



**U.S. Department of Education Call with HBCU Presidents and Chancellors**  
**Moderator: Dr. John Wilson**  
**12-10-09/2:01 p.m. Eastern Time**

John Wilson: While we're waiting, let me just confirm that both Tony Miller and Bob Shireman are already on the line.

Bob Shireman: We're here.

Tony Miller: We are.

John Wilson: Okay. All right. We'll wait for the operator.

Coordinator: Thank you. Excuse me. This is the operator. I would like to inform all participants that this conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

If you'd like to mute your phone you can do so by hitting Star 6 and Star 6 again to unmute. Thank you. You may begin.

John Wilson: Thank you. Again, this is John Wilson, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs.

I want to thank everyone for signing on today. The call is being recorded and transcribed. I want everyone to know that this is our second phone call to the HBCU community.

The first one was a couple of weeks ago, a few weeks ago. And the topic was the H1N1 virus and what you should do about it.

We have just one hour so I want to get right to it.

We are honored to have with us opening this call and kind of giving you a quick sense of the larger context for this call U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Tony Miller. He wants to say a few words. And Tony will turn it over to Deputy Undersecretary of Education, Bob Shireman. Tony.

Tony Miller: Thanks John. Well and thanks all for being able to join the call this afternoon.

We have a very ambitious agenda as we think about how we can meet the President's goals by 2020. We will graduate the highest percentage of high school graduates in the world.

That's a goal that we take very seriously. We've been working very hard over the last almost 11 months to outline a comprehensive agenda that spans from early childhood with legislation pending through a very robust and ambitious K-12 reform agenda, with programs like Race to the Top, and Investment and Innovation with unprecedented amounts of discretionary funding that we are investing to improve K-12 education.

And then obviously with our College and Career Ready agenda, hoping to build the capacity of the higher ed institutions, and in particular, making higher education more accessible and affordable for all.

As part of that and because our agenda spans the full spectrum, we really are calling on all to do what they can to really take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity.

In particular, we think there's a role for HBCUs. And so we were pleased to be able to convene this call today to just highlight that and to expose you, to you know, our thinking of some programs that will be forthcoming; that would be new programs for colleges and universities in general and in particular for HBCUs to participate in as an example of the kinds of collaborations we'd like to look to going forward.

And with that, let me just highlight this example. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have \$650 million in a discretionary grant program called Investment and Innovation.

That is a program that we have proposed. A notice for public comment we have now - that period is closed. We are finalizing the details of that, the grant program. And you should look for the details for that to be coming out in the coming weeks.

But in the original proposal, one of the things that we wanted to do was call out that our district, this is programming that at local education agencies, local school districts, that they should be reaching out and partnering with nonprofits and/or potentially colleges and universities to identify and either identify in a (beta) program that are promising at the one hand to developing those most promising programs, just scaling them up to take them the full scale. So it allows opportunities at both the local, regional or national scale.

And so this is a program where we're relying on evidence. We really want to identify the best practices that have a solid and proven evidence base and where we can target our investments for things that we know will work to improve education in America.

Again, I call it out because this is an opportunity for colleges to partner with local districts so we can partner across the continuum. And in particular, it's an opportunity for Historically Black Colleges and Universities to access not just funds, but be on the front end of our education agenda.

So that's the end of my opening remarks. I'll turn it over to Bob Shireman and he can talk about the other aspects of our overall agenda.

Bob Shireman: Okay thank you Tony. We wanted to give you an overview of both financial aid and other program support activities that are going on, and potentially the future.

We've faced as you know, a very tough budget situation at the beginning of this year when the Obama administration began. And one of the major questions was how to handle the Pell Grant Program.

As you know, HBCUs benefit enormously from the Pell Grant Program. Something like half of your students on average receives Pell Grants, which is almost double the percentage generally around the country.

Supporting the Pell Grant Program is critical to supporting the students who are at HBCUs.

We face a budget situation though where more people are eligible for Pell Grants because of the nature of the economy, more people applying for federal aid than had ever applied before.

