

Male 1: We're going to get started. Our goal is to end this promptly at 6:00 unless you decide to stay over; that's up to you. But that's our goal because we know there are things out there that probably you're wanting to get to, like more reading of the regs and stuff. Okay?

[Laughter]

Tony: Okay. And we're meeting at the bar – no, forget that. Okay, you want to hold onto that? All right, I'll be very brief because we have a lot to do. This is different because it's also, the way we're doing it, it's us talking and they're listening, and that's good. But something else is happening; this is really the beginning of a new chapter. We've had a chance to meet with these folks yesterday and we've had – we had our last GPIC call, and Joe was part of the beginning of that call. There's a real movement here to listen.

Male 1: Tony, who is GPIC?

Tony: Oh, I'm sorry. Graduate Professional Issues Committee, which is one of the 12 subcommittees, if you would, of NAFSA. So it's a whole committee that deals with it. I'm privileged of being the chair. Mary Fenton is the Southwest representative, Linda is the Western representative, and Steve is one of – well, he's not on the committee, but he's obviously, what do we say in sports, a first ballot hall of famer, and he's here representing Fordham Law and the graduate community. They're all first ballots for that matter.

Okay, real brief, we're going to have an opportunity to reply back to you. We asked you for input on the graduate professional Listserv issues. You've sent case studies to us, you've talked about some issues. We culled all that information and we had a chance to work with the Department of Ed, sit down with them, we put them into sort of a spreadsheet and we're going to kind of report back on some of those. But not for a long time. We'll give you some updates, some good updates. And then we're going to hear from you on the issues that you've encountered, things that you want us to do. We have some wish lists too, some electronic things we'd like to see happen. So this is what we're going to do today; it's really about us.

Now it's very timely, because Steve's going to report on some late-breaking thing we just heard about regarding, it's now called the income-driven plans, right, 'cause we have three. So it's not just income – the income-driven plans. And we have some late-breaking news, and we'll fill you in on that, and you can see why

we might be a little worried, but maybe not. Okay? So let's do this, let's go over some of those issues, we'll report back to you, we want to be good stewards as representatives of the graduate and professional community, and let's start. So, Linda, you want to take the first group?

Linda:

Okay. Thank you. I have just a couple of things. One issue that we ran into this year, and actually ran into fairly recently was we discovered that a number of our students, four in the population that we know of, ended up, they were in school, but somehow they ended up in repayment status with one of the servicers, and the students didn't discover this until they applied for the grant PLUS loan this year and were denied, and couldn't understand why they were denied, and came in to see us. And I've got a great staff, and they went to work and found out that it had actually gone all the way to the person's credit report incorrectly.

So digging around, we have now learned that this could have happened with a number of other schools as well. It was a glitch we think in possibly one of the servicer's software applications or a conversion or, I'm not sure what caused it, but we know it happened with four of our students. We're working to get that solved. It has been solved for those four students; they have their graduate PLUS loans now. One of them is very close to having it removed completely from her credit report, which is what will happen. And we expect that to happen for the others as well. So the department is aware of this, they're working on those things, but I wanted to bring it to your attention because you may not know that some of your students are in this situation, and I just thought that I would make you aware of it. I don't know if there's anything proactive you want to do, ask your students to check their credit report to see if this is on there by mistake. I don't know how you would get a hold of your graduates to check their credit reports. But anyway, I just wanted to let you know that if you do see this it's not completely uncommon or rare, and that it can be fixed. All the way to having it removed from their credit report. So that's a good thing and it's a good resolve.

The other thing that has concerned me throughout this year is that we ran into a couple of situations where a person who has graduated, and I found this out through our LRAP program, they applied for our loan repayment forgiveness payment program, and they have FEL loans and DL loans, so they wanted to consolidate. And in their consolidation process, you know, all those have been going through one servicer, so they would consolidate with the servicer, apply for IBR, and then when they put in their

employment certification for the public service their records for consolidation would get moved to the new service, or the servicer that is designated to take care of public service, but the IBR paperwork did not get moved. So the person was notified from his first servicer of what his IBR payment would be, and then lo and behold, when he got billed it was much higher; it was actually the standard repayment, and that was because the paperwork hadn't gotten moved. This is another situation that the department has become aware of and they have taken moves to fix.

And it's my understanding now that when a person applies they will apply for consolidation with the one servicer, they will complete the IBR paperwork, and then both of those sets of paperwork will get moved to the servicer that is designated for public service. So I think this is also a great fix. And that's kind of what I feel really encouraged about this openness that we have now. I mean the fact that the department – the fact that they gave us a chance to have this opportunity to have a GP session, and we've got about a half – well, you're stretched all the way to the back, I think, but about a half a room full of people and that the department has so many representatives here I think is just a wonderful thing.

The other thing I think is great is that the department has created this customer service experience division and they are really trying hard through their social media and those kinds of things to reach out to us. I'm not a spokesman for the department, but I am encouraged, and that's – I am very encouraged and pleased about that.

I don't know if you want to say anything about you being the designated-

Male: Oh no, no, no.

Linda: No. All right. I'll cut it off.

Tony: That's great. We'll have your – give you a chance to react to that. Steven.

Steven: And moving quickly along, one of the great things to come out of the meetings with the department and the discussions is that we're the same and we're different. Our students have different experiences than undergraduate students. The vast majority of aid recipients are indeed undergraduates, but we do have students who are coming through the process, our students tend to have more

debt, more experience, and perhaps higher expectations. And the feedback has been great on that.

Some of the questions you folks brought up, I'll take the first easy one, because we heard the answer to it the other day in the session from the servicers, on capitalization of interest. We heard that fix is in the works. That was a major concern of people writing to us in the process. Raising issues, part of your identification of our students are different, for better or worse. Our students don't have any subsidized loans anymore. It's not a department thing; it's the Congress and the President and all that. The real question came up on the FAFSA, what are we testing, what kind of needs test are we doing on the FAFSA for graduate and professional students. Suggestions were make a six-question FAFSA; do all of the matches, the social security match and the selective service match and things like that; and that's all our students – and default matches. And that's the reality for graduate and professional students. So from a policy perspective maybe we don't need a graduate and professional FAFSA or we don't need – or students don't need to fill out what undergrads are doing. So the smart form, hit the box Graduate and Professional, Degree/Undergraduate Degree Already Received goes to Sign Here. Cool.

