

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

HIGHER EDUCATION AND COVID-19:  
THE FUTURE OF LEARNING, OPPORTUNITY, AND WORK

Washington, D.C.

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PARTICIPANTS:

**Opening Remarks:**

THE HONORABLE BOBBY SCOTT  
Chairman, US House Committee on Education and  
Labor

**Panel: Building tomorrow's workforce today**

**Moderator:**

WENDY EDELBERG  
Director, The Hamilton Project  
Senior Fellow, Economic Studies  
The Brookings Institution

**Discussants:**

RICHARD ANUM  
Dean, School of Education  
University of California, Irvine

MITCHELL STEVENS  
Professor of Education, Stanford University

**Panel: Policy options to strengthen higher education  
and workforce development**

**Moderator:**

KRISTEN BROADY  
Policy Director, The Hamilton Project  
Fellow, Economic Studies  
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**Discussants:**

MARY SUE COLEMAN  
Former President, Association of American  
Universities

PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):

ANDREW P. KELLY  
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President, The Institute for College Access &  
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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. EDELBERG: Welcome to *Higher education and COVID-19, the future of learning, opportunity, and work*. I'm Wendy Edelberg, director of the Hamilton Project. And I'm very excited about the program we have for you today. This event is part of a series of work that we've done to explore how the COVID recession and the pandemic are affecting the economy both in the short-term and over the long-term, and what policy makers could do to mitigate those effects.

You can go to our website to see information about past events that we've done including how the recession is affecting small businesses, the labor market, other aspects of the economy, and how the pandemic and the recession are having desperate impacts on people of color. You can also see something, as of today, that we've just put up. You can find an update to a popular analysis that we put out in 2014 showing how different kinds of education have different kinds of effects on long term earnings.

The update was written by our policy director Kristen Broady and Brad Hershbein from the W. E. Upjohn

Institute for Employment Research. It includes an interactive that examines typical lifetime earnings across GEDs, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees, and 98 college majors. For example, Kristen and Brad show that cumulative lifetime earnings across majors range from about 2.3 million for those with a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering to roughly \$770,000 in lifetime earnings for those with a BA in early childhood education. And there's a second interactive showing how a college major affects a graduate's ability to repay student debt.

On our website, you will also find a proposal that will be the focus of today's event. Today, we will hear about that proposal. It offers ideas to ensure traditional colleges and universities and federal college funding programs respond to the acute learning needs brought on by the pandemic. And in doing so, how to make sure that they successfully prepare the future workforce. In just a moment, we'll be welcoming Congressman Scott, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor. And he'll offer some framing remarks and answer some questions from us and from you.

Then we will have a panel, which will include the introduction of that THP proposal. And we'll hear from other panelists who will give us a view from the trenches. They'll describe the challenges that they see in the education sector and they will bring a critical eye to the discussion of policies and how different kinds of policies would change the relationships between students and education institutions.

By the end of this event, you will learn about the challenges in post-secondary education. Some of those challenges have been long lasting, and some of have been made far more acute by the pandemic. And you will learn about concrete ideas for policy makers to face those challenges. Thank you to those of you who have already submitted questions. And we will continue to accept your questions throughout this Webcast. You can email us at [info@hamiltonproject.org](mailto:info@hamiltonproject.org). You can also email or send tweets to our Twitter account @HamiltonProj, and we will be live tweeting the event with the #CovidEconomy.

And with that, I am very honored to turn things over to Congressman Scott, who will offer some

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remarks to help frame today's event. Congressman?

MR. SCOTT: Well, thank you, Wendy, and good morning. I want to first thank the Hamilton Project for hosting this event. And I want to recognize today's distinguished speakers, panelists, and attendees for all their good work to protect and strengthen access to quality education during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's gathering of leaders could not come at a more critical time in higher education. As you know, the disruption of on-campus activities across the country has caused a tidal wave of unprecedented challenges for students, educators, and institutions. Too often on-campus resources that students normally rely on to pursue an education like computer labs and reliable Internet are now unavailable. And basic essentials like food and housing are restricted while campuses are closed. As a result, millions of students are falling behind as colleges struggle to transition to remote platforms.

Student loan borrowers also continue to bear burdensome debt on top of the economic fallout of this pandemic with only temporary relief that is scheduled to

soon expire. At the same time, our institutions of higher learning are facing severe funding cuts that have obstructed their ability to support students and remain open. We know that institutions across the country are grappling with massive state and local government budget shortfalls, which could total hundreds of billions of dollars and result in severe cuts to public education funding unless there is federal support.

Institutions are also facing severe revenue losses because of drastically decreased enrollment and because of continued suspension of on-campus activities. On top of this, public colleges are still dealing with long-term effects of state funding cuts during the great recession. Combined, these setbacks have reduced key student services and programs that help students complete their degrees and find fulfilling careers. They've also made it difficult for institutions to prepare for safe reopening or maintain basic operations, including the cleaning and disinfecting of campus facilities, implementing social distancing guidelines, and keeping staff on full payroll. And they're faced with financial strains such as debt service on empty

dormitories.

To address these challenges, Congress secured \$14 billion in emergency relief funding for higher education through the CARES Act back in March. Half of this funding was dedicated to direct student emergency aid. The package also provided emergency relief to student loan borrowers by suspending student loan payments and freezing interest on all direct and federally held student loans. Unfortunately, instead of quickly disbursing the direct student relief as the law clearly stated, the Department of Education created arbitrary eligibility requirements that delayed, and in some cases, denied relief for some students. As a result, undocumented students, students without a high school diploma, students who previously had defaulted on federal student loans, or other vulnerable groups were denied the aid that they desperately needed and that was provided for in the CARES Act.

In response, the State of Washington and the California community college system sued the Department in May. Thankfully, these lawsuits have temporarily stopped the Administration from denying California

community college students and students across Washington State access to the emergency aid that Congress had secured. Last month, a judge provided similar relief to students and institutions in Massachusetts. In reality, the CARES Act did a lot of help, but more needs to be done to address the ongoing challenges to institutions of higher learning during the rest of the pandemic.

Our institutions are facing massive state and local budget shortfalls and severely reduced revenue as they start the academic year with decreased enrollment. Unfortunately, we know these consequences are falling hardest on historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and universities, minority serving institutions, and community colleges, which already have the fewest resources.

We're also dealing with an unemployment crisis. Millions of workers continue to receive unemployment benefits each week and research indicates that up to 8 million of the jobs lost during the pandemic could be permanently lost. Meanwhile, our public workforce development systems, which are designed

to help workers attain a quality education and in-demand skills for new careers, are facing unprecedented demand and limited resources.

In response, the House included critical relief for students and institutions of higher learning in the first Heroes Act that we passed in May. That relief package included dedicated substantial funding to help state and local governments to avoid cuts in education, provided \$37 billion in direct funds for institutions, and extended the suspension of student loan payments and interest accrual in the CARES Act through September 2021. Unfortunately, instead of urgently advancing these solutions, the Senate Republicans just shrugged their responsibility to provide pandemic relief and waited nearly four months to introduce any relief proposal and then promptly defeated their own proposal.

Compared to the Heroes Act, that proposal would have done nothing to help state and local governments avert massive cuts to education. It provided less for institutions of higher learning. It did nothing to extend relief for student loan borrowers.

That relief is scheduled to expire the end of this year. And offered a liability shield for schools instead of requiring them to maintain safe workplaces for school employees and students.