We - it's a situation where it would cost billions of dollars more just to fund a stable Pell Grant.

And in a lot of situations, I'm sure you've seen in states, they take the amount of money they have for their grant program and divide it by the amount of people they expect to be eligible, and they end up with a lower grant amount or they cut people off.

We did not want to do that. And as part of the Recovery Act and the budget at the beginning of this year, we made sure the Pell Grant program would not only be maintained at the maximum grant level, but that we would actually see an increase in the maximum Pell Grant. And the - so that was a critically important part of the Recovery Act and our budget.

The Recovery Act also included the American Opportunity Tax Credit. So even for those who may not qualify for a Pell Grant, there's now a \$2,500 tax credit beyond supporting tuition and fees that can support books and supplies.

And that's something that you make sure that your students and families are knowledgeable about, and take advantage of that when they file taxes this coming year -- could be very - it would be very helpful.

We also needed to make sure that we have reliable access to student loans. We really dodged a bullet a year and a half-ago, when the credit markets were collapsing and there were questions about whether there would be student loans available.

So - a temporary solution was put into place where the Department of Education offered to buy loans being made in the Guaranteed Student Loan Program. That program ends at the end of this academic year.

Fortunately, the Inspector General put out a recent report and said that our contractors and agency personnel who run the Direct Loan Program are 100 percent ready to supply all the loans that are needed in - through the Direct Loan Program. If it turns out that institutions need to go that route rather than the guaranteed program or if Congress decides to move to 100 percent direct lending as we have proposed that move to 100 percent direct lending does save, according to the Congressional Budget Office about \$87 billion, which if Congress acts could be plowed back into maintaining Pell Grants and really increasing Pell Grants in the coming years and making other kinds of investments.

And I wanted to mention one that we had proposed that's part of that legislation, the Access Completion Fund. It really is about encouraging innovation at colleges and universities.

So much like what Tony described in the Investment and Innovation Fund which exists now, this would be - promoting innovation and implementation of best practices at the higher education level in order to increase completion-based participant's rates and to help us get to that national goal that President Obama has laid out.

So your student support folks, financial aid people, faculty members who may have ideas about approaches that would be implemented or tested that could improve college completion, now's a good time to start putting together those ideas for the possibility of a grant program that would come from that - this pending legislation.

That effort may also yield some ideas about waivers of rules that the regulations, the Department of Education has.

We have some authority to waive regulations in financial aid if the goals behind the rules can be achieved in ways that might be less burdensome on your institutions or might result in better outcomes per student.

So we welcome feedback the Experimental Sites Initiative. And we welcome your ideas for regulatory waivers that we can try out and see whether we can reduce the regulatory burden on you.

The last thing I wanted to mention is loan repayment. And we know that in the current tough economic times more former students, people who've graduated or left school for one reason or another are having a harder time bringing in the income that allows them to then repay on their loans.

And there is some help out there for federal student loans called Income Based Repayment. And that started up just on July 1 of this year.

It allows borrowers to repay their loans based on a percentage of their income and helps keep those payments down especially in tough times when they may not have that high-paying job that they had hoped for when they started college. So make sure that your students are aware of Income Based Repayment.

I'm going to stop there and turn it over to John to call on questions or anything else that we might want to do from this point.

John Wilson: Well I just want to say, we don't have a system, a moderated system through the operator to screen the questions or to order them.

So what we're going to do is just take the risk of leaving it open. And if you have a question if you could say your name and your institution and then ask your question, Bob will answer the questions. And we'll try to get everybody in. We'll go up to three o'clock. Does anybody want to jump in?

Suzanne Phillips: Yes, this is Suzanne Phillips from Cheyney University. Certainly this is wonderful. And I wanted to know about some programs we're working on with local school districts in Philadelphia.

When will - do we know when that might be finalized or when an RFP or something would be going out for that?

Bob Shireman: You're talking about the Investment and Innovation Fund...

Suzanne Phillips: Right.

Bob Shireman: i3.