And then verification takes on a whole new meaning as well. The news we heard, all of us heard at the opening of the conference is pay-as-you-earn is going to be brought up a lot quicker than was originally anticipated, and our students will be able to take advantage of it earlier. In fact, it was suggested at the opening session, by the end of the year. We did have some concerns that we raised with the department over the IBR as it stands now. In terms of some of the calculations, in terms of some of the student experiences, going into and moving from a standard payment to IBR. We'll also talk a little bit on students who are consolidating and their experiences in terms of the consolidation and choosing repayment plans.

So let's see, what else? The pay-as-you-earn is going to have an electronic application. As part of that process it's going to take out some of the confusion, some of the confusion about what tax forms are needed to be used, what income counts; there will be discrete questions on the application along with instructions.

And that's it for me for this first round. Oh, and just, again, something that came out of the community, we have common origination and disbursement and student experience that has been

almost uniformly great. The suggestion was made to have something closer to common servicing in collections.

Tony: Before Mary starts I would like you to know that your efforts were-

Male: You took my notes!

Tony: I took your notes. You'll get them back. We actually put together-

Male: Microphone.

Tony: So sorry.

We actually put together this spreadsheet, if you would, with recommendations. Actually take a look at – you _____ yours, Mare. It's actually now four or five pages. And there are – we state the issue, we look at real cases, and then we make recommendations. So this is a living, breathing document. We've already – it's like the fifth iteration. And after hearing what you're going to have to say, we're going to keep adding to it and sharing it with the department; they already have one copy of this. Mary, your turn.

Mary: Okay, some of the other thing we heard about were the issue of the consolidate – I'm just going to stand up; I feel like I can't see anybody.

[Applause]

Mary: Thank you. Wow, I had a good idea. Okay, the federal direct consolidation website, for a couple of years now we've been asking for aid officer access to that, similar to NSLDS or COD, you know. And they're going to be the tokens, because in working with graduates, they would report back to us what was going on in the website, and we couldn't access it, we couldn't see the inconsistencies that were there. So we've spoken with the federal group about it, and they're giving consideration to that. It seems to me that if we did use the same mechanism to get into NSLDS we could have that and, you know, see what's going on.

The other issue is the whole issue of exactly how is IBR and pay-as-you-earn going to be calculated, and because we've all seen inconsistencies as to having two or three individuals who work together in the same place who have the same debt, who have the

same income, but they're all making different IBR payments. So they're looking at that also.

The other issue was capitalization of interest, and the consistencies or inconsistencies and how some servicers are capitalizing it. It is appearing on individuals' NSLDS records, and therefore they become ineligible to borrow because, you know, the interest has been capitalized. We had some really good conversation with Pam, and I don't know if Pam's here from NSLDS. Thank you.

One example that I have, and I'll be very brief, is I had a student borrower who came to me and her consolidation – I have two actually; one who knows she has \$150,000.00 worth of debt, but she can only find \$50,000.00, and that's all we can find on NSLDS. I have it – you know, I have her credit report where it's all there, I've looked through everything I can possibly think of, and so we're going to look at that. And I have a student who received her final confirmation of her consolidation, but on it was an extra \$100,000.00. So it took her to \$250,000.00, and when calling the servicer she was told "Just disregard it and trust me."

[Laughter]

Mary: I wouldn't, but, you know, whatever. If you feel good about that. So, you know, everyone's aware of that we're taking a look at that, because these are real-life situations. I'm sure some of you have had the same thing. And out of that one of the overriding recommendations that we've made throughout all of these issues that we've put together is that because now we, you know, I think we currently are up to potentially 33 servicers, there may be more, and we want to look, you know, in a former life we had a common manual; we want a common servicer manual so that everybody crosses Ts and dots the Is on the major pieces at the same time.

And I think that's it; that covers all the options.

Steven: They told me I couldn't stand. I need to walk. Finally, on policy and political issues, students reminding us that many of them, their first interaction with a government entity is motor vehicle, to get their driver's license, kind of a plus and minus. COD works so well. The application for federal student loans, the FAFSA online works so well. The next interaction is the interaction on the servicing side, and for many that hasn't been so good. We appreciate the thought of graduate schools. When the department issued regulations on it the price calculator kind of doesn't 'make sense for us, and indeed we don't have it. There are still some

questions on the shopping sheet, if it applies to us. I am not giving you federal advice, do not take this from me, but the other Department of Ed staffers, FFSA staffers have been saying, “No, it doesn’t apply, even if you’re in the Veteran’s Affairs programs.” But they’re strongly encouraging us to use it. Again, it’s something that doesn’t quite fit. The thought is the right thought, I think, but the fit for the graduate and professional schools is a little different. Same thing, again, with the FAFSA and the requirements.

The other FAFSA issue that folks brought up is if the schools are using a one-institution code, OP code. The information students get back when they submit the FAFSA is shopping sheet type – or is the price calculator and information on the main school, the main undergraduate school’s completion rates, the full rates, things like that. So that doesn’t quite fit. And again, this issue that our students are talking to one another, they’re having different experiences in the program, and when the program was designed to be one program and move from many lenders and servicers to a federal loan program, they’re not quite getting that. And some of the students and graduates or alumni are getting more and more frustrated.

Tony:

Another issue that we brought up that’s being addressed and looked at, there wasn’t any real major announcement that all of a sudden they are taking the NSLDS data and populating the consolidation website. So I remember in mid-October talking to a student, a graduate, walking him through the consolidation. “_____ my loans are here.” I said “You must’ve saved it and you forgot, because you’re so busy, you’re a resident.” He goes, “I don’t know; they’re here.” And I saw **Justin Drager** at this conference the next day, ‘cause we were at the New York State conference, and I said, “Justin, populating the field, you ever hear of it?” He goes, “Nah, your student probably forgot and he started and saved it.”