To that end, the House Democrats made another good faith effort to work with our colleagues across the aisle by offering a revised Heroes Act. The new proposal preserves critical funding to help state and local governments address their budget shortfalls and avert cuts to public education. In addition, the updated Heroes Act also boosts relief funding for institutions to help cover the unexpected costs of operating and reopening safely, including an increase in funding for HBCUs, tribal colleges and universities, and other minority serving institutions.

In addition, the updated Heroes Act ensures that student loan borrowers will not have to worry about loan payments, interest accrual, or collections through September 2021. And finally, the proposal invests more than \$2 billion in additional funding for workforce and career development programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act.

Regrettably, the President announced by tweet earlier this week that he is refusing to negotiate on any COVID-19 relief packages until after the election, dealing another blow to students, school administrators, and state and local governments that need that support. However, we know that the need for support for higher education has only grown more urgent and we hope that Secretary Mnuchin, notwithstanding the President's directive, will continue to negotiate.

Looking ahead as this virus continues to spread, we must make our investments in higher education. Innovative strategies to maintain students' access to education have a key role in that effort. However, we cannot let those innovative ideas come at the cost of quality and equity. We have to follow the research and evidence and maintain adequate oversight to help all students reach their full potential, not just those who can afford it.

Amidst all the negotiations, it's important to remember that we are not just discussing an economic stimulus. What Congress does now will have lasting impacts and we have the responsibility to ensure that

students and institutions can succeed for generations to come. So, I'm sure that you'll agree caring for the wellbeing of our students during a public health emergency is never about politics. It's about the future of our communities and our nation. So, please continue to make your voices heard. And thank you again for everything you're doing to advocate and support our students. Thank you.

MS. EDELBERG: Thank you very much for those remarks, Congressman. I certainly agree that we need to do more, and we need to protect our students. And thank you for painting such an alarming but vivid picture of the current challenges and the crisis that education is facing.

We have a bunch of questions from the audience. A lot of them basically are asking you to delve deeper into some of the things you touched on in your remarks. One is, you talked about the challenges for students that are in school today. And I want to ask about how you're thinking about challenges for the students that are just about to graduate or who just graduated. We know we have empirical research showing

that when people graduate into a weak labor market, that can affect their trajectory of income for a long time. What should we do for those students and are there policies that we should be implementing to help them?

MR. SCOTT: Well, one of the first things you can do is make sure the jobs are there. Just why the House passed an infrastructure package to be able to create millions of jobs. It included a school construction part of the budget, which will create many times more jobs than were created in the \$1.9 trillion tax cut a couple of years ago. So, the jobs will be there. That's the first thing we can do.

The other thing we can do is make sure that, you know, when you get a liberal arts degree, it doesn't qualify you for specific skills on the job. The House committee, Education and Labor Committee, last week reported the Apprenticeship Bill, creating 1 million new apprenticeship opportunities with a focus on opening up opportunities in job careers that are not traditionally apprenticeship opportunities. I mean, apprenticeships are generally the building trades, but in financial services and other things, you ought to be able to use

apprenticeship strategy and register in apprenticeships where you can get a stackable credential that is recognized nationally. So, that's another thing you can do.

We have to support our community colleges to make sure that their job programs are fully funded so the people have those opportunities. But basically, the thing we have to do is defeat the virus. As long as this virus is around, the economy is going to be in bad shape. And so, there are a lot of things. It's not just one thing you need to do. You need to make sure the jobs are there, the job training is there. But actually, if you're going open the economy, you got to open the public schools. You can't have a functioning economy with the schools closed.

The public schools need to open not only for the economy, but also that's where you can get the best education. You get access to nutrition with the school meals. You get much better -- you can identify things like child abuse. I mean, there are a lot of reasons why you want the children social and emotional skills you learn when you're dealing with people not sitting at

home. A lot of reasons we need to open the schools if it can be done safely.

The schools need resources to open safely. They need more money for transportation because you got fewer kids on the bus, smaller class sizes. Ventilation is a key effort. That's where this infrastructure package is so important because the CDC has identified ventilation as an important element. You can eat outside in a restaurant, but not inside. Because if you're inside in a stuffy room, anybody with the virus will be breathing and sooner or later everybody's got it. You have proper ventilation you don't have a problem. So, there are a lot of things we need to do to make sure the schools can open safely, but they need resources to do it. And so, all of that goes to making sure that the economy can open.

But you're absolutely right, they've done studies that when you graduate into a bad economy, you start off with a lower salary and then all your increases are based on that lower amount. And so, for the rest of your life, you could be suffering from the ravages of having graduated into a bad economy. So, we

need to focus on it, but it first means you have to defeat the virus. You have to open the schools. You have to have the job training. There's no one thing that needs to be done.

MS. EDELBERG: So, thank you. In your answer there you talked about how important it is for these institutions of higher learning to help create a productive workforce to essentially do workforce training. Should we think about that that's the right focus for schools of higher learning? Is that too narrow of a focus? Is that the appropriate focus? Is that how we should be thinking about optimal higher education?

MR. SCOTT: Well, one thing about higher education is it's not just one way of doing it. A four-year liberal arts degree may be appropriate and may be taken up by maybe 25 percent of the public. Most of the public if they aren't going to get a four-year at all, and most of the rest, you know, those that do get a four-year degree will be in liberal arts. But there are a lot of other people that need training and education past the high school level. A high school diploma is

woefully inadequate for today's job market.

So, we have to have a higher education strategy to make sure that people if they're not going to get a four-year liberal arts degree, I think that's the gold standard. I think that's what people ought to strive towards. But if you're not going to get that, and the vast majority of people will not, there are job training opportunities where you can get a credential.

One of the things we're trying to do in reauthorizing the Higher Education Act is recognize that a Pell Grant can be used only for courses that lead to a college degree. If all it leads to is a good paying job, you can't use a Pell Grant. And the couple of thousand dollars it costs to get that training, it serves as a major barrier to many people. If it leads to a good paying job, of course you ought to be able to use a Pell Grant. The trick there is once you open that door, quality control is a major consideration. We've seen in particularly many of the for-profit colleges have offered little benefit at great expense. A lot of defaults, a lot of excessive debt. And we don't want to open that door so that some storefronts can feed at the

trough of the federal government and take the money and not provide a quality program.

But I think if you limit the access to this credential, Pell Grant funded credentials, the community colleges and maybe workforce, the WIOA boards, that you can maintain some credible oversight in quality. But we ought to make sure because we've seen in the community colleges in Virginia, they have some short-term programs, 8, 16 weeks, where you can increase your income 25, 50, even 100 percent. It costs a couple of thousand dollars. Well, you've seen the studies that show that most people can't come up with \$400. Well, so, \$2,000/\$3,000 is a major barrier. If you can get a Pell Grant, not only can you pay the tuition, you can get a little living expenses so you can afford to go.

This can transform a lot of people's lives. So, the higher education has to have a portal for everybody to go into depending on what they want. If they want a four-year liberal arts degree, that ought to be available. If they want a short-term credential that can transform their life, and a stackable credential. And nursing is the best example of that. You become a

licensed nurse, registered nurse. You work your way up. Stackable credentials, if we can put people on those kinds of paths, I think those opportunities need to be there.