Suzanne Phillips: Yes.

Bob Shireman: So there have - there is - we have posted information about i3. And why don't we - we will send around to everybody the current information.

It looks like mid to late January is when the final version of the guidelines for that program will be out there.

So you can get a sense of what we're currently thinking in the proposed approach that we published in the Federal Register. And then mid to late January is when we expect the - where the actual package would be there for applying.

Suzanne Phillips: Okay thank you.

Earl Richardson: John, Earl Richardson from Morgan State. How are you?

John Wilson: All right. How are you Earl?

Earl Richardson: Okay, all right. A few questions, the 2.5 billion, is that a set-aside amount or is that a combination, several grants that you - just might be applicable to the historically Black colleges?

Bob Shireman: The 2.5 billion is the Access and Completion Fund. It has a portion that goes to states for early access kinds of programs and then an innovation program that depending on which version, what version Congress goes with -- you know, this is still in the legislative process -- there would be funds that would go directly to institutions and perhaps some to states.

There is a separate - in House version of the bill which is the only one that's been passed. There is a separate fund for HBCUs as well as HSIs, and tribally controlled colleges.

Earl Richardson: Okay. Is there - does it have to go through the states? Much of the money that goes through the states causes us great angst. Because when it goes through the states it's distributed in ways that oftentimes do not benefit our historically Black colleges. That's one question.

And I'll add another one so that I don't dominate the conversation here.

But the second piece of that is for money that is available for partnerships between universities and school districts is - and this is part and parcel of the other question.

Is there some way that the money that the PI or the primary institution will be the institution/university as opposed to the school system?

Again, it makes a difference as to what programs are developed, what designs are developed and how that money flows. Those are types of structural and administrative problems that sometimes does not allow us to tap into money that was intended to help us.

Bob Shireman: Yes, I'll start with the second question first. You will be pleased to know that in fact our - the draft guidance that we have proposed does allow an institution of higher education to be the primary, the fiscal agent, the applicant that - the entity that applies for the Investment and Innovation Fund grant.

So that is the approach that we've taken in that - in the draft approach that is out there at this point.

In terms of going through states, early on in the discussion of our Access and Completion Fund, there was an expectation that virtually all of the funds would be going through states in part because of the kind of input that we received from HBCUs and others.

The discussions of - with Congress have moved in the direction of a substantial portion going directly to institutions or consortia of institutions rather than through states.

At the same time, we want to encourage states to do the kind of strategic planning where they would look at where are our needy students going and how can we help?

And so we expect that for those funds that do go through states, that we would be certainly encouraging them to make sure that they are providing the help where it is really needed in their own state.

Earl Richardson: And will they have some opportunity to interact and to dialogue with Department of Ed people as they are putting together the announcement and the parameters for this? That is as we talk about the 2.5 billion and how that will go, the kinds of programs for the definitions that will be used?

The retention and graduation issue is something that I - we need lots of dialogue based on the research.

And so will there be some opportunity before this is finally put to bed and sent to us for us to have some interaction or discussion with Department of Ed on this issue?

Bob Shireman: Yes. And I would say that we also have been having that kind of interaction even in this kind of legislative period which is - has already resulted in, you know, consideration of approaches that Congress is taking.

So - and with John Wilson's help, we're happy to talk about these kinds of things.

And we wanted to get you all thinking about this early. We don't know where this will go and what the timing might be. But we wanted to make sure that you were thinking about it in any case. I do want to make sure other people have a chance to ask questions.

John Wilson: Other questions?

Alvin Thornton: This is Alvin Thornton from Howard University. It's not clear to me the faculty dimension here. I've read the comments of the Secretary and heard the comments today.

Can you say more about the faculty dimension? A large part of the success historically of HBCUs obviously was the unique faculty that they had and still have; diversity and orientation towards the kinds of students that they serve.

Say more about how you see faculty development proposals being cut and the grants that would be available?

