Loan Counseling Webinar

January 18, 2017

1:30 pm ET

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants will be in a listen-only mode for the duration of today’s conference. This call is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the call over to Mr. Michael Cagle. Sir, you may begin.

Michael Cagle: Thank you very much and good afternoon or good morning. And welcome to our loan counseling session today. Before we begin today, I’d like to go over just a few items so that you can get the best out of our experience today. First of all, you need to make sure that your computer speakers are on and that your computer’s volume is in audible level and you can do that by simply looking up on the top of your screen, you can see your speaker icon, it should be green and you can adjust the volume, et cetera with that as well.

You know, we want to make sure that you have a copy of today’s presentation. If you registered early, we did send you a presentation copy, if not, you can still get it here in the classroom. And basically to get the presentation, you would go to the files pod and you would click on the name of the session which is 2017 Loan Counseling Final and you would just simply highlight that and then you would click download files and you should be able to get the presentation that way. It will be helpful for you to have a copy of that in front of you as we go through the session today. But if for some reason you’re not able to print it or not able to view or get the information right now that’s fine, you can still follow right along with us here in the classroom, so we’ll have the presentation up momentarily.

Also we are going to entertain your questions today. We will be able to look at what we call the Q&A pod and in order for you to ask a question, you would simply find that Q&A pod there and there is a blank field at the bottom and you would simply type your question and then once you typed your question you would be able to hit send and you would hit that little button there that’s circled that you can see on the screen and you would be able to send the question. We may not answer it right away, but at the very end we will take questions that are in the queue and we’ll get them answered the best that we can.

So with that in mind, we do welcome you today also we will be doing some polling slides throughout the session today. And when you see a polling slide come up on your screen, you’ll also see a copy of it there in your PowerPoint, so as the polling slide that’s come up we would appreciate your participation in that polling slide, and you’ll see that when it comes up throughout the session today.

So with that in mind, again welcome to our loan counseling session, we’re happy that you’re here and I’m going to turn it over to Jeff Baker. Jeff?

Jeff Baker: Thanks Michael and thanks to all of you for taking some time off a very busy day, we know this time of the year but actually any time of the year is very busy for financial aid administrators. So again, we thank you for willing to spend about an hour and a half with us. And more importantly, we thank you for participating in our Loan Counseling Experiment as I’m sure you know we have our experimental sites initiative as part of our Federal Student Aid activities, we are under the Authority of the Higher Education Act, we have a number of experiments going on. And this is the last of the ones that we have initiated for this year, Loan Counseling, you are among -- about 60, a little over 60 schools that we’ve invited to participate in the Loan Counseling Experiment, and we’re glad to have you here. We hope that this webinar will be helpful.

With that we’re going to get into it. I’m going to give it just a couple of more comments on a couple of these slides and then turn it over to Tamy and Anne from our team, who will take you through the rest of the slides as Michael mentioned there’s some polling it’s just unofficial, and then at the end the questions that Michael explained to you.

So we will begin with the title of the slide and then the next slide is just a little bit of the agenda an overview which is going to be a little bit for me and then more from Tamy, and then we’ll talk about all the requirements of the institutions, the flexibility that you’ll have and things about the counseling. And then at the end a little bit more about actually how we implement the experiments in terms of legal documents, program participation agreements and so on.

So the only other thing I want to, you can go to the next slide, Michael and one more please. Thank you. So we viewed this slide before. This is just a reminder and it sounds like we’re kind of yelling at you a little bit and of course we don’t mean to do that. But when you’re administrating Title IV programs including under experiment, the administrative capability requirements of our regulations are there and they apply to all parts of the institution not just the financial aid office. This experiment in particular may include involvement with other offices on your campus including the business office or whoever handles disbursements, it could also include some offices in terms of admissions and registration and student support services.

We want to make sure you understand that your agreement to be in the experiment covers the entire institution not just the one office that’s primarily responsible for it. So just a little caution and a reminder for everyone.

With that I’m going to turn it over to Tamy Garofano from our team who’s going to take you through the experiment, goals and things you already are pretty much aware of but we’ll move up from there. Tamy?

Tamy Garofano: Thank you, Jeff. Michael I seem to be having a little bit of difficulty. Would you please go ahead and advance my slides to the description and I’ll just have to tell you when to advance, I’m not able to see the presentation.

Michael Cagle: That work just fine, Tamy. And we’re on Slide 5.

Tamy Garofano: Right.

Michael Cagle: We’re on Slide 5 now, so.

Tamy Garofano: Fabulous. Thank you so much everyone. Thank you, Jeff. Under this experiment participating institutions will have the flexibility to require additional loan counseling for student borrowers beyond the statutory required one time entrance and one time exit counseling as a condition where the student to receive their direct loan fund and to also customize counseling based on the students need.

Let’s talk at a high level about what this experiment actually is under the experiment and institution will require all of its eligible direct loan borrowers who have previously completed -- I’m sorry, I’m getting a little feedback from Jeff and Craig. Under the experiment an institution will require all of its eligible direct loan borrowers who previously completed first time entrance counseling to participate in the experiment or for some large institution a sub-set of those borrowers with approximately half of those borrowers randomly assigned to complete the additional required counseling beyond the entrance counseling normally provided to first time borrowers as a condition of receiving direct loan funds.

We’ll talk a little bit more about subsets later. Our objective the additional loan counseling will have a positive influence on the decision making process for determining how much a student will borrow and will also promote the successful repayment of student loans, including reducing delinquency and default and have a positive impact on the academic performance of the students.

The next Slide is Slide 7, there are two columns there are current rules and experiment rules. And so under the current rules an institution must ensure that entrance counseling is conducted with each direct loan student borrower prior to making the first disbursement on the loan unless that borrower has received a prior direct loan or a federal family education loan. It’s important to know under the experiment columns that there will be a random control trial that means possibly half of those borrowers will be randomly assigned to complete additional required counseling beyond the entrance counseling normally provided to first time borrowers as a condition of receiving their direct loan funds. And we’ll discuss more about the random assignment across this later in the presentation.

Institutions participating in this experiment will require additional counseling for their direct loan borrowers that are included in the treatment groups. The additional counseling approaches to be used for example the department FACT product, third party counseling product or a third-party servicer or an institutionally developed alternative counseling must be the approach and must remain constant. You indicated this in your letter of interest the approach that your institution is interested in using for the remainder of the experiment.

Now to Slide 8 where we talk a little bit about some requirements, flexibilities, and counseling element. In Slide 9 intuitional requirement is important to note that the loan counseling can only be provided once for academic year and we’re calling that the FAFSA year. Therefore, students who are already required to participate the entrance counseling in any year first time borrower at any institution will not be include in the experiment for that year and also only students who completed their loan counseling during a prior year whether for enrollment at that participating institution or at a different institution will be included in the experiment for subsequent years.

We are going to have a polling slide so please go ahead and take some time to answer that while you’re listening to the rest of the presentation. The institution will need to work with the department to establish the number of direct loan borrowers who will be included in the experiment. So will you be requesting not to include all of your eligible borrowers in the experiment and please indicate your response there?

The institution will need to work with the department to establish the number of direct loan borrowers who will be included in the experiment, and this would be in all of your eligible direct loan borrowers or a subset of those and Anne will discuss a little bit more in detail the subset later in the presentation. The institution will also need to track and provide data to the department for the borrowers who are assigned to the treatment group and the borrowers who are assigned to the control group.

I want to make special note here is that all of the borrowers whether they’re in a treatment or the control group are considered part of this experiment. This is a requirement that part of your schools amendment to its program participation agreement. You’ll also get some more information about that program participation agreement from Anne a little bit later.

The institution must ensure that the additional counseling required of its borrowers in the treatment group is reasonable as to the time and effort and that it is relevant to the student borrowing decision. That additional counseling is not biased or restricted based on student’s religion, national origin, race, color, sex, socio-economic status which includes income, disability, their place of residence, physical location where the student will be enrolled or the physical location of that educational program. It looks like we have about 65, 31% that is not going to require their – they will not be including – that will not include a subset, so that’s a pretty good polling slide information there. Mike, I think we’re going to be on Slide 11 now?

Michael Cagle: Okay.