MS. EDELBERG: So, do you think that we have the best chance for success if we have some institutions dedicated to the four-year liberal arts degree and some institutions dedicated to credentialing and offering degrees something short of or different than a four-year liberal arts degree? Or do you think it works best if we encourage the institutions who typically offer these four-year degrees to start getting more into this world of accreditation, associates degrees, shorter term education than the four-year degree?

MR. SCOTT: I think my answer is all of the above. The community colleges, I think, do it best because they have the total array of opportunities. You can start off with a community college and get the first two of a four-year liberal arts degree. You can get even some of these stackable credentials that are recognized nationally. You can get a short-term pre-apprenticeship program that will get you off in that

direction.

Community colleges, I think, have it best. But each college will have to make its own decisions. And I don't think every college has to do everything. But all of the opportunities have to be there.

MS. EDELBERG: So, we only have a couple more minutes, but I'd love to leave us on an optimistic note. So, I'm going to ask you what have you seen as the best innovations that schools have put in place in response to the pandemic?

MR. SCOTT: Well, the remote learning has been a surprise that we've been able to do as much remote learning as possible. But, of course, on the public school level that just tends to exacerbate the achievement gaps. Those that are at the bottom of the achievement gap for various reasons are least likely to benefit with distance learning. Those who are at the top of the achievement gap tend to do best. So, you really have to come in and fix that.

The colleges have a lot of work to do. One of the aspects of college is not just the technical classroom learning. I think if you look at most of the

people who've done extremely well in life who have a four-year degree got most of the benefit they got from college had nothing to do with what they learned in the classroom. It was dealing with the people around them, the socializing. And there's something about the on-campus college, four-year college experience that transforms a person's life. And I hope we don't lose that by going totally online. The colleges, I think, have a lot of work to do to adjust towards the pandemic and still not lose the on-campus, four-year on-campus socializing effect that transforms peoples' lives. That's going to be a challenge.

MS. EDELBERG: Well, thank you so much for being with us. Thank you for offering the remarks to frame our event and answering questions from us and from our audience. This was super. And good luck with all of the policies that I know you are fighting hard for.

MR. SCOTT: Well, we're going to try to get some more funding and hopefully we'll do it shortly.

MS. EDELBERG: All right, thank you very much, Congressman.

MR. SCOTT: Thank you.

MS. EDELBERG: And now, our next panel is going to be with the two authors who prepared the proposal for the Hamilton Project. We have Richard Arum, who's dean of the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine. And we have Mitchell Stevens, professor of education at Stanford University. And I am thrilled to have them both with us. I am thrilled to have their proposal that we have published to, I think, radically transform how higher education is delivered and make it far more accessible.

So, if you both would, if one of you wants to go first, describe your proposal and then I'll ask you a bunch of questions.

MR. ARUM: Thanks, Wendy. We appreciate this opportunity. We're going to discuss this proposal --

MS. EDELBERG: Uh-oh. I am worried that we have lost Richard. But the good news is we have Richard's coauthor, Mitchell. We've hedged our bets and we've had them both.

MR. STEVENS: There we go.

MS. EDELBERG: Mitchell, can we ask you to take over until we get Richard back?

MR. STEVENS: You bet. But Professor Arum has returned.

MS. EDELBERG: Excellent.

MR. ARUM: Thank you again, Wendy. And this proposal has two interrelated elements. The provision of learning opportunity credits to unemployed and underemployed individuals and the establishment of infrastructure on the future of learning opportunity and work. We'll explain both those elements shortly.

But as social scientists, we believe that it's important to start by historicizing. And the moment we're in simultaneously involves crisis and opportunity. First, let me talk about the crisis. There's long-term structural challenges we're facing around the increased need for lifelong learning and workforce training. Higher education and workforce training systems, however, are segregated in our country. Resources are scarce and global competition is fierce.

Now, COVID-19 has simply exacerbated these challenges. We all know tens of millions of Americans have lost their jobs. Nineteen million Americans are currently either unemployed or they're out of the labor

force but desire work. Coupling this crisis for individuals, hundreds of higher education institutions are struggling with issues of financial solvency. And we're in a moment where both states and families have limited ability to invest further in addressing these problems. And these problems, of course, affect individuals from underrepresented minority backgrounds disproportionately. But it's not just a crisis, it's also an opportunity. Mitchell?

MR. STEVENS: Yes, again, as social scientists trying to take the long view, we know that wars and calamities change entire societies. And they change societies because they require so many resources to combat. In the midst of wars and calamities, long-established systems fail. Things fall apart. And putting them back together often requires heroic and otherwise audacious changes of course.

This is why we see the current moment as both a crisis and an opportunity for post-secondary education in this country. There's no question that the pandemic created a public health and ultimately economic calamity. But we're also in the midst of a war, a civil

war, a cultural and political conflict, but a war, nevertheless. And our colleagues in polling and demography and political science make clear to us that one of the main fault lines in that war is between those who enjoy the benefit of a post-secondary credential that's worthwhile in the labor force and those who do not.

So, again, as in national crises in times past, thinking about World War II mobilization, responding to the need to serve veterans in the wake of the conclusion of World War II. In mobilization for the Cold War. The federal government has consistently called upon colleges and universities to provide new services, new resources to the polity. And it has relied on colleges and universities to mobilize and reward human capital.

And what Richard and I are proposing is an acknowledgement, a recognition that the moment that we're in creates conditions to really move the furniture around with federal provision for workforce development. And we're specifically encouraging a revisiting of what is now basically a categorical divide between higher

education funding and policy and workforce development funding and policy. This is a division that was established in the 1970s in a very different political and economic order.

And one of our hopes is that our colleagues in Washington and in higher education do not face the present moment presuming that that categorical division is going to serve the nation or higher education well in the present moment or going forward. That's the context for our proposal. Richard?

MR. ARUM: Yeah, so, first the provision of learning opportunity credits. What we're recommending here is that unemployed and underemployed individuals, adults in the labor force are given learning opportunity credits so they can exchange for access to courses that can be used for credits towards either degrees or certificates. Learning opportunity credits would be restricted to public and nonprofit accredited individual institutions and their program partners.

LOC providers must certify in order to access these credits, that they have involved local businesses in identifying local labor market needs. Unlike Title

IV programs, LOC programs will prohibit institutions from charging additional financial cost for course participation. That is cost will be capped at the price of a learning opportunity credit. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, in order to access LOC credits, institutions must agree to provide a minimum of 50 percent of student experiences online, and share that data with a national entity that would be stood up to ensure transparency and improve the science of learning.

Mitchell, can you describe that entity?

MR. STEVENS: Yeah, sure. Now, as anyone who's active in the workforce sector knows, and there are quite a few of you on this call, the relationship between biography, education, and employment in this country is anarchic at best. Those who are seeking to invest in their own lives and futures by returning to school, face a very opaque market of providers. And the Congressman mentioned this earlier. And so too do the federal agencies that disburse aid for these programs. Again, as the Congressman mentioned.

As I often summarize it to my students, it's much easier in this country today to make an informed

decision about buying a used car than it is to invest in a post-secondary credential. That's because seekers of used cars have access to a host of information systems that make it relatively easy for them to compare the quality and value of their options. Essentially, no such systems exist today in the post-secondary learning sector. And we could talk at length about why that's the case, but our focus here is really forward thinking.

