

Jessica Finkel:

So hi, everyone. Welcome to today's session on the gainful employment disclosure requirements. I'm Jessica. I'm from the office of postsecondary education at the Department of ED. This is Cynthia from the Federal Student Aid office, and my colleague, Elise, from the National Center for Education Statistics and CES.

Before we get started, I wanted to mention just a few things. First of all, I know that I tend to talk really fast, so please, if I'm talking too fast or if you can't hear me, please just raise your hand. I've got the two of them ready to nudge me if start speed talking.

And then second of all, please hold all of your questions for the end. We should have some time for questions, and there's a good chance we'll address any questions that you have during the course of the presentation. So, again, please hold your questions for the end.

So I have a quick agenda slide. For the beginning part of the presentation, Cynthia and I are going to tag team a little bit. I'm gonna discuss the provision and then Cynthia's gonna share some tips based on the questions we've received over the past few months, and share some things that we've learned during the implementation of these requirements. And then toward the end, Elise is going to cover the disclosure template, and then we'll share some resources and answer questions. So let's get started.

Okay. So we developed these regulations through our statutorily required process of negotiated rulemaking. Some of you may have heard this term thrown around and maybe you're not really sure what it means. But in general, what it means is that we convene a group of negotiators who represent the various stakeholders in our regulations, so it includes people from two-year schools, four-year schools, private schools, public schools, financial aid administrators, states, accreditors, students, consumer advocates. We try to really have everyone who's covered by the regulations involved, and we formally convene a negotiation session.

We typically have three negotiation sessions after which the department publishes a notice of proposed rulemaking for comment. We have a public comment period, and then we analyze all of the comments that we've received, and then turn around the NPRM into final regulations that we publish in the federal register. So we use that process to develop these gainful employment regulations.

If you watch the gainful employment provisions unfold, you know

that we ended up splitting the topic into three separate pieces. The first piece was the disclosure and reporting requirements that we included in the larger program integrity package that also covered the definition of a credit hour, state authorization, return of Title IV funds, a variety of other topics. And that program integrity package was published in the Federal Register on June 18, 2010. We finalized those regulations on October 29th of the same year, and so in accordance with the master calendar requirements in the Higher Education Act, they went to affect this past July 1st, 2011.

I said there were three pieces to gainful employment. The other two pieces were published separately, how you add a new gainful employment, and then also the debt metrics. Today, we're only focusing on the disclosure piece, but there are other sessions at the conference covering gainful employment, and you can also find additional information on IFAP.

The first piece of the gainful employment regulations consist of reporting requirements and those are found in Section 668.6(a). There was another session today covering those. And it also covers disclosure requirements, which are in 668.6(b). Now remember, the distinction here. Disclosure is information that you give to students in the public, but you report information to the Department of Education. And today, we're only go focus on the disclosure requirements, that is the information that you provide to the public. These requirements apply to all GE programs, regardless of whether pass or fail the debt metrics.

I'm not gonna get into the definition of a GE program in this session. Other sessions have covered it. We've also developed a number of eAnnouncements and Dear Colleague letters that explain what is considered a GE program, and those are all available on the GE information page on IFAP. Even if you don't think you have GE programs, I encourage you to read the guidance and make sure. I'm gonna let Cynthia chime in with a few tips related GE programs.

Cynthia Hammond: Hi. So as you guys might have heard, if you attended the big GE session in the Marquee Ballroom earlier today, **Jeff** went into a little bit about what is a GE program. Usually, if you have any sort of non-degree credential, a certificate, a diploma, it is a GE program. Even Pell-only schools have GE programs, and you have to provide disclosures.

Now we've had a lot of questions about this last bullet on the slide. It's not enough that the certificate program is fully transferrable to

another program. If you provide a certificate, it's still a GE program. The ones we were talking about here that are not GE programs, and it's also in Question G16 on the Frequently Asked Questions, are designed as transfer programs only. You do not give the students a certificate or a diploma or anything. It's purely a transfer program. These type of programs were much more common in 1965 when the Higher Education Act was first written, but there are still quite a few community colleges that have these type of programs.

Jessica Finkel:

All right. So there are five areas where institutions have to make disclosures. There's occupations, on-time graduation rates, tuition fees and other costs, placement rates, and median loan debts, and we're gonna get into those in a little bit more detail right now.

For each GE program, institutions must provide prospective students with this occupations by name and SOC code. SOC is the Standard Occupational Classification code. So by name and SOC code the occupations that the program prepares students to enter. For each of those occupations, schools have to provide links to the corresponding job profiles on O*NET, which is a website maintained by the Department of Labor. To determine the occupations related to the program, you would use the program's six-digit ZIP Code and the O*NET crosswalk. That crosswalk, and you can see the link is available here on the slide, was last updated in 2011, and it covers data through 2010, so it's up to date and it's fairly accurate.

Now we've gotten two main questions related to occupations. First all, what if a program crosswalks to more than ten occupations, and then on the other end of the spectrum, what if a program doesn't crosswalk to any SOC codes?

For the first question, which we actually received during our comment period, in response to that comment, the regulations specify that if a number of occupations related to the program based on ZIP Code is greater than ten, then an institution may provide links to a representative sample of the identified occupations, still by name in SOC code, for which its graduates typically find employment within a few years after completing the program.