Okay. I heard it from another student and another student. All right. That’s – they didn’t have an opportunity to make that announcement; they will or whatever. We now know that. But here’s the problem, the third student said, “Tony, they populated the field.” “Yeah, I heard about it.” “Okay. But I can’t edit the data; there’s something wrong.” That’s not good. But it was even more sinister than that in a sense; they couldn’t figure out what to do with grad PLUS, they said “Use a V code.” She tried that.

So what happens is she had to leave that section, piece of loan application because she couldn't fix it, it was wrong, couldn't put it in, but the fix would be like you going home and working your electrical system and you put this wire here and you're getting cable TV when you're not supposed to get it. The fix would be, okay, you're going to go into public service, your loans are with Fed Loans, it's ultimately going to be with Fed Loans, we'll get it in later. She felt very uncomfortable with that fix, but knowing the representative, Lisa from Fed Loans, and how she works so hard with the student, I gave this case to them, that's the fix. So that is definitely going to be looked at and has to be looked at.

If you go to Amazon and you are ready to cash out, you could edit your order, right? You can go back and look. They've got to start thinking that way, and they are. And you have to be able to look at the servicer's website that has your loans, look at your consolidation before you click Yes, check it out, because it's been populated, make sure it's right and go back and edit it if you can. So they are addressing that as well.

All right, one last reminder and it's open to you. This is for all students; yes, we're graduate schools and we deal with a somewhat different population, but what we're talking about, the overwhelming majority of it, is for all students, and I don't want to get that lost in the shuffle here, that we're this little sect and we have, you know, a small segment. We're not that small. We're probably 35-percent of all the dollars that are utilized on the federal side. We may only be 15 or 12-percent of the population, but that's a pretty significant group. And we have good default rates. We do a pretty good job. And it's out of necessity with – I mean on the medical school side the average debt is \$170,000.00.

But I was speaking to someone from a divinity school. And that's the other thing; it's not just the health professions and the law schools; we want to hear and must hear from all of you. She said, "Yeah, we have some different needs. We have to be heard. We still have students that come out with \$110,000.00. They're going to be making the salaries of physicians. What are we doing with them?" So please, there will be an outreach for case studies, 'cause we can pass those cases on, for your voice. And here's the other thing you don't know, GPIC is working on a Hill visit, a Capitol Hill visit for late March, maybe April. We have to let Congress get settled, new Congress in a sense, and we're working with NASFA to just go down to Washington, meet some of the representatives, and if you're in D.C. we're going to – the call is going to be "Let's keep this cheap for all of us." If you're nearby

and you want to take part, and you can just take the shuttle – the Metro over – if you can get there then you'll be part of this group. I'm not asking you to fly in and spend money unless you could do that. But we're going to have a nice visit, and we're working on that; that will eventually happen.

So we're working on all fronts. So here's your chance to be a part of that so you're not left out. It's easy for some organizations to have certain groups that have a large number of people and they seem to dominate. No, this is a family, and everyone comes to the table and eats.

All right, who's going to be first? Let's talk.

Audience: We're taking notes.

Tony: We're taking notes, they're taking notes. That's good. And if we need clarification on something, certainly they'll be here. Dan – Dan Burr.

Dan: Thank you, Tony. I'm Dan Burr; I work at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Audience: _____ turn around and face _____.

Dan: Well I'd like to talk to these guys. Why don't we back up, then turn around?

Male: That's good.

Dan: Because I greatly appreciate both what's been set up as the preliminary and also the presence of the people from the Department of Education here. And I realize that there are differences between many people in the department do and where federal student aid policy comes from. So I understand that there is that distinction, but I do still think that the people here could be valuable conduits of information. So what I would like to state is just an overriding concept or idea that I have about where we are with graduate professional education and federal student aid, and that is we are making graduate professional education in this country very, very expensive. And the examples of that would be that there is only now unsubsidized loans in the Stafford program and then the utilization of the grad PLUS loan, which is an expensive loan.

And I think that when we do this, when we take this level of education and make it very, very expensive, there are going to be societal consequences to that. And that I think just needs to be considered, and to the extent that it could be taken from the department forward to people who might be receptive to this, that is why I'm saying this.

Large debt is going to affect, number one, the people who enter graduate professional education. We're going to scare off a lot of people who feel they cannot afford the cost of this level of education. So the diversity of people who will be physicians and lawyers and teachers and ministers and in business is going to be affected by this high cost. It's going to affect how people who earn these degrees with significant debts conduct their careers, what they are able to do and what they're going to have to pursue in their careers vis-à-vis this significant, this six-figure student debt. And that is going to ultimately affect how members of our society are served by these people.

Now I know the significant issues of K-12, I know the significant issues of access to a college degree. You know, I'm not diminishing those in any way, but I do think we don't want to lose sight of what happens, what a society needs on a further level. Now, okay, easy to point all that out; everybody in the room knows all of this. Probably everybody – I'm sure everybody at the department knows all of this. A solution, a possible solution, I think the grad PLUS loan is too expensive; I think the fee is too high and the interest rate is too high, and that ought to be changed.

[Applause]

Male: Mics are open.

Steven: I just want to comment on that.

Dan: Okay. Come on.

Steven: And the others, now you have to get – give good experience. The other part of that, and again, we hear from our students is kind of it's becoming an us/them. I mean when Congress changed – took away the subsidy and kept the higher rates we were told that the subsidy is going to Pell grants. Pell grants we support, a great basic tool for financial aid. It's part of the program to get students their first degrees, but it almost seems as if graduate students are paying for undergraduate students, and that's setting up a

dichotomy that is not going over well politically, certainly at our graduate school. Please.

Kendra:

Hi. I'm Kendra. I'm from Maine, so it's pretty nice to be down here right now. I'm enjoying the warm weather. My concerns, I have basically three kind of concerns. The FAFSA for grad students, so yeah, they're not getting the sub-eligibility anymore. But at my university we do use the EFC to calculate need for students in awarding scholarships to them, so I'm not in favor of them getting to skip over the income part, 'cause that's what we use. If a student doesn't 'have to provide that information then I don't want to have to create a form then to send out to the students to get that information, because then they'll be asking "Why do I need to do this?" So if we just leave it the way it is, that's my – what I want.