Tamy Garofano: All right. Another requirement that the institutions must ensure that the additional loan counseling does not discourage students from taking on the debt they need to successfully complete their studies while not over borrowing, taking it into consideration their anticipated earnings. The additional loan counseling should be reasonable and not so burdensome that it becomes a barrier for the student to receive those direct loan funds.

Additional loan counseling must not discourage borrowing needed to successfully complete the study and the policy for providing the counseling under the experiment must remain consistent throughout the institution’s participation and the experiment. A participating institution is also expected to ensure that it’s delivery of the counseling does not change significantly during the institution’s participation in the experiment.

Slide 12 the institution must disclose to all the borrowers included in the experiment both those that are in the treatment group and so that are in the control group that the institution is participating in the experiment related to loan counseling and that some of the students in the experiment maybe required to participate in additional loan counseling as a condition for receiving their direct loan funds.

Institutions must also informed students who have been selected to receive additional counseling that the loan disbursements are conditional upon completion of that counseling. The department will perform ongoing monitoring during the experiment to ensure that a participating institution meets these requirements throughout participation in the experiment.

On Slide number 13 an institution participating in the experiment will have the flexibility in the content and the modes of delivery of its additional loan counseling and the mode of delivery would be online individual in person, group in person or student to student. The institution will be allowed to choose the counseling approach it will use for the required additional counseling by choosing one of the following – the department Financial Awareness Counseling Tools, the acronyms, of course, FACT, a third-party counseling product or a servicer, or institutionally developed alternative counseling. Your institution must indicate one approach to be used and an institution cannot use multiple types of counseling and must choose only one approach.

The content of the additional required counseling provided to borrowers by participating institutions may vary based on the student’s expected time to complete their program and it could also vary for different groups of students depending on their borrowing. At this point I’m going to turn the presentation over to Anne for her to finish out for us.

Anne Tuccillo: Thanks, Tamy. As you’ll see up on the slide, we have polling slide number 2 and Tamy just described we’re just interested in seeing what approach your institution will use. So let’s just take a minute or a second to fill up that polling slide that would be great. And I’m going to just see how some of the numbers are coming in before I proceed to Slide number 15. Looks like, we’re getting institutionally developed and in fact look like they’re running neck and neck there. Good. Okay, just to give us an idea of what you guys are just thinking about.

So what I’m going to do then – thank you for doing that. We have a series of polling slide so we’re going to go to that second poll and what we want to talk about or what we want to get your feedback on is, what is the likely or most common modes of delivery your institution will use. Mike, can you pull up that their polling slide please.

Michael Cagle: Yes, it’s coming up. It’s coming up. Yes.

Anne Tuccillo: It’s poky today.

Michael Cagle: Here we go momentarily.

Anne Tuccillo: Okay. So if you could just…

Michael Cagle: That’s the magic of my – the magic of the pen sometimes doesn’t always work but it’s coming up.

Anne Tuccillo: Yes. Okay, I just – I’m seeing the Q&A pod right now.

Michael Cagle: All right.

Anne Tuccillo: But the choices are regarding the mode of deliveries online, individual, in person group, in person or student to student. So you wouldn’t mind letting us know what you’re thinking about there.

Michael Cagle: There you go.

Anne Tuccillo: Perfect. Thank you. That would be great. We like these calls because they kind of keep everybody engaged in the presentation and give us a little bit of a breather from talking at you all this time. Online, that’s what I would suspect. Great.

Michael Cagle: Like they’re online, yes.

Anne Tuccillo: Online. We’re all moving to online. Okay, so Mike we could take that polling slide down and move on to Slide 16. I’m going to talk about counseling elements.

Michael Cagle: There you go.

Anne Tuccillo: Great. Thank you. All counseling provided to borrowers must deliver information at a minimum includes the total amount of the borrower student loan indebtedness. The institution may customize the counseling based on the borrower’s needs. However, the department encourages participating institutions to include in its additional counseling specific information where it’s relevant to assist students in making more informed borrowing decisions.

So the next few slides we’re going to discuss the recommended elements that were outlined in the federal register notice that all of you took a look at in order to apply to participating in this experiment. So first, the counseling must include comprehensive information on the terms and conditions of federal student loans, including information about annual and aggregate limits, interest rates, how interests accrued, the loan fee to federal student loan and the responsibilities the borrower has with respect to payback with respect to the loans in terms of paying it back.

The counseling must also include a reminder that students will be required to repay their loans even if they do not complete their academic programs. Again these elements must also include information that indicates that completing an academic program will increase a student’s ability to successfully repay their loans.

So let’s move on to Slide number 17, Mike. And we’re continuing on with talking about these elements. The counseling must also include information about the requirements to complete subsequent additional counseling and to complete exit counseling upon leaving the institution. The elements must also include a statement that when determining whether and how much to borrow. Students should consider how much they can reasonably expect to earn after leaving their academic program of study.

As part of the statement the institution may provide other relevant information such as earnings data, gainful employment disclosures, required under 34 CFR 668.412 (a) and also cohort default rates is available or if they are applicable.

The elements should include comprehensive information about the different terms and features of direct loan repayment options and forgiveness benefits, including information about, for instance, income driven repayment plans, the public service loan forgiveness and teacher loan forgiveness and information also about loan deferments and forbearances.

Moving on to Slide number 18 talking about more elements. The loan counseling must include a reminder that information and assistance with federal student loans such as loan consolidation, rehabilitation and participation in income-driven repayment plans are provided by the department at no charge and that the borrower does not need to pay someone for this type of help. It’s important that the counseling provides information about establishing a relationship with a loan servicer, including among other things, keeping address and contact information up-to-date and learning who to contact and how to ask questions.

Another critical element is it should also include information about the department’s Federal Student Aid ombudsman group, including a description of the services it provides and contact information. And finally the elements should include information about the department’s Federal Student Aid feedback system.

There was an electronic announcement regarding this feedback system that was published on July 1, 2016 entitled Federal Student Aid launches online feedback system. This information is located on the information for financial rate professionals website also known as ifap.ed.gov. So please refer to the federal register notice again for specific information about the recommended elements that should be included in the loan counseling materials.

Moving on to Slide number 18, we’re talking about frequency so we talked about the elements. Now talk about frequency, how often you must do this. Borrowers in the experimental group are required to receive the additional counseling prior to the first disbursement of any loan in the same FAFSA year.

Once the additional counseling has been completed important no subsequent additional counseling is required for any subsequent disbursement or new loans if a loan was based on the same years as FAFSA. These borrowers cannot be required to participate in any subsequent additional counseling more or less frequently than the counseling that is required prior to the first disbursement of any loan in the same FAFSA year.

Let’s move on to Slide number 20 which is a polling slide actually. Mike if you could bring up the polling slide. And this is the question about does your school currently offer voluntary counseling to the direct loan borrowers? And while you’re answering this point slide, Mike if you can bring that up I just want to reiterate and I know a reminder I think Tamy had discussed this with me about this morning that if your school continues to offer voluntary counseling prior to the experiment it can only offer it to those in the control group and it must remained voluntary. So that’s an important reminder, something to keep in mind. And if I mumbled that up either Tamy or Jeff, you can jump in and correct me. No you’re perfect. Not every day that I’m called perfect. Thank you.

Tamy Garofano: All right.

Anne Tuccillo: All right. So we got about 63% or 67%, no they’re not going to offer additional volunteer counseling. Well, thank you very much for filling out that poll. We’re going to move on the next polling side, which is number 5. And for those of you who did answer, yes, what percentage of your direct loan borrowers participate in voluntary counseling. So Mike when you get a minute if you could bring that up – oh, here we go.

So we’ve got different categories, difference percentages. So if you could take a minute to answer that for those of you who did indicate that you have voluntary counseling programs we’d be interested to see what percent of your students are receiving that, what percent of your borrowers, really?

Okay, so about 0 to 25% so it’s about a quarter of those. Great. All right, so going on to Slide number 22, this is our last polling slide of the webinar, so. We would like to hear your information regarding if your institution offers voluntary counseling, do you plan to continue offering voluntary counseling to borrowers in the control group once the experiment begins?