For the second question, we noted in guidance posted June 15th, 2011, that if a program does not crosswalk to one or more SOC codes, then institutions can add a SOC code that aligns significantly and substantively with the program learning

outcomes, provided that the institution has evidence that graduates of the program found employment in those fields.

The next piece of information that an institution must disclose for each GE program is the on-time-graduate rate for students completing the program. To calculate this rate, and Cynthia's gonna give an example in a moment, you would divide the number of students who completed the GE program during the most recently completed award year, within normal time, divide that by the total number of students who completed the GE program in the most recently completed award year, and then you multiply that result by 100 to get a percentage.

A few things to keep in mind here. First of all, what is normal time? Normal time is the published length of the program. It's defined in Section 668.41(a) as the amount of time necessary for a student to complete all of the requirements for a certificate or degree according to the institution's catalogue. So, for example, if you have a standard term-based program, it might be four years for a bachelor's degree, and two years for an associate's degrees, and then you may have different various scheduled times for a certificate program. But in general, it's what your institution has said is the amount of time that you expect it will take for a student to complete the program.

The second point I want to make here is that the department's longstanding Title IV student aid policy has been that a student is considered to have completed an educational program when they have satisfied all of the academic requirements of the program, regardless of whether the degree certificate or other credential has actually been awarded to the student. In other words, it doesn't matter when the student actually walks across the stage to get their degree. The important point is that it's the point in time when the student's considered to have completed all of the academic requirements for that credential.

And then third, this on-time graduation rate for completers is different from the completion rate under the Student Right to Know disclosures in 668.45. And I know it must seem like we just really wanted to make everyone's lives difficult, but I promise, we did have some good reasons for using a different methodology. First of all, the Student Right to Know disclosure is based only on first-time full-time students, and that doesn't serve our purposes. After talking with our statistician – it's hard word to say, statistician, we concluded that really it would just be too difficult for institutions and for the department to use the Student Right to

Know methodology, because what we wanna do is include all students, and not just first-time full-time students. That was the first reason we decide to have a separate rate.

And then second, the Student Right to Know rates, are based on 150 percent of normal time, not on the actual published program length, and we feel that it's valuable information for perspective students to know the extent to which people actually finished a program in the time that the institution has said it expects the program will take. And we think it's important because that way they can adjust their expectations for how long the program may take them to complete, and then can also better plan their time and expenses.

Cynthia Hammond: Here is very simple example of how you would calculate an on-time completion rate. First, you have to determine the number of students who completed the GE program. Then you start the math. Of those students who completed the GE program in the most recently completed award year, how many of them completed within normal time? In the example on the slide, it's 75.

You divide that by the total number of students who completed the program, which is 100 on the slide. I wanted to keep the map very easy. Then you multiply the result by 100, and this program has a 75-percent completion rate. And depending on the program, 75 percent is probably a fairly high completion rate.

So a few tips on on-time completion rates. It includes leave of absence. You don't get to stop and start the clock for a leave of absence. You have to count that time. If a student attends multiple programs at your institution, they switch programs, they switch majors, we all know students do this, you calculate it from the time the student started any program at your institution.

Now if the student completed a program and then came back to your institutions for a second program, you do not have to count the time prior to the completion. So an example of this, let's say it's a for-profit college and the student got a bachelor's degree, loved the education they had, decided to come back for the master's. When you're calculating your on-time completion rate for the master's degree, you do not have to include the time that the student was in the bachelor's because there was a completion.

And one more tip that isn't on the slide – that's okay. One more tip that wasn't on the slide, but is very important is normal time must be an actual unit of time. You can't have semesters or

quarters or clock hours. It has to be either in weeks, months, or years.

Jessica Finkel:

So next on the slide, institutions also have to disclose the tuition and fees it charges a student for completing the program – that’s the entire program, not just a year of the program – within normal time. They have to disclose the typical cost for books and supplies, unless the books and supplies are included as part of tuition and fees, that could be expected over the course of the program, and then also the cost of room and board, if applicable, that would apply over the course of the program.

Schools have the option of disclosing other expenses, like transportation or living expenses on that same Web page that contains all of the GE disclosures for a particular program. That’s options to include it on that page, but you have to, at a minimum, include a link to those program costs on the Web page that has all of your other Student Right to Know disclosures. Transportation and other living expenses are a required disclosure under Student Right to Know. The option here is to include that information in both places, or just include a link from the GE page to the Student Right to Know disclosure just for transportation and other types of expenses like that.

Again, remember, the key point is that these costs must reflect the full program, not just one year of the program. I can’t stress that enough. We’ve gotten that question a number of times. So to give you an example, if the normal time for a student to complete a GE program is four semesters over two years, and the tuition and fees are \$1,000.00 for each semester, the amount that you would disclose – who wants to tell me? What would it be? Who’s paying attention? You tell them \$4,000.00, right? Because it’s \$1,000.00 per semester. The program length is four semesters, so \$1,000.00 times four. You would disclose \$4,000.00 as the cost of the program.