I also think the shopping sheet is good for grad students because I do a lot of general information sessions at interviews for when students are coming and interviewing for admissions at my school. And I also do orientations. And it seems like grad students are not paying attention to the cost of the program, they're not looking at the tuition and fees to go to the school, they're not looking at what it's going to cost them to actually live while they're going to grad school, so they're not taking that into consideration. There might just be choosing the school based on fit or choosing the school based on location or the people that are coming out of the program. So I think using the shopping sheet for grad students will help draw attention to the cost of the program, so that should be taken into consideration when they're deciding what grad school to go to. I don't think it's just an undergrad who should be determining where they go based on cost and that. So I think the shopping sheet actually is pretty good for the grad students.

And then also is there going to be ever a limit on the grad PLUS loan? 'Cause my coworker has a student who is now at like \$350,000.00. What?

She's got almost \$500,000.00 in grad PLUS loan alone, and she's been jumping from online program to online program it seems, and not actually getting a degree. So I know that, you know, putting a limit on the grad PLUS loan might hinder people that really, legitimately need it, but because of the increase in students going to online education and those students who do frequently jump from program to program without actually getting a degree, having some sort of limit, even if it is \$350,000.00, but having some sort

of limit in place might be good 'cause then it could try to keep the cost down of the loan itself. So thank you.

Maria:

Hi. I'm Maria. I work in Maine with Kendra, right across the hall actually. So this – she kind of segued into my concern; we talked a lot in sessions about Pell jumpers, and I have concerns about grad school jumpers, particularly online grad school jumpers. At the University of New England we have online degree and certificate programs that are Masters degrees and certificates, and they're comparable to our on-campus programs, they're reputable, they take time, they're sort of expensive, we give financial aid for them. I have one student, she has \$138,500.00 in Stafford loans and \$330,000.00 in grad PLUS loans and she's still enrolled at UNE, and as far as I can tell she doesn't have a Masters degree yet. And I can see on her NSLDS record that she's been bouncing from online school to online school to online school and presumably living off of financial aid. Why else would her borrowing be so high? And those are the concerns that I see. And I'm seeing it increasingly with my online population, that they're sort of hopping from school to school.

At UNE we don't offer the living expenses upfront; they have to jump through hoops, they have to ask me for it, they have to sign off. I know it's grad PLUS, I know it's expensive, and they're astounded, "Well, every other online school I go to gives me money" and "I get \$8,000.00 no questions asked." And I worry about the culture of perpetual students in those instances, and I would love to sort of talk to other people about grad school is what you're doing if you have online programs, but certainly I think a limit on grad PLUS loans is not a wild thing or reducing its rate, some way to grab not only Pell jumpers, but aid jumpers in general, students who are just – and they get nabbed in SAP, they're not going to stay at UNE long enough to get nabbed in the lifetime eligibility, because they're going to leave and fail out or go someplace else or transfer, so they don't become any one school's SAP issue.

So that's sort of where I stand on those kinds of issues, for something to think about moving forward for sure.

Audience:

I'm going to change the subject a little. I know we're here because this is the Department of Ed and the Fed Services are here and we want to bring all that attention to it. But I love this group and I think that Tony and the rest of them are doing something great and unique that's a niche to us. And I've been coming to this thing forever, and among ourselves we murmur about what goes on in

our institutions. And I would like to ask Tony and the committee to consider some kind of professional development at this level, because you and I went to medical school, so we have our PDC, but of this level, from all the different schools, there's something in common we all deal with. And we deal with a certain level of lack of resources at our schools, lack of respect, lack of just communication and challenges, and I would love to see that this organization brings something maybe here or someplace else, where we can talk about that comfortably and develop that. Because again, at the end of the day we've all got to go back to our institutions, we've got to deal with the same people, and we don't necessarily go back with resources on how to take some of these great ideas and move it up the chain of command.

Tony: That's an excellent point. So let's – Steve, one second. Let's just toss it out as a proposal. Is it possible that if we come here, you know, if it's here that there be a graduate professional development track of some kind, where, you know-

[Applause]

Tony: You understand? So there's a whole bunch of programs at certain times during the next three and four days that we're here, maybe we go back to four. Maybe it's a pre-conference. Maybe it's that Monday if they start on Tuesday, or something. I can't figure it out right now, but we'll get some input on that. A graduate professional development track. Steve.

Steve: Time for a commercial, though, for NAFSA's GPIC.

Tony: Oh. What am I supposed to say? That's okay.

Audience: Thank you. I come from a graduate professional medical school, and I guess I'll make a comment first on the shopping sheet, because I have had a real hard time putting my hands around how that would even remotely work to get an EFC for – they come in and they interview, and about the time they start –I mean if the purpose of the shopping sheet is for a student to make a decision on which school to attend, it's just not going to work for us. It's a great concept of giving them a cost ahead of time, and I do understand that, but it will not work for the graduate schools. And I know a lot of graduate schools, most of them are probably saying that "We don't have an EFC." These are military students as well, who are most likely going to get military aid.

And I heard it suggested at the last – at one of these, that we put a suggested amount, and that doesn't make any sense. You give them their full cost of attendance. And at this point we don't really know what to do; I know that we're not required, but the suggestion is that it's highly suggested, it might become required. It would be nice to see a resolution that before the springtime comes and we have to start – we have to know what to do with this, 'cause right now I don't really have a clue how that would work.

I have just a couple of questions. Back in not long ago they said there was going to be a Dear Colleague letter coming out and it had to do with repeated coursework for the graduate professional students. We are waiting for that Dear Colleague letter before we – is that on its way?

Tony: Yeah. I have two updates on both of your things. On number one, on the shopping sheet, Kara McCarthy and David Fittrell are the NASFA staff to GPIC, and on one of our calls it was reported that we heard that it's not necessarily required for graduate schools, that's what the White House is saying; Department of Ed was saying, "Oh yes, you have to use it, but you can modify it." That isn't quite settled, but it's on its way.

What was the second one again? On the-

Audience: Repeat coursework.