So again for those of you who answered yes to the first – will indicate to us you would be providing voluntary counseling. Okay. Good. Thank you very much for participating in our polls just gives us an idea, gives us a way to engage what’s going on out there in our experimental sites community. So at this time we are going to move on from the elements and move more into the implementation of the experiment. So the next few slides are going to – I’m going to discuss the requirements regarding the successful implementation of the experiment, the loan counseling experiment on your campus.

So I’m on Slide 23 now and then we’re going to move on to Slide 24. And I want to take a few minutes to talk about the Program Participation Agreement process, which I will refer to as the PPA from this point on because it’s kind of a tongue twister. What happens with whole PPA process as follows? So you will receive an amendment to the PPA from the school participation division in your region.

Once you receive this amendment please carefully review it and understand your commitment, your institution’s commitment to participate in the experiment. Please be aware at this point in time we have not sent the PPA to your institution, it’s currently going through the clearance process and we’re hopeful that we should have it cleared and sent out to institution through the school participation division within the next few weeks.

What you will need to do is once you do receive that PPA amendment is that you’ll need to attain the require signatures and that could be from the institutional official as, you know, a president or chancellor something like that, and also the financial aid administrator’s signature and then return the signed amendment to Federal Student Aid via a courier service.

So then after that, after you return the PPA amendment to Federal Student Aid, Federal Student Aid will then send your school a countersigned amendment to the PPA. So that’s your copy to keep because it’s then been signed by somebody by a director in the school participation division, your school must keep this copy on file.

And one of the things or several things that I want to point out before you can begin the experiment and several of you have already gotten to this point but the school must receive an official invitation from FSA to participate in the experiment and that’s happened. Your school has to accept that invitation and then after that that’s when the PPA amendment is sent and your school official signs and returns the amendment to Federal Student Aid.

When an institution has a fully executed amendment to their PPA for the experiment, they will receive a welcome letter signed by Jeff and sent by me from the ESI team. The letter will inform the institution that they may begin to implement the experiment. However, there’s a caveat and one thing that Jeff wanted to also emphasize that schools can begin to assign borrowers to the control and treatment groups prior to receiving the amendment, the countersigned amendment to the PPA.

And so we realize that, you know, awarding and things like that are going to be taking place because of the earlier FAFSA filing deadlines. So you have that flexibility to start assigning the borrowers at this point. Jeff, I don’t know if you want to chime in or Tamy anything else regarding that?

Jeff Baker: No, that’s an important point. The PPA’s takes a while because there’s legal implications both here and at the school, but we’re going to talk about the assignment in the control experiment group and you can begin doing that based upon the fact that we invited you to participate in the experiment.

Anne Tuccillo: Right. Thank you. Mike we’re going to go on to Slide 25 now and this is where we are actually going to talk about the random assignment process. Right, so this experiment will require a random assignment of approximately half of the borrowers eligible for the experiment to a treatment group who will be required to complete additional loan counseling as a condition of receiving their loan funds. The other half of the borrowers eligible for the experiment will be randomly assigned to a control group and they may not receive additional loan counseling beyond what they received as first time borrowers.

The randomization of borrowers into the treatment and control group will be performed by your institutions based upon a set of simple rules that we will provide and I’ll talk about in the next slide. It’s important to note that institutions who participate or who have – excuse me particularly large numbers of borrowers who would be eligible for the experiment may request to include in the experiment a subset of those borrowers each year. The size of the subset will be determined by the department in consultation with the institution and will take into consideration the overall number of students needed to estimate impacts for groups of institution using similar counseling models.

Under this experiment control groups are not included in the required counseling. If you offer voluntary counseling and this is something I mentioned before to borrowers in the control group you can continue to offer this counseling as long as it is voluntary.

Let’s move on to Slide number 26 and talk in a little bit more in depth about the random assignment process and let’s spend a few minutes going through this. So as I just mentioned the experiment will require a random assignment of approximately half of those borrowers eligible for the experiment to a treatment group who again will be required to lead additional loan counseling as a condition of receiving their loan funds, the other half will be assigned – the other half of the borrowers eligible for the experiment will be randomly assigned to a control group and may not receive the additional loan counseling beyond what they received as first time borrowers.

So for this experiment schools must assign students with social security numbers ending in even numbers to the treatment group and students with social security numbers ending in odd numbers they will be assigned to the control group. And just as a reminder social security numbers ending in zero are considered even and would be assigned to the treatment group.

Information for students in both the control and treatment group must be uploaded into the experimental sites initiative reporting tool before additional loan counseling is provided to ensure that the correct assigned status has been documented.

Institutions will prepare an excel template for upload into this ESI reporting tool. The template will include five required elements and those elements are your institution’s OPE Id number, the award year, the experiment number and for the loan counseling experiment its number 32, the student social security number and the student’s date of birth.

Additionally the template also includes experiment specific information. For the loan counseling experiment at this time institutions will be required to indicate the assignment of each student to either the control group and you would be indicating that with a C or the treatment group with a T, participating schools will be provided with a workbook that explains how to access and use the ESI reporting tool and a webinar is planned in the future too.

So I’m going to on the next slide provide a screenshot of the reporting template demonstrating how to enter this information on the template. So that’s on Slide number 27.

So here you can see that the even numbers including zeros we have in this example are assigned to the treatment group and are entered as T in the loan counseling column. The loan counseling assigned status column on the template. The odd numbers are assigned to the control group and are entered as C in the loan counseling assign status column on the template.

So again as I mentioned schools can begin assigning borrowers to the treatment and control groups now and we will provide more details at a later date. One of the things that I wanted to point out to schools is that this template has a lot of different columns on it for information specific to different experiments.

The columns that you are concerned with for now are the five columns that I mentioned the five required elements and the one column pertaining to the assignment status for the loan counseling experiment. All the other columns you do not need to be concerned with. Moving on to – yes.

Michael Cagle: Just a quick comment about that. The loan counseling one that they see on the right hand side of the screen there the assigned status.

Anne Tuccillo: Mm-mm.

Michael Cagle: When they actually get to the template itself there’ll be all kinds of other columns in-between there and to find the loan counseling one they would simply just go all the way almost to the end of the last column.

Anne Tuccillo: Right. I think it’s like the second to the last column. Thanks Mike.

Michael Cagle: Right.

Jeff Baker: Anne, this is Jeff. If I may, let me jump in just on a couple of things. One is on the discussion we just had about the template there will be more trainings available once we get the template ready to go about where to find these fields, how to upload them and so on. But I do want to perhaps more importantly go back to the business of assigning your borrowers to the treatment or control group.

We spend a fair amount of time discussing the best way to do that and we had considered the possibility that the schools would send us information about the borrowers and we would assign them. We thought that was too cumbersome and also not timely enough for you to make your determinations and inform the students of whether or not they have to do additional counseling. So we’re putting it on the schools with a very simple separation. Its close enough to randomness that it works for our experiment even odd as Anne explained.

But that’s very important that nobody violates that. If you have a student that’s to participate in the experiment because they met the other requirements, they had last digit of the social security number determines whether they’re in the control group or the treatment group which gets the additional counseling. I don’t want to come on too heavy here but there is no possibility of someone who is in the treatment group but they don’t want or you don’t want to, or they complaint to you teams about this extra counseling, they’re in an experiment, they must participate in the counseling.

So if you have some questions on that towards the end, we can follow up on that a little bit more but this is critical to be a rigorous experiment is to have a control and treatment groups and we decided to have the schools as most expeditious and reasonable to have the schools make the assignment based upon this very simple rule.

Anne Tuccillo: And Jeff I wanted to add something out to that. We wanted to make sure that the schools knew that they were able now to inform their students that they were – that the institution is indeed going to participate in this experiment because we know that some of you are considering packaging for the ’17, ’18 award year. So you are able once you decide and so that you are going to participate in the experiment and you’re going to assign on the program participation agreement. So please go ahead and inform your eligible borrowers that you will be participating in an experiment and there maybe some additional requirements.

Jeff Baker: All right, thanks. Thanks, Anne.

Anne Tuccillo: You’re welcome. Now we’re on Slide 28, Michael. This slide kind of reiterates exactly what I talked about in the previous slides regarding the five required elements as well as how you will assign students to either the treatment or the control group on this experimental slides initiative upload excel template. And I have to say we’re kind of making an assumption that you all know where this is. This is something that is part of COD and as Jeff and Mike mentioned there will be specific training on how you will utilize this tool in the upcoming weeks or months.