A few little scenarios. If the tuition and fees are gonna change over time, if you expect that they will, you can disclose those numbers either using current rates or an estimated rate if you have an estimate of what future charges might be. But either way, whether you use current or estimated rates, you have to include a disclaimer noting that the amounts may change. And then a final thing to keep in mind here is that fees include any charges that must be paid to the institution as a condition of enrollment or attendance.

Institutions must also disclose the placement rate for students who completed each GE program. This is a little bit tricky. The regulations require institutions to use the NCES methodology once it's available, but we ran into a little bit a problem. In March, NCES convened a technical review panel called a TRP, and the panel determined at that point, a single job placement methodology that would apply nationally to all different types of programs could not be developed without further study, because we have limitations and data system and available data.

So while the TRP consensus was that calculating job placement rates using a common metric would be preferable, the group was unable to provide a more definitive suggestion at the time. They did have a few suggestions for us. They suggested a more focused review be conducted on how to define key elements in a common metric in a way that presents meaningful and valid data, and they also recommended that we do further research into the availability and expansion of data sources to support a common metric. They want us to continue to monitor the availability of data to maybe make some changes in the future to be able to develop multi-access methodology in the future.

The TRP, the way the process works with that is that the results from the panel are published on the NCES website, so NCES did that. They collected public comments. But nothing in the public comment really caused NCES as an independent statistical agency to modify the TRP's recommendation. So all of that is to say that we don't have an NCES methodology yet. So what should you all do in the meantime? If your institution is required by your accrediting agency or a state agency to calculate a placement rate on a program basis, then you must disclose that rate, or both rates, if you're required to do so by both types of agencies. So if you have an accrediting agency requirement and a state agency requirement, you would disclose both of those rates. And you also identify the accrediting agency or the state agency that required that calculation.

If your institution is required to calculate a placement rate at the institutional level or another level that's not on a program basis. Then what you would do is the apply the methodology specified by your accreditor your state, on a program level to calculate a placement rate for the program. And then you would disclose that rate. Okay?

And then the last disclosure piece is median loan debt – and it doesn't say it on the slide, but it's median loan debt and any other

information the secretary provided to the institution about that program. So first, for each GE program, schools must disclose the median – not mean, debt incurred by students who completed the program, and they have to separate that into median loan debt from Title IV loans, from private education loads, and then from institutional financing plans. So you have to divide it into three categories. And the way this will work is that the department is gonna provide institutions with median loan debt information, and then institutions will have the option of using the information from the secretary, and disclosing that information, or using their own medians, wherever they believe is more accurate.

But I want to point out that the GE disclosures do fall under misrepresentation regulation. So even if you choose to use your own median loan data, it's important to make sure that you present that information accurately and clearly so that students and consumers can understand it and that you don't run afoul with misrepresentation regulations.

So that's the first piece, median loan debt. And the second piece, again, that I should have put on the slide, but didn't, is that once the GE metrics to into affect and we begin calculating debt to earnings ratios and repayment rates, that's information that the secretary will calculate and then provide to institutions, and that will fall under other information the secretary provided to the institution about the program. So once we have those ratios and repayment rates, and we give them to your schools, you will also be required to disclose that information to your students.

Cynthia Hammond: So a few tips on the three different medians. The first is Title IV. Title IV loans, both FFEL and direct loans, are not included in institutional financing or private loans. As Jessica said earlier, you have three separate medians that are disclosed on your Web page. The Title IV median includes Grad PLUS, but does not include Parent PLUS. It also does not include federal Perkins loans.

Private loans can be made by banks, credit unions, or even states. The Truth in Lending regulations, sometimes called TILA, has a lot more information on private loans. These were regulations crafted by the Federal Reserve Board, and we just use their definitions.

I'm not gonna get into a lot of detail with this year, but my understanding is Session 36 on consumer information provides more information on private loans, so you might wanna consider going to that session as well.

Okay. Institutional financing. Institutional financing is the total amount as of the day the student completed the program. This is unlike Title IV or private loans, when it's all the loan debt the student took out. For institutional financing, it's only that debt owed to either institution or a third party that is as of the day the student completes. This could include unpaid parking tickets or library fines or graduation fees. It's anything owed to the institution.

We did put an aggregate minimum in there of \$200.00. So if after you add up all those parking tickets and library fees and graduation fees and all that other stuff and it's less than \$200.00, you can put a zero when you're calculating the median. This \$200.00 minimum amount is for institutional financing only. It does not apply for the other two medians. And, again, here's it's not federal Perkins loans.

Now I know what you guys are thinking. You're saying, "Okay. Well, federal Perkins loans aren't in Title IV. They're not in institutional financing. They obviously don't fit for private loans. Where are they?" and the answer is they're not anywhere. Federal Perkins loans are not part of any of the metrics calculations, and they're not part of the disclosures for gainful employment.

If you need more information about institutional financing, you should see Frequently Asked Question G14, which says, "Can the department provide more guidance on institutional financing plans?"

Jessica Finkel:

She just left you a cliffhanger. Go wait and see what it says. All right. So in addition to specifying what institutions have to disclose related to GE programs, the regulations also specify how and where the disclosures must be made. Generally, they have to be included in promotional materials, things like catalogues, brochures, advertisements, invitations, things like that, and then also on the institution's website.