Tony: -repeat coursework. We have had confirmation that that issue was settled and that it supposedly is a Dear Colleague letter that is coming out. But the issue initially was that let's say you have a block program, and I'll use the medical school as an example, you take a bunch of courses, it's the end of the year, and they say, "Well, you have to repeat those failed classes. We'll give you a chance to do that. But you know what, you were kind of weak in the ones that you passed. You know, you passed by a tenth of a point. We can't put you out in the public to deal with patients, so we want you to take that over as well." And there was some issue of whether or not you were allowed to do that. And there was a ruling saying, "We understand. We don't want a hardship for medical schools; we want the right people out there." But again, we're still waiting for the Dear Colleague letter. So that's good for us to get back to NASFA to say "Please give us an answer. Thank you."

Audience: Thank you. And these other things are kind of two basic questions to see what other schools are doing, and this came from higher up. But as far as an institution required to take attendance, we're thinking that we're probably not. We have clinicals, we have pre-clinicals, some take attendance regularly, some don't. Does that make you an institution required to take attendance if you have the didactics where they might do that every day and other areas where they don't. And then if you are an institution required to take attendance are you out of compliance if some of the groups do not take attendance?

Female: Yes.

Audience: A question specifically from the clinical rotations, I _____ -

Audience: She said it's a question specifically for clinical rotations, and it's for the school as a whole that has both.

Mary: Okay. Well, if your concern is clinical rotations, if they don't show up, the faculty, their attendings noted, they don't pass.

Audience: Right.

Mary: So I mean that would be one way. I mean they don't have them come in and check in, but, you know, if you don't show up and the attending knows who you are, you fail.

Tony: _____ three, possibly no more than three _____ -

Mary: Well, you have to have an excused attendance-

Tony: Yes.

Mary: -you know, death in the family or something like that.

Tony: Someone died, yes.

Mary: But you must have an excused attendance to not – you know, you don't just, "I'm out finding myself or something," you know. So in that setting, in a clinical setting that would be your answer there, is that the attending are going to be grading you on that.

Audience: Okay. So most schools, graduate professional schools that are medical schools and have both the clinical and the pre-clinicals would be schools that are required to take attendance?

Tony: No.

Audience: No?

Tony: No.

Audience: Okay. Okay, and maybe I can talk about that on the side. My last question has to do with health profession, HPSLs. The HPSLs, I have read this, you know, the booklet that we have seems a little bit outdated, like they take certain aspects of it and they update it and there are some things in the HPSL that I – like if a student, you're required to be full-time. If a student drops to less than full-time and it's somewhere in the middle of the quarter, where are the regulations on what you do and when you actually have to return that money and all that? I mean you follow the basic return to Title IV regulation son that? We just, we're trying to find some information on the HPSLs regarding when a student drops, if anyone has that.

Mary: I have a question, HPSL, do you mean – oh, Tony.

Tony: I can't hear you.

Mary: On HPSL do you mean – are you talking Title VII?

Tony: Title VII? Yeah.

Mary: Okay. Well, this – okay. Well I don't know that you all want to hear this or care about it.

Tony: It's Title IV.

Mary: But anyway, so you're asking are there regs as to when or if they drop below half time. If they drop below half time they're not eligible for the point _____-

Tony: No, below full-time she said.

Mary: Oh, okay.

Audience: Yes.

Tony: Still within half-time range.

Mary: So question again. I'm sorry. That was exactly-

Audience: They drop below full-time, if they drop out, if it's 60-percent do you return it? Where does it say what to do?

Tony: Okay, Mary, it's not about that.

Mary: The thing is it doesn't say really that you have to-

Tony: No. Are they in school or are they not in school? Did they leave under the 60-percent mark or did they leave over the 60-percent mark, then you make your decision.

Mary: And a lot of that is the overriding focus is the Department of Ed regs. The Title VII regs follow-

Tony: Right. Often. Often told that. We were often told that.

Mary: -the Department of Ed. And yeah, and what I know I've done in the past is, you know, the Ed money went back first and then Title VII money went back, and then institutional money, accordingly.

Tony: That's right. That's correct.

Audience: That's what I wanted to know. Thank you very much.

Tony: Very good. Thank you for that. Next. Brenda?

Brenda: Yeah, _____. Going back to the shopping sheet, I've gone to two sessions; one session was all about the principles of excellence and the MOU and all that stuff, and that's where we talked about the shopping sheet. The other one was today that I actually got to the tools for educational choice, or something like that it was called, which was a really good session. And I just wanted to throw this out; I don't know if anybody's here from the Department that could really speak to the shopper sheet or you guys really just don't want to speak about it, I'm not sure which, but what I got from it is two things; it goes back to exactly what Tony said, was that yes, it's not required for graduate and professionals. It's recommended, of course, that we might want to use it. However, if you did sign an MOU, that is the document for you to use in order to be compliant, so you need to know that.

And the other thing is they said is yes, they are aware that the data on the right is not good data for us and it's okay for us to change it to pertinent data, meaning the data about the level barring graduation, all that stuff, and the other cute little thing I heard was

don't forget the little box on the bottom, you can always add whatever you need to.

One other thing I want to say is that in conversations with people I've had before even coming here, one of the things that they stress is that, you know, they're not saying that, some people I think still have the idea that the shopping sheet is taking away your ability to do an award letter. And the way that was best conveyed to me to let people know is that think of the shopping sheet, even though if you do use it, more as a cover that you might use with your award letter, because I understand everybody says none of us are going to bother doing a shopping sheet until we have a FAFSA, until we're ready to award, right? So rather than thinking you're going to have to do a shopping sheet and then turn around and do an award letter, think about the idea of bringing them together.

There was also a school that had mentioned in one of the sessions I had that they were already doing something similar to a shopping sheet and they were concerned whether they should not do it, but they didn't feel like the shopping sheet was doing enough. Well, think about it as a cover letter. Again, go ahead, if you've already got something that's working, don't take it away if your students are already understanding that. I think the idea is the department, from what I've understood so far, is at this point, because they're in version 1.0, as they say, they understand our concerns, they're just giving us some leeway right now as far as how we can go ahead and modify what we can for our group of students. And I think you should take that to heart. And they know some of the concerns.

