

## OPC/ UPEP FACULTY FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

### BACKGROUND & GUIDELINES

#### MODERATOR:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group about your experience with the [Onondaga Pathways to Careers (OPC) Program/Universal Pathways to Employment Program (UPEP)].

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I work for a company called Social Dynamics, an independent research firm located in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Social Dynamics is acting as subcontractor to Westat, an independent research firm in Rockville, Maryland who is contracted by the Department of Labor to conduct this focus group as part of the evaluation of the Pathways to Careers: Community College Interventions for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities grant program.

As you may know, the purpose of our focus groups is to get the honest opinions of the faculty here at the community college. Today, we want to hear your experiences and opinions related to [OPC/UPEP].

Before we begin, I would like to review a few details about our discussion:

- The focus group will take about one hour.
- Your participation in today's focus group is voluntary. You are free to leave at any time. But we hope that you will stay for the entire session.
- There are no right and wrong answers. We ask only that you provide your honest opinion.
- Your individual comments are strictly confidential and will not be shared with the college administration or any other staff members.
- We are tape recording the focus group so that we don't miss anything important.
- I have a lot that I want to talk about today. So, don't be surprised if at some point I interrupt the discussion to move to another topic. But, don't let me cut you off. If there is something important you want to say, let me know and you can add your thoughts before we change subjects.

- After we conduct several of these focus groups, summaries from these discussions will be part of a report we will write. Your name will not appear anywhere in the report. *What you say today will not be attached to your name at any point.*

The interview will last one hour. We will finish around \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you have any questions before we start?

## INTRODUCTION

Today we're going to be talking about the [Onondaga Pathways to Careers (OPC) Program/Universal Pathways to Employment Program (UPEP)] here at your college and your interaction with it. Some of the topics we're going to focus on are your role in the program, some of the strategies and initiatives you may be involved with as an instructor, and your work with the students.

Let's begin.

### Onondaga Pathways to Careers (OPC)/Universal Pathways to Employment Program (UPEP)

#### 1. How would you describe [OPC/UPEP]?

**PROBES (if needed):**

- What student populations does it focus on?
- What are its goals?

#### 2. How did you first learn about [OPC/UPEP]?

#### 3. As a result of the program, how did your work or responsibilities change?

**PROBES (if needed):**

- How did your reporting responsibilities change?
- How did your responsibilities related to course design change?
- How did your instructional techniques change?
- How did your student advisement responsibilities change?
- How did your participation in training events change?

### Accessibility & Inclusion

Now we're going to talk about accessibility and inclusionary practices for students with disabilities here at the college.

#### 4. What does the phrase "accessible to students with disabilities" mean to you? How would you define it?

**PROBES (if needed):**

- Is accessibility focused only on physical access? Does “programmatically accessibility” have a different definition for you? What would that definition be?
5. Are the definitions you’ve provided different from those you would have given prior to [OPC/UPEP]? If yes, what has changed in your definition? What has caused it to change?
  6. What does it mean to you to make the courses you teach accessible? Is this different than prior to [OPC/UPEP]?

**PROBES (if needed):**

- What actions do you take to assist students who perceive (hear/see) differently?
  - What actions do you take to assist students who have mobility challenges?
  - What actions do you take to assist students who learn differently?
  - Are there services you recommend to students to assist them?
  - Are there services you access to assist you?
7. Are the definitions you’ve provided different from those you would have given prior to [OPC/UPEP]? If yes, what has changed in your definition? What has caused it to change?
  8. What services are you aware of here at the college that promote accessibility and inclusion of students with disabilities?
    - Are the college’s online systems accessible to students with disabilities, for example, online systems for applying or enrolling, registering for classes, or requesting services or accommodations?
    - How well would you say the college communicates about issues of accessibility to staff and students with disabilities?
  9. What actions do you take if a student discloses to you that they have a disability?

**PROBES (if needed):**

- What procedures must the student complete in order to receive an accommodation?
- What are your responsibilities once a student discloses a disability?

## Technical Assistance Received

Next, I’d like to talk about some of the technical assistance that the college has received or provided to faculty to support [OPC/UPEP]. First, let’s discuss Universal Design for Learning. Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

**10. Are you familiar with Universal Design for Learning? If yes, please describe how you heard about it.**

**11. Tell me about any training you have received on Universal Design for Learning.**

**PROBES (if needed):**

- What topics did the training cover?
- Who provided the training?
- How was the training presented to you (e.g., webinars, manuals, classroom instruction)?
- Was the training required or voluntary?

**12. To what extent has the training you've received been made available to all instructors at [OCC/PSCC]?**

**PROBES (if needed):**

- Has the training been used by instructors outside of [OPC/UPEP]? If yes, please give an example.
- Has the training been used in career and technical education courses outside of the courses that you teach? If yes, please give an example.

**13. Are you incorporating Universal Design for Learning principles in your courses now? If so, how?**

**PROBES (if needed):**

- Has what you've learned influenced how you present information to the class?
- Has what you've learned influenced how you ask your students to demonstrate their understanding of the material?
- Has what you've learned influenced your ability to maintain your students' focus on the instruction?

**14. What impact, if any, do you believe Universal Design for Learning will have on the persistence and completion of students participating in [OPC/UPEP]?**

**15. What impact, if any, do you believe Universal Design for Learning will have on other programs here at [OCC/PSCC], for example, other academic programs, career development programs, or disability service programs?**

**16. Tell me about any other training you have received related to students with disabilities.**

**PROBES (if needed):**

- What topics did the training cover (e.g., Guideposts for Success)?
- Who provided the training? Was it provided through [OPC/UPEP]?

- How was the training presented to you (e.g., webinars, manuals, classroom instruction)?
- Was the training required or voluntary?

**17. How have you used this additional training you have received?**

**PROBES (if needed):**

- Has what you've learned influenced your course instruction in any way?
- Has what you've learned in any way influenced how you interact with students?

## Advising Students

**I'd like to talk about the career advisement you conduct with your students now.**

**18. Please describe the career advisement you provide the students in the [Onondaga Pathways to Careers (OPC) program or the Universal Pathways to Employment Program (UPEP)].**

**PROBES:**

- How do you encourage students to self-explore their career options?
- Is there a focused career exploration program you conduct with the students?
- What career planning and preparation strategies do you share with your students?

**19. Are these practices different as a result of training provided by [OPC/UPEP]? How so?**

**PROBE (if needed):**

- What approaches are new? How do they differ from what you've done to provide career advisement in the past?

**20. Have you participated in the development of an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) or an Individualized Career Plan (ICP)? If yes, please describe that experience.**

## Closing

**[OPC/UPEP] has now been in place for at least a year and several of you have taught here at the college for multiple semesters. I'd like to conclude our conversation by talking about how your experiences with the program have impacted you as an instructor.**

**21. Do you feel that you are more knowledgeable about the legal requirements under ADA and Section 504 due to your experiences with this program? If yes, what are some the things you've learned that you have found most valuable?**

**22. Do you feel more confident teaching students with disabilities in your classroom as a result of this training? If yes, what experiences have contributed to your confidence?**

**PROBES (if needed):**

- Do you feel more confident providing instruction to your students?
- Do you feel more confident communicating with your students?
- Do you feel more confident acting as a mentor or adviser to your students?

**23. Do you feel your experiences with [OPC/UPEP] have influenced how you view individuals with disabilities that you encounter in the community? If so, how?**

**24. Is there anything I haven't asked that you would like to tell me about your experience with [OPC/UPEP]?**

Thank you very much for participating in this discussion. We have learned a lot about your experiences with [OPC/UPEP].