Richard and I recognize that that problem of information is something that no single federal program can hope to remediate any time soon. But we believe that the authority and the resources of the federal government could be leveraged with new funding streams that encourage a very different way of thinking about information organization in the post-secondary sector. So, an essential part of our proposal is the creation of a project on the future of learning, opportunity, and work. Call it FLOW. Think of it as a Manhattan Project for post-secondary workforce training.

Its empirical spine is an expectation that schools making use of LOCs report detailed data on the enrollments, institutional content, and the learning

outcomes of LOC offerings to a nationally distributed research project. And note that I did not say a regulatory project. I said a research project.

In doing so, we would mimic the distributed applied science projects that have worked so well between the federal government and research universities in other domains of science in the past. The big difference this time is that the networks would include not just a handful of research universities, but a wider plurality of schools. Historically Black colleges and universities, minority serving institutions, community colleges who all would be part of a nationwide network to observe which kinds of programs work for which kinds of learners in which sectors of the economy and perhaps even in which regions of the country. And in this, by tying the learning opportunity credit provision to a reporting requirement, we believe finally create the conditions under which the promise of digital data to really move the needle on learning science can accrue into a national public good. Richard?

MR. ARUM: Yeah, so, in conclusion, three critical points to walk away with. First of all, this

program is supplemental to Title IV. We recognize the critical role Title IV programs like Pell Grants play in sustaining and ensuring educational opportunity in this country. But we think the moment requires something more than simply existing programs.

Second, we note that the time requires more than just investment in workforce training. The moment requires establishing infrastructure, national infrastructure to maintain the global pre-eminence of U.S. higher education. And that infrastructure is no longer brick and mortar campuses. It's data infrastructure that we describe here.

And finally, we'd like to end by saying in a time of crisis, national purpose can be built around a shared bipartisan commitment to education and workforce training. And we hope we take advantage of that moment to bring our country together and ensure a healthy and productive future moving forward.

MS. EDELBERG: Thank you, Mitchell and Richard. That was fantastic. And we have a bunch of questions. One, just to I think get probably an obvious one out of the way. So, these lifetime opportunity,

learning opportunity credits rely most heavily on online education. And I can see how that reduces costs. I can see how that would expand access to a lot of people who otherwise would find it extraordinarily challenging to do this education in person. But it also creates you mentioned infrastructure. It also creates technology challenges because there's great inequities across the U.S. of who has access to the infrastructure to take advantage of online learning.

MR. STEVENS: I'll take that.

MS. EDELBERG: How do you think about that with regard to your proposal?

MR. STEVENS: Yeah, two answers. First of all, we're not advocating LOCs requiring them to be primarily online. The expectation would be that providers convey at least half of their experiences through digital mediation. And the reason we are doing that is because we're concurring with a growing national consensus among educators that the media through which we're having this event can actually be quite valuable. They can be very powerful instructional opportunities.

But schools in the past have not been

incentivized to really lean into innovation in this domain. And so, we want the LOCs to encourage creative repurposing of technologies like we're doing with Zoom this morning to really, you know, try to leverage some affordances of scale. But you're absolutely right, Wendy, also that -- and we talk about this briefly in the proposal that in order for our project to pursue its goals of equity, it would need to be tied to a kind of broader infrastructural investment in broadband Internet access, which I see also as sort of part of the audacious opportunities that the current calamity provides.

MS. EDELBERG: And so, how do we make sure that schools participate?

MR. STEVENS: Richard, you want to take that?

MR. ARUM: Yeah, so, first of all we say that in times of national crises, there's never been a moment where U.S. higher education when asked has not stepped up to the plate and committed itself to national service. So, we share that deep believe in higher education.

The second thing I'd say is enlightened self-

interest. Higher education institutions today are hemorrhaging resources as Congressman Scott mentioned. The estimates are that hundreds of private universities will be closing. And public universities are facing such profound budget deficits that they'll be eager to look for new resources to shore up operating revenue.

So, we think the moment is right. Enlightened self-interest and a deep commitment to national purpose will be sufficient to encourage most institutions to participate. And not all have to. There are first movers that are in the system already, like Arizona State University. Like New Hampshire.

MR. STEVENS: Southern New Hampshire.  
Southern New Hampshire University.

MR. ARUM: That have been at the forefront of increasing access to higher education. So, we think that a critical mass of institutions would be eager to take advantage of this opportunity.

MR. STEVENS: I'm going to say two more quick things. One is that in the past, universities have responded to national need when they have been called upon to meet that national need. So, you know, we are

suggesting a proactive Congress and a proactive presidential administration to ask, to call upon, to expect colleges and universities to respond to this need. And to be a little less sanguine, you know, the federal government has sticks as well as carrots. Tax exemption and massive subsidy of both instruction and research essentially make the federal government the primary patron of higher education in the United States. So, you know, we are essentially suggesting a reopening of negotiations in the social contract between universities and the federal government.

MS. EDELBERG: So, obviously, you talked about not all institutions would need to participate, and indeed, the proposal that you've laid out has certain requirements for institutions participating. And they would have to be accredited. So, first, can you talk a little bit more about how you would make sure that the education would be of high quality. And so, maybe that's talking a little more about the accreditation system. But then on the flipside, we have an interesting question from our audience asking how do you make sure that the accreditation process does not impede

innovation? So, I think it's worth thinking about how accreditation can do lots of good things but can also get in the way of other good things.

MR. ARUM: Well, first of all, you know, it's not just accreditation that we have that in the existing system. And the existing system has uneven provision of educational opportunities in terms of quality. What we think will improve on that system is the requirement for data sharing. The ability for transparency around kind of data sharing around student engagement, student learning, and student outcomes creates enhanced accountability and quality assurance with the higher education programs that we are suggesting to put in place.

MR. STEVENS: Yeah, and this is where I think the Manhattan Project metaphor is useful. You know, we do now have the technological capacity to, you know, to build data systems to dispassionately observe the relative value of different degrees over the entire life course, which would be an essential part of this exist. But resources have not been mobilized to assemble that infrastructure as a public good. And that's essentially

what we're advocating for here at least a beginning of the building that infrastructure.

And it's also the case I'm glad accreditation came up. But the accreditation system we inherent is also a product of the middle of the 20th Century. It's also, you know, organized around a presumed, you know, sort of mode of delivery and way of evaluating quality that may have made sense in the 1970s. But it doesn't make sense anymore. And so, we're not -- at least all by itself. So, we're not suggesting a wholesale replacement of that governance infrastructure. We are suggesting the creation of an alternative source of information that could at least over time, you know, inform an information ecosystem that is essentially more responsive and more transparent than the current one.

MS. EDELBERG: Well, that was great. And we're out of time -- excuse me. One thing I'll say and so, Mitchell, I love your comment that we need to reopen the social contract. I think that I will take that part with me way more broadly than just thinking about higher ed.

But this has been super. And I encourage

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everybody to go to our website and read the proposal offering concrete ideas for how institutions should face the challenges that the pandemic has wrought. So, thank you Richard. Thank you, Mitchell.

I'm going to pass the baton to Kristen Broady who will moderate our next panel

MS. BROADY: Thank you so much, Wendy. And thank you, Dr. Arum and Dr. Stevens.

So, the paper was very interesting. I've had quite a bit of time to study it and I'm glad that you've now all heard about it. So, adaptive instructional delivery in higher education helps support the long-term needs of the U.S. workforce. While colleges train workers for a variety of professions, not all of them and not all of their programs serve to meet the needs of a current or future workforce.