And as far as the disclosures on your website, there are a few key principles. First of all, all the GE disclosures must be prominent and included on the homepage of the applicable GE program. Second, you have to be able to access that information from each of the other institutional Web pages about that program. And those links also themselves have to be prominent and direct. Third, the information must be prepared in an open format that is platform independent, machine readable, and made available to the public

without restrictions that would impede their use of that information.

That sounds like a lot of jargon. That's actually language that OMB requested that we use. And that's part of it reflects a broader administration-wide effort to make information more easily available to consumers. That's something that that's language that they're using across agencies and across regulations at the moment. And so I know it sounds complicated, but basically, we that language means is that the disclosures have to be made in a format that doesn't use proprietary software, and it allows for you to search for it easily. Using Google, for example, you should be able to find things like that, and that you should be able to copy and paste it freely to share with others.

I've Googled that phrase, and it sounds a lot more complicated than it is, but it does just mean it should be easy to find and easy to use and copy and share it.

And then fourth, the last principle to remember related to disclosures on your website is that you may, although this isn't required, provide the disclosures on the website in conjunction with the second-year debt warning that's required under 668.7J4 if your institution faces those sanctions down the road. So that's something that will apply right now, but it's something to remember that you have the option to provide the disclosures along with that debt warning later on.

Cynthia Hammond: All right. So a few more tips on promotional materials. If you talk about a specific GE program or programs on promotional materials, the disclosure should be provided wherever feasible. For promotional materials that advertise more than one GE program, you basically have three options. You can provide the disclosures for all of the programs mentioned, directly on the flyer or whatever the promotional material is. Or, you can provide a direct link to each of those programs mentioned, back to the program homepages, or you can provide one link that if the student goes to that link, it will then redirect them to each of the program homepages.

Now having this single link and having the disclosure information there and having the students redirect it to the homepages is in addition to having the disclosures themselves on the homepage of each of your GE programs. And in any way that you do it, a clear explanation of the information that is available if the student went to that Web link needs to be something like, "For more information

about our graduation rates, median debt of students who completed the program, and other important information, please visit our website at [www](#) – whatever your link is. All of this information and more is available at Frequently Asked Question D3. So if you're thinking of some sort of promotion some of your GE programs, you might wanna look at that.

Okay. And a question. "Can my institution include the information for all of my GE programs on one central website?" And the answer is no. You need to have the disclosure information on each GE programs website. You might have one website for your institutions, but then you have various pages for your programs, and the disclosures need to be directly on that homepage for the prom. You can't have links taking you to other places.

Now I wanna spend a couple minutes talking about Electronic Announcement No. 25. On September 28th, we posted the this electronic announcement, and it's particularly significant because it modified our previous guidance in this area. We heard from several schools that had two programs with the same ZIP Code, same credential level, but the programs were different lengths. One program could be a 12-month program, another one an 18-month program, and they're obviously different lengths, but they could also have different costs, different completion rates. In the interest of providing accurate disclosures to students, we changed our previous guidance and recommended that schools do disclosures for these two programs separately.

If the length of the program differs by more than 3 months 12 weeks, or 1 Title IV payment period, separate disclosures should be considered. Institutions should also consider providing separate disclosures if the cost of the program differs by more than 10 percent.

Here are a couple tips on who to include when you're doing your disclosure calculations. We want to keep disclosures consistent with what is being reported to NSLDS. Therefore, you do not include students when you do not have their secondary school numbers. For high school students, and I know some of your programs, particularly some vocational programs might be admitting adults and high school schools in to the same program. You include those high school students only if you're admitting them as regular students.

Now remember the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which passed in 2008, changed the law in this area, so although high

school students still cannot receive Title IV aid, they can be admitted as regular students.

A few tips on small programs. This is probably the question that I get asked most frequently of all the frequently asked questions that we've posted. The advice on this slide is to protect students' privacy, small numbers applies to disclosures only? All cosmetic schools have to approval programs in a program even if there's only one. And so this information applies only to disclosures.

And, although you do not have to disclose the median debt or the on-time completion rate for those small programs, there are a number of things that you must disclose. Even if you have no students at all enrolled at a program, you should still disclose the occupations, the costs, and the placement rates if you're required to disclose those by your accreditor or your state.

And with that, I will turn this over to Elise to talk a little bit about the template.

Elise Miller:

So you might be wondering what this NCS lady's doing here, _____ here to talk about the placement rates, but they didn't come up a solution for her, so some of you were in my IPED session. I promise you I'm not gonna announce now that you also have to report all this to IPEDs. That's not why I'm here. I'm here because we have been assisting with the template that will be used starting July 1st of 2010, to help you meet all these requirements. Those phrases that are so difficult to understand about open source and all that will be built into this template, which will make it a lot easier for you to meet these requirements, and it will be required that you use this to make your disclosures.

Now where did we get this idea? Well, it came from the Net price calculator. The net price calculator, as many of you know – how many of you used the Department of ED, net price calculator to create yours on your website. Okay. So that simplified things, hopefully. And the idea here is that we're gonna try to simplify things as well, by allowing you to build your disclosure Web page by just filling out some information, the information we talked about, into a format, screens, and then it will produce the HTML site on which you need to post, much like you did your net price calculator. But, again, the big difference here is that the net price calculator template that we designed was optional. You could use ours and design your own. Come July 1st, it'll mandatory to meet disclosures in GE using this template that we provide.

