE:** What do you like most? Is there anything you would change, and if so, how? What do you think of the color scheme used?

ISSUE 4. Content, Design, and Functionality of the College Scorecard Site

[25 minutes]

I am now going to show you what the homepage of the College Scorecard website looks like.

> MODERATOR NOTE: Turn on computer monitor and pull up the Scorecard site.

12.   Where do your eyes go first? What catches your attention?

   PROBE: What would you click on first? What makes you say that?

As you can see, there are nine criteria that you can use to search for prospective colleges. Zip code, state, and size are simple and self-explanatory; therefore, I would like to hear your reactions to the other criteria. Let's start with "Region."

   o **Region**

13. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

14. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

15. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

   PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

   o **Degree and Major**

16.   [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

17.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

18.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

   PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

   o **Occupation**

19.   [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

20.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

21.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

   PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

   o **Distance education**

22.   Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

23.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

24.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

   PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

   MODERATOR NOTE: Ask the next question after you have gone through all four criteria.

25.   Now looking at this page as a whole, what do you like most about it? What do you like the least? What makes you say that?

   PROBE: If you had an opportunity, what, if anything, would you change?

ISSUE 5. WRAP UP AND FALSE CLOSE

[5 minutes]

26.   Would you be **inclined to access** this site to assist you in identifying colleges based on affordability and value? Would you be inclined to recommend the site to your friends? What makes you say that?

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False Close

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Moderator checks with observers for one additional question to pose, time permitting.

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This concludes our discussion for tonight. Again, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy lives to be here with us tonight. The facility has your envelope ready for you. Please enjoy the rest of your evening and travel home safely.

Focus Group Protocol for

Parents of High School Seniors

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FOR PARENTS OF COLLEGE-BOUND HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

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   a. <u>Mention mikes and taping.</u> The session is being recorded to enable me to write an accurate report, not of who said what but "what was said."
   b. <u>Mirror for Observers:</u> Colleagues from Westat to take notes and our clients from the Department of Education.

D. Guidelines: In order to make this an efficient session, here are some guidelines:

   a. Please talk one at a time.
   b. Talk in a voice as loud as mine.
   c. Avoid side conversations with your neighbors.
   d. I need to hear from everyone; however, you do not have to answer every question.
   e. It is OK to piggyback on someone else's comments.
   f. Work for equal "air time" so that no one talks too little or too much.
   g. Allow for different points of view. There are no wrong answers.

E. Self-Introductions: Please introduce yourself to the group by telling us:

   a. Your first name (only).
   b. Your favorite subject or hobby.
   c. Your favorite food.

ISSUE 1. WARM UP AND OPENING QUESTIONS

[5 minutes]

1. At what point in the college search process is your teenager? That is, have they started? If so, are you helping them to narrow down the list or are you/they still adding to it?

2. What **websites** did you and your teenager use or are currently using to look for information when trying to decide which colleges to apply to?

   PROBE: Where, on the internet, did you collect most of your information? Did you go to the college websites directly? Where else?

3. During your search, what type of information have you found regarding the affordability and value of a potential college or university?

   PROBE: What does a college's affordability and value mean to you?

ISSUE 2. COLLEGE SCORECARD CONTENT

[35 minutes]

As I mentioned in the introduction, the U.S. Department of Education has created a new resource called the "College Scorecard." The College Scorecard website is intended to help students and families identify colleges that are well-suited to their needs, priced affordably, and consistent with their career and educational goals. Using this website, students and their families will be able to quickly and easily find more about a college's key indicators of affordability and value so they can make informed decisions about where to apply and ultimately enroll.

There are many sections of this new website that I would like you to discuss. However, instead of showing the website to you in its entirety, I first want to hear your reactions to certain sections in isolation. Therefore, for this part of the discussion, I'll ask your feedback specifically on the content presented only, instead of how the site looks or functions.

MODERATOR NOTE: Activity #1—Turn on projector. The PowerPoint presentation should already be loaded and ready. For each information category, read aloud the information on the first slide and then ask questions 1-6.