Arum and Stevens have provided some solutions that we're now going to discuss. And I'm pleased to be joined Dr. Mary Sue Coleman, former president of the Association of American Universities and president emeritus of the University of Michigan. Dr. Andrew P. Kelly, senior vice president for strategy and policy for

the University of North Carolina System. James Kvaal, president of the Institution for College Access and Success. And Dr. Belle Wheelan, president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. I'd like to thank you all for joining me as we have this discussion.

And so, I guess where I'd like to start is just with a little bit of context. So, as was discussed in our previous panel, college enrollment has been on the decline. In fact, the last time U.S. college enrollment went up was 2011, at the tail end of the recession. All else being equal, as the economy gets better, unemployment goes down, more people leave college, or postpone it, and head to work.

So, things are a little bit different now. And so, I guess, my question is how do you, Mary Sue, see this current trend evolving with COVID-19? How do you think the pandemic and economic crisis will affect this trend?

MS. COLEMAN: I'm off mute, right?

MS. BROADY: You are.

MS. COLEMAN: Okay, thanks very much. You

know, it's really difficult to predict when the current recession will effectively end and when the COVID-19 vaccines will be available. And I've been sort of listening to the economists and most I hear is not until well into 2022 or 2023. So, what that means to me is that higher education institutions really must be planning now for a number of different scenarios about what will happen online or whether students come back.

But they're still reeling from the effects of the pandemic both from their on-campus experience and from the financial devastation that we just heard in the previous panel. This is all on the backdrop. But I think this is really important on profound social unrest as exemplified by the Black Lives Matter movement and what that has opened up, the wounds that it has opened up and continuing inequities in society.

So, the reality is and we're facing this many millions of Americans out of work, even if they were to go back to work, many of the small companies where they used to have jobs are on the cusp of closure because of the financial problems. And so, I think we face this. I like the way that it was framed in the last panel

about sort of a Manhattan Project moment that we really need to be thinking about what to do.

So, this is a good time for the federal government to have some kind of dramatic program to return people to work and giving them opportunity. I think it has to be coupled, and I like the fact that this is a coupled idea. We've got to give people the skills so that they can succeed in an economy in the third decade of this century. I mean, it's just going to be a different economy. And so, we have to take that into account.

So, here's what comforts me about this whole issue. And that is that I do think that higher education institutions in this country are pretty adept and fairly nimble to reacting to crises. And what we've observed in the last six months I've been sort of amazed at the way that these institutions have been able to pivot to go online, to go to more digital, to try to keep their students moving. But they've also encountered pretty dramatic faculty and student resistance to the formats that were hastily assembled out of necessity. But faced with declining enrollment,

and this is going to be a big incentive, I think, for people to challenge their faculty and the educational researchers to design more interactive and creative strategies that will engage students and also if they have the funding available to do so, they'll be able to do it.

So, the incentive structure of any federal program in my view is critical. But also, vital importance as was discussed to weed out the bad actors. What I worry a little bit about though is that if a program were mounted only for public institutions, I think there would be an outcry from the private sector. So, I don't know quite how that would work. I also think a looming challenge is the federal deficit that is historic in amount and it's going to make consensus difficult to achieve.

MS. BROADY: Thank you so much, Mary Sue. You brought up several points that we're going to touch on a bit more. But I think one of the ones that is kind of overarching is accreditation. Universities can make the changes, but they are subject to the rules of various accrediting bodies. And so, Dr. Wheelan, I'm so happy

that we have you here to address my next question.

So, considering that the universities that would participate in this program are accredited, and that they would be trying to serve adult learners whose schedules and responsibilities are different and that this would be hybrid, meaning that half of the courses would take place online. What challenges or issues do you see with accrediting these programs? And what, if any, advice would you provide for schools in terms of meeting those challenges?

MS. WHEELAN: Thank you, Kristen. There have been so many comments about accreditation I'm just chomping at the bit here to respond to a bunch of them. First of all, online learning is not a new phenomenon for institutions of higher education. It is new for some of our institutions because they've never engaged in it. But the concept itself is not new. When I was president at Central Virginia Community College in 1992, Old Dominion University was providing online or virtual conversations with student where the students could see and talk to the faculty member at Old Dominion from each of the community colleges. But the faculty member could

not see them. So, we had that synchronous kind of thing going. When I was at Northern Virginia in 1998, the enrollment in the online programs was larger than two of the smaller campuses. So, it's been around a long time. It's just different types of institutions are now realizing that it's an avenue worth exploring.

The pandemic has exacerbated that, obviously, because, you know, traditional residential institutions have not had to deal with that. They've dealt with students who want that social experience and come on. But the reality is, you know, over 50 years ago when I was in school, 80 percent of students were 18 to 21 who were in college and only a small percent were adults. Now, that ratio has literally reversed. More than 80 percent of students are 25 or older in higher education. They are working. They have families and so, it makes it imperative that if enrollments are going continue at institutions, and institutions continue to be open, then they're going to have to do something to attract that adult population.

So, I say all that to say the requirements from an accreditation standpoint have not changed. They

would just apply to a new type of institution. We expect that faculty will be trained in offering online instruction because it is a different way of delivering. However, we also expect that the social -- sorry -- student learning outcomes that are expected of students will be the same quality as those who attend in class on campus. That the support services that are available, the counseling, the advising, the financial aid, the libraries, the computer lab, all of those things will somehow be available and probably in a 24/7 format, rather than just, you know, 8:00 to 5:00 on campus or even 8:00 to 10:00, 8:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night as it were. Because some people have to wait until children are put to bed or, you know, jobs are over or whatever to access those kinds of things.

So, there are many more contractual arrangements between institutions of higher education and outside providers for providing those support services, for example. Because those organizations that have call centers, for example, you know, can be open 24/7 to access those kinds of things. So, we still worry about the quality. It's just that now there's a

larger number of institutions that are going to be involved.

When the pandemic hit, only about 10 percent of our institutions that we accredit had not previously offered distance learning. So, it's here. It's been a while. And it's going to stay.

MS. BROADY: Thank you so much, Belle. So, I was concerned about accreditation, but you've assuaged my fears. And so, now that we know that these programs can be accredited, I think there is another thing to think about. As you said, we're looking at a newer population of students. We're looking at adult learners here. So, while a lot of recruiting at colleges focuses on high school students, that population is decreasing we've heard.

And so, new research shows that there are 36 million Americans, mainly adults, who have some college and no degree. But offering opportunities to them is a bit different. They have different responsibilities. They have different schedules. They have different knowledge. They have life experience. So, how do we serve these different needs? What do schools need to

think about because now that we know the programs can be accredited, but what support services need to be added once those students are in the programs? So, James, can you help us to think about that?

MR. KVAAL: Thanks for the question. I'm honored to be a part of this group. I really want to commend the authors for tackling such an important subject. We are down some 11 million jobs. The labor market may not recover until 2023 according to the *Wall Street Journal Economist* survey today. And I think it is important not to lose sight of the tremendous cost, tremendous human cost of those levels of unemployment we're you're talking about people whose wages will probably never fully recover. Families come undone. It's really a crisis that is worth taking very seriously and thinking very creatively and ambitiously about it.

To date, community college enrollment is down about 8 percent, part due to the pandemic. So, this is a little bit different from past recessions. And I think it is really great to be thinking ambitiously about that. I also think the paper's discussion about research agenda on what works in teaching adults is a

really creative and important contribution. And they make a really persuasive case there that we can learn a lot more and do a lot better by adult students.

