APPENDIX O
SCC Implementation Evaluation Student Focus Group Protocol

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Introduction

Thank you for taking part in this focus group today. My name is _____, and my colleague _____ and I are Research Analysts from Trewon Technologies, an organization supporting the Department of Labor. Your unique perspective and experience as a student will significantly enrich our understanding of the implementation of the [program], funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grant. This group conversation will last about 90 minutes.

Before we begin, I will explain the focus group process. We will conduct this focus group using a semi-structured format of pre-determined questions with follow-up queries based on your responses. Please feel free to share your honest opinion while respecting the right of others in the group to disagree with or reject your feedback. Your feedback is valuable to us, and no 'right' or 'wrong' answers exist. All responses are confidential, and any identifying information will be anonymized. We will be on a first-name basis today.

With your agreement, we would like to record audio of this group to ensure we accurately capture your insights. We will delete this recording after transcribing, verifying, and approving its content for accuracy. You are welcome to ask for clarification on any questions during the interview and may pause or stop the recording or interview at any point. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

Do you understand and feel comfortable with these guidelines? If yes, and you agree, we will begin the focus group.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions
1. How did you first hear about this program, and what motivated you to join it?
2. What factors or circumstances led you to join the [program name] Program, and do you anticipate it will meet your educational and career aspiration goals?
3. What were some of the challenges or limitations you were experiencing while seeking education and training opportunities in a high-demand industry, and how has joining this program helped you overcome them?
4. Can you explain any unique experiences or challenges associated with being part of an underrepresented group in your chosen high-demand industry?
5. What have been the most helpful resources or supports in support of your success in this program?
6. What are some barriers or obstacles preventing underrepresented students from accessing high-demand industry training courses?
7. How has the program created community and belonging among students from diverse backgrounds?
8. Have you observed any strategies or initiatives within the program that have proven remarkably successful at fostering diversity and inclusion?
9. What suggestions do you have for expanding outreach efforts to attract more diverse groups of students into high-demand industry programs?
10. Please describe any mentorship or networking opportunities provided through the program and explain how these have affected your career goals.
11. How could the program enhance its curriculum and support services to meet the unique needs of students more effectively?
12. What changes would you like to see implemented into the program to advance further equity and capacity-building efforts for underrepresented groups working in high-demand industries?

Conclusion:
Thank you for your time and thoughtful responses. Your feedback will provide valuable information for the implementation evaluation of the [SCC program]. We will provide you with a copy of this transcript if you wish to clarify or expand your responses. You can expect our report on this interview to be available by [anticipated date]. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about your data protection rights or concerns about this study. As a token of our appreciation, please accept this $25 gift card. We hope you enjoy your gift card and thank you again for your time!