Cost: *The average net price for undergraduate in-state students is $14,852 per year. Net price is what undergraduate students pay after grants and scholarships (financial aid you don't have to pay back) are subtracted from the institution's published tuition and fees.*

Graduation Rate: *53.1% of full-time students received their bachelor's degree within 6 years. Graduation rate data are based on students who enrolled full-time and have never enrolled in college before – about 63% of students new to VCU each Fall.*

<u>Loan Default Rate:</u> *5% of borrowers defaulted on their Federal loans within three years of entering repayment.*

<u>Median Borrowing:</u> *Students at VCU typically borrow $18,039 in Federal loans for their undergraduate study. The Federal loan payment over 10 years for this amount is approximately $207.59 per month. Your borrowing may be different.*

<u>Employment:</u> *The U.S. Department of Education does not have this information. Before you enroll, ask VCU to tell you about how many of its graduates get jobs, what kinds of jobs they get, and how much they typically earn.*

1. **Text.** What does this information tell you about this prospective college or university?

2. **Text.** What do you think about the clarity of the information?

   > **Probe:** Would your teenager understand it? What about other students and their parents? What, if anything, would you like to see changed about how this information is described?

3. **Icons/Graphics.** At first glance, what does the icon on the left mean to you?

   > **Probe:** How would you describe it in your own words? Is it easy or difficult to understand? If not easy, what would make it easier? Does it accurately reflect the summary information provided? Would you be able to understand the graphic if there was no related text? Would you be able to understand the text without the related graphic?

4. **[If applicable] Statistics.** What about the statistics that are provided with this information. How would you interpret them?

   > **Probe:** Do you think students like your teenager would find these numbers easy or difficult to understand? What about other parents? If not easy, how would you change them so they are easier to understand?

5. **Category title.** What are your initial thoughts regarding the category title for this information?

Probe: Does the title accurately reflect the information? If not, what, if anything, would you change about it?

6. What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

> **Probe**: Is there anything missing within this category that you think is critical for the college selection process?

> MODERATOR NOTE: The following question is only asked for the Employment slides.

7. **Employment Only.** What is your reaction to the information on employment? What did you expect to see covered here? Would you be inclined to ask a prospective college for this information?

> **Probe:** What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

> MODERATOR NOTE: Ask Q8 independently of the five categories.

8. If you were given the opportunity of adding just one more category of information on affordability and value that would be helpful to you, what would it be?

9. **More Information.** Before we move on, I have some additional information that I would like for you to review. Please turn over the colored sheet of paper in front of you and follow along as I read aloud the directions.

Directions: The information below is more information about two of these five categories. You would be able to find this information on the Scorecard website by clicking a "help" or "more information" link. We would like your assessment on how easy this information is to understand. Please take the next 10 minutes to read the information to yourself. While you are reviewing this information please do these three things:

1. Circle the information that is the most important to you;

2. Underline information that needs more clarity or is unclear to you;

3. Cross out the information that you do not think is critical to you.

4. When you are finished, pass your paper to me.

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate displayed is for first-time, full-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who began at the institution. For primarily bachelor's degree-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2005 and seeking a bachelor's degree. For primarily associate's degree-granting institutions and primarily certificate-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2008. If the institution reports transfer out rates for first-time, full-time students, that rate is displayed as well. The percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time in Fall 2011 is also displayed. The institution's graduation rate is displayed with an indication of how it compares with graduation rates among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees. Data used to calculate an institution's graduation rate; transfer-out rate, if applicable; and percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.

Loan Default Rate

Loan default rate refers to the institution's three-year cohort default rate. This is the percentage of an institution's borrowers who entered repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans in federal fiscal year 2009 (between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009) and who defaulted before September 30, 2011. The national cohort default rate is also displayed. Data used to calculate an institution's cohort default rate come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). For more information about the cohort default rate, please visit http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html.

ISSUE 3. COLLEGE SCORECARD DESIGN

[10 minutes]

The information about this prospective University has been compiled by the U.S. Department of Education in a format that they call a "Scorecard." Each scorecard includes the five pieces of information about a college that we just discussed: Costs, Graduation Rate, Loan Default Rate, Median Borrowing, and Employment. However, please note that the information included in the Scorecard may not apply to all students. The Department of Education urges students to contact the institution for more specific information about these measures. Here is what a scorecard for the Virginia Commonwealth University looks like on the Scorecard website.

> MODERATOR NOTE: Ask participants to turn over the large piece of paper in front of them.

10.   **Organization.** How well is this information for the five components organized? Is it in the appropriate order? What makes you say that? If not, what should be the first piece of information?

11.   **Aesthetics.** Now, take a step back from the words and the pictures and look at this page as a whole. What do you think about the overall look of the page?

PROBE: What do you like most? Is there anything you would change, and if so, how? What do you think of the color scheme used?