You asked about some of the elements that are missing. I guess I have three questions for consideration. One, I wasn't totally sure why the proposal operates in parallel to Pell Grants and the other existing student aid instead of building upon it. And since there's no provision in the proposal to pay for living expenses, I understand some of the students served may be on unemployment insurance. But living expenses are a real barrier especially for adults who are trying to return to school.

A second would be some of the program design elements that we know work for adults, which are compatible with the proposal, I think. But things like selecting programs instead of individual classes so that you make sure the classes meet at consistent times. That you can get the classes you need, hopefully move through them with a cohort of students who can form a peer support community. Frequent start times so that someone doesn't have to wait four or six or eight months

for the next semester to start in order to enroll.

Those are all things that are important and that I think would be compatible with the proposal

The third and final thing that I would just wonder about is quality assurance. And if I understand the proposal correctly, it is funding colleges at the level of three- or four-unit classes. So, we're talking about programs that are quite short in duration. These are programs that do have a history of abuse before they were removed from Pell eligibility. A couple of decades ago, one of my colleagues at TCUS has done some research on what we know about employment outcomes at those programs. It's not very much, but they vary widely as you would expect for a program that short. You don't tend to see very large learning gains the programs that have graduates with higher earnings tended to have. The students who came in with high earnings, at least as far as we can tell with existing data. And, you know, the mandate that it be at least half digital when, you know, I tend to agree with the authors that that's an area of a lot of potential, but not yet proven. You know, I think maybe the digital aspects may be more suited for

the research side of the proposal rather than immediately scaling before we know what works.

So, for all those reasons, I do worry a little bit about whether we would get something better than what we currently have under the proposal.

MS. BROADY: I want to thank you so much for bringing up those concerns. So, as we build, we've heard about the population of students that we're trying to serve. And schools have received advice on how to deal with accreditation. We now know what challenges face adults differently than 18 to 20-year-old students that universities, many of them are seeking.

So, now, I want to get a little bit more specific with how we actualize this program. And so, I'm happy that we have Andrew Kelly from the University of North Carolina System to kind of talk about what actual universities and colleges would need to do to actualize it. So, I guess, I'm going to come to you with that. How do schools take this money and recruit the students and serve them? How do they start these programs? What does that look like on an actual college campus?

MR. KELLY: Thanks, Kristen. And let me echo James' comments about what an honor it is to be here. It's such a treat too to wrestle with Mitchell and Richard's thought-provoking work. It's been a while since I've had the chance to do that. And I'm a big fan of both of them as scholars, but also more importantly as people. They're just wonderful guys. So, I'm really glad to be here.

I want to sort of start I want to talk a little bit about North Carolina in the context here. But I want to start by really echoing some of what's already been said but to say it one more time. Incentives matter in this market. And the federal government really is the main driver of the incentives that our institutions, all of them, community colleges, four-years, the UNC system, any other public system in the country. The federal government's the major driver here. And when it comes to serving the population identified by Richard and Mitchell, it would seem to me like we need incentives on two fronts. And so, we need incentives on one that you mentioned, Kristen, which is we need incentives to recruit and enroll those types of

students, right? Typically, over the age of 25, recently unemployed, need to reskill, upskill.

The second, though, incentive, and you mentioned this as well, is we need incentives to create the type of experience, programming, services, alignment that serves those students well, right? And I want to sort of make a fundamental point about sort of the difference between those two. And the point is that the first is much easier to accomplish than the second, right? The federal government can cut checks. We know that. They can cut checks. They can write rules about how you can use those checks and redeem them for what you need, right? The federal government has a much harder time with the second, which is you can tell people to do things. You can't tell them to do them well, right? Is another way to say that. And so, I do think that we've got sort of the paper itself, I think, does a good job of explaining why the LOCs would create this incentive for more on the recruitment and enrollment side. I'm not sure it does as much on the programming side.

And I want to talk a little bit about the UNC

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context because I think it's relevant. So, we're a reflection in the system of the incentive structure of the last 50 years. And we've done it really, really well. I'm biased, but I think we've done it the best of pretty much any public system in the country. We've enrolled students. We've created access, affordable access for students to enroll. Typically, traditional aged students. We've had a bumper crop every year of 18 to 24-year-olds for the past 25, 30 years, probably even further back.

What does that mean? Well, that means that we're 16 percent over the age of 25 at the undergraduate level. Sixteen percent, that's all, right? The vast majority of our students fall into that traditional age bucket. What does that mean for our programming? It looks traditional. We have one start date a year typically, right? Maybe two if you have a spring admit class. We have courses that meet in the traditional 15 to 16 weeks schedule, and so forth. So, when I see a proposal like this, the natural question is we have suddenly a set of financial incentives that would create incentive to recruit and enroll, but I think that the

work of retrofitting, let's say, institutions to serve this new demographic is really where the hard work lies.

And I want to say just a couple quick things about what the pandemic, I think, has shown us both on the good side of the ledger, but also on that shows how much more difficult it is than maybe the paper might assume. So, on the one hand, the pandemic has driven an incredible amount of creativity on our institutions. How do you suddenly pivot and then work across the whole summer, right, to really reengineer what we all would admit was not good enough in the spring, right? It was a sudden pivot. It was really remote instruction. It wasn't really online instruction.

Our institutions have shown an enormous amount of creativity. They have changed their academic calendars in some cases. So, many have shifted from a 16-week semester to an 8-week set of 8-week terms, right? That's an enormous undertaking, right? And it was done over the course of the summer. They've really had to totally rethink the way they deliver student services, right? So, unlike the typical model where it's kind of a first come first serve. I come in to

meet with an advisor or a tutor. They've had to be much more proactive in reaching out to students and actually grabbing them and saying you might need help. What do you need? How can we help you?

That's all, I think, really, really good. And I think it's given us a head start on the demographic changes that are coming our way with respect to the decline and plateau in traditional aged students. However, right, this is -- we're very much still at the early stages here, right? And we know from experience that this type of work actually takes more resources, not less.

And I want to be clear that I think one of the pieces of the proposal that I'd like to see more clearly addressed is that, you know, I think we know two things about adult students it seems to me. We know more than two, but two are clear. One is that online learning by itself sort of, you know, where people are learning in isolation remotely from each other disadvantaged students, students that are less prepared academically don't do as well as they do in in-person, right? We also know that the most successful interventions, writ

large, not just for online, but for these types of academically underprepared students, they're expensive. They have high upfront costs, right? And I would cite the CUNY ASAP program as the kind of emblematic example.

They have a high upfront cost, but they're efficient on a cost per degree basis, right? Because the investment pays off on the back end. My concern about -- I love the fact that the proposal pays attention to the costs and setting the reimbursement rate in a way that would help to contain costs, right? My concern is that the implied in that is that it's less expensive to serve this group of students than it is to serve the traditional aged students. And I think it's in fact the opposite, right? And so, I think that needs some serious attention, right? We need to sort of figure out what that means for a proposal like this before we move forward with this.

The last thing I'll say is like James and others have mentioned, I think the idea of the R&D agenda is long overdue. I think it's a terrific idea. And I applaud this piece. And I think it is exactly the kind of thing that the federal government is well

situated to do. It is to launch a research agenda like this. The only thing I might add to that is if I were the authors, I might think a little bit more about a division of labor. So, in the paper it doesn't quite make clear which types of institutions would be targeted for providing the LOC type curriculum and which would be targeted for participating in the FLOW project.