Bob Shireman: Well one of the things that we have encouraged Congress to do is to keep this fund flexible. Because we want to encourage you to think through what are the kinds of things that are working that you want to prove are working so that others can latch onto that knowledge that you have developed, and to the extent that people have ideas for ways that your programs could be more successful, and you want to try things out. We want to - we want you to be creative and propose those kinds of things.

So I - I mean I'm reluctant to tell you here's the way you should do it because you and your faculty have more expertise and experience than we do with what that should, you know, bring out those kinds of ideas.

So our - we're hoping that ultimately what we get from Congress does give us - give that kind of flexibility so that whether it's about financial aid or support services or what happens in the classroom or what happens - or what the faculty do outside of the classroom -- any of those kinds of things can be areas of implementing best practices and innovation and experimentation.

Alvin Thornton: Thank you.

Joseph Stevenson: Hello. This is Joseph Stevenson at Mississippi Valley. Wouldn't it make better sense to come up with a common denominator for HBCUs to do given what you've just stated?

For instance, action research is a methodology used to increase retention and graduation rates in the classroom.

Why not encourage all HBCUs to do that as part of a national initiative to, you know, fit with recruitment, retention, and graduation rates?

Rather than have 100 or so HBCUs do different innovations, wouldn't it be more prudent to have all HBCUs use the same innovation for a national concern?

Bob Shireman: Well we have certainly had some people encourage us to ask for a consortia of colleges; and I think that makes perfect sense.

So, you know, if HBCUs were to pull together and have a consortia assuming the legislation comes out in a way that allows for that -- and I would hope that it does that -- you know, that, if your combined wisdom on this issue is that that would be the most effective way of moving forward, that's great.

Joseph Stevenson: Well I think if you're - if there's an interest in a national impact, if in fact HBCUs collectively through their collective strength can increase recruitment and retention based on graduation and placement, it would make economic and academic sense to have more doing the...than most doing the (thing).

Bob Shireman: Yes, I think that's definitely a good conversation for the HBCU community to have. And John Wilson maybe - can maybe help to facilitate that kind of discussion.

John Wilson: Yes Bob let me interject. I appreciate the question. But I don't - it would not have been prudent for us to presume that from the outset. Nor would it have been prudent or wise for us to try to stimulate or drive that.

I think that's the kind of ideas that has to come from the field. And as Bob is saying or implying, if that's a direction in which you think HBCUs ought to go, if you can organize that -- I'm hard-pressed to think about how you could do it with 105 institutions -- but if you can organize some sort of consortium and propose something in that category, then we would look at it when it comes in and make a judgment about it.

Maurice Taylor: This is Maurice, John. This is Maurice Taylor at Morgan State University.

My question is that the question of access and completion is not only a factor for undergrads but the - many graduate students at HBCUs suffer the same kinds of concerns.

My question is, is there anything in either the i3 or the Access and Completion Fund that specifically and/or expressly supports graduate education at HBCUs?

Bob Shireman: Well i3 is mostly a K-12 education focused in terms of the outcomes that we are looking for.

The Access and Completion Fund is higher ed oriented. And again, we are - we're asking for a fair amount of flexibility so that various kinds of approaches and various kinds of outcomes can be aimed for and assessed.

And certainly one of those, especially the issue of good undergraduate preparation for entry into graduate and professional education is one of the areas that is critically important and in bringing about diversity in our graduate and professional schools depends on what happens at the undergraduate level.

So those are certainly the kinds of goals that we would like to see in proposals around the Completion fund.

John Wilson: Let me make an additional comment on that question and in anticipation of other questions.

I want you all to recognize that this is a shift. You may be asking whether we would like to hear about one or another idea.

The change that our President and especially Secretary Duncan, they are bringing, is to be, is to make a shift from being tight on means and lose on the goal which was the case in the past.

And now we're being very tight on the goal. We've said where we want to go. And we're open to your creativity as to how to get there.

And if some of you have creative ideas in pitching ideas related to graduate education or other features of the educational pipeline and want to propose them, we want to take a look at them in an open-minded and open-ended way. So this really is an open process. And we hope you appreciate the openness of it.