ISSUE 4. Content, Design, and Functionality of the College Scorecard Site

[25 minutes]

I am now going to show you what the homepage of the College Scorecard website looks like.

> MODERATOR NOTE: Turn on computer monitor and pull up the Scorecard site.

12. Where do your eyes go first? What catches your attention?

PROBE: What would you click on first? What makes you say that?

As you can see, there are nine criteria that you can use to search for prospective colleges. Zipcode, State, and Size are simple and self-explanatory; therefore, I would like to hear your reactions to the other criteria. Let's start with "Region."

o **Region**

13. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

14. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

15. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

o **Degree and Major**

16. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

17. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

18. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

o **Occupation**

19. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

20. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

21. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

    PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

    o **Awards offered**

22. [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

23. [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

24. What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

    PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

    MODERATOR NOTE: Ask the next question after you have gone through all four criteria.

25.   Now looking at this page as a whole, what do you like most about it? What do you like the least? What makes you say that?

    PROBE: If you had an opportunity, what, if anything, would you change?

ISSUE 5. WRAP UP AND FALSE CLOSE

[5 minutes]

26.   Would you be **inclined to access** this site to assist you and your teenager in identifying colleges based on affordability and value? Would you be inclined to recommend the site to your friends? What makes you say that?

27.   Do you think this type of information could affect the decisions your family will make on which schools to apply to? How?

False Close

Thank you so much for being here tonight. Before we conclude, I need to step out for a few minutes to make sure we have everything ready for you.

Moderator checks with observers for one additional question to pose, time permitting.

Final close

Upon return, moderator will pose questions from observers, if any.

This concludes our discussion for tonight. Again, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy lives to be here with us tonight. The facility has your envelope ready for you. Please enjoy the rest of your evening and travel home safely.

Focus Group Protocol for

Guidance Counselors

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

SCORECARD WEBSITE FOCUS GROUP

FOR GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

(Rev. November 15, 2012)

INTERNAL INFORMATION ONLY

Study Purpose: To garner the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of consumers regarding the Scorecard website's content, design, and functionality. To collect feedback on web content and a new website the U.S. Department of Education created.

Intended Outcomes: Respondents provide feedback that will improve, enhance, and/or confirm the content and design decisions of Version 1 of the Scorecard website.

ROADMAP OF ACTIVITIES PLANNED

Categories of Information to be Covered	Approx. Time Set Aside
Welcome/Ground-rules/Self-Introductions	10 minutes
Issue 1. Warm-up and Opening Questions	5 minutes
Issue 2. College Scorecard Content	35 minutes
Issue 3. College Scorecard Design	10 minutes

Issue 4. Content, Design, and Functionality of the College Scorecard Site	25 minutes
Issue 5. Wrap up/False Close	5 minutes
Total Time Allotted	**90 minutes**

A. Acknowledgment: I want to **thank you** for coming this evening and for fitting this session into your busy schedules.

B. Intro: My name is _____ and I work for Westat, a social science research firm in Rockville, MD. This evening, I will be the moderator for this 90-minute group discussion. Our purpose today is to discuss the content, design, and functionality of a new website created by the U.S. Department of Education to help students in their college search and selection process.

Agenda: During our time this evening, you will be doing several things, e.g., participating in a free-flowing conversation intended to spark the sharing of different points of views, reviewing documentation, and helping me compile and organize lists of information pertaining to the discussion.

C. Key Characteristics about the room we are in:

   a. <u>Mention mikes and taping.</u> The session is being recorded to enable me to write an accurate report, not of who said what but "what was said."
   b. <u>Mirror for Observers:</u> Colleagues from Westat to take notes and our clients from the Department of Education.

D. Guidelines: In order to make this an efficient session, here are some guidelines:

   a. Please talk one at a time.
   b. Talk in a voice as loud as mine.
   c. Avoid side conversations with your neighbors.
   d. I need to hear from everyone; however, you do not have to answer every question.
   e. It is OK to piggyback on someone else's comments.
   f. Work for equal "air time" so that no one talks too little or too much.
   g. Allow for different points of view. There are no wrong answers.

E. Self Introductions: Please introduce yourself to the group by telling us:

   a. Your first name (only).
   b. How long you have served as a guidance counselor.
   c. Your favorite food.

ISSUE 1. WARM UP AND OPENING QUESTIONS

[5 minutes]

1. Given all of your responsibilities as a guidance counselor, to what extent are you **involved in** helping students **search for colleges**?