So again, this Slide 28 kind of reiterates what we just went over and we showed on the screenshot. Going on to Slide 29 again this is again a snapshot of the five required elements and the columns that you would see, what you would upload or when you had complete this template. Again this template is available you will be able to download it through this reporting tool that is part of COD. And again, we are creating a workbook. We have one already that we’ve created for two other experiments and we will need to update that and we will share it with you as soon as we have it ready to go.

So let’s move on to Slide number 30. Again I’m just giving you kind of a look at what the actual loan counseling assigned status column looks like. Again just to reiterate, you know, on the template for each student as a part of the experiment, you will enter a C in the assigned status column if the student is part of the control group, or T in the assigned status column if the student is part of the treatment group.

And again, we do have a work, the ESI tool workbook available on the ESI website at this time and you’re welcome to download and take a look at it. We might have to update it based on the information that we’re sharing with you right now for loan counseling specifically, but it is available on our website.

Going on to Slide number 31, let’s talk about reporting requirements. Your institution and all institutions participating in this experiment and others are required to collect and submit data to the department on all the students who were part of the experiment in both the treatment and control groups. In addition the institution will be required to provide to the department existing records of all students participating in the experiment whether they’re assigned to the treatment or control group for the purposes of assessing the impacts for the additional loan counseling intervention.

The records will likely include the borrower’s academic information such as credits taken, credits earned, grade point average, completion information and credentials earned, as well as financial information such as the cost of attendance, state and institutional aid received, non-federal loans received and other information relating to financial aid received by the borrower.

On an annual basis the institution will be required to provide information about the method and content of the loan counseling and of their experience with the experiment. The department will collect from the institutions the details and components of the additional counseling that the institution requires, including the content and method of delivery such as Tamy went over individual, in-person counseling, group counseling, web based counseling, and so forth for each cohort of students.

The institution will be required to submit a narrative description of their implementation of the experiment as well. At a minimum the narrative should include any unforeseen challenges and unexpected benefits. The department will provide the institution with a listing of specific information that must be collected, reported and maintained.

So let’s move on to Slide number 32 and we just wanted to point out just to remind you that the experimental sites website is alive and well. If you haven’t had a chance to visit it we encourage you to visit it. The URL is right there. And here you will find a boatload of information regarding how to apply, you’ve already applied but here you would find the federal register notices under that particular link how to implement an experiment, you would find specific guidance regarding this experiments and implementation guidance that we have provided.

So we really want to encourage you to take a look at it if you haven’t already gone out there because we post things to try and keep all of our participants update and current on what’s going on in each of our experiments.

So let’s look at Slide number 33. And here is the contact information. I am the ESI team contact. Tamy also works as my partner in crime on the PLI side, the policy side. My information is provided here. My phone number and my email address. And we also have the experimentalsites@ed.gov mailbox as well where you can send your questions through the mailbox as well. And Warren and Mike do an excellent job of monitoring them and getting them out to the right person to answer your question as soon as we possibly can. So if you ever have a question please don’t hesitate to contact us.

So at this time I am going to stop my talking and we are going to – I’m going to turn it back to Mike and he’s going to go give you an idea of how we’re going to go through the questions and answers.

Jeff Baker: Excuse me. Mike this is Jeff. Before you begin, I want to just follow up on one thing that Anne discussed at the end about the reporting and the academic information and financial aid information and so on. Within the next month or so we will be publishing in the federal register something we’re required to do when we collect information, there’s an information collection announcement. And I just want to give a heads up to folks. We will get back to everyone in the experiment when that gets posted and direct you towards it on IFAP so you can take a look at it and perhaps provide some comments.

But a little bit of inside information for you. When you see that information collection documents, you will see many items that we’re including, this is an example where we put in things that we might be requesting but it doesn’t mean that we will request them all. So it’s a little bit to cover ourselves because once we publish it becomes legal and we can’t be changing every once in a while.

So we probably went a little bit overboard in the items that we’re going publish. And then when we actually get to work with the schools it will be somewhat less than all of those items. You can ask me some questions about that through this process now but I just wanted to give you a heads up on that. Thanks Mike. Go ahead.

Michael Cagle: Yes, no problem. So many of you’ve already asked questions using the Q&A pod and we do have several in the queue at this point and we’re going to go through those. But as we do that also if you have not asked a question yet and you’d still like to ask one, you still have time to do that by using the Q&A pod and entering your question and then we’ll go through it as we get to it.

But the first questions that’s in the queue is a question that says, if we process loans on a borrower based academic year, is it possible that the student has two loans and that would represent four semesters in one FAFSA year. Is it correct that this student would only need to go through this counseling once in the year and not twice?

Jeff Baker: Yes. So this is Jeff. And by the way, as a heads up on this I’m going to try to begin answering these questions but I’ve also invited my team to follow up and correct me if I made a mistake or add something to it. So this is kind of an informal thing we’re all part of the same family here with you folks.

The answer to this is yes only one counseling. We went round and round about how to characterize this if that’s a way to say it, and it’s based upon the FAFSA for which the loan was calculated. So every loan, even an unsubsidized loan is associated with a FAFSA/ISIR.

So if you have multiple loans, it could be borrower based as this question, it could be a loan for fall-spring and then you’d decide to award a loan in the summer and as the schools call it a trailer, it’s all off to the same FAFSA then you don’t do counseling again if you’ve already done it. But once you switch over to a new FAFSA for example you did a fall-spring under, let’s say the ’17, ’18 FAFSA and then your summer you treat as a header to the next year which means you do it off of the ’18, ’19 FAFSA. So just tied to the FAFSA that was used to authenticate that the student was eligible for the loan or the loans, ultimately that helps a little bit there.

Michael Cagle: Okay, great. The next question is that so students must be informed whether they are in the control or treatment groups?

Jeff Baker: Yes. That’s true. And I should have kind of commented earlier. We’re going to provide some more information hopefully not too many more weeks about what you’re to provide to these students. And the treatment group is pretty straightforward because you need to tell them that your institution is participating in an experiment with the United States Department of Education and under that experiment they’re required to have this additional counseling.

The control group since there’s nothing much that happens to them what we’re trying to figure out a best way for you to just inform them that you’ll be reporting some information to us without getting them all nervous and excited about it. We’re going to try to work on some texts that you can use and we will follow up hopefully within a couple of weeks on that.

Michael Cagle: Okay, great. And we also have a question here? Can we use a third party service if it was not specified in our letter of application?

Jeff Baker: Yes. Somebody else can jump in here. I don’t think that’s super critical. We’ll probably follow up during the reporting and ask you who you’re using. But anyone think there’s any problem with them…

Anne Tuccillo: No, no.

Jeff Baker: No.

Tamy Garofano: Not a problem.

Jeff Baker: We’re good. Just kind of as a follow-up to that one. Are we saying that they cannot use the combination of institutional and third party approaches?

Tamy Garofano: Correct. They can only use one approach.

Jeff Baker: Yes. And the reason for this is – this is we don’t want to take your flexibility away, but since this is an experiment that we’re going to look at the results and see if we can reach any conclusions about this additional counseling, we need to understand for example, X number of students performed this way when they had this kind of counseling and we get that from you and if you move it all around we’re going to have difficulty coming to any conclusions.

And the whole purpose of the experiment of all of our experiments is to see if we can specifically and validly with good research design come to some conclusions and perhaps recommendations about policy changes.

Tamy Garofano: And Jeff can I add something to this? This all means that in your sequent years of participation in this experiment when you have that new FAFSA cohort again that means this approach has to be across your whole participation in the program and it can’t fluctuate between the different groups that are assigned to control or treatment.

Jeff Baker: Okay. And this is a very interesting question about the ECAR and about the process for the PPA. This school has had a question about, they have an open chain that was submitted on their ECAR, and how will this affect them in a PPA that we’ll be sending?

Jeff Baker: Why don’t – why doesn’t that school, thank you for asking, send that question to the experimentalsites@ed.gov website which we’ll find out who you are and we’ll see where you are with your open ECAR and make sure this doesn’t get hung up.