Maurice Taylor: John, let me just - this is Maurice again. Let me just say that I appreciate the shift. I do want to say though that the means are not separate from the goals. And part of the issue is being able to strengthen the means by which HBCUs are able to work towards those goals.

I don't want the shift to suggest that the focus on outcomes means that the institutional means are forgotten.

John Wilson: Point well taken.

Other questions please?

Everette Freeman: Yes, this is Everette Freeman at Albany State University in Albany, Georgia. Is there any consideration being given to rural versus metropolitan university venues and any particular weight's given in one direction or the other?

Bob Shireman: In the - we haven't gotten far enough along in the Completion Fund on that particular issue. But that is certainly an interest of making sure we are able to reach those who are not being reached effectively now.

So certainly, it's certainly important to us. But I would expect in the - once Congress enacts the program if they do that we would be able to work on those kinds of things.

So and any suggestions you have about how we might reach out and make sure that we get applications and provide technical assistance to folks so that they can apply, we definitely welcome that kind of input.

Everette Freeman: Thank you.

John Wilson: You know, while people are thinking of other questions, let me just amplify something else that Bob said.

Now I don't want anybody to be discouraged or misled about his comment that the i3 fund would focus on, a large part on K-12.

We still think that is relevant to the HBCU community given the amount of K-12 teacher production that HBCUs engage in.

I was just at Jackson State University earlier this week and got the wonderful statistic that Jackson State has generated and continues to generate up to 75 percent of the teachers in Jackson, Mississippi.

I know that they are already tracking on both of our funds and a number of our funds, and are looking for ways in which the federal government can help them in their teacher production efforts.

I know also that some HBCUs have connections with local K-12 systems trying to add value to what they're trying to produce. And that is the kind of thing that might be considered in the i3 context.

So just to be clear, the spirit in which we are wanting both kinds of initiatives on the table and in your site is because we are familiar with the range of areas in which HBCUs have done a great job.

Other questions please?

Earl Richardson: Well John, any time I see a lull I see an opportunity just to mention something. Let me say, I think this is very, very helpful.

John Wilson: And Dr. Richardson, before you continue, let me just say to take advantage of this lull also, congratulations to you. You are retiring I think within the month.

And as a show of your enormous energy, you are on the line here asking many questions relevant to the future of Morgan State. So thank you and congratulations to you.

Earl Richardson: Thank you very much. It shows you where my heart is.

John Wilson: All right.

Bob Shireman: And Dr. Richardson, I'm curious whether you remember me from Senator Paul Simon's office way back when?

Earl Richardson: Look, I thought the name sounds familiar but I wasn't sure. Yes indeed.

Bob Shireman: Great. Well it's me. It's great for me to hear from you again.

Earl Richardson: Well all I wanted to say, I think this provides a very, very significant opportunity for -- to move us towards some of the goals that the President has established in terms of the access and completion for a larger number of our students.

I was looking at the New York Times on last Saturday, and I saw the article there that was talking about leadership. I think the demographic statistics that were used there were very instructive in terms of this discussion.

They said that by 2050 that the percentage of the workforce that would move from being 67 percent white to 51 percent white and the difference would be in - for the next generation would be in African-Americans and Hispanics.

And that's the thing that is driving us, the institutions that have done so much for this, but oftentimes have not been able to demonstrate it the way that they should because of that lack of resources that Maurice was talking about.

And by the way, Maurice is at one location and I'm at another location. So I didn't have time to talk to them on that.

But my main point in this, if there is some way of really focusing in on our historically Black colleges on this particular fund, I think we can show how to make a difference in terms of this whole issue of access for minorities.

I was - when we first started the stimulus package discussion there was initially, you might know, about 6 billion for institutions that were serving minorities and low income students.

And of course just 24 hours before it went to the conference committee, that was taken out.

And I think many of us had thought that that was going to be the Camelot for our historically Black colleges. Because if you really want to see somebody make a difference, I think this is one group of institutions that can make a difference.