       OPTIONAL PROBE: Which search activities do you help students with the most?

2. What **websites** do students use to look for information when trying to decide which colleges to apply to?

       PROBE: Where, on the internet, do students collect most of their information?
Do they go to the college websites directly?
Where else?

ISSUE 2. SCORECARD CONTENT

[30 minutes]

As I mentioned in the introduction, the U.S. Department of Education has created a new resource called "College Scorecard." The College Scorecard website is intended to help students and families identify colleges that are well-suited to their needs, priced affordably, and consistent with their career and educational goals. Using this website, students will be able to quickly and easily find more about a college's key indicators of affordability and value so they can make informed decisions about where to apply and ultimately enroll.

There are many components of this new website that I would like you to discuss. However, instead of showing the website to you in its entirety, I first want to hear your reactions to certain components in isolation. Therefore, for this part of the discussion, I'll ask for your feedback specifically on the content presented only, instead of how the site looks or functions.

> MODERATOR NOTE: Activity #1—Turn on projector. The PowerPoint presentation should already be loaded and ready. For each information category, read aloud the information on the first slide and then ask questions 1-6.

Cost: *The average net price for undergraduate in-state students is $14,852 per year. Net price is what undergraduate students pay after grants and scholarships (financial aid you don't have to pay back) are subtracted from the institution's published tuition and fees.*

Graduation Rate: *53.1% of full-time students received their bachelor's degree within 6 years. Graduation rate data are based on students who enrolled full-time and have never enrolled in college before – about 63% of students new to VCU each Fall.*

<u>Loan Default Rate:</u> *5% of borrowers defaulted on their Federal loans within three years of entering repayment.*

<u>Median Borrowing:</u> *Students at VCU typically borrow $18,039 in Federal loans for their undergraduate study. The Federal loan payment over 10 years for this amount is approximately $207.59 per month. Your borrowing may be different.*

<u>Employment:</u> *The U.S. Department of Education does not have this information. Before you enroll, ask VCU to tell you about how many of its graduates get jobs, what kinds of jobs they get, and how much they typically earn.*

1. **Text.** What does this information tell you about this prospective college or university?

2. **Text.** What do you think about the clarity of the information?

    > **Probe:** Would your students understand it? What about their parents? What, if anything, would you like to see changed about how this information is described?

3. **Icons/Graphics.** At first glance, what does the icon on the left mean to you?

    > **Probe:** How would you interpret it? Is it easy or difficult to understand? If not easy, what would make it easier? Does it accurately reflect the summary information provided? Would you be able to understand the graphic if there was no related text? Would you be able to understand the text without the related graphic?

4. **[If applicable] Statistics.** What about the statistics that are provided with this information. How would you interpret them?

    > **Probe:** Do you think your students/their parents would find these numbers easy or difficult to understand? If not easy, how would you change them so they are easier to understand? What about for different groups of students and parents of students—first generation college goers, limited-English speaking (ESL) students or parents, etc.

5. **Category title.** What are your initial thoughts regarding the category title for this information?

> **Probe:** Does the title accurately reflect the information? If not, what, if anything, would you change about it?

6. What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

> **Probe**: Is there anything missing within this category that you think is critical for a student's college selection process?

> MODERATOR NOTE: The following question is only asked for the Employment slides.

7. **Employment Only.** What is your reaction to the information on employment? What did you expect to see covered here? Would you be inclined to ask a prospective college for this information?

> **Probe:** What additional information would you want to know pertaining to this content, keeping in mind the focus of this site is on affordability and value?

> MODERATOR NOTE: Ask Q8 independently of the five categories.

8. If you were given the opportunity of adding just one more category of information on affordability and value that would be helpful to students, what would it be?

9. **More Information.** Before we move on, I have some additional information that I would like for you to review. Please turn over the colored sheet of paper in front of you and follow along as I read aloud the directions.

Directions: The information below is more information about two of these five categories. You would be able to find this information on the website by clicking a "help" or "more information" link. We would like your assessment on how easy this information is to understand. Please take the next 10 minutes to read the information to yourself. While you are reviewing this information please do these three things:

1. Circle the information that is the most important to you;

2. Underline information that needs more clarity or is unclear to you;   3. Cross out the information that you do not think is critical to you.