Michael Cagle: Yes, under normal circumstances the amended PPA for the experiments really don’t have any impact on anything else that you might be doing as far as your ECAR but that is a very good question that we’ll make sure that we have the correct answer. If (Warren) is on the line he can confirm that for us but I’m not sure if (Warren) is on the line at this point.

Tamy Garofano: I think he’s not in the presenter group in the presenter line.

Michael Cagle: All right.

Jeff Baker: Okay, all right we’ll follow-up.

Michael Cagle: We’ll follow-up on that. And then the next question, I believe you stated we need to accept the invitation prior to being sent the PPA amendment. How do we accept the invitation?

Jeff Baker: Again I’m going to take a shot at this, I’m going to take a shot at it but and let the team jump in. I think we don’t really have an acceptance process since you cannot, remember the basis of this experiment is you’re going to withhold disbursement to borrows in the treatment group until they complete the additional counseling.

You cannot do that until PPA has been signed and countersign by us but you can go ahead now and don’t worry about accepting, we’re assuming you’re accepting it because you’re participating, we invited you, we did say in the invitation I think if you’re no longer interest to let us know. We took care of that, I don’t know if anybody gave us that. So don’t worry about it. The acceptance will be when you – when we send you the PPA amendment and you return it to us.

Michael Cagle: Exactly, okay. All right the next question, what if you assign a borrower in June and a student cancels their enrollment, can you select another student?

Jeff Baker: You’re not counting students, you’re just every student that meets the requirements of the experiment is either odd-even, either an experiment or control group. So if this is a school that is talking – wants to talk to us about a limited number of the eligible borrowers being in the experiment when we get to have a discussion with that school or those schools we’ll talk about what happens if those numbers change a little bit but for the schools who are going to put all of their eligible borrowers in either control or treatment group, you know, just shake out however it does. I think that’s responsive. Anyone want to add or else the school can ask a further question?

Michael Cagle: Yes, I think we’re good. All right the next question is currently we have staff going into the classrooms to discuss student loans, would this count as voluntary or maybe we continue this type of treatment to the students who would be in these classes.

Jeff Baker: Let me make sure I get this – make an assumption here with this, we can’t have a two way conversation but assumption here that someone from probably the Financial Aid Office goes into a classroom for a regularly scheduled class that they steal 15 to 20 minutes or whatever you do from English 101 or Carpentry 500 and spend a few time talking about loans, I think that is not voluntary counseling but I don’t think it’s counseling either if it’s as simple as that.

If you are going in to a classroom and doing a much more extensive presentation and counseling then I don’t think that’s voluntary. But we’ll have to look at the specifics, so the school that asked can take what I just said and sort it out a little bit and maybe to make sure they can send us a little more information to that email address.

Michael Cagle: And that’s another good point Jeff as throughout this session today we’re going through these questions. If there’s something that you need more clarification on even after the call is over with, please feel free to send it to our ESI mailbox and we’ll certainly answer it that way as well.

All right the next question is, what is the random assignment – what if the random assignment doesn’t yield 50% of the population for each group?

Jeff Baker: It will always yield it in terms of randomness. It’s true that if the population is small enough you could have 60% people have an even number and 40% have an odd number that will just be what it is. So we don’t worry about it. Across the experiment, you know, we’re going to have thousands of students in the experiment that will come close to 50-50. So, no, you’re not – the 50% in control as we mentioned and the 50% in treatment that’s the shortcut way of saying odd, even and however that shakes out.

Michael Cagle: Okay and then it says, what FAFSA years will the experiment include?

Jeff Baker: We intend our experiments to last several years. Unfortunately we can’t tell you what several means because we have other things to deal with but we’re assuming the schools are going to begin this with the ’17-’18 school year if I can use that and maybe not the ’16-’17 although that’s okay. But we’ll extent I’m almost sure into the -- beyond the ’17-’18 into the ’18-’19 year and after that we’ll have to wait and see.

We always try to give schools any of our experiments plenty of notice, hopefully positive notice to say this is notification that the experiment is continuing for another year or two or if unfortunately we have to end it we would give them plenty of notice to be able to change your procedures for the ending of the experiment.

Michael Cagle: And the clarification that’s kind of related to this Jeff is that can or must an institution wait until the start of 2017-’18 academic year to begin or can they begin in the spring of 2017 which is part of the ’16-’17 year?

Jeff Baker: I think and I’m going to say this and have my folks on our team weigh in here. You can’t do anything in terms of holding a person’s disbursement until the PPAs are executed. As Tamy mentioned you can start the process of odd, even and informing people who are in the treatment group blah-blah-blah but you can’t hold, but assuming that those PPA amendments can be executed within the next few weeks, yes, you could start right away. If it’s a traditional school though you’re probably starting your spring semester like now or very soon to now, quarter school is a little bit later but it’s up to you. It could begin sometime during the current ’16-’17 year which means it would be based upon the ’16-’17 FAFSA but make sure you don’t hold anybody’s disbursement until the PPA has been executed.

Tamy Garofano: And Jeff, we specifically I’d like to just add, we specifically are going to collect reporting information beginning with the 2017-2018 implementation year. So we’re not ready to collect any kind of additional information if institutions want to implement earlier.

Jeff Baker: Right but you can go ahead and do that and we’ll kind of…

Tamy Garofano: Right.

Jeff Baker: … maybe catch up later at the end.

Michael Cagle: Okay. This next question might require some clarification but it says that we mentioned that students are to receive information on procedures in the webinar. Could you expand on your comments of this subject, I’m not sure exactly what...

Jeff Baker: Yes I don’t – if we said something like that we weren’t thinking about any – we’re talking about procedures for completing the tool, the template to provide us information and Tamy, I can’t think of anything else. This might have been just…

Tamy Garofano: I think I’ll try to take a stab at this one. The students are supposed to receive information that the institution is participating in an experiment and for those that in the treatment group they’re also supposed to receive information that their direct loan funds are conditional upon receiving and completing additional counseling. I don’t think we’re going to be having a webinar for students, I think the webinars are going to be for additional clarification with the schools participating in the experiment and not necessarily for the students. Anne, do you have anything to add on that?

Jeff Baker: I guess she doesn’t.

Tamy Garofano: Okay, Jeff…

Anne Tuccillo: Sorry I was on mute. No, I think what we were referring to is that there would be a webinar further on down the road regarding how to do reporting using the ESI reporting tool and so forth specific for the schools in the experiment.

Jeff Baker: Okay good.

Michael Cagle: And again if – yes, if that school has any further clarification they’d like to provide they can do so either here in the classroom or they can send it our ESI mailbox. And again we’ll be happy to answer it that way.

Okay, then this is very similar to a question we had before but if we’re assigning the SSNs and it does not end up at a 50% split but maybe 60, 40, how would you handle that, would you drop, sum up and make it even or leave it as it is?

Jeff Baker: No just as I said you’d leave it as it is because over the entire experiment over the number of schools and number of years it will come down close to 50-50. As a matter of fact that’s, you don’t want to start shifting them around just to get to 50-50 because it takes away the randomness which is important for the rigor of the experiment.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next question, will we be sent the specific requirements of the additional loan counseling requirements if we use a third-party servicer?

Jeff Baker: Was that will they be sent like from us?

Michael Cagle: Yes, will they be provided with our specific requirements for additional loan counseling.

Jeff Baker: I don’t think so. What we have in the regional federal register notice within this webinar and further information we will provide to all schools about what’s expected to be in the counseling. Nothing special for if you’re using a third party, it’d be the school’s responsibility to get that information to a third party. Tamy, Anne, do you agree?

Tamy Garofano: Yes.

Anne Tuccillo: Yes.

Michael Cagle: Okay.

Jeff Baker: You guys notice how I ask the question, do you agree, they don’t dare disagree with me.

Tamy Garofano: The federal register notice does specifically say what the recommended elements are. So there is a whole list in the federal register notice that will help with all of that and so...

((Crosstalk))

Jeff Baker: And I’m going to make a commitment for our team right now folks if you would. We’ll put something out on our experimental sites website kind of answering this question of what we envision to be the required components of the counseling. So you don’t have to go through the small font information in the federal register, we’ll do it.