My observation would be that the research universities who are really well equipped to contribute the most to the FLOW Project are also maybe have the longest way to go to prepare themselves to serve these 25 plus students. I would probably suggest to them, hey, we want to use your core competency in research to drive this piece and we want to target these other places that might be already better situated because they do a lot of work with adult students to focus on the LOC piece.

So, I have lots and lots of legal pad notes here, but those are my main observations. And, again, just a pleasure to work on what is really a great proposal.

MS. BROADY: So, thank you. And you've given

us a lot to think about. And one of the things that you said was that the University of North Carolina System has experienced enrollment growth while other systems haven't, where other schools haven't. And that your system has been very innovative. And so, one of the things that I think about is schools that are really focused still on the 18 to 22-year-old population only. Or the 18 to 22-year-old population, leaving out anyone else.

And so, considering that that population is decreasing, what needs to be done to incentivize more schools to prepare to and desire to participate in a program like this? Because the adult population is definitely going to need to be served. So, and why do you think that they're not interested? I guess I want to pose that to you, Belle, because you worked with this broad proportion of schools, some of which are very well prepared and very innovative, and others that are more traditional.

MS. WHEELAN: One of the beauties of our higher education system is that there seems to be something for everybody. So, I'm not sure that except

for the fact enrollments are declining that there is a major push or incentive for anybody to take on a new population of students. Whether it's, you know, adult students or short students or tall students, you know, it just depends. The challenge with adult students is that they tend not to be mobile. And so, either the institutions around the area in which they live or institutions that are offering distance programs, are the ones that are going to benefit from those adult students.

So, for institutions like the University of North Carolina, for example, that might recruit students from all over the state or all over the country, but not necessarily from the local area in Raleigh or Charlotte, may be at a disadvantage in accepting those students. So, I think it's going to be a shift in the philosophy of who we recruit, for example, that's going to make a difference as to which institution picks up adult students.

Having said that I think that there will come a day, it may be 20 years from now, that the adult population is going to shift the whole face of higher ed

because that's going to be who the majority of students are. My generation didn't have as many children as my mother's did. So, there's a lag in the number of young people that are going to be available. So, if you're going to keep your doors open, then you're going to try to find ways to accommodate the adults.

MS. BROADY: And so, I think one of the reasons why more of the adults are going to need this education is also because of automation, right? And so, COVID is expected to increase the speed of automation. And so, there's already a gap between the goals of higher education and the needs of the workforce. And so, I guess I wonder how can colleges and universities and employers and nonprofits and others work together even better? What suggestions might you have for pipelines to bring the two together to meet these goals? And I'm going to pose that to the group if we just want to do a quickfire answer to that question.

Mary Sue, why don't I start with you on that one if that's all right?

MS. COLEMAN: Sure. This has been a perennial issue. I think in all of my 50 years in higher

education this question keeps coming up. But it's an important one. And, you know, I think it's been most successful that I've seen rather than institutions trying to do this at a super high level, is that for each of the colleges or the units, business schools are pretty good at this at getting advisory groups to come in and talk to them from their alums. But what I found at Michigan is that more and more of the other departments like the history department, the English department, is beginning to try to assemble these alumni groups and people who have had their degrees to come in and just give some talks to the faculty or give talks to individuals about how they should be facing this. So, I think that's the best approach is doing it informally. The federal agencies can also be helpful in terms of requiring these sorts of interactions. But I haven't seen much interest in them doing that.

MS. BROADY: I absolutely agree as a former business school dean. I do think about that. That in business you're going to have an advisory council. It's just standard. But other areas don't necessarily do that. And automation is not only affecting people who

major in business. So, maybe more institutions and more areas do need to have advisory councils. Belle, I'm going to go to you (inaudible) --

MS. COLEMAN: You will find in community colleges occupational technical programs have advisory councils all over the place because those are the people who employ those particular graduates specifically for the skills that are being taught there. So, the automotive techs, the welding, the nursing, the dental hygienists, all of those tend to have advisory committees. And they do work very well. They give them ideas on ways to change the curriculum so that they stay current with whatever the needs are that are out there.

Oftentimes, the institution will benefit from equipment that a company is bringing in the latest and greatest, you know, whistles and bells and now but their immediate last generation is still very functional on which to use for training. So, there are a lot of advantages to doing that. But you're right, it tends to be more prevalent among occupational technical programs than liberal arts programs.

MS. BROADY: Absolutely. So, it seems like as

you said there are examples. So, for programs in schools that may not have as many advisory councils, there are some templates that they could follow. James, why don't I go to you on the same question. How can institutions and the workforce work better together to serve these goals?

MR. KVAAL: That's a great question. I agree with Mary Sue, it's perennial. You know, I think that we do know that the most effective federal programs tend to have a lot of employer (inaudible) when you're thinking about apprenticeships, or on the job training. I suppose that's because employers are quite clear about what they need and then also the students see the benefits of the learning. So, you sort of get some of the benefits of that experiential learning. I think that it -- well, one, I really like the author's proposal that you try and direct some of the science not just to is a program good or bad or is a college good or bad, but what is a good program for which students and in which industries? I think it really is important to try and break it down at that level of specificity.

You do want to provide a little federal money.

I think can help, but you don't want to do it to the point that you're paying people to go through the motions. So, you have to be a little bit careful how you use federal dollars to incent that kinds of working together. And it really does vary from industry to industry. Some industries have portable credentials that everyone uses, and others don't. Some employers have business strategies that are built around high skill, high wage employees, others do not. So, it really requires a lot of context and careful work.

MS. BROADY: This is true because, I guess, one of the things that you said made me think about is that for our positions, it may not necessarily be the whole degree. It could be a class or two that helps you get that pay increase. So, Andrew, I'm going to come to you on that because I think when we think about graduation rates or completion rates that schools are kind of judged on, but we have this population that may not need the whole degree, they just may need a few classes. And maybe this is between you and Belle because, again, I'm thinking about this judgement. If you have these students, these adult students that are

taking these courses but they're not earning a degree, what effect does that have?

MR. KELLY: It's a great question and I think what you're pointing to is the sort of, you know, poverty let's say of our metrics. And the fact that we rely on what metrics we have those that are clearly defined and that are readily available. And unfortunately, those are not always the ones that would be the best, but with which to measure different programs. And I think what you're alluding to is really what matters is that on some level, the degree at some point is an output and the outcome that this type of project would be hoping to drive would be, you know, a family sustaining wage, let's say, right? Or something along those lines. And employment first and then family sustaining wage second, certainly.

And, you know, I think some of what we could do is we could do a lot more work on the data side to collect better information. This is kind of, you know, to Mary Sue's point. This is also a perennial conversation, right? How do we have more and better data on labor market outcomes. I do want to say one

thing though and it's related to this is I also think that that sort of is a function of the way that we tend to think about these kinds of programs and these kinds of training programs.

And one of the things I think is interesting to think about is the employer community is not really serving as a third-party payor in most cases these days. They're doing some customized training in community colleges. Sometimes they'll do some at a four-year college as well. But I do think it's worth thinking about in the context of a proposal like this. How would you engage the employer community more directly in ponying up some of their resources? And in deciding with a set of secondary providers that yes, they're providing exactly what it is I need and I'm investing in it because it's real money and it's my money.