4. When you are finished, pass your paper to me.

Loan Default Rate. *Loan default rate refers to the institution's three-year cohort default rate. This is the percentage of an institution's borrowers who entered repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans in federal fiscal year 2009 (between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009) and who defaulted before September 30, 2011. The national cohort default rate is also displayed. Data used to calculate an institution's cohort default rate come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). For more information about the cohort default rate, please visit* http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html.

Median Borrowing. *The median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study at the institution is displayed. The estimated monthly repayment amount is also displayed. The monthly repayment amount is displayed with an indication of how it compares with monthly repayment amounts among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees. Data used to calculate the median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). The estimated monthly repayment amount has been calculated using the Department's standard, extended, and graduated repayment calculator based on an interest rate of 6.8%. For more information about repayment calculators and interest rates, please visit* http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about. *Note that a student's actual borrowing and monthly repayment amount may be different.*

ISSUE 3. SCORECARD DESIGN

[10 minutes]

The information about this prospective University has been compiled by the U.S. Department of Education in a format that they call a "Scorecard." Each scorecard includes the five pieces of information about a college that we just discussed: Costs, Graduation Rate, Loan Default Rate, Median Borrowing, and Employment. However, please note that the information included in the scorecard may not apply to all students. The Department of Education urges students to contact the institution for more specific information about these measures. Here is what a scorecard for the Virginia Commonwealth University looks like on the Scorecard website.

        <u>MODERATOR NOTE:</u>   Ask participants to turn over the large piece of paper in front of them.

10.   **Organization.** How well is this information for the five components organized? Is it in the appropriate order? What makes you say that? What should be the first piece of information?

11.   **Aesthetics.** Now, take a step back from the words and the pictures and look at this page as a whole. What do you think about the overall look of the page?

        PROBE: What do you like most? Is there anything you would change, and if so, how? What do you think of the color scheme used?

ISSUE 4. Content, Design, and Functionality of the Scorecard Site

[20 minutes]

I am now going to show you what the homepage of the College Scorecard website looks like.

       MODERATOR NOTE: Turn on computer monitor and pull up the Scorecard site.

12.   Where do your eyes go first? What catches your attention?

      PROBE: What would you click on first? What makes you say that?

As you can see, there are nine criteria that you can use to search for prospective colleges. Zip code, state, and size are simple and self-explanatory; therefore, I would like to hear your reactions to the other criteria. Let's start with "Region."

      o **Region**

13.   [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

14.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

15.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

      PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

      o **Degree and Major**

16.   [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

17.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

18.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

     PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

       o **Occupation**

19.   [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

20.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

21.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

     PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

       o **Awards offered**

22.   [Before you click on criterion] What type of information do you expect to find under this criteria?

23.   [After you click on criterion] How does the information that you expected to find compare to what is actually there?

24.   What are your thoughts about the information that is listed under this criterion? Is it clear what it means?

     PROBE: What information, if any, would you change? What makes you say that? In looking at all nine search criteria, would you add anything? Remove anything?

25.	Now looking at this page as a whole, what do you like most about it? What do you like the least? What makes you say that?

PROBE: If you had an opportunity, what, if anything, would you change?

ISSUE 5. WRAP UP AND FALSE CLOSE

[5 minutes]

26.   Do you think students would **be inclined to access** this site to assist them in identifying colleges based on affordability and value? Would you be inclined to recommend the site to them? What makes you say that?

27.   Do you think this type of information could affect the decisions students will make on the schools they apply to? In what ways?

False Close

Thank you so much for being here tonight. Before we conclude, I need to step out for a few minutes to make sure we have everything ready for you.

Moderator checks with observers for one additional question to pose, time permitting.

Final close

Upon return, moderator will pose questions from observers, if any.

Well, that concludes our discussion for tonight. Again, thank you so much for taking time out of your very busy lives to be here with us tonight. The facility has your envelope ready for you. Please enjoy the rest of your evening and travel home safely.

Attachment V

Focus Group Materials

Handouts

Handout #1

Cost

Costs refer to the average net price for undergraduates at the institution for academic year 2010-11. The institution's average net price is displayed with an indication of how it compares with average net prices among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) defines institutional net price as "the average yearly price actually charged to first-time, full-time undergraduate students receiving student aid at an institution of higher education after deducting such aid." Data used to calculate average net price come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.

Median Borrowing

The median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study at the institution is displayed. The estimated monthly repayment amount is also displayed.