So I wanted you to know that besides conversations here to go into sessions, I've had some conversations with them, and so I feel a lot more comfortable now because I've signed an MOU, of course, and so I know a lot of us felt like we were getting mixed messages. But I think that I feel comfortable, and I hope you will too, that if you've gone to some of these sessions that the bottom line is it's not required for us; it's recommended. Use it as a cover sheet if you need to and let's pray for 2.0.

Tony: Someone has a question?

Audience: I just wanted to say the Bureau of Health Professions knows that the book is outdated; it's right now being updated. They're hoping by February that the new book will be available. But on their website you'll be able to figure out how you would return any money if a student no longer meets the eligibility requirements.

Tony: Oh. Are you working for your school?

Audience: Oh, my school is the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and I'm kind of perplexed here because I have undergraduate students. So yes, I fought for the Pell to remain for them, but we also have seven graduate and professional schools, and when they said that the sub was going away what we did was a calculation on our student borrowing, and we went to the president and the deans and we let them know "If you keep increasing tuition then students are going to owe more." But for example, a student in our law program having only unsub and grad PLUS, for them that was going to be an additional \$3,000.00. And when we inform students of that we are seeing a decrease in borrowing. So I guess we are different from most people here, but again, that's our story.

Tony: Great story. We have someone in the back that had their hands up too. We have to make sure we get them all in.

Audience: We have one-

Tony: You, at the mic.

Jamie: Hi. My name is Jamie. I'm from Salus University in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. We have two four-year doctoral programs, optometry and audiology. Our optometry students are eligible for the additional unsub because optometry was a HEAL-eligible program back in the day. Our audiology program was not HEAL-eligible because at that time it was only a two-year program. Well now it's a four-year doctoral program and their budgets are pretty much similar to what the optometry student budgets are, but the bulk of their loans are grad PLUS because they can't get the additional unsub. So what changes can be made, if any, to have these programs that are now four-year professional programs? I believe PT falls under the same category.

Tony: We have updates for you.

Jamie: What?

Tony: We have a big update for you. Mary.

Jamie: Oh, okay.

Tony: Year-and-a-half process.

Mary:

Yeah, when I arrived at the University of New Mexico I was in discussions with some of my colleagues that I work with now, and it became very clear to me, because previous to that I had been in a medical school, only I – and at UNM we have a school of medicine, college of pharmacy, college of nursing, and in the school medicine alone – Karen, don't go to sleep – we have another eight disciplines in there, I think another eight disciplines, all of which were in the original HEAL legislation, considered Allied Health. And at that time Allied Health, those programs were mostly baccalaureate programs. And so I went back to the HEAL legislation and went back and researched it and talked to the few remaining people at HRSA that still remembered the HEAL program, and what we did was wrote up a treatise, as Tony calls it, to put forward to GPIC, to put forward to NAFSA, justifying that Allied Health, because those – and in the legislation I think it said something about the fact that, you know, baccalaureate and Allied Health.

Well now you are correct, almost all Allied Health programs are at least Masters or doctoral programs now. So we've put forth together the justification for it. NAFSA did a survey of all of the health professions, the graduate health professions programs. It has gone to the NAFSA board and NAFSA I believe has approved taking a head to the Department of Education to look at that. Because it was clear in the original legislation, HEAL legislation, that the only cut-off was that those were all, you know, if you were a baccalaureate program it's not – and virtually all health professions now are at least Masters, if not doctoral. So we should be hearing something in hopefully soon.

Tony:

And just to put it in perspective, what we're talking about is the increased unsub beyond \$20,500.00. It's on; I put it back. For health profession students. Now you're saying "What about law?" and "What about this?" Well, the intent eventually would be to try to see if we can – you know, you start small, you get some changes, you get some enhancements, and then maybe move forward to other groups.

Who's next? Yes.

Joe:

Hi. I'm Joe with the University of Pacific, McGeorge School of Law. I'm going to change the subject just a bit. Does anybody have concerns about this push to make private loans bankrupt – make them eligible for bankruptcy, private student loans? 'Cause I have a lot of concerns, I get asked a lot from our students about whether they can declare bankruptcy, and with interest rates being

so high on some of the federal loans I'm afraid of people – I think they're much better within the federal programs because of the overall picture of the programs, the economic hardships, the forgiveness options. I have a lot of problems with students who have private loans, just the fact when they're in school sometimes they don't even get deferments. You know, private loans will work with you for like a year and then they expect to get paid. I mean there's no income programs, there's no, any of that. And I have a real concern.

I also have a concern, because NAFSA apparently is supporting it, and I do understand it's a function of undergrad a lot, and I do get that. But I have a concern that we're going to see more people go to private loans. And I remember at the last conference the Department of Ed was saying – I remember I think Jeff saying, "You better have a good excuse on why your students are taking a lot of" – if they see your students are taking a lot of private loans. I mean they want people in federal-

Tony: Joe, I can see your concerns in multiple ways. One, they will not borrow the federal, take the privates out so I can do bankruptcy. Two, there's another thought is this is a way of killing the private loan industry, because they will not continue to offer loans that they know are going to – they're the only loans discharged to bankruptcy. Three, maybe it's the moving; if you get the private sector to declare bankruptcy you can get federal loans declared in bankruptcy. So I think there's many different forces moving in that statement and those statements. But I can see initially-

Joe: _____ see low interest rates. I mean some of the private loans, if you have really great credit you might be able to get a good rate. But I hear from these students, you know, I make them write something for our file saying that they do not want to take the federal program, so I have the documentation.

Tony: I understand. But you have to teach them to-

Joe: And I hear from them after they graduate, "What can I do? I don't have a job. They're not willing to work with me."

Tony: Right. And this is why we say to the federal government, "Lower those rates. You want us to encourage students to borrow the federal loans"-

Joe: Right.

Tony: Initially they don't go deep with it. I tell them, "You've got to go deep. You've got to go long-term," and they will understand it. But their parents, they're sitting there, it's July, school starts in whatever, September, "Give me this loan." You've got to help us make that argument with lower interest rates, but it's easier said than done.