Tamy Garofano: And just to add onto that Jeff, I mean I think we stepped through pretty thoroughly the required elements as well on some of the slides in this webinar. So I think that those are – we spelled them out pretty much right out of the federal register notice.

Jeff Baker: Right so the schools…

((Crosstalk)

Michael Cagle: Yes, go ahead.

Jeff Baker: Go ahead.

Michael Cagle: I was just going to say that something Jeff that we – I agree with you that we’ll put out later on. Also we can include that as part of our action plan that we have for each experiment.

Tamy Garofano: Right.

Anne Tuccillo: Okay.

Michael Cagle: That we’ll be having those action plans posted shortly. Okay the other one, can or does the FACT meet all the required elements if they use FACT?

Jeff Baker: Yes.

Tamy Garofano: Yes.

Jeff Baker: And that’s important. I’m glad, I’m glad that question was asked. The answer to that which was yes means that you don’t have to – if you decide to use FACT you don’t have to say, oh I got to use FACT and add three more things on the site, no FACT covers it.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And this is kind of a three-part question but this particular question starts out as they have three questions. Is this correct to be in the experiment, the borrower must have completed entrance counseling in the prior year. So a student who borrowed two years ago and skipped a year and wants to borrow again cannot be part of the experiment and….

Jeff Baker: No, that’s not correct.

Tamy Garofano: No.

Michael Cagle: Okay.

Jeff Baker: That’s not correct. Remember the requirement; this is an experiment allowing schools to do something that’s not otherwise allowed. The experiments for entrance – the requirements in the law and in a regulations for entrance counseling is that once the student has completed entrance counseling any year in the past, at any school in the past and for any program, what I mean by that is it might have been several years ago that the student was at a another school back then, if that counseling was completed then it cannot be required again.

So now we’re saying for people who otherwise would not be required to take the counseling if they’re in the treatment group they are now required to take the counseling. So it doesn’t matter when they completed the statutorily required entrance counseling, it could have been last year, it could have been two years ago, it could have been 10 years ago, it could have been at a different school. Once they’ve met that requirement which normally would say, no one –you guys cannot require additional counseling now you can; now you must if they’re in the treatment group.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And I think the second part of the question is that should it be disclosed to the student how they are randomly assigned and what kinds of specific student disclosures are expected from schools?

Jeff Baker: Well, the first little thing that’s up to the school. I mean it’s not magic, you know, we’re not assigning them because we don’t like the city they were born in or anything like that. So you can tell them it’s a random by last digit Social Security Number if you want but you don’t have to. As I said we’ll provide a little more information on the next few weeks about what to be included in these disclosures particularly the one for the control group.

Michael Cagle: Okay. We’ll move onto the next question. We’re planning to conduct our counseling in an in-person group setting. We have a relatively small number of students who are completing their programs online and did not live close to campus. Can we use online for those students?

Jeff Baker: And the rest of the students will have in other way?

Michael Cagle: Yes.

Tamy Garofano: You are allowed to fluctuate the mode of delivery which is counseling in-person group setting or some online as long as the counseling is relatively the same, yes you are permitted to change the delivery of the counseling just not the approach.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And another question here, do we know how we would get approve for a subset group for the experiment? It’s a good question and we talked about that briefly for those schools that have large numbers of borrowers.

Jeff Baker: Yes this is Jeff. I want to move back just a second. Craig Munier from our team is here with me and he just reminded me on the response that Tamy gave about the distance and so on. You need to be able to document, why this group was presented differently because the distance is where the question came out. Just little background information and I’m sorry because of that what was the question, Mike?

Michael Cagle: The next question is do we know how we would get approved for a subset group for this experiment? We talked about that briefly when we mentioned that some schools have a large number of borrowers.

Jeff Baker: Yes, we’re going to contact – we’re going to reach out to the schools find out which ones want to do a subset, talk to them frankly about why and then if, secondly about how we will establish the size of their subset and how they get in the subset just very, very briefly, it will be random again. So there is no such thing as we want a subset because we want to exclude nursing majors or we want to exclude people who live at home or we want to exclude people who are studying this kind of stuff. It’s going to be random if it’s not everyone and we’ll work with each school about how much and how to do the randomization.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And this is a question about the ESI reporting tool and the worksheet and the template. They just wanted some clarification about the timing of the worksheet, is it available, when are they going to be required to complete it, all that kind of stuff? Anne, do you want to take a stab at that one?

Jeff Baker: Yes, Anne, do you want to give a little background of where we are in this?

Anne Tuccillo: Well, the actual template is available right now for download and if you are assigning borrowers to the control or the treatment group or will be very shortly you are welcome to download that worksheet from the COD, you know, product that we have within COD.

The actual, we will – I think we still need to talk internally Jeff, regarding how we’re going to -- how we want schools to be sharing that information with us as far as us making sure that the control and treatment group assignments are driving. And I don’t think we’ve actually talked about that internally yet but as far as actually accepting the template it’s available right now.

The workbook that Mike and I developed is available on the website which gives you some information as to how you go about using the tool. So it’s available right now if you are ready to begin the assignment process. One thing that we need to make sure that’s clear that Jeff had talked about this document that we’re going to be sharing as far as the information we will be collecting from you, from school regarding the students in the experiment as well as some narrated descriptions stuff. That still has to be approved.

So your reporting per se for the larger kind of experiment won’t take place until probably a year from fall of 2017 but for purposes of us knowing who’s in the treatment and control group you can begin to utilize that template now if you’re going to be starting the experiment. But for those of you who won’t or little bit of time you’ll use it when you’re ready to make that assignment.

((Crosstalk))

Jeff Baker: Anne, I want to ask you question while everyone is online. If a school, first of all she just said at the end here, if you’re not going to be starting until the ’17-’18 year you can go look at the template if you want and read this up but there’s nothing to worry about a bit even if you’ll be assigning students. If you are doing something earlier we don’t want them – are we ready to have them submit anything or do we need to wait to get them a little more information?

Anne Tuccillo: I think we should wait to give them a little bit more information. I think we need all internally be talking about how we want to do that as far as, you know, what we want to see and how we want – when we want them to do it and so forth or when we would them to upload it but they’re welcome to take a look and download it, there’s no harm to do that at all.

Jeff Baker: Okay, so…

Michael Cagle: We’ll actually provide more information in the future as to when they can start doing that uploading of their information.

Jeff Baker: Right, okay so that will be something for the schools to look for it over the next, I don’t want to make any promises, sometime next couple of months.

Anne Tuccillo: Right.

Michael Cagle: Yes. And just to kind of piggy back on what Anne said in regards to the actual template itself. You know, we do have information out there as Anne had mentioned on our ESI website but keep in mind that we have several experiments going on simultaneously. So we refer to couple of the other experiments that are actually using the worksheet right now and the template right now for their reporting. And so you can find out how to use those first five required elements. The template has the first five required fields that’s applicable to all experiments and all that is out there right now. So if you want to get an idea of how it looks, you know, you can certainly go out to the website and take a look at that.

Jeff Baker: Okay. Okay we only have about 20 minutes, we got a lot of question, let’s see how many we can get through and if I can keep my mouth shut we’ll get through quicker.

Michael Cagle: Okay. The next question, what is your recommendation for gathering a list of students at our institution who have completed online loan entrance counseling in a previous year so that we can use that to begin building our list of treatment and control group students?

Jeff Baker: Well I think the answer to this is how – without the experiment how do you know whether a student needs to do entrance counseling or not because it’s kind of the opposite of that. When you have a student getting a loan under the current, you know, without the experiment you need to know whether they need entrance counseling from you. They don’t if they’ve taken it previously. So this is the opposite of that.

The person may want to send in a question a little more detail but this should be something that all of the schools do anyway to find out who needs counseling and regular entrance counseling because they haven’t already completed regular entrance counseling and it’s the flip side of that.

Michael Cagle: Okay, the next question. This is for clarification but the student must complete the counseling every FAFSA year. So if the student attends our institution for three years they will complete the counseling for three years. Is that correct?

Jeff Baker: In a traditional way of three years, three different loans each loan on a different FAFSA, yes that’s the whole point of the experiment…

Michael Cagle: Three times, yes.