So how did we come up with this and why did NCS getting involved. Part of the reason we got involved was because of our work on the net price calculator template. We also have been doing some work around consumer information in general, and had an opportunity to hold some focus groups with both students and institutional representatives who would be filling out this information.

And because we had done that work previously around the net price calculator, we decided that it would be helpful for us to weigh in on the design of the template as well. So the process for this, however, does require federal registered notice under the Paperwork Reduction Acts since you'll have to be filling this out as a requirement, and that I've got posted in the federal register for a 60-day comment period, are ready. We are actually still addressing some of the comments we received, so you'll have another have another opportunity to comment on it during our 30-day comment period. Hopefully in the near future. We just have a few more questions we need to address.

So how it works. What this does is it allows you to enter some information that will allow us to pull out the information that you reported to the department through NSLDS, but also allows you to enter some of the information that you don't have at your institution that we would not have at the department. So based on your six-digit OPE ID, and the six-digit ZIP Code you enter, and the credential level you designated, we'll be able to identify the program information that you reported previously through the reporting process for gainful employment. And then we will have calculated your median federal debt, your median private loan debt, your median institutions debt, your repayment rate, and your debt to earnings ratio. We will have those in our systems, and we can pull them in based on your OPE ID, the SIP and the credential level.

So that gets preloaded for you. Then, all the other information we've been talking about today, you will need to provide. So one of the things will be program length. Another is related SOCs. It will be very nice and easy to do this 'cause we will pull up – you will fill out that six-digit SIP and we'll say, "Here are the SOCs from O*NET site. Check the ones that apply." And then we will go ahead and create that URL link that you need to put in your disclosure. So makes it easier.

The total tuition and required fees for the entire program, the estimated cost for books and supplies and room and board if

applicable, and the on-time graduation rate and job placement rate, according to the conditions that you've heard already talked about today, on needing to meet that. So basically, all the information we've been talking about today, you'll fill into a form, hit Submit, and it'll create the actual website where the information would be displayed for students.

The idea here is then a student could go from institution's website to institution's website and see the information in a common format, described in the same way. It'll make it much easier for students to understand the information and compare it from one program to the next.

So that – some of you will have multiple, multiple programs and we just added this to the net price calculator as well. It's gonna have bulk upload option so that if you have 50 gainful employment programs, we'll have a way that you could just upload the information and create all the different websites at once, rather than having to go through screen by screen by screen, and create it manually.

So this is the draft screen. This is in not in Web format, but in Word format of how the output screen will look that would end up on your institution's website to display the information about the program. So you can see it contains the information as we described that you need to disclose. The name of the program. For this example, we used a baking and pastry art certificate program. Links to the information, right below that, to the SOCs that we mentioned, to the O*NET website. And then basically three boxes that break down the disclosure information into a format that students could easily look at.

As I said, we did test this with students already, so we brought together some students who are currently enrolled, and some gainful employment programs in the DC area, and had them look at this and provide us feedback. So some of this stuff we added to this actually – actually suggested by the students themselves. For example, with the What's Included button, so that information about providing more information about exactly what's in tuition and fees, that's one of the things the students wanted to know.

And then, also, the information about What Does This Mean, is where under the repayment rate, in debt to earnings rate, those may not be intuitive concepts for _____, and so we're gonna provide some information in that pop-up box that explains exactly what those concepts are.

So as I mentioned, we still have a 30-day comment period available to you to provide comments on the form, both on how you would be entering the information if you need some more instructions for what we're asking for. We did test it with a number of institutional representatives already, and we incorporated their being and how we described things to make sure we're getting accurate information. And then but we also want comments from everyone. So once we put the 30-day notice up, feel free to submit comments on what would make it easier and more understandable for providing the data that will end up on your disclosure Web page once the template goes live in July.

And, again, it will be available no later than July 1st, and that will allow you to meet your disclosures in a unified format across all the schools.

Cynthia Hammond: Several times during my presentation, I talked about this is Frequently Asked Question No. This or that. This website is to the GE information page, where we have regulations, Dear Colleague letters, electronic announcements, all the frequently asked questions broken out by disclosures reporting, general. Chances are if you have a question about something related to GE, it is there. There's also training where we post Webinars. We will post this session on that site after we get back home.

And there's also a resources section that has all sorts of different things that you guys might find useful as you're doing your GE disclosure reporting, have questions about the metrics, whatever it is.

So if you go to the main IFAP page, this is how you would get to the GE information page. That big red arrow shows you which site to click on. Mine's bookmarked, so maybe you guys wanna bookmark it, too. But if you don't, it's right there on the IFAP homepage. And after reading the Dear Colleague letters, electronic announcements and frequently asked questions, then if you still have policy questions and they're not answered in one of these sessions this week, please send a question to the GE questions mailbox, and the e-mail is on the slide.

Now this is for policy questions. If you have reporting questions, there's an NSLDS e-mail address to send things to. But before you shoot your question, look at the frequently asked questions. I'm finding most of the questions that people are asking are posted there. All right?