Joe: And when they see 7.5-percent as compared to 7.9-percent they're going to go with 7.5; they're not going to look at the whole picture.

Tony: Right. Thank you, Joe, that was good. Let's keep going.

Audience: [*Inaudible*] said that the state _____.

Male: Right. It's [*Inaudible*]. Now remember, interest rates are low now, five years from now it could be a different story.

Tony: That's a good point. You've been waiting a long time.

Audience: Yes, I have.

Tony: Go for it.

Audience: Well, I just kind of want to piggyback about the overall loan indebtedness. At our institution we created a form or more of a literacy type brochure, basically putting the students financially aware of their overall loan indebtedness from the beginning to the end of the credentialing requirements for attending a law school. And what happened was it created some pandemonium, not only with the students in addition to administration, because we're scaring students that they're having this \$180,000.00, \$220,000.00 indebtedness when they come out of law school. But with the GE requirements it really helped, you know, motivate, encourage, and promote. But when this big lawsuit then happened now, I'm finding with some of my peers that if they're a for-profit institution there's no push to really try to make sure you make the students financially literate of their overall indebtedness.

I'm just kind of really concerned what's going to happen with this lawsuit if we fail again. Is this not going to be something that we're going to be required to ensure we promote, like you mentioned the shopping list, to try to help basically a lot of students to be financially literate, which they're basically signing themselves up for? But again, you know, a lot of students, especially my law students, for one reason or another they just typically don't read.

[Laughter]

Audience: So, I mean how could you be assured to protect yourself, or better yet, the institution, to ensure that they're just financially literate or cognizant about what they're basically getting ready to engage upon. You know, this is – it's been very frustrating for us, because when we put it in – it's like either the institution is in a panic because they're losing seats and the student is in a panic because they're going to owe this much debt and we can't provide any additional either institutional, and there's no graduate funding at all as far as for federal grants. So the only option at the graduate professional level is 100-percent loans, and as you mentioned earlier, the graduate PLUS loan, the interest rate at 7.9-percent, which over \$100,000.00 of those resources being graduate PLUS loans, our students already failed before they even get started.

Tony: All right, we might want to do a few more and then we have some closing remarks, so I _____ that would be great.

Male 1: We'll do two more.

Audience: Okay, two things. A couple things, actually. A grad professional _____ would be great. A friend of mine who is in a small divinity school would love that. We were talking about that before I came to the Federal Student Aid conference. One quick question. With the new verification rules that are coming out does the department anticipate that graduate students will continue to be selected for verification?

Male: Yeah, I think the answer is yes.

Audience: Okay. And this piggybacks onto the issue that was raised with the graduate student who was jumping from school to school to school. If they're selected for V4 and they're receiving unsub and grad PLUS only, what is our responsibility? If the department is flagging them as being somehow questionable but we're giving them unsub and grad PLUS only, what is our responsibility on the school side? Is it nothing?

Female: _____ you can't – we're not allowed to deny them unsub or grad PLUS.

Audience: Yeah. And while the department is busy on that one, I mentioned this at the COD session, it would be very helpful if schools had a way to log onto COD to see status updates for appeals that are

lodged for a graduate or a parent PLUS loan that has been declined. I can't tell you the number of times that I'm told by a student or a parent, "Oh yeah, we've appealed that. We've appealed that. We've appealed that." Four weeks later I still haven't received a CRCO file, and "What's going on?" "Well, we've appealed, we've submitted our stuff," and it's just it's – it puts me in a bad position between the student, the family, and our bursar's office, and I like keeping my bursar's office happy.

The other thing that would be very helpful for the department would be the next time COD changes the credit criteria for a PLUS loan, please tell the schools.

[Applause and Cheering]

Audience: When I found out that the credit criteria had changed, and I was talking to a customer service representative at COD, I was told that the schools were not informed of this but other people were. And he said, "Because it doesn't affect you." I corrected him very quickly that we are the ones who are probably the most affected after the student borrower or the parent borrower, because suddenly we're having students who are trying to figure out how they're going to pay the bill.

Tony: That's right.

Audience: So that communication, the fact that we were not informed of the COD changing their credit criteria created a huge amount of problems for us.

Tony: Yeah, it did. Mr. William Leif, I think you might want to add a little something to one of the questions.

William: I wasn't going to add anything, I was just going to respond. Actually I agree with you on the communication on the credit criteria. There was a question on the verification process, and I think if the questions regarding the changes that are being put in place for verification to capture people that are running from school to school and what is your responsibility there; the responsibility would be the same regardless of what type of Title IV the student is receiving. And the fraud detection activity that is going to be put in place is not just going to be for Pell, it will be for, you know, all students that have suspicious enrollment patterns. But we are going to start off slow, because, you know, we don't want to be overzealous and capture people that, you

know, do have legitimate educational purposes and just make their lives more difficult.

We also did hear the suggestion on COD to be able to look up an appeal status. That's a great idea; we have it, we'll take it back and hopefully report out we're coming down with that a little bit later. I actually have a 6:00 meeting, so I'm going to have to run.

Tony: Okay. We're still going. Bill, thank you. I understand you have to go.

Audience: Tony, thank you and your group for having this conversation. Can you give us some understanding of your conversations as it relates to students who come back to school who have families and what your committee, any conversations that you have had at your committee level on helping – I think we could have a long conversation about students whose spouse doesn't work; that we could have for hours. But let's maybe not go there; let's go to the single student who has one or two kids, who is trying to get through graduate school. I mean I think every one of us has seen that type of student really struggle. Has your committee looked at that issue? Will you look at that issue? I think it's a big issue. Any comment on that?

Tony: As a specific issue, no. But I would love for you to – I'll give you my e-mail, please send it to me.

Audience: I think everybody here could give a story on it.

Tony: Yeah. Let's do it. Let's do it.

Audience: Yeah, I think that's the single student with-

Tony: We may see more of that too.

Audience: Yeah, the single student with a child who's really – I mean we could do the dependent care, but that's not enough.

Tony: Mm-hmm. You want to know something, I've – you're right, I can see her face now, she has a six-year-old. She already had academic difficulty, she's still in school. We have no idea what it's doing and how it's affecting her academics.