And that's not to say that our community colleges don't have a role. It's not to say that our research universities don't have a role.

But I think that some targeted dollars will be well invested. And to the extent that we really benefit from these moneys that you're now talking about, I think will make the difference for the President.

Bob Shireman: Great. Well I think I agree that the HBCUs can make an enormous difference here in not only reaching the numbers, but also developing the leadership that we need. So I appreciate your long leadership in your role. Thank you.

John Wilson: Okay, want to also make sure that you hear the point that Bob made earlier about scalability and that you think about what we're trying to do not just in terms of where your institution -- and this is not directed at Dr. Richardson, this is at everyone -- not just in terms of where your institution might benefit, but also the external validity of your ideas and how we might scale things up not only at other HBCUs but across higher education.

Because the point you're making Dr. Richardson is we have some things to teach the rest of higher education as well. So that scalability is something we're going to be looking at as well.

Earl Richardson: Absolutely.

John Wilson: Other questions please?

Mickey Burnim: John, this is Mickey Burnim at Bowie State University. How are you doing?

John Wilson: All right. How are you?

Mickey Burnim: Fine. Thank you very much for arranging this. It has been very helpful.

I have heard several things mentioned. I'd like more information. Will there be something posted on a Web site or will there be some sort of electronic communication to us highlighting the major points that have been made during this talk today?

John Wilson: The answer to that is yes. The call is being recorded and we are also going to have a transcript of it. And we'll make sure that the transcript, a link to it is on our Web site as soon as possible.

Mickey Burnim: Great, thank you.

John Wilson: Sure.

Dwight Fennell: John, along that line, Dwight Fennell with Texas College. Will we have access to the others who were on the call with us so that we can continue the exchange of ideas about establishing consortia or partnerships?

John Wilson: The transcript will also include a list of participants on this call. I don't know if we can put the contact information on there, but it will include a list of the participants. And let me just say a word about that.

We want, you know, the email, I sent three emails now to the HBCU community. One is introducing the fact that we will be in touch with you electronically.

The second one was introducing the H1N1 call. And the third email was to introduce this call.

That means we're going to use this method of communication very, very judiciously. And we would appreciate hearing from you immediately after we get - after you get an email from us because we believe that the things we want to be in touch with you about are quite worthy of your time and energy.

So yes, as follow-up to this engagement, we are going to have that information, all the information outlined here. And we are going to continue to inform you of the funds that will be announced as Bob mentioned in the future so that you can be in the loop.

Joan Robinson: John this is Joan Robinson from Morgan State University.

What is this cycle for funding for this grant? And how will it be sustained after the cycle ends?

Bob Shireman: Well for the Completion Fund, it's still in Congress or still being considered by Congress. So it really depends on how - on the timing of when Congress puts that funding out there.

Then we will be able to figure out the timing for proposed, you know, draft approach to the - to get input from you and others and then a final approach for the applications that you would put in.

I suspect that one of the questions for institutions is going to include the question of the cost effectiveness of innovations that might be tried, and ways that they might be able to continue beyond the duration of the grants.

And, you know, in some cases those are the kinds of things that can be absorbed. In other cases, they help to make the case to states and the federal government about the kinds of things that we should be funding because they've been demonstrated to be successful through these innovation programs.

So we hope we'll really learn a lot more about what works and what doesn't, and to help guide our future funding and efforts as well as where states and institutions put their funds.

Mildred Ofosu: This is Mildred Ofosu from Morgan State University. I wanted to ask a question.

In the past when DOD has sent out some of the DAAs and they were targeting our HBCUs, they have limited the number of proposals that could come from a given institution.

I'm hoping that when the final announcement comes out we will have - and that part of it will be open. We will if we need to or want to submit as many applications as we can as long as they are very well written and competitive, there would be no limitation. What are your thoughts on that?

Bob Shireman: I hadn't thought about it, but it's helpful input. And we'll definitely include that in our thinking.

Mildred Ofosu: Okay, thank you.

John Wilson: Other questions?