Jeff Baker: … this additional counseling beyond the entrance. So just to take it further that student would have taken entrance counseling, regular entrance counseling either at your school or another school, then two more years because I think the question was if they’re at your school for three years, two more years of additional counseling and then extra counseling when they leave.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And do we have several questions that are simultaneous about how many years experiment will be happing and Jeff, you alluded to that earlier.

Jeff Baker: Yes, yes.

Michael Cagle: How many years so.

Jeff Baker: We’ll do the best we can to keep it open a number of years.

Michael Cagle: Right. And the next question is can a new third party servicer for default prevention be used in addition to our institutional counseling approach for the treatment group if the third party service is something we used for all our borrowers not just the treatment group?

Jeff Baker: I’m not sure I understand the question. This is third party service for default prevention. This is someone who is reaching out to all of your students about defaults. I think we need a little more information about this because there are some conflict of interest issues that I don’t – I’m not sure there are any but there could be. So I think this school or any like they should send us a specific question.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And again you can use our ESI mailbox as well for that. Okay and then the next question is could you alter the counseling approach from one year to another?

Jeff Baker: Tamy?

Tamy Garofano: No you are not allowed to alter the counseling approach from one year to another. You need to have the counseling approach remain constant for every year that you are participating in the experiment.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And then next question, will our control and treatment groups change each year or can we use the same control and treatment groups in a subsequent year?

Jeff Baker: All right let’s make sure we understand this right.

Michael Cagle: Yes.

Jeff Baker: Once a student is placed in a treatment or control group they stay there the rest of their time at your school. Every year there’s a new cohort because every year there’s new set of students who completed their entrance counseling maybe at your school or the transfer student and now are in the experiment. And they will by Social Security Number you put in treatment or control. So as people once they’re selected for treatment or control they stay there till they leave and not one for one but there are always student coming in each year and even during a year who get into treatment or control depending upon their last digit of the Social Security Number.

Michael Cagle: And this is one related to the reporting tool as well is that they are a community college and they have students requesting loans all the time. So how often would they be reporting the specific information about the treatment and control group into the ESI reporting tool, how often will they have to do that with?

Jeff Baker: It’s not going to be like every week or so on. I think maybe monthly, maybe quarterly certainly each year, we’re still working that out and we’ll work it out with the schools to make sure we’re not overburdening anyone.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next question, we are a small college with low participation. Can we use all students as treatment?

Jeff Baker: No.

Tamy Garofano: No.

Jeff Baker: The purpose of that experiment is to have a control and a treatment group. So you are not – you can’t do that and therefore you cannot require all of your students to have this extra counseling because the law doesn’t allow.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next question, are you going to limit third party products to ensure wide enough scope for the experiment?

Jeff Baker: Probably not. I think that would, given where we are in the calendar that would get in the way. I think there’s enough variation around just like we know a lot of schools are going to use FACT and that’s a single item. So I don’t think we’re going to be doing this.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next question, how will the files be transmitted and how often will they be transmitted? I am not sure I understand this question.

Jeff Baker: We’ll provide more of that information as we get training and about the tools, right.

Michael Cagle: I think all these tool related questions; we are going to be providing some additional information that’s important.

Jeff Baker: Right.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And then again more about the template and how often, we’ll provide that information to you. So please be patient and we’ll get that out within the next month or two.

Anne Tuccillo: Hey Mike, can I just…

Michael Cagle: Yes Anne.

Anne Tuccillo: Can I interject. Just so everybody knows the upload will go – you’ll be uploading into COD. So it’s all an online process and all of the information will go through a secure system. So I just want to make sure everybody was clear about that.

Michael Cagle: Okay, thank you Anne. And this is a question relating to the random assignment process and can they simply use their computer software such as Excel or SPSS to randomly assign their students to the treatment and control groups?

Jeff Baker: With something different than the last digit Social Security Number, no.

Michael Cagle: That’s what it sounds like to me, yes.

Jeff Baker: Yes, I mean I understand that there are software even Excel but other software that can do randomization sometimes much more statistically valid, you know, using random number generators and all that but we need consistency and as I said earlier last digit Social Security Number is very close to sophistically valid randomness.

So that’s the criteria and in fact one of the reasons we keep talking about that you’ll be uploading information to our tool, frankly and again I don’t want to come on too strong, if we see you put a student in the treatment group that had Social Security Number that ended in an odd number we would question that because odd numbers are supposed to be in the control group.

Michael Cagle: Okay. Another question about the spreadsheet, where it can be downloaded from and again we’re going to provide more information about that spreadsheet. Currently on our ESI website we do have the workbook and the link to the reporting tool as well as information about the spreadsheet itself. But if you’d be patient we will get that information out as soon as we can within the next month or two. Anybody have anything to add to that Anne, they just wanted to know where they can provide more information or where it’s downloaded from?

Anne Tuccillo: No, I think it’s just on the website. I think it’s great, they can take a look at it and, you know, if they want to go into COD and take a look at it that’s fine as well. There’s really nothing that you’re required to do right at this minute.

Michael Cagle: Right and the website is experimentalsites.ed.gov. So that’s where you’ll find the information. Okay, let’s see here we’ve got some more questions here. The next question is, will this follow students if they transfer to other schools?

Jeff Baker: No.

Tamy Garofano: No.

Jeff Baker: No. First of all there’s only 60 or so of you in these 6,000 schools. So chances are they’re not going to be in school that participates in the experiment. So that’s the end of it. One of the things we’ll be asking either getting – probably getting from our own systems but perhaps in school is whether the student is still enrolled, completed, withdrew and if you know transferred.

So we’ll be able to understand that but in terms of their treatment in the treatment group or whatever, now you could have a possibility where student gets transfer from one school and experiment, one of you folks to another that student would end up in the pool and the odd-even would apply and they could end up in a different side of that dichotomy.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next question is regarding the counseling elements for the selected group. Can we have one type of additional counseling for entrance and another type for exit?

Jeff Baker: Exit is not part of this project so…

Anne Tuccillo: And neither is entrance right, Jeff?

Jeff Baker: Yes, so let’s be careful here and then I’m going to say something and ask Anne and Tamy. There’s required entrance counseling that’s in the regulations, in the law and we have it in our system some schools, many schools use ours. There’s exit counseling which has requirements in the regs and the law and we have a product that school use, don’t have to use what they use. This is additional counseling which is probably going to be most likely going to be much different than exit counseling because exit counseling is, what to do now as you’re leaving school. It may be similar to your current entrance counseling but it can be something different as long as it meets all the components.

Michael Cagle: Okay.

Jeff Baker: Does that make sense ladies?

Tamy Garofano: Yes.

Anne Tuccillo: Yes.

Michael Cagle: Yes.

Jeff Baker: Okay hopefully that is helpful.

Tamy Garofano: And can I just add one thing, the additional counseling is supposed to be after the entrance counseling. So would specifically, I just want to make sure that line of demarcation is there.

Michael Cagle: Good point.

Jeff Baker: Right because of the FAFSA year and that this is for people who have already completed their entrance counseling.

Michael Cagle: Right. The next question, could we use a different delivery method for our residential students versus our commuters?

Jeff Baker: So this isn’t about distance, this is both sets of students come to school but some are living on campus in the dorms and some are taking the bus every day to school.

Michael Cagle: That’s how I’m reading it, yes.

Jeff Baker: Yes, that’s how I’m reading it. I don’t think you can do different….

Tamy Garofano: May I answer that Jeff?

Jeff Baker: Yes.

Tamy Garofano: It is allowed to vary throughout the participation in the experiment and it may vary from different institutionally defined groups of students…

Jeff Baker: Okay.

Tamy Garofano: … with minor insignificant changes throughout the experiment. So yes this is actually, you are able to vary the delivery, the mode of delivery yes.

Jeff Baker: Okay thanks Tamy. I did mention at the beginning that I’ve asked our team to correct me if I get something wrong and she just did.

Tamy Garofano: And because that doesn’t happen every day, mark this on our calendar, I’m just kidding.

Michael Cagle: There we go.

Tamy Garofano: For the record.

Michael Cagle: All right we have a few more questions here. The next one, if a student borrowed at another school and transferred to us, could they do normal entrance counseling to borrow with us, will they be part of the experiment or not until the next FAFSA year?