And so there's our contact information. We now have time for questions. There are two microphones, one on either side. I ask that you guys go to the microphones, 'cause even if you're sitting in the front row and are close enough for us to hear the question, the folks in the back will not be able to hear the question. So if you can go to one of the two microphones, that would be great.

Jessica Finkel: One quick thing I want to mention before we start the questions, just in case I forget at the end. They're gonna be sending you evaluation forms at the end of the conference, so please fill that out. Let us know what you liked about the session, what you didn't, so that we can improve it in the future. Questions.

Audience: Hi, there. Quick question. I'm the compliance officer for our school, and we do a lot of social media advertising. We also do a lot of Internet advertising. I've kind of advised our marketing department that I consider like Twitter and banner ads and pay per click ads as promotional materials, and so in those kinds of materials, though, there's just no room to put the disclosure information. So what we've been doing – my guidance to them has been we can't discuss a specific program. For example, we have business programs and so I say, "You can mention generically business programs, but you can't mention our specific titles of our programs."

So I was just wondering, first of all, am I correct in that Twitter and those things are promotional materials? And if so, is the department going to be doing something about that, maybe clarifying about the disclosure materials that needed to be done?

And then lastly, I guess, is the policy I've kind of given, are we going on the right track there?

Elise Miller: Social media and other sites that are generally available to the public are considered promotional materials. You should provide disclosures. I think you gave your folks fairly good advice. If you are mentioning just the school name and not a specific program or are mentioning, as you said, not a specific program, but like business programs or something, that's fine. The other option is you put the link that then would take the students to the homepage where the disclosure information is provided.

Audience: So just real quick follow-up. So we just do the link, we could just put the link to the website, not the – 'cause the template you gave us in the question and answers is a whole, "For more information,

blah, blah, blah, blah.” We can’t fit all that. So would the link be sufficient then, just the link to the website?

Elise Miller: _____ that.

[Laughter]

Jessica Finkel: That’s a really good question.

[Laughter]

Audience: Okay.

Jessica Finkel: On the one hand, it is very similar to a paper promotional material where you would say, “Here’s the website,” and the language that Cynthia gave before saying, “For more information, please visit our website,” there probably are ways to shorten it and the modify it so that it fits within Twitter specific character limits. But I think we’re still gonna bring that back and discuss it a little bit more ’cause it’s not really an issue that’s come up. Actually, I’m surprised that no one has brought up social media before. It’s really good point, and it’s something that we should reflect on and get back to you on.

Audience: Well, I sent the e-mail twice, and I haven’t gotten answer back.

[Laughter]

Elise Miller: Check your e-mail address, because neither of us has seen it.

Audience: Okay. Thank you.

Elise Miller: Okay.

Audience: Hi. I’m from a four-year public school, and we thought we had this figured out until on Paged 5, you said if the program is two years in length and is fully transferrable, still a GE program unless it is designed, in capital letters, as solely a transfer program. So can you just elaborate a little bit. We have stackable certificates. The certificates can apply to multiple programs, so you could have a certificate that might apply to three or four different four-year programs in business, but they’re stackable towards the four-year degree.

Jessica Finkel: If students can enroll separately in the certificate program, it is a GE program. The fact that they’re stackable and they can

eventually you could get a degree, that's – no. If you're offering a certificate or a diploma.

Now if the students cannot separately enroll in the certificate program, if they have to be enrolled in the degree program, and they happen to earn some certificates along the way – I know some technology degree programs are like this where you might get a certificate in something if you complete a course. You're not able to separately enroll in that. Those are not GE programs. Those aren't separate programs at all.

Audience: So it's not necessarily how they're declared in the system. So say, for instance, the student is declared in that four-year program, but they start out _____ with that certificate path. How would I classify that student? Would that student go in the GE reporting or not?

Elise Miller: In order for students to be Title IV eligible, they have to be enrolled in an eligible program, so all students at all of your schools are enrolled in something. And if they're enrolled in the degree program at a nonprofit or state school, that's not a GE program. If they're enrolled in the certificate program, then it is a GE program and you need to do the reporting and disclosures on those.

Audience: Okay, thanks.

Audience: Hi. My name is **Shawney** and I'm from Pomona Unified School District, Adult and Career Education. We are a small school. We did not comply to the November 15th deadline. And I just want to know two-part question, what was the timeframe we were supposed to report. Was that last July to November? And secondly, how long before we'll get sanctioned for not reporting?

Elise Miller: Luckily, none of the three of us work for program compliance.

[Laughter]

So I can't answer the questions for you about what the sanctions may be. I can tell you that you should have reported all students enrolled in all of your GE programs since July 1st, 2006, to July 1st, 2011, by November 15th. If you have not yet done that, please do so as promptly as possible.

Audience: Do you care if we had serious cutbacks and almost lost our schools *[Laughs]*? No. Okay, thank you.

Jessica Finkel: I'm sorry to hear it.

Audience: I believe I understand the GE definitions, but I just want to confirm.

Elise Miller: Can you speak a little closer to the microphone?

Audience: Yes, I just want to confirm that if we have a certificate program that is not participating in any of the Title IV programs, then that program does not have to submit GE information.