And I think there's a few examples of that. So, one firm that's doing some of this is Guild Education. They're working to partner with employers who have tuition benefits for students to use. Usually for workers to use. Usually as a retention benefit. But they want to make sure that those students are using

them at places that add to their human capital that make them better and more productive people. So, that's one.

The other one I would point to is the U.K. has implemented this levy for apprenticeship funding. And they hold off a portion of the payroll and it's basically use it or lose it. And the firm then pays what they call an apprenticeship service provider to recruit and bring people in and serve as apprentices in their businesses. And so, I do think that's one place where the United States has sort of, I think, advisory councils and those kinds of things are important and fundamental. But at the end of the day, the business community tends to do those things as a favor almost. And rather than as an imperative. And I think putting some of their money on the hook would be more effective in some cases.

MS. WHEELAN: Some of things Congressman Scott pointed out this morning was that community college enrollment has gone down because usually it goes down when the economy is good. People have gone back to work. Now, it's gone down because people have no jobs to pay the tuition, number one. And there are no jobs

available because everything's closed down. So, where are they going and for what would they go back to be trained? That's one of the impacts this pandemic has had that higher education has not experienced before.

The other thing that I find most interesting is students today whether they're 18 or 48 or 88 are interested in getting a job. And most traditional institutions of higher education, which are generally more our senior institutions, have not been focused on jobs. They've been focused on educating students. Community colleges have had a job training focus forever. You know, their occupational technical programs have always been come in and get a job and so on.

We were on the Hill trying to fight graduation rates being a litmus test for a successful institution. We tried to explain to them students who go to community colleges, only 1/3 of them go with the intent of transferring to get a four-year degree. The other 1/3 wants to get a job. And then the other 1/3 is just there because they want to improve their own lives and stuff. And so, how can you say that an institution is

not being effective because it has a low graduation rate when the whole purpose for going there was not to graduate in the first place?

So, there's a lot of that conversation. I liked in the paper the fact that they pointed out that the secretary of labor's money and the secretary of education's money never comingles. And so, you've got, you know, competing interests where with this proposal, it's like, duh, how about we put those two sets of resources together? There's a novel concept that it will be interesting to see if our locally and nationally elected officials think that that's a good idea.

MS. BROADY: I have one more question in that regard. And I wanted to get to the specifics because I love the proposal, but when you try to actualize it at the university level, there are some challenges that I thought about. So, one of them is that you're an adult learner and you need three to four classes that the LOC will pay for. But those courses have prerequisites, right, that you had to have taken principles of English and algebra and things like that but maybe you need some sort of technical class. Maybe you need an accounting

class, et cetera, but the university would make you then take three to four prerequisites. How do you deal with that issue? So, it's a learning outcome issue, maybe an accreditation issue. How do you deal with that for someone who wants to take three classes but to take those three, they'd have to take three more? And I'm going to open that to anybody. But it maybe (inaudible) but I'm going to pose the question.

MS. COLEMAN: I think it'll take a lot of conversation on campus with the various interested parties. You know, because what we've said traditionally is the faculty are in charge of the curriculum. They get to decide. And it's been a huge strength of higher education that is we don't have mandates. We don't have a federal department of education that tells institutions what they have to teach and how they have to teach it. So, but in order to make something like this work, you've got to have buy-in from many parties. So, some institutions will want to do this, others won't. That's fine. You know, I mean, I think that's been the tradition in higher ed in the U.S. But I don't see it as an insurmountable

obstacle. But it'll take a lot of work.

MS. WHEELAN: I think you see a lot of institutions that have already inserted career specific themes through what they teach. So, that in English classes nowadays, they're actually assigning papers that may be related to a career interest as opposed to just say what did you do this past summer kind of thing.

And so, I agree with Mary Sue, it's coming, but it's taking some of the more long serving faculty a little bit longer to feel comfortable with expanding that. One of the great things that advisory panels do as well is that it creates faculty interns, if you will. They get to come in in the summer to see what this company does so that when they go back to their classroom that they can incorporate some of those concepts in their writing, in their reading, in their computing classes so that it's relevant to where the student will end up.

MS. BROADY: So, I think one of the trends in this conversation is that there are some schools that are doing these things very well and that are being very innovative. And there are other schools that have a bit

of a ways to go. And so we've started out broad with Arum and Stevens' proposals and so, I guess, my last question for all of you considering where you stand is what more can be done maybe through your organizations or just your thoughts about how to bridge the gap between universities that are ready for this and those that are not that want to be. And you probably have 30 seconds that one piece of advice to try to bridge this gap. I'll start with you, Mary Sue. Yeah, I'll start with you, Mary Sue.

MS. COLEMAN: Okay. Well, you know, I think what this is naturally I think there's going to be a lot of interest because of the devastation of the pandemic. And institutions are facing a crisis that they haven't ever faced. So, I imagine there are lots of conversations about strategies for the future.

MS. BROADY: Belle?

MS. WHEELAN: We have an annual meeting every year that provides opportunities for institutions that are successful at doing this to make presentations so that folks who have never thought about it before or have, you know, looking for ways to tweak their programs

can become involved. So, I think getting them to talk to each other and providing avenues where, you know, you can see what's going on the different reports that come out from your organization or from TCUS or whoever is, you know, producing them to show that this is happening. It's happening at institutions that are like mine. And so, it's okay for me to consider it.

MS. BROADY: I've attended those conferences and I can attest to the fact that they do work in doing that. So, thank you. James?

MR. KVAAL: I think we do need a greater spirit of collaboration across higher education. And if you look at the places where students struggle, it's often in the gaps in between colleges or educational institutions where you have students who show up on a college campus not ready to do the academic work that the faculty expect. You have students enrolling in a community college expecting to transfer and that is a challenging issue in many places. And, you know, I think we need to pay attention to how our higher ed system is working as a system and not just think that all of the solutions are at an individual campus level.

And so, you know, I think if this proposal is a way to encourage the knowledge and expertise of some of the research universities and apply that methodology to help improve training programs for adults at a broader set of institutions, you know, I think that could be a really powerful first step to integrating what different schools do well.

MS. BROADY: Thank you so much. And our last piece of advice, Andrew?

MR. KELLY: Well, I would say, you know, go out and find your -- if you're an institution that thinks you're on to something and you're doing something well, go out and find a partner in another university in your state who is willing to contribute some research time to help you really understand what it is that's driving that (inaudible). I think we have -- one of the things that's frustrating is we have a disconnect between practitioners who have a ton of expertise on the ground and researchers who are sort of doing at a lamppost problem, right, where they're always searching for their keys under the lamppost. We need more of those two groups of people to get together and actually

produce lessons about scalability. And this is where I think that the FLOW part of the proposal is most exciting and commend Richard and Mitchell for putting it forward.

MS. BROADY: So, I'd like to thank Congressman Bobby Scott for joining us. It was an honor to hear from him. I'd also like to thank our authors for their wonderful paper. Thank you to Wendy Edelberg, the director of the Hamilton Project. I'd also like to thank the panelists here, Mary Sue Coleman, Belle Wheelan, Andrew Kelly, and James Kvaal.

I hope that you've enjoyed this as much as I have. I hope that you've learned something from it. And for colleges and universities, I hope that you'll apply the information that we've discussed to the best of your ability. I'd like to thank you all. And I hope that you'll join us for our next event. Thank you.

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