Jeff Baker: Well I want to back up on this a little bit and make sure schools understand, even without this experiment there is no legal way to require counseling for the student you just described. So…

Anne Tuccillo: Entrance counseling.

Jeff Baker: Entrance counseling. The only, the next counseling for such a person absent in this experiment and absent being in the treatment groups with this experiment is required counseling is the exit counseling. This is the exact student that we’re talking about being in the experiment and then depending upon the Social Security Number being in the treatment or the control group.

Michael Cagle: Okay.

Jeff Baker: Hopefully that clarifies that.

Michael Cagle: Yes. And then one that’s kind of related to the reporting, will they be – the school will be notified of the student’s loan repayment status several years from now, how will the schools be updated of the success and effectiveness of the experiment?

Jeff Baker: That is a very good question. It started off with the specific question but I think the broader is we have and I believe we haven’t thought this out as how we’re going to do this. So I’ll be honest with you but I believe we have an obligation to report back to our schools who are participating in experiment even our preliminary analysis and data and certainly if the ultimate thing is we decided, whatever we decide in terms of recommending policy or statutory changes.

So it’s a very good question and we need to jump on it to make sure we have a feedback. You guys do an awful lot of work and, you know, put yourself on a limb a little bit because you’re going to require students to take counseling but they don’t want to and we want to make sure that it’s cooperative and it’s a team effort. So we’ll make sure we have a feedback mechanism.

Michael Cagle: Okay. The next question, are all students enrolled to be included on the template or just those who are borrowers?

Jeff Baker: We’ll provide more information but…

Michael Cagle: Yes.

Jeff Baker: We got a – first of all it has nothing to do with enrollment. It’s about whether they’re receiving loans and whether they’re post-entrance counseling and whether they’re in the treatment or control group. Both the treatment and control group will be reported on a template but it’s not about enrollment. There’s lots of people who enroll in your schools who are not going to be part of the experiment because they’re getting loans and there’s going to be lot of people who are getting loans but they took entrance counseling in the year they got their first loan, they are not in the experiment either.

Michael Cagle: Okay. The next question, can we assume if there is a federal student loan showing on the ISIR that the student completed entrance counseling?

Jeff Baker: So again I don’t want to appear too frustrated by these questions but it begins – I begin to wonder whether our schools understand the current law about counseling but the answer to that question is yes and we put that over and over again. If you have confirmation that the student received a direct loan or an loan anywhere, anytime, anyplace then that student has completed entrance counseling and absent the experiment you cannot require additional counseling. So the flipside of that is if they did have a loan at another school then now they’re in the experiment because they’re no longer required to take entrance counseling.

Michael Cagle: Yes. The next question is an important one, are schools required to start in 2017-’18 award year?

Jeff Baker: They’re not required but we’d want to know in cooperative way if someone, I mean if someone can’t do that we’d like to understand why and is it going to be for the entire year or they’re just not ready to start. I know we maybe a little bit behind because you’re thinking about and maybe some of you have already started packaging and you need to inform students that they in a treatment group that they’ve to take this counseling but we’re still only at the end of January and even with summer as a header for ’17-’18 we’re talking about May or June, we would prefer no one delay but we’re not going to be, you know, real hard about that. You’d need to communicate with us and we’ll talk it through and see where we end up.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And then the next couple of questions are about the Q&A here as well as the webinar itself. There will be a recording of the webinar that includes these Q&A’s posted to our website within the next couple of week. So, yes, it will be recorded. Let’s see, is there any issue in submitting or resubmitting students throughout the year? We are community college and we have many non-traditional borrowers so we will continue to add students as the year progresses.

Jeff Baker: Again we’ll provide a lot more information on this but not only we’ll – so you have the ability to add new students but – and I believe if they reported something and it needs to be updated they can do that as well.

Tamy Garofano: Correct.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And is there just one cohort of ’17-’18 or do we add new cohorts each year?

Jeff Baker: Well, depends on how we define cohort. So if you define cohort as those students who have already completed their entrance counseling and they’re in the experiment that’s the cohort but that will change during the year as new students come in like the earlier question from a community college in particular but other schools. So that’s the cohort for each year but then people would be going in and out of that cohort during the year. Is that responsive?

Tamy Garofano: Can I add something here because I think this question and the other question might be a little bit related. Every time you award loans to a student and they are eligible for this experiment. So they are a student that has completed entrance counseling, you’re going to assess the randomization to that student all throughout the whole year and then in subsequent years as well.

So we want to make sure that you follow through the ’17-’18 and those students would remain in the treatment and the control group for the ’18-’19 award year and respectively but also if you have new students coming in on ’17-’18 you’re going to want to look at assessing them the same treatment and control, the same randomization all throughout that whole award year. Correct, Jeff?

Jeff Baker: Right.

Tamy Garofano: Because if they’re coming in as a new – as a borrower, right.

Jeff Baker: Right.

Michael Cagle: Okay. We just have just a few more questions in the queue, we’re about one minute left of the session Jeff, so I’m not quite sure what you’d like to do.

Jeff Baker: Let’s try to get this last couple and…

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next one, there will be webinars in the future and we’ll announce, so as we develop them you’ll be invited to those. The next question is if we chose to use the FACT product, do you send files to COD for us to drawdown to determine who completed the counseling?

Jeff Baker: Probably not. That’s a process that you used right now to make sure that the student completed entrance counseling and if you decide to use FACT here you’ll need to use those same – I think COD has some download reports that you can get but we’ll keep it outside of this experiment at least that’s my thought right now.

Michael Cagle: Okay. Just to clarify exit counseling would meet the control group requirement in their final year.

Jeff Baker: Let me answer it differently and see if this is the question. The question I think is based upon that we’ve said if they’re in the control group they cannot be required to have any additional counseling. Exit counseling is still required even the control group people must be, control group people must have exit counseling as must treatment group people. Exit counseling is different than this additional counseling.

Michael Cagle: Right and that’s important.

Jeff Baker: Okay.

Michael Cagle: And then the next one here, is there a way to get the FACT counseling in a text based format so we can easily incorporate some of the content into our institutionally designed counseling for the experiment?

Jeff Baker: Somebody on our team will look into that with our people who developed FACT and see if that’s possible and if so we’ll get it up.

Michael Cagle: Okay. And the next question at the student last semester if someone in the treatment group will be doing additional entrance counseling and exit counseling, is that correct?

Jeff Baker: Correct.

Michael Cagle: That’s correct. The next question…

Jeff Baker: Yes and., you know, I know somebody can come up with a scenario where they take the additional counseling, you know, because summer and then they have to do exit counseling right after that. That just is what it is.

Michael Cagle: And this question next one is can schools have access to their data for extra in-house analysis?

Anne Tuccillo: Can I answer that?

Jeff Baker: Yes.

Anne Tuccillo: Once data is uploaded, you upload your information from the template into COD all institutions will have access to a dashboard that will give you information regarding your data and you can look at it in different ways to see what it’s telling you and to do a little bit of analysis.

Jeff Baker: That’s great.

Michael Cagle: Very good, yes. And then the very last question, does this include graduate level students?

Jeff Baker: No.

Tamy Garofano: No.

Jeff Baker: I think we mentioned that early on, graduate students cannot participate in the experiment. That’s not because we don’t love them or we don’t think they could benefit from additional counseling but this is about the requirements when you start mixing graduates and undergraduates their outcomes in terms of completion of programs and repayment behavior just kind of skews things.

So any of these students we’re talking about are undergraduate students, not graduate students. Graduate students, the normal process is that they must have entrance counseling and they cannot – and they must have exit counseling but they cannot have any additional counseling during their studies.

Michael Cagle: Great. And we appreciated all these questions and thank you everyone for spending the time to get those out there and I think we’ve gone through all of them but again if you do have specific questions that weren’t answered during this webinar we do highly recommend that you continue to use our experimentalsites@ed.gov email box and we’ll certainly get those answered for you as well. With that in mind Jeff, that’s the end of the questions in the queue.

Jeff Baker: Yes. And so I want to again thank everyone. There were about 75 or 80 of you on the call and we appreciate that and thank you very much for spending the time. Thanks for being in our experiment and thanks to Michael and Anne and Tamy and the rest of our team for working on this and we’re looking forward to working with you schools over the next weeks, months and years. Thanks again.

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