Audience: It's stressful.

Tony: Please.

Audience: But I don't know the answer.

Tony: No, right now I don't either, but we will. sozzo@nymc.edu.

Male: 6:00, Tony.

Tony: All right. Don't go yet. We have one more question and then we have some things to say. So go.

Audience: *[Inaudible]*

Tony: Comment. All right, we didn't hear you.

Audience: If anybody is still here from the DOE, I don't know if anybody is, but I do have a student who just recently graduated who did, he was a PA student and he was very, very upset that his stay-at-home wife could not reap the rewards of his financial aid. And he said that he was going to go to the DOE and fight for other people that had spouses that stayed at home. So just to let you know he might be coming and, you know, complaining.

[Laughter]

Tony: We don't know what he looks like.

Male: Yeah, fair warning.

Tony: All right, a couple of things. There is a grad – how many of you are not on the NASFA graduate professional listserv? Not on it. Okay, most are. Okay, good. See if I remember. You go to the NASFA website, you go to – is it Resources, My Account or something? It's free. You don't have to be a member; you can still log in and subscribe. And if you're not sure, send me an e-mail and I'll have the links and all of that.

Two, what happened today is the beginning of something ongoing. I'm not just saying this; we have assurances. Now we're going to be able to have dialogue with them, and here's – and I'm being very practical. The GPIC committee, we've already decided through June the number of calls we're going to – well, since July we have calls already scheduled. It's about every five weeks or so. So we have one next week as a follow up to this, Ed will be part of that, and we're going to continue to do that. So anytime you give us stuff somewhere soon we'll have a call with them. So we'll be able – and then we will, of course, get back to you and say, "We

have all these updates. They just fixed this” or “They’re still working on this. There’s a new contract who’s going to do this.” So we’ll always be able to be timely with you to us, with Ed on our calls, with us as good stewards reporting back to you, okay?

And NAFSA has already given us one opportunity, they say we can have it as many times as we need it. You know the NAFSA daily news that we get? We had one in there, you know, GPIC’s doing _____. We’ll have updates. I wanted to do a blog, but they said, “Tony, let’s do it this way” and I said “Fine,” so we’re going to do it.

Anything else? Yes, please. Whoa!

Male: How’s that for an ending?

Tony: Did you put that there? No, I’m kidding. Brenda?

Brenda: Tony, I want to ask a question _____. If they have specific listserv and they have issues, how would you like for them to get _____?

Tony: I forgot to mention that, thank you. About a couple of months, three or four months ago, whatever it was, remember I – well, maybe you don’t remember. I sent a form out and said, “If you have cases fill out this form and send it back.” I got about 12 back. Mary Fenton and Cynthia Bouthey had to leave for another meeting. Cynthia Bouthey and Mary are going to work on kind of refining that a little bit and maybe making it a little bit user-friendly, and we’re going to send that out again as a follow-up, saying “Okay, if you have a case, now not just this global thing, this student’s going through this. I need help. This is a real tough case; I need some help.” Send it to us, we’ll get it right out to them. So thank you for bringing that up.

There will be that mechanism, again, enhanced to do that. We might as well take advantage of what’s happening. We’re kind of like Cinderella now with – well, that’s not a good example, because midnight wasn’t a good thing. But, you know, it’s our time. So let’s take advantage of that.

Any other thoughts or words?

Audience: That’s great _____. I’m finding that because _____ ask me.

Tony: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Audience: That's great _____ serve everybody _____ me _____ concern how do they _____ -

Tony: No, that's not a survey. That's actually sending cases and information to us and we'll pass it on.

Audience: Right. But who does pass it? How do they get your information to _____ _____?

Tony: You want my e-mail address?

Male: Yes.

Tony: Got it. Are you ready for this?

Audience: _____-get your e-mail address, but the other thing is if you go on the NAFSA site and you use your membership directory you can look up by committees and you can find all those individuals.

Tony: Oh yeah.

Audience: Like if you wanted to talk to Ms. **Bessessi** there, Linda, about what she was talking about-

Tony: She's the Western rep.

Audience: -you can do that. You should reach out to each and every one of them at any point in time and they will get back to you.

Tony: We have Bruce here, who is our **Ramasfa** rep. Mary is the Southwest rep. Unfortunately Candy Frasier, who is the past chair, is Midwest, and Michelle Pastina is the South. So you're right, you could do it via them or send it to me, sozzo@nymc.edu. NYMC stands for New York Medical College. I read my e-mails all the time, so I'll answer you back.

Any other thoughts? Do we have any closing remarks from Linda, Mary, and Steve?

Steve: Just before closing remarks, I just was handed a sign-in sheet. This is cool.

Tony: Oh, that's right, I was supposed to tell you that. The Ed has a signing sheet, and I promise you won't get a federal audit. It's just

to know that you're here. So who hasn't signed this sheet? This is good. I would sign the sheet. I would literally sign that sheet. This is good. No, they're not going to come to your house.

Male: There are two of them.

Tony: While you're signing the sheet Mary and Linda are going to say some final thoughts and we'll tell you what bar we're going to be at in a few minutes.

Mary: First I just – two things. I just want to say thank you to all of you for coming, because mostly – but first and foremost, thank you to the Department of Ed folks who are still here; we call you the Feds, I hope you don't, you know, take that as, you know, but anyway. But we really, really appreciate. This is the first, it's a great opportunity, we thank you for listening, for everybody who had to leave. But thank you all. And like Tony said, Cynthia and I will finish up that form, we'll get it right out. If something comes up fill it out, send it in, because they're really listening to us now, so thank you very much.

Tony: They're listening, take advantage. Linda, any closing remarks? And then we'll applaud you.

Linda: Just ditto on everything that Mary said. And thank you all for coming. This is so wonderful to see so many GP people here. So thank you.

[Applause]

Tony: And keep in mind we want to push for that graduate professional track, because that will help our colleagues who couldn't be here fight and say, "Look, look what they're doing for us. I've got to be here." And we might have more attendance too.

Thank you all. We'll see you soon.

[Applause]