We have Bob on the line for the next 17, 18 minutes.

Bob Shireman: I don't mind time for coffee if nobody has questions. But if there are questions I...

John Wilson: Okay. Dr. Richardson, I might ask you if you have any further questions or people from Morgan.

Earl Richardson: Let me just say again, I think that it's going to be important just mentioning that we get information early on, that we have an opportunity to talk about various ramifications of these things before it's set in stone. And secondly that as much as we can, the money go direct to (institutions).

And John, I think it would even be good if we can somehow have a conversation with you. Maybe you and I can talk. Maybe give me a call and we could just talk about some of the things that we think that we may be able to suggest even before you put it in stone or send it out.

And I'm not just saying Morgan either. I'm talking about all of our Black institutions.

And by the way, all of my comments are intended for all of our Black institutions, not just Morgan. And I know you understand that.

John Wilson: Sure. I understand that very clearly. And I will take a phone call from you just as I would any other President of an HBCU. You are my constituency.

Billy Hawkins: John, Billy Hawkins from Talladega.

John Wilson: Okay.

Billy Hawkins: Just one comment. I hope that as we move through the process and that as the proposals are reviewed, that consideration be given to small HBCUs just like consideration will be given to the larger HBCUs as we move through this process, just a comment.

Bob Shireman: Yes.

John Wilson: Thank you. And that is clearly the case.

Bob, do you have a comment about that?

Bob Shireman: Oh no. I was just going to agree that we definitely - we'll take that into consideration. We know there are different level of resources and all of that and want to make sure - part of the reason for doing this call is to let you know the kinds of things we're thinking about well in advance so that to the extent that you need time and have questions and input you can - that can happen.

Everette Freeman: This is Everette Freeman again from Albany State University. You may not have given thought to it yet. But if you have, I'd like to know something about your thinking on the review process itself, who will be doing the reviewing, who will be asked to be a part of that process?

Bob Shireman: We have not gotten into that yet. That would come after, you know, after Congress creates the program. But we'd welcome your thoughts about how you think that should be done.

Everette Freeman: It certainly might be beneficial to - and John, you may want to do this to give a heads up to us at some point as Presidents and perhaps Dean's of the colleges and schools of education to be thinking about how they and we might want to contribute to the evaluation process, what rubrics might be used, what matrix might be used -- those sorts of things -- and what individuals might be best brought into service to volunteer or to be asked to serve on those review panels.

John Wilson: I will keep you informed about when we will be making decisions about that.

Even if you want to send your ideas in now to me electronically about how you think that ought to go or who you think ought to be involved, you can do that now. I'll make sure that Bob and his team have it so that that can be considered.

Everette Freeman: Thanks a lot. I really appreciate it.

John Wilson: Sure.

Charlie Nelms: This is Charlie Nelms from North Carolina Central University. And I just wanted to thank you for the budget information and that kind of thing.

I want to echo what my colleague from Albany just said a few minutes ago, not so much as to who's involved, but the criteria against which the various proposals will be reviewed.

First and foremost, I think that that should be rooted in best practices and what we found to be effective in terms of assisting students toward achieving their academic objectives.

And it ought to be criteria that can be applicable to more than just that single institution going back to I think what you said earlier John, the scalability. And someone talked about that.

John Wilson: Right.

Bob Shireman: That's very useful input. Thank you.

John Wilson: Down to about ten minutes folks. Are there any other questions? Okay, there being none, I want to thank you all for signing on. I want to thank my staff for setting all this up, in particular, Ron Blakely, Karen Epps, and Chris Lee. Thank you for your fine work.

I want to thank our Deputy Secretary of Education Tony Miller for his input and his concern. And I especially want to thank Deputy Undersecretary Bob Shireman for taking the time to answer these questions.

Again, I will let you know that we will have a transcript up for those of you who want to review this information again. It will be on our Web site. And you can encourage your other colleagues to take a look at it.

And again, as I thank Bob in closing, I want to wish you all a happy holiday season. And we will be in touch on the other side of the New Year.

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