Elise Miller: That is correct.

Audience: Great.

Elise Miller: If it's not a Title IV-eligible program, you don't have to submit.

Audience: Hi. My name's **Ray Testa**. I wanna ask a couple questions about the separate disclosing of programs within the same OPEID number when those programs have different lengths or some of other criteria you've mentioned.

Our organization, for example, is 105 campuses stemming from 57 OPIED numbers, so we have a pretty complex gathering of information in order to disclose properly. And become some of our main locations have additional locations across state lines, where state agencies mandate different programs lengths and therefore cost are different and so on, we jumped on that dear colleague letter and said, "Okay. Let's get this right." It became so complicated as to which ones we should separate and which ones we shouldn't, we said, "Let's do the straight up thing and let's disclose by program, by campus."

So we took like even to the furthest transparent step you could. So my first question is did we do anything wrong there, because I think what we did was the best thing for the student 'cause now they're looking at, "Here's where I'm gonna go to school. These are the relevant rates there." So I don't know if you wanna answer that one and then I'll give you my next one.

Elise Miller: I think that's consistent with electronic announcement.

Audience: Okay. Now with regard to separating the disclosures, in the interest of giving transparent information to the students, we can do it. I don't think the department can. The department's gonna

throw back median loan debt based on OPEID number. Right now, we can calculate our median loan debt by location, and that's what we're doing, because we're doing the best we can with what we have. But what's gonna happen is we're gonna be doing what you're asking for in separating 'em and many other schools are gonna do the same thing, but when the student look at the disclosure, they're gonna be getting by program, by location in many cases, but they're gonna be getting median loan debt that's compiled data from all the locations associated with the OPEID. And when you go to the template where you're trying to make it completely uniform, you're gonna have even more problems.

Cynthia Hammond: Yeah. This is the reason why we have realized that this is a problem with us providing the medians, and the other problem we've discovered as we've talked through this is when we provide the medians, there's a delay because there's a delay in when you guys report the information into us. You can do medians much quicker yourselves than we can do them for you. So as Jessica mentioned, we are going to provide schools with the medians 'cause we've said that we will do that. But schools will have the option of putting in their own medians on the template.

Audience: Okay. And I have one last thing. Due to the nature of – well, our programs are predominantly 95 percent clock hour based, and without going into a lot of detail, we have problems with state agencies who mandate how we publish catalogues and program length, which is resulting in some cases in the on-time graduation rates just being flat out meaningless. They have no significance to the student. They bear no resemblance to real completion rates, or even to how many students are graduating on time.

How much flexibility is there for a school when we displayed these rates in a prominent manner on our website? Can we interject explanations that are meaningful? I mean, if we say, "Our on-time graduation rates or 37 percent, but, in fact, 80 percent of our students are successfully completing the program," there needs to be a way that we can present this to a student so they're not getting information that has little or no meaning in lieu of information that's more significant as to their chances of success.

Cynthia Hammond: I will speak to what we're gonna make available on the template, which is similar to if you are the person who does IPEDS on your campus. We put a context box on the forms where you can provide some additional information such as what you just mentioned, and that would appear on the disclosure template output page as well. So that if you need some clarifying

information, we'll make a text box space available where you can provide that additional information and it will show up in then output screen.

Audience: I just wanted you guys to maybe expound a little bit more on the tips for the on-time completions, specifically the leaves of absence. With our institutions, that's a really big thing for us, we have lots of LOAs. So I just wanted to have you be specific if it includes it, you have to tack on that time at the end. If you're gone for four weeks, you add that extra time on, or you're not allowed to?

Elise Miller: It'd be easier to pass this one around. Yeah, if the student takes a leave of absence, you still count that time. A student can be gone for a year, and you need to include that time when you're determining the on-time completion rate.

Audience: So their completion rate would be instead of a base two-year program, it would be their completion would be three years, but that's how long it should have taken them. Is that what you're –?

[Crosstalk]

Elise Miller: Yeah, okay. So you figure out how many students graduated in the most recently completed award year. So for the – can you flip it back to the example slide? You have 100 students. Of those 100 students, you figure out when they started. So did they start two years ago in your two-year program? Did they start three years ago, but took a one-year leave of absence? Maybe they were going part-time. Whatever it is, you count all that time. In this example, only 75 of those 100 students completed within – it doesn't say on this slide, but it 2 year, or whatever the time is for your program. And then for this one, 75 percent is the on-time completion rate.

And I know a lot of you are looking at your on-time completion rates and going, "Oh," but similar programs probably are going to also have similar on-time completion rate. And we think it's important information for the student to know that folks say this is a two-year program, but the vast majority of the students may not be completing it in two years.

Audience: I have a clarifying question for programs that don't offer any assistance in finding a job. Does placement rate mean the number of students that the school placed in jobs, or the number of graduates working?

Cynthia Hammond: Until NIC develops its methodology, which you heard are earlier from Jessica, may not be for a while, you need to follow whatever the rules are for your state or accreditor.

Audience: Okay, thank.

Cynthia Hammond: However they determine it, that's what it is.

Audience: Under Template, Next Steps, it says, "Available no later than July 1st, 2012." Is that when you expect it to be released?