The monthly repayment amount is displayed with an indication of how it compares with monthly repayment amounts among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

Data used to calculate the median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). The estimated monthly repayment amount has been calculated using the

Department's standard, extended, and graduated repayment calculator based on an interest rate of 6.8%. For more information about repayment calculators and interest rates, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.

Note that a student's actual borrowing and monthly repayment amount may be different.

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Costs refer to the average net price for undergraduates at the institution for academic year 2010-11. The institution's average net price is displayed with an indication of how it compares with average net prices among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

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Graduation Rate

The graduation rate displayed is for first-time, full-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who began at the institution. For primarily bachelor's degree-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2005 and seeking a bachelor's degree. For primarily associate's degree-granting institutions and primarily certificate-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2008. If the institution reports transfer out rates for first-time, full-time students, that rate is displayed as well. The percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time in Fall 2011 is also displayed.

The institution's graduation rate is displayed with an indication of how it compares with graduation rates among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example,

the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

Data used to calculate an institution's graduation rate; transfer-out rate, if applicable; and percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate displayed is for first-time, full-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students who began at the institution. For primarily bachelor's degree-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2005 and seeking a bachelor's degree. For primarily associate's degree-granting institutions and primarily certificate-granting institutions, the graduation rate displayed is for students beginning in Fall 2008. If the institution reports transfer out rates for first-time, full-time students, that rate is displayed as well. The percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time in Fall 2011 is also displayed.

The institution's graduation rate is displayed with an indication of how it compares with graduation rates among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

Data used to calculate an institution's graduation rate; transfer-out rate, if applicable; and percent of entering students who were counted as first-time, full-time come from an institution's annual submission to the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). For more information about IPEDS, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.

Loan Default Rate

Loan default rate refers to the institution's three-year cohort default rate. This is the percentage of an institution's borrowers who entered repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans in federal fiscal year 2009 (between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009) and who defaulted before September 30, 2011. The national cohort default rate is also displayed.

Data used to calculate an institution's cohort default rate come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). For more information about the cohort default rate, please visit http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html.

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Median Borrowing

The median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study at the institution is displayed. The estimated monthly repayment amount is also displayed.

The monthly repayment amount is displayed with an indication of how it compares with monthly repayment amounts among institutions that primarily grant the same level of award. For example, the comparison group for an institution that primarily awards bachelor's degrees is all institutions that primarily award bachelor's degrees.

Data used to calculate the median amount of Federal student loans borrowed by students for their undergraduate study come from the U.S. Department of Education's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS). The estimated monthly repayment amount has been calculated using the Department's standard, extended, and graduated repayment calculator based on an interest rate of 6.8%. For more information about repayment calculators and interest rates, please visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/about.

Note that a student's actual borrowing and monthly repayment amount may be different.

Handout #2

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Richmond, VA
Primarily bachelor's degree granting
Undergraduate enrollment: 23,498

🔍 Back to Search　　ⓘ More Information　　🖨 Print Profile

Costs 🖩

What does it cost to attend VCU?

The average net price for undergraduate in-state students is $14,852 per year. Net price is what undergraduate students pay after grants and scholarships (financial aid you don't have to pay back) are subtracted from the institution's published tuition and fees.

🖩 Click here to go to the Net Price Calculator for a better estimate of what your costs would be.

$14,852 / yr

Medium　　Low　　High

Graduation Rate 🎓

53.1%

Low　Medium　High

How many students graduate and how long does it take?

53.1% of full-time students received their bachelor's degree within 6 years. Graduation rate data are based on students who enrolled full-time and have never enrolled in college before – about 63% of students new to VCU each Fall.

Loan Default Rate ⅌

Are students able to repay their loans after they graduate?

5% of borrowers defaulted on their Federal loans within three years of entering repayment.

5%
This Institution

13.4%
National

Median Borrowing $

How much debt do students have when they graduate?

Students at VCU typically borrow $18,039 in Federal loans for their undergraduate study. The Federal loan payment over 10 years for this amount is approximately $207.59 per month. Your borrowing may be different.

To learn about loan repayment options, go to:
http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/understand/plans

$207.59 / mo

Medium　　Low　　High

Employment 💼

What kinds of jobs do students have when they graduate?

The U.S. Department of Education does not have this information. Before you enroll, ask VCU to tell you about how many of its graduates get jobs, what kinds of jobs they get, and how much they typically earn.

Visit http://www.mynextmove.org to explore what potential careers a particular postsecondary program or major prepares you to enter. The site has information about current earnings and potential growth in those occupations.