Cynthia Hammond: Right. So that's when we're going to be making the template available for you to start using. And, again, we'll have the book upload feature, and I don't know if they have the time for when they're gonna start looking to see if people are using the template.

Audience: That was my follow-up question. When is the deadline for schools to be up in compliance with this, like we were for the net price calculator?

Cynthia Hammond: I can't answer that question right now, but when we announce, "Here's the disclosure template," and on July 1st or slightly before that or slight after it, whatever it is, when we announce the disclosure template, that electronic announcement will have something in it that will say – and we expect schools to have used it by – and some date. There will definitely be a period of time that schools can then go in and use it. It's not gonna be immediate.

Audience: Okay. When you say "definite period of time," are we talking a week, 30 days, 6 months, any idea/

Cynthia Hammond: I don't know at this point.

Audience: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Audience: Hi. With regards to the question that the gentleman asked when his schools reported the programs distinctly and by campus, just to be as clear as he could with the students, you said we don't have to use what ED provides for median debt. We could use our own information. However, ED is also providing the ratios.

Elise Miller: And those you will have to use.

Audience: All right. We have several schools. Some of them have multiple programs with the same ZIP Code. So there's a question of validity.

Elise Miller: You might wanna go and look at your ZIP Codes and see if you have them right. We found through this process that a lot of schools do not have the most distinct, most accurate ZIP Codes for their programs, so the 2010 ZIP Code list is available on NCS' website. You might want to go and look and see if there's a better ZIP Code for some of your programs.

Audience: I appreciate that. We've advised our schools to do that. I've also been informed that our state assigns the ZIP Codes and that the ZIP Codes are, for the most, current 2010 ZIP Codes, and accurate. But there are, indeed, multiple programs, distinct courses. But they fall within the ZIP Codes are fairly broad. So I just – if you could take that into consideration, I have a feeling that when all of this information is public, that there will be a lot of discussion about the validity of the ratios because of situations like this.

Elise Miller: Thank you.

Audience: Hi. Can I clarify the requirements based on the number of students in a program? I'm from a foreign institution that has a GE program with a few hundred students in it, but less than five who are borrowing US loans. Less than five who are US borrowing US loans.

Jessica Finkel: So if you have 100 students – you said US loans.

Audience: Yes.

Jessica Finkel: So are you a domestic school?

Audience: No, sorry. I'm a Canadian school, and the majority of the students are Canadian. There's about two borrowing US loans. So I know there are some different requirements if you have less than ten students. We have more than ten students, but less than ten US students.

Jessica Finkel: For foreign schools, and this applies to foreign schools only. If you have less than ten reportable students, so those are students where you have US Social Security numbers.

Audience: Yep.

Jessica Finkel: So it's not necessarily just Title IV eligible students. You could have other US students that are self-pay. But it is that you have

their Social Security numbers and they are reportable. And then those small program provisions would apply.

Audience: Okay. And which you've still disclosed, but not the median or the on-time completion rates?

Jessica Finkel: Correct.

Audience: Okay, thank you.

Audience: I have a question about once the template is up and running, how it meshes with the homepage of the programs. Right now, like when you use the net price calculator, you link to it. Will that be the same thing for this, or will somehow the template have to appear on the homepage?

Cynthia Hammond: It will be available – there's both ways to do it, and you can actually find some institutions that have decided to put the net price calculator within a page that they already had, rather than a completely separate. So there'll be instruction provided specifically saying exactly how to do that so that you could build it in and not have to link to a separate page. But I think that as long as you say, "Here, point to the information," then you'd also be able to provide an HTML link as well. But I'm being told we will [laughs] make sure we go back. So we're not gonna give a definitive answer today, but we promise they'll be built into the instructions with the template. So in a way so that you are meeting the requirements.

Audience: My question is actually very similar, so I apologize in advance if it's the same answer. But having to do with the disclosure template. I understand today, I needed to be on the program-specific page, not a link from that page, but actually displayed on that page. Is the thought that come around July of 2012, it's gonna be the same that we need to recreate that template on our program page, or we're gonna have the link to your template?

Elise Miller: Right. So it doesn't link to anything on the department's website. It's hosted on your own website, but it might be a link within your own institution's website. But there is a way to build it into the website, and we will be giving out information when the disclosure comes out exactly which way you need to go in order to meet the requirement.

Audience: Okay. So just to be clear. So we'll be creating your template, and then it'll be information to come out how to populate that.

Elise Miller: I'm sorry. I couldn't quite hear you.

Audience: So we're gonna create the template ourselves, based off of what the template you provide.

Elise Miller: So the template is a form. There's a form you fill out, and then it produces a ZIP file with HTML files in it, and then that gets hosted on your individual institution's website.

Audience: Okay. Thank you.

Elise Miller: Sure.

Jessica Finkel: Give you one more minute to think of any other questions. All right. Well, we'll be available for a few more minutes up here if anyone has any questions that you'd like to ask. Otherwise, you have our contact information. You have the GE mailbox e-mail address. Feel free to use it. Again, check all the receives that we have posted on the IFAP website. Again, remember to do your evaluations, and thank you. Thank you so much for coming